

School for Teachers
Училище за учители

FROM ENTERPRISE CLASSES TO YORDAN RADICHKOV'S SPARROWS

Milena Todorova

High School „Kuzman Shapkarev“ – Blagoevgrad

Abstract. The author presents her view on the topic of entrepreneurship for children. Dramatization of Radichkov's "Sparrows" is used for students' theatre. Other artistic activities for the pupils are also presented.

Keywords: theatre, entrepreneurship, Radichkov,

If I had more grasp of entrepreneurship I wouldn't be a teacher. Undoubtedly my heart is more in Radichkov, the theatre and the stage – my classroom.

In the classes of Enterprise I managed to combine my love to theatre and the children's unlimited capabilities to impersonate different roles from books and life. Thus we created a theatre play which proudly performed to parents, colleagues and jury. And the children were given 'original' footballs bought with the proceeds from the performance which they gladly tested on our multifunctional school's playground.

I've been working for second year on the "Enterprise" program of "Junior achievement Bulgaria" organization. The topic for 2nd graders is "My family" and we also study the professions of people being closer to the child's world. The idea of Enterprise for children is to make them, helped by their parents and the teacher, do activities benefitting their close ones and be paid for the job. The decision for what the money to be spent for is left to the children. I give them several options corresponding with the class' needs. We may also set a goal in advance to follow – last year we needed cupboards for the backpacks. In March we have already used them.

The Enterprise topics I implicate in similar ones in different classes such as classes of art, applied practice and techniques classes, Teacher's class, etc... I decided to start Enterprise classes in January. We've got available ready works on topics supplied with materials which need to be worked out and enriched. The ideas were born in the process of study. But the very beginning was set in a class of Bulgarian literature where I first introduced Radichkov's sparrows to the class: Giff,

My Dear Mister (Dragi mi Gospodine), Feet-sticking-out (Краката му стърчат навън), Mititaki, Hummy (Тананик), Stinkycrow (Смрадовранката) and so on. The pupils immediately recognized each other in the names of the feathery characters; I believe that every class-teacher could discover among their nippers Radichkov's sparrows. We had difficulties just with the personification of Stinckycrow until we found out in all-knowing Google that it is a lovely blue bird from the crows' family. It was the same one that taught us by Radichkov's words that although we go to school 'the knowledge is never enough' and 'we should always be in trend with the newest knot' i.e. the state of the art! (Teachers often learn from the kids of the latest knot!).

This is how the idea to dramatize that popular to Bulgarian reader story was born. It is supposed to be addressed towards the parents. I linked it with the enterprising jobs we've studied – actor's profession – since theatre is something that kids like. I took them to the Drama theatre where the actress Janet Keranova introduced us to the mysterious backstage world. There we also get to know other theatre jobs such as director, stenographer, wardrobe keeper and scene-shifter. We saw the studio where the costumes are tailored. The spark was already lit - the performance was just a matter of time. I made a decision to fulfill it in the second school term when I will be able to rely on students' assistance that I mentor during the students' training programs. I didn't mean to intrude this particular literary work (moreover the sparrows aren't 24 as the pupils in the class), therefore I gave the opportunity to them to choose another piece of studied works at literature classes. We picked up Doctor Dolittle and along with the reading in the school reader book we read some chapters from the original one. The adventure spirit of the kids was fired by the ship voyage to the Monkeys land, the introduction to the African Royalty (Prince of Jolyginki) and by the doctor's friends devotion. Thus the children got the opportunity to choose a play to act in. Undoubtedly Doctor Dolittle is easier to produce and closer to child's heart. That play was role-played and acted for fun by various dialogues and costumes. The other one – Radichkov's – was a more serious thing. It was expected to be valued by the parents! The latter greatly appealed to me and I had to adapt it for dramatization, changing the author's words the least as possible. I personified the Tomcat and the Tree so that everyone gets a role to act and to be similar to one - another. I was very pleased to listen to the monologues learnt by heart with the help of parents; it was obvious where the parent had influenced and guided for a particular intonation, pause, and clear diction. I had gotten the parents into it – that was an achievement! In Enterprise classes we made a list of activities that had to be done before staging the performance in front of audience:

1. Casting for each play;
2. Distributing the roles;
3. Design and tailoring the costumes;

4. Scenes design and making;
5. Tickets: determine the cost, print outs, ticket-seller;
6. Invitation cards making;
7. Making of posters.

