

## TOPIC: Literature and Creative Thinking

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### Objectives

The objectives of the current PAL ART Lesson are to *use the **creative thinking** to promote positive narrative of Romani artists, youth and writers* using the health of the Romani Literature and culture.

The **Literature Art Integrated Learning module (LAIL)** is aiming at developing the potential of learners in a holistic, balanced and integrated manner encompassing the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects in order to create a balanced and harmonious human being with high social standards.

There is a need to discover if the literature component in line with its aims and objectives of Romani integration and promotion of their culture. Thus, a focus on the approaches employed by trainers in the teaching of literature component in terms of Romani integration process would be of great value and interest. This module focuses on teacher's approaches and challenges in the teaching of LAIL in adult education. It will focus on the approaches employed and challenges encountered in the teaching of literature to Romani people, adults and youth.

This module aims to develop:

- ✚ understanding of 'Literature Art' as a pedagogical tool and of its impact on the holistic learning and development of every learner.
- ✚ familiarity with creative thinking (different techniques) as medium of exploring learners creative expression.
- ✚ skill of planning and organizing age-appropriate art experiences to make learning of different subjects appealing.
- ✚ Understanding Romani community: their portrait through positive narrative.
- ✚ Communicating and interacting with Romani Adults.
- ✚ Introducing the important influence of the Romani literature and culture on the European culture

The literature component in Romani creativity-thinking is aimed at enhancing learners' language proficiency, and it is also geared for the purpose of generating the aesthetic part of the language that is personal response from learners. The Language Curriculum Specifications stated that the aim of literature is not only meant to address the interpersonal, informational aesthetic value of learning but also the learning of the Romani language in general. Similarly, this objective is in line to this curriculum of the that spells out the objectives of the introduction of literature component into the language syllabus are to enable learners to improve their proficiency through reading, respond to text, draw lessons and insights from slices of life, understand and appreciate other culture, relate to events, characters and own life as well as expose students to models of good writing.

The aim of the module is to help members of Roma communities to write and realize themselves in literature and creativity-thinking process. Unlike, for example, music, Romani literature is still perceived as inferior and naive. Within the framework of political correctness and multicultural education, the media provide it with only limited space. When someone from the cultural community already reflects Romani literature, then he or she is surprised by its "non-literariness", rawness and seeming naivety. Unlike dance and music, the creative literary activities of the Roma are considered unnatural in our country.

From technical point of view House of National Minorities created a **Literature Art Integrated Learning module (LAIL)** with 40 hours duration and consisted of 3 training sessions. LAIL is a teaching-learning model which is based on learning 'through creativity-thinking' and 'with literature: it is a process where literature art becomes the medium of teaching-learning, a key to understanding concepts within any subject of the curriculum. This resonates with the experiential learning approach. LAIL is going to introduce the learners to the basic of literature writing but also will teach them how to create connection among their identity with their cultural and ethnic background. LAIL is closely connected with the creation and expression of Romani positive narrative thought painting art. It will be piloted among Romani artists in Czech Republic in 2022 as part of the PAL ART Labs and Roadshows and in cooperation with Roma Publishing House KHER.

The target learners of LAIL are people willing to learn literature writing, future or current writers with Romani background and influence. The trainers to work on the module are professionals which are involved in the literature sector or related to it. Also, professionals that support Romani integration to EU (e.g., social workers, VET teachers, assistance, volunteers).

### Short Description

Integration of arts with other subjects means that arts (visual arts, performing arts and literary arts) become an integral part of teaching-learning processes. It also implies adopting an art-integrated curriculum, where art becomes the basis of classroom learning. Arts at the center of the curriculum, helps in clarifying concepts. Art-integrated curriculum can provide means to bridge content of different subjects in logical, learner-centric and meaningful ways. All subjects such as mathematics, sciences, social sciences and languages and their abstract concepts can be correlated, linked, concretized and learnt effectively with art at the center. Learning by this method becomes holistic, joyful and experiential.

