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‘YOU HAVE A RIGHT. THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY’
HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS WITH FREINET'S METHODOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this presentation is to show how Freinet's educational tools can be applied to secondary school students aged from 12 to 15 years old. Each technique can be carried out either written or digitally. The goal is differentiated learning, whereby each student's capacities are respected. Students are encouraged to experiment on creative writing and self-expression as well as to interactively present their work to their classmates. The educational tools provided by Freinet's Pedagogic Movement are: Student council, What's new?, *Petit livre* or little book, Free children's text, School printing house and School newspaper, Correspondence, School library, Classroom-Courtyard-Community, Cinematography, Radio broadcasting. Children express themselves in a safe democratic pedagogical ambience, where the school climate is improved and all voices are heard. Through interaction, which is key to learning, students promote their sense of collaboration, compassion, respect to diversity and uniqueness but also

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responsibility, diligence and autonomy. They also develop communicative skills, promote critical thinking, reinforce the inter- and intra-personal intelligence, increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and build their capacity to empathize. As a result, not only intellectual but also emotional development is cultivated.

Keywords: Freinet's Methodology, democratic pedagogical ambience, collaboration, responsibility, autonomy, diligence

The aim of this presentation is to show how educational tools provided by Freinet's Pedagogic Movement can be applied to secondary school students aged from 12 to 15 years old. Most of the techniques can be carried out either written or digitally. The goal is differentiated learning, whereby each student's capacities and skills are pointed out mostly through team work. Students are encouraged to engage in creative writing (Καρακίτσιος 2013) and self-expression as well as to interactively present their work to their classmates.

Célestin Freinet was a pedagogue and educational reformer who lived in France from 1896 to 1966. His educational philosophy was innovative and even today, at the age of high technology and virtual reality, his educational tools, which emphasize on the significance of physical world, very effective. Many modern pedagogical principles were pioneered by Freinet. He inaugurated the concept of cooperative learning, experiential learning and differentiated learning. Children learn through experimental palpation by completing projects based on their interests. Everyone's contribution to team work is respected and collaboration is based on democratic principles (Λάχλουετ al. 2017· Aslanian et al. 2017).

The Freinet's educational tools are (Μπαδικιάν 2017):

- Student council: Students share opinions on topics and problems which arise during the educational procedure and their daily school life. Everyone has a distinctive role in the council and successful management is the outcome of team work. The aim is to resolve any dispute in a peaceful and consensual way.

- What's new? A technique where children share their everyday experiences, concerns and agonies at the beginning of the lesson. This technique enhances empathy and forges the unity of the class.

- Petit livre: little book. Students create their own petit livre by folding paper in a certain way and they write down their original texts drawing inspiration from everyday life, literature, personal experience etc.

- Free children's text(Pomelov 2021): a very creative and provocative technique, where students create their texts spontaneously, post them to the wall newspaper or read them loudly and receive comments by their schoolmates. Students choose their means of expression according to their abilities and desires. During the presentation a group of students may use theatrical techniques (Αυδή and Χατζηγεωργίου 2007·Γκόβας 2001) or painting tools to enhance the impact of the free text. It is a powerful interactive procedure that develops both intra- and inter-personal intelligence(Gardner2000). Inspiration may be drawn by various fields, such

as literature, art, contemporary news (<https://blogs.sch.gr/2gymglne/archives/3404>). Let's explore some examples where free text technique was implemented.

At first the SEEVAL (Social and Emotional Education - Building inclusive schools and ownership of values) project, a project that promotes the idea of social and emotional learning. Students expressed themselves freely responding to some paintings (<https://blogs.sch.gr/2gymglne/archives/2772>).

Some of the students' answers:

'What do I see in the mirror? I see a lost person. Lost between past and future. I am trying to find the real me. I will never give up trying, because love for life is stronger than the fear for the future'.

'In the mirror I see beauty, kindness, happiness and love for myself. I don't see insecurity or the urge to lose weight'.

'What do I dream of? I always dreamt of a new better version of myself. But besides my inner change I dream of a better world, a world where everyone would be respected for his uniqueness'.

The next project 'Love. Why? Friendship. Why?' is based on Saint Exupery's famous novel 'The little prince'. Some of the answers:

'Love and logic are like the sun and the moon. When the one rises the other sets off'.

'We need hope to fulfil our dreams'.

'We need hope in order to change the world'.

'Friendship makes you a better person'.

'Nostalgia' is composed of the word 'nostos', the greek word for returning to a beloved place or situation after a long absence, and the word 'algos', the greek word for pain, physical or psychological. Students looked at some pieces of art which depict the idea of departure and alienation, like Bruno Catalano's 'The Voyager', and showed how they conceived the idea of nostalgia using many ways of expression.

Following a project based on Kostas Karyotakis' poem 'Evening' (Καρυωτάκης 1992), where the key concept is loneliness, disappointment and frustration (Γεωργιάδης 2014· Μπενάτσης 2004). Students listened to each verse separately and visualized it spontaneously using the cooperative writing tool jamboard.

The project 'Experimenting with words' triggered creative writing. Free inspiration, free expression.

'Home

A swallow built a home.

High on a tree, to gaze at the sea.

A wolf built a home.
 Deep in the forest, along with the wind.
 An ant built a home.
 Deep in the earth, to listen to her breath.
 A man built a home.
 Close to the beating of his heart
 and placed inside all he loves, all he desires, all he dreams of'.

– School printing house and School newspaper: Students become journalists and investigate issues of their interest. They publish their texts and go through the entire process of making a newspaper using the School printing house. The significance of materiality is underlined.