I took the Director's seat and ticked the first 2 points from the list at once. As a screen writer I brought up my idea for the sets but also demanded the pupils taking part in it. In 2 consecutive art classes we were drawing sparrows that would be sitting on trees. I asked a parent to sponsor with a small sum the purchase of cloth as in return gets 3 seats in 1st row boxes. Other parents sewed triangle neck-cloths for each sparrow.

The Paper beak-hats project and it's making was mine (I took it from „Crocotak“ and developed further the idea). For “Doctor Doolittle's stage-properties I made a list. Everyone was assigned what to provide and we made up for the characters' costumes. The doctor's cylinder I borrowed from the theatre, the rest was improvised.

Once the characters' costumes were ready I took pictures of them for the poster. It was a pleasure to me and to the children. We did the poster's project in a separate class : I brought 5 various drama-theatre posters and we took a look. Some of them were with actors' pictures and in other - there were listed just their names and roles. We choose the Dr. Dolittle's poster to be from the 1st type as the personages are less in number and the poster for the Sparrows to be drawn with the names next to each image of them on the tree. We missed no one. We specified the exact scripts : time, venue of performance, the author of the scene play and the actors. The pupils made their poster projects on a drawing paper sheets and I created the posters on hard drawing paper with the specified date when it became a fact – 30th April. Now we could prepare the invitation cards. It took us 2 school classes of arts. The invitation card presented spring scenery – applied paper techniques (decoupage). The new technique learnt was the making of a stork and a blossoming tree out of decorative paper. The text on the cards included the tickets cost 5, 4, 3 levs according to the row in the hall. Two pupils were assigned to sell the tickets – those ones who are less artistic and had to act the least.

The decor took little resources and lots of hard work. (Especially the egg that hatched <My Dear Mister>!)

That is my personal outlook for enterprise at this early childhood fulfilled at school that relates to the school activities. Most of the work is done by the teacher and some of the parents. I'm very petulant that everything done by children has its purpose or function so they can see the benefits – material, moral and financially. This year we've decided to spend the profits for fun. If everything runs smoothly the reward is a day excursion.

On the performance day I received unreserved help from the students. They made the chairs setting, on each chair there was a colored paper price tag for the

seat. The tickets I printed in the same colour as the price tag paper on the chairs for better orientation. The tickets were cut out by a parent and handed in to the ticket sellers who passed by the sitting guests and they paid for the selected seat. After the performance the revenue amounted to 112 leva that was locked in a safety box.

On the next week in mathematics class we calculated the profit which amounted to 15 leva after deduction of the expenses having in mind the sponsorship. The children wished for balls to play with. We consulted the PA teacher and both of us have chosen appropriate balls. We've got wonderful multi-functional playground at the school yard where the kids played delighted the last school week. I was feeling proud and rewarded. We have also made the excursion to town Tzari Mali grad a fact.

All those activities have raised the entire school interest which made us replay the performance in front of larger audience. It took place at the school's hall equipped with projectors, curtains, sound system – all needed for a real theatre performance. There were TV reporters and cameras. I was happy to see my children rewarded for their hard work! They weren't embarrassed, on the contrary – they enjoyed acting on a real stage.

I thought to myself for a thousandth time how different the nowadays kids are from those I started with in the beginning of my teaching career 25 years back! These kids have to be taught in a very new approach as they teach us the 'last knots'. School's Headmistress Mrs. Lilia Stoyanova, has always asked for and insisted upon this exactly 'new trend approach' – to be with the last trends in teaching the children. Her aspiration to bring the school to higher positions deserves admiration. She always thanks us and always asks for more!

Of course the children were fascinated in the sparrow's names and just slightly got into the deep meanings of words and messages hidden in the character phrases. They have heard such preaches million times from the adults and now they were coming out from their mouths. Here is how I bring up the children and set educational aims.

There were many things the kids have learnt from the sparrows about life: skills how to cope alone with it; the path to knowledge and self-perfection. And there are old-fashioned things that have remained unchanged...

Yourdan Radichkov is a great writer and there's a lot to talk about his works. I have to admit that his "Frog stories" have already crossed my mind for the next school year to come.

✉ **Mrs. Milena Todorova**
Secondary School „Kuzman Shapkarev“
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
E-mail: sou7_bg@abv.bg