The module we have created (LAIL) is aiming to engage professional writers in the process of interaction and creation of new skills and techniques to specific group of learners: Romani adults. The innovative aspect of the current work is that in the process of teaching and with the specific training techniques will be introduced and discussed the importance of the Romanipen<sup>1</sup> and Romani code as part of the Romani spirit, culture, law, history for creation of a positive narrative.

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<sup>1</sup> Romanipen (also romanypen, romanipe, romanype, romanimos, romaimos, romaniya) is a complicated concept of Romani philosophy encompassing totality of the Romani spirit, culture, law, being a Rom, a set of Romani strains.

The literature training is:

- The creative process that has an aesthetic function (it affects human feelings, evokes a pleasant feeling)
- Educational and cognitive process (learning something new)
- A formative process (develops perception, thinking ability, shapes personality),
- Educational process (leads to certain ethical values, attitudes)
- Social phenomenon (influences the thinking and actions of society)
- Entertainment and recreational activity (fills leisure time in a meaningful way)

The preparation and implementation of the training MODUL will consist of 3 main parts:

<b><u>Part 1: Working with human creativity and imagination</u></b>	<b><u>Part 2: Introduction to Romani literature</u></b>	<b><u>Part 3: Mastering the creative writing process</u></b>
<i>Workshop/ Roundtable on creative writing, plot construction, plot, conflict, denouement</i>	<i>Webinar on Romani literature organized in cooperation with the Prague Romani publishing house KHER</i>	<i>The actual production of texts and their preparation for publication.</i>



It can be difficult to define Romani literature. You can't place it in a specific geographic area. This makes it independent of national categories, and can create problems with the writing sometimes, since literature tends to invite the imagination of the reader to settle it in a particular space.

**Romani literature** sometimes suffers from the perception that the people are not indigenous to the country in which they are based. The nomadic stereotypes tend to mean that they can only ever speak as a minority within their country. They are always seen as Romani writers rather than, say, Hungarian, Czech or English writers.

Neither can you define it in terms of a common language. Some Romani writers write in Romany, while many others write in their national language. It is hard to talk in terms of aesthetic similarities, since we are talking about literary works that span most formats, including novels, tales, poetry, prose and plays.

As for a cultural frame of reference, the authors' cultural universes are as distinct as the countries to which they belong. But reject these other criteria and you can be left only with ethnicity, which risks sounding like discrimination, albeit a positive version, and miserably reduces the author to his work. While it is impossible to deny that these people belong to a nation – their own nation – the best antidote to trying to over-classify them as one homogeneous group is to read what they have to say. It is striking how almost all literary works by Romani writers include in their speeches the voice of the other, and their prejudices. Both educational and defensive, this allows the “gadzo”, or non-Gypsy reader, to enter the work more easily.

Many texts are life stories, placing them at the limit of literature. Other stories are notable by their banality, but this is precisely what makes them interesting: because Gypsies are not usually represented as being part of the ordinary, this can make for extraordinary writing.

Through Gypsy eyes, the protagonists are for once not immediately branded as different, weird or foreign. They are not Romani in the plural of a confused set of people supposed to be all alike, but singular and subjective instead. They are men and women first of all, who are also Gypsies.

Many texts also enable Gypsy people to rework a collective past those national histories continue to forget and almost deny. **Ceija Stojka**<sup>2</sup> and **Philomena Franz**<sup>3</sup> tell the story of their years in the Nazi death camps, for instance. **Magda Szécsi**<sup>4</sup> in Hungary speaks about how Romani were treated during the Soviet era. **Coucou Doerr**<sup>5</sup> tells of his Gitana life between France and Spain during World War II. **Sandra Jayat**<sup>6</sup> tells of her bohemian life in Paris in the 1960s. **Mateo Maximoff**<sup>7</sup> uses the testimony of his ancestors to describe the Gypsy slavery that lasted five centuries (until 1865) in the very heart of Europe.