– Correspondence: Writing letters is a forgotten art. Students correspond to other schools' students, preferably in another region or another country. Exchanging visits between pen pals is a moving and exciting experience.

– School library: Students are responsible for the creation, enrichment and management of the school library. The love of reading and the promotion of the idea that the book itself is a cultural item is highly stressed.

– Classroom-Courtyard-Community: Let's break the walls. The classroom opens to the courtyard, which is also considered to be a learning environment that stimulates and motivates students. Even more so, the opening of the classroom to the community is of major importance because active citizenship is promoted.

– Audiovisual media and New Technologies in Pedagogy Freinet: A very important technique in educational philosophy of Freinet is Cinematography and all the New Technologies. According to Theodosiou (Λάχλουet al. 2017: 275-85) this technique should be integrated in the educational process not as a simple aid but as an essential element of the educational process. In the first quarter of the 20th century, at the beginning of the Freinet movement, the New Technologies exploited the printing press, cinema and radio. But the issue of audiovisual education is raised in 1952. That year with a government's law, films could be demonstrated at schools. Freinet expressed the view that: 'The audiovisual media should only focus on the level of information and way of demonstration, without leading us to action'. That is why he proposes the creation of films by the children themselves. So, from the late 1960s onwards, the Freinet pedagogues started making films with children. 'They put the camera in the hands of children', as Henri Portier says (Portier 1989: 280).

In pedagogy Freinet the child should be in the center of all the actions that take place in school life. By shooting their own films not only do they develop the potential of communication and dialogue but also the school opens the door to society and society comes into school.

Working procedure-An example

The procedure that we will present is based on the way we work in class with pedagogy Freinet. The class council is the first step. Students sitting in a circle discuss and decide the topic and the working method of making a film. Next step is the work in the school library in order to find the information they need for their theme. After that, in a new class council they take upon different tasks (director, camera, narrator, narrative text, photographic material, music selection, editing), edit the material and finally decide how the film can be used in the education process.

Students of the ninth grade from a school in Athens in their class council decided to create a film with the topic 'Kallithea in the Resistance' ([yendig video 1 - Η Καλλιθέα της Αντίστασης sch.gr](#)). The topic is about history and the local history. The students get to know their community and, in that way, they have an opportunity of getting to know the monuments and history of the neighborhood they live. They also cooperate in order to choose the information they need for their theme, they use the library, they design the map of the historical walk and they come out of school to the community. When they get back, they work separately in his/her task and then they cooperate to create the film. The teacher's contribution is to help, encourage and be by their side. Finally, the film not only can be used to create a film library in school and be used in the educational process but, most importantly, it brings the neighborhood, the society into school.

In the example below students decide to make a historical walk. In another film about the refugees in Kallithea ([yendig video 1 - Γωνία Πλάτωνος και Φιλαρέτου sch.gr](#)) the same students were introduced to the interview process. They followed the same procedure as it has been shown above but now, they get familiar with the interview procedure and get to know personal narratives. Through personal narratives, events that seem distant in history books come to life and children learn from the stories of older people and they, in return, feel the joy of giving while their stories become valuable as personal testimonies of the past.

– Radio Broadcasting: There are many ways that Radio Broadcasting can be used in class. But an interactive and easy way is to show a student's free text to the school community using this radio broadcasting technique. After the aforementioned writing procedure, the student records his/her voice while reading his/her free text that can be a narrative, a poem, a story etc. The class can also decide to organize radio podcasts that could be heard

through loudspeakers during breaks between lessons. In order to do something like that, the class has to decide through the class council the name, the podcast signal, the music theme, the speaker and the text at the beginning and at the end of the podcast.

This technique gives students the opportunity to attempt to read correctly, to strengthen their voice, to articulate correctly, to speak clearly. Through this technique students' voices can be heard. This technique also incorporates rhetorical skills and is connected to expressive reading, an oral interpretation of the free text. In conclusion, with cinema and radio 'the school opens up to society. Society comes to school. 'The whole world becomes the source of knowledge', as Theodosiou points out (Λάχλουετ al. 2017: 275-85).

It is obvious that the Freinet's educational tools complement each other and this coordination enhance their effectiveness. In conclusion, children express themselves in a safe democratic pedagogical ambience, where the school climate is improved. Through interaction, which is key to learning, students promote their sense of collaboration, compassion, respect to diversity and uniqueness but also responsibility, diligence and autonomy. As a result, not only intellectual but also emotional development is cultivated. Furthermore, active and democratic citizenship is promoted by the students' participation in organizing all aspects of school life.

Inviting other schools, showing students' projects to the community and participating in competitions and festivals is a sign of extraversion and strengthens the idea of collaboration and coexistence through which they find out that their connections are stronger than their differences. They, also, learn that differentiation can be a path of communication, when respect, appreciation and tolerance are established. Therefore, Freinet's educational philosophy is a strong pedagogical heritage.

In Greece the principles and practices of Freinet's School are spread by Skasiarheio (Truancy) (Παιδαγωγική ομάδα «Το Σκασιαρχείο» 2023), a pedagogical group of open-minded teachers who are in close collaboration with FIMEM (Fédération Internationale des Mouvements d'Ecole Moderne - International Federation of Freinet Pedagogy Movements) (FIMEM n.d.) and ICEM (Institut Cooperatif de l'Ecole Moderne. Pedagogie Freinet - Cooperative Institute of the Modern School) (ICEM n.d.).

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