Within the framework of political Romani oral literature has been the main authentic verbal expression of Romani people in the former **Czechoslovakia** since the 1960s. And it was only a step to writing. Even a good narrator must have the gift of abbreviation and generalization just like a writer; he or she must be able to engage, frighten, impress and teach. The procedures of the folk paramisar (fairy tale writer), relying only on his memory, are somewhat different from those written, and the remnants of oral storytelling are still evident in the author's Romani texts. However, the experienced

<sup>2</sup> Ceija Stojka: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceija\\_Stojka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceija_Stojka)

<sup>3</sup> Philomena Franz: <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/collection/p/philomena-franz/>

<sup>4</sup> Magda Szécsi: <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/contributor/magda-szecs>

<sup>5</sup> Coucou Doerr: [https://www.cairn.info/resume.php?ID\\_ARTICLE=TSIG\\_037\\_0118](https://www.cairn.info/resume.php?ID_ARTICLE=TSIG_037_0118)

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Jayat: [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandra\\_Jayat](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandra_Jayat)

<sup>7</sup> Mateo Maximoff: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mateo\\_Maximoff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mateo_Maximoff)

reader can see a stimulating otherness in this rather than a lack of ingenuity. We do not want to repeat the whole story of young Romani literature in the Czech lands. At least for the sake of order, however, it should be noted that the foundations of the spelling of the so-called Slovak (correctly north-central) Romani, which was written in most early works, were laid in 1971-2 on the pages of the **Gypsy-Roma Union (SCR)**. The first Romani texts of Tera Fabiánová<sup>8</sup>, Andrej Gini<sup>9</sup> or Andrej Pešta<sup>10</sup> were also printed here, and although the Union was forcibly dissolved in 1973 and with it the unique platform of Romani literature disappeared, pride in the beauty of Romani and the desire to publish in the mother tongue have taken roots. However, it is still true that without the brave pioneers of the late 1960s, there would be no Romani literature in our territory, and of course it is also true that for whom Romani is the mother tongue, it expresses itself by far the most naturally, with rich and original imagery.

The basic idea and goal of the Literature Modul is to strengthen the relationship of the Romani participants to their Romani identity through literature and to give them the opportunity to push their abilities and write literary works in a creative and meaningful way.

### Project output

The main output of the project should be **a book** - a joint, common work of the whole group.

The students will first discuss the theme of the book, its genre and there should be a consensus on the type of literature to be produced. The teacher leads the class and directs the activity towards the creation of, for example, a story book. Based on a framework agreement over the content and form of the literary work, the participants then engage in the creation of their own text. The teacher can guide the pupils to reflect on themes such as love, friendship, man, family, good and evil, happiness, life or death.

Under the guidance of the teacher, students will participate as co-authors of each chapter. These may take the form of small literary units, reflections, essays. A strong theme, which the lecturer should also present to the pupils as a possible source of inspiration for the book, is the theme of the fairy tale or, if you prefer, the Romani fairy tale. Individual chapters could thus take the form of fairy tales or fantasy stories. By creating their "fairy tales" they also convey their "vision" and understanding of the world and accentuate the values they consider important. Collectively collaborating on this book will help them to know who they are and where they belong to and what their identity is. The aim is, among other things, to awaken in the participants a love for literature and their need and necessity to write and express themselves literarily. The work is intended to bring students the joy of creation and the creative process. Participants should come to some form of self-discovery and awareness of their own personal identity. What kind of book would we like to read? What do we think our friends and loved ones would like to read?

The book will be as interesting and varied as the life stories of the individual students. And perhaps even more colourful. The book will be as rich as the imagination of the students themselves. The teacher will work with the students' written output, being a stylistic and linguistic proofreader, but also taking into account the originality and "handwriting" of the individual students

### Characteristics of the work:

- it is a collective activity
- it is a combined project, students work at home and together with the tutor
- The tangible outcome is a common book in which each student will have his/her own text, so that at the end he/she will have a book with the work of all his/her classmates.

The lecturer will work with the pupils' written output, being a stylistic and linguistic proofreader, but also taking into account the originality and "handwriting" of each student.

The book also includes illustrations, although these are not the subject of the project itself. The teacher can introduce the participants to the tradition of illustration and to Roma artists and discuss the design of illustrations for the texts once they have been completed. The illustrations should be in one style (ideally by one artist/illustrator/artist), which will ensure a unified character of the final publication.

### Reflection on the project

The books generally are still alive and will always be alive. Just as there is a need to read and write. And even though we live in a boom of new media, the printed, paper book will always find its fans. In this project, pupils develop a number of key competencies. Among the competences are the ability to write creatively (but also to think), to deepen their knowledge of the history and present of Romani literature and, of course, the actual writing and production of the book.

### The book is the best television!



Iveta Kokyová (left) and Dana Hrušková (right), 2 of the Czech Roma authors (courtesy of Saša Uhlová)

## Main exercises

### Exercise 1: ART LESSONS Opening Warm Up

#### Opening Warm Up

The game "I come from"

The teacher and the pupils go around the circle several times, with each person saying their name and completing the sentence "I come from". With this game, we can begin to explore all the places we come from - physical, emotional, geographical, spiritual, all the experiences and ideas that make up who we are as individuals. For example:

Example: I come from Slovakia,

I come from a big family

I come from a carefree youth

I come from lawlessness

I come from the future.

I come from a sense of joy,

I come from art

The teacher will then ask the students to write a short essay on the topic of where I come from. The essay can be referred back to throughout the workshop, gradually edited and any progress the pupils have made can be presented at the end of the session.

#### Working with energy and focus

This activity (games) is primarily designed to create a "safe space" where students can have an open and honest dialogue. Like all of the games in this unit, the activities have clearly defined boundaries and tasks. These activities promote positive group dynamics; they are "getting to know each other" games. They prepare students to move forward to deeper work that requires greater focus and attention.

## Exercise 2: ART LESSONS – Creative Writing

### How to begin with creative writing?

It's really nothing that difficult. If you enjoy literature and that is why you are here today, we will show you in a few points what could make your writing easier in the beginning.

#### ✚ Step 1: Write down your initial idea

For a start, just one sentence or a short paragraph with a story is enough. Try to play with it and then gradually develop the idea. Win with it and try to make your initial idea as interesting as possible. For example:

#### ✚ Step 2: Write an annotation

The Roma boy called Valentin lives in the mountain city of eternal Autumn. He gradually meets friends who will help him turn the sad city of Autumn into the Cheerful city of Spring. You think this foundation would already interest the reader, you have it fulfilled, and you can go to the next step...

Astronomer who fell in love with the Cassiopeia constellation, another person is Valentine's Brother who is trying to invent a yet undiscovered color. Another character is the Solomon the Star Salesman, who has a dream that one day because of the money he saved he will buy all the stars in the sky and people will be able to look at the sky again for free. Valentin with the help of his friends and his brother he manages to turn the city of eternal Autumn into the City of Spring, and all the people in the story will finally have their dream come true.

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#### ✚ Step 3: Write the first page

Not the first chapter, not the opening scene, but the first page. Finish exactly where it works according to your writing editor.

Note: Don't forget that at the beginning we should get to know the main character in an interesting way and reveal the atmosphere and the theme of the story. You are asking how to start writing, but your readers will be wondering how and what will be told in the book. Show them!

#### ✚ Step 4: Invent the first conflict

Once you have a clear beginning, you can jump to spice up the story (that's the more fun part of writing). If you feel like it, name the plot. Otherwise, try to write one scene in which the plot becomes complicated for the first time (I discuss the topic of conflicts here, for example). It will probably be (or should be) very close to your first page, which you have already written.

So don't wait for anything unnecessarily and get started. We keep our fingers crossed for you!

#### ✚ Step 5: Brainstorm for a while

Think about the events and scenes that should definitely appear in the story. Make a list of them and color-code the ones in which the main character somehow changes or develops.

**Tip! Take a look at the conflict map to help you with that.**

## ✚ Step 6: How to start writing: When should I start?

If you have gone through all five steps, the mint is won. You should know what your story is about. You also tried to write short excerpts that relate to your book + you knew that your own writing didn't hurt that much.

## ✚ Step 7: Writing Itself!

After all, the most important thing about the creation of the book is the writing itself - without it, the shelves of the bookstore would really be quite empty. If you belong to a group of authors who delay the beginning of writing, you probably think too much about your book or suffer from a creative block. In both cases, it's a good idea to think twice about your story.

Anyway, feel free to take a week off and then go through everything again. If you need it, make sure you are well prepared for writing.

### Exercise 3: ART LESSONS – Writing a fictional diary of your favorite childhood toy or character

For aspiring authors, the diary is one of the most accessible genres. It uses a personal level, an immediate description of experience, and it counts on a certain amount of disorder, spontaneous emotionality and bias. It is not distracting when it approaches spoken language - it counts on colloquialism, obfuscation, imperfect connection of sentences. There is also no expectation of precise scope in the individual entries, nor is absolute coherence required. In short, there are many factors why the diary is an appropriate way to practise expressing and describing situations and experiences with pupils.



#### Why to prefer fiction?

Once a student can write more than three or four sentences, he or she might soon tire of keeping a real diary about his or her own life. Of course, there are those who get hooked and keep journals from childhood throughout their lives. But most children soon find the constant description of daily repetitive activities boring. For when in life does a true thrilling adventure happen that is worth

recounting in colourful detail and proudly reading to others? In addition, at a certain age, the shame factor is added and personal, intimate accounts are not a suitable genre for classroom reading.

Still, it would be a shame to give up the supporting diary genre so easily. Get pupils excited about the idea of writing a diary of a favourite toy - depending on the age, consider whether it is more appropriate for children to choose their own toy as a mascot, perhaps a teddy bear or some kind of robot, a monster, a unicorn character, just any favourite toy.

Talk to the children about diaries, whether they have written or read any, what diaries might look like, what they say, what they must contain. Then, together in class, make personal diaries for the prepared mascots - write the child's name and the toy in a suitable notebook, write the date and make the first entry together.

#### Free writing

One option is to let the children write freely in their diaries, without restricting them in terms of subject matter or genre, and allowing them ultimate freedom as authors. The only thing that needs to be set is the frequency with which we expect new journal entries from the pupils. It is better to set the requirements so that children write shorter experiences at a more frequent frequency than the other way around (for younger ones, individual episodes need not exceed four or five sentences).

Emphasise to pupils that they can draw inspiration from what they do and experience themselves when inventing activities and stories for their toys; they can describe ordinary situations and settings, but they can also make up their own stories, send their toys on fantastic trips, let them travel through time, it's up to them. But don't forget to write at the end how the toy enjoyed the experience, whether it made them scared, laugh, happy or really looking forward to going home. In this way, we teach children to evaluate the situation, build empathy and perception of inner experience, which has its own weight and validity just as much as the external.

If children are clueless, provide them with a series of suggestions of where the toy can go, who it can meet, what it can taste, etc. Reading each other's diaries in class and perhaps reading other diary, adventure and travel texts will also serve as a source of inspiration.

#### Guided writing

Of course, it is possible to opt for a more controlled form of journaling and assign journaling tasks in bulk. For example, define the type of experience that will be elaborated on in the following entry (today your toy meets an unknown creature under the bed, today it has an adventure in the desert). This approach has the advantage that it can be well coordinated with learning from other subjects. Depending on what books we are currently discussing or reading, we then choose topics for the journal. However, the assignments must always be interesting and broad enough to spark the imagination and not the other way around.

It is also possible to set thematic tasks only from time to time and let the pupils write freely for the rest of the time - but consider whether a specific task will then disrupt some children's conception of the story they are creating, the fantasy world, and take away their desire to invent fictional toy destinies further. Then it may be better to give such assignments only the character of recommendations.

### Mutual reading and cooperation

Once the pupils have mastered diary writing and mastered the first few entries, during which they find a certain style, it is time to organise a class presentation. Each child will bring his/her mascot and introduce him/her to the others - not only by name, but also by trying to explain his/her character, distinctive personality traits, likes, dislikes, habits, etc. Then he reads out a story.

We then have the pupils read from the toy diaries regularly in class. This not only creates natural mutual inspiration, but allows us to set fun tasks that encourage cooperation. For example, we announce that the next adventure will be experienced by the mascots in pairs, and have the pupils, or their toys, work together on the episode in pairs (the mascots must first meet and get to know each other in the story, and then have an adventure together as friends, but perhaps also as rivals).

If there is not enough time for reading in class, it is of course possible to select journals, choose suitable examples from the texts and read at least a few excerpts from the work of classmates to the others. We use these to demonstrate what really worked and who had an interesting idea. However, there is a danger that pupils, when required to hand in their texts, will start to see their diaries as more than just a 'workbook for writing essay exercises'. We do not write in children's diaries in any case, they are their own books!

### A common class mascot

For older children who are able to work more collaboratively, one universal class mascot can be chosen, which all pupils take turns to write about. They can, for example, take it home in the order they choose and write one linear colourful story in a travelling diary, or they can write separate episodes all at once on loose-leaf paper to be put in diary folders at school.

The advantage is that a common hero will increase interest in classmates' texts, and if the children are interested in the whole project, it will help cement the collective. However, if the frequency with which an individual comes into contact with the mascot is too low, there is a risk that children will soon lose interest. This is why the project needs to be kept alive with creative ideas (for example, the mascot may have a birthday, each pupil makes an original card and comes forward to officially congratulate him. We can sing to him and have a little party.)

### Diaries for older and advanced students

A very similar concept can work surprisingly well in second grade with significantly older students, but the project just needs to be adapted and conceived more as a recession. The mascot can definitely not be a stuffed animal, but a manufactured quirky character. The mascot will then start a blog instead of a paper diary. Not only is this very simple and attractive for children, but an online diary also brings with it many practical advantages. Pupils can be in contact with the mascot as often as they like, they can respond instantly, comment on each other's articles, rate them, add photos to them, add the mascot to their Facebook friends or "friend" several similar fictional heroes in this way. There are no limits to imagination!

## Materials Needed

Students will need clean sheets of paper and a pen. They may also bring a favourite (children's) book to show. The environment will be reminiscent of a school classroom in a writing class (literary writing). Notebooks and writing utensils will be distributed by the teacher. A whiteboard and markers will be provided in the room for the teacher.

## Equipment

The trainer will need a computer connected to the internet and a projector with a screen. A whiteboard and markers will also be provided.

## Time Needed

### *Part 1: Working with human creativity and imagination*

**Workshop/ Roundtable** on creative writing

**Duration: 10 hours**

### *Part 2: Introduction to Romani literature*

**Webinar** on Romani literature organized in cooperation with the Prague Romani publishing house KHER

**Duration: 6 hours**

### *Part 3 : Mastering the creative writing process*

The **actual production of texts** and their preparation for publication.

**Duration: 24 + hours**



Steps in the Implementation (please add references to materials and add photos):

Literature is one of the arts that man has created during his existence on earth, along with, for example, sculpture, painting, music and architecture. Like other arts, literature is based on the real world, which it does not merely imitate, but creates its own artistic world by specific means. Literature tells not only about the world in which man lives, but also about man himself. It tells about his desires, hopes, dreams, loves and hates.

Every artistic activity has its own basic materials with which it works. The materials of literature are language, words, writing utensils, paper and the inner need to write and to tell the world who I am, what I feel and how I view the world around me. The tools needed to implement the module will thus be very modest and readily available to all.

**Fairytales have a strong educational role.**

Fairy tales have an irreplaceable place in the formation of children. They teach them that good and love defeat evil and hatred, draw attention to the power of friendship and end with a happy ending. Fairy tales stimulate the imagination, expand vocabulary, help integration into communities, and help to create a sense of belonging. Fairytales have a strong educational role.

**A little bit of theory: Paramisa**

Paramisa is a Romani word, whose English meaning is fairy tales. This prosaic formation, which originated in the narrative tradition, is represented exclusively by Romani authors. In Slovak Romani, we can divide the paramisa into several genres, but their boundaries are blurred. and often the individual forms overlap. The paramisa include two main groups of songs. These are heroic tales, which resemble epics in their length, and short humorous fairy tales.



*Mire Bala Kale Hin – Romské pohádky (Romani Fairytales)*

✚ **Part 1: Working with human creativity and imagination**

**Workshop/ Rountable** on creative writing, plot construction, plot, conflict, denouement

In creative writing, you will explore literary creativity from the inside: creating characters, shaping poems, and drawing on your imagination

Now we will focus on the concrete creation of the plot of the story and its composition. I'm not going to tell you a clear process to follow, because every author has a unique style and the real guide to compelling writing lies in talent, not the number of manuals you've read. Therefore, today I'm going to talk about the general laws of story composition that can help someone with the way they tell their story.

All of us who think about the writing profession have an awareness of how a story is created. We know it from other books, TV shows or movies. Our goal is to tell a story in a way that is engaging, surprising, and best conveys something to the reader. The reader isn't interested in things he can't project himself into. So, the plot must be properly constructed so that the reader can say, "I laughed at that. This moved me. That sounds interesting. I wasn't expecting that. It's clearly written. It inspired me." And so on

✚ **Part 2: Webinar on Romani literature organized in cooperation with the Prague Romani publishing house KHER**

Romani literature inspires, helps and entertains. Do you meet Romani people of different ages in your work? Do you take care of a meaningful program for your clients? Is it important to you that they also encounter trends in Romani culture through you? Besides music and dance, are there other forms of relaxation and self-esteem-building? How can they be attracted to Romani literature in particular? How can children and adults be enthusiastic about it, even though they have no relationship with books? Can your clients find inspiration for their own lives in books by Romani authors? What role models and stories close to them can they find in Romani literature? What happens when a Romani author tells a story to Romani children? And what if there is hidden literary talent among your clients? Would you like to offer Romani authors to children and adults in your library, but you don't know what books they might appreciate?

In a webinar participants will learn:

- what Romani literature is about, how it stands after 30 years since the revolution and what functions the Romani language has today.
- what role it plays in building ethnic identity and cohesion and in Romani-Czech coexistence.
- how it can be beneficial for Roma in any social status.
- what Romani and non-Romani readers appreciate about books and the work of Romani authors.
- who Roma authors are, where they come from, why and how they write.
- which works to offer to different age groups of children and adults and how to work with them.
- why to expand the Romani library and what works, including Romani periodicals, should not be missing from it.
- what all needs to be done if you want to organize a literary event in your institution and how

to invite a Roma author?

After the webinar, participants will receive by email a list of recommended books by age group, a list of institutions dealing with Romani literature, a list of resources that can be used for subsidies for organizing literary events and publishing Romani literature, and a list of contacts of publishers where books can be obtained.

The introduction of the first module will be devoted to the lecture so-called multicultural education. It should introduce the concept of multiculturalism in its historical context and also the current situation. During the introductory class, participants will get acquainted with basic works of Romani literature and their authors, especially Czech and Slovak, as well as foreign Romani titles.

The lecture will introduce the different literary genres such as Fairy Tale, Paramisa, Narrative Prose with a Romani minor character and Narrative Prose with a Romani main character

The prepared materials should not be intended only for the participants of the training, but ideally they should also be used as a supplementary resource and material by teachers when teaching literature at the first level of primary school.

The intention is to have parents and their children attend at least part of the lessons so that the youngest Romani generation can also participate in multicultural education. It is important for us to help the youngest generation with their personal development and preparation for life in Czech society, which is gradually becoming more heterogeneous and multicultural.

### **Part 3 : Mastering the creative writing process**

#### **The actual production of texts and their preparation for publication**

We believe that the participants of the seminar will be people who already have the need to write and create and to communicate stories or pass on information through their work. In the case of a professional text, it is also important to be able to explain the topic and capture the reader's attention.

#### **Topic**

The first thing to think about is, of course, the topic of the text. It is important to have a meaningful idea and a direct supporting story that can be developed. It is also key to think about who the resulting text will be for and to adapt the subsequent writing style and level of expertise of the text to this.

#### **Outline**

Participants will think about the purpose of their writing and the key message they want to convey to the reader. Accordingly, participants will plan the structure of their text and allow sufficient time to prepare the outline and layout of chapters and sub-chapters.

It is important to think about what is most important for the topic of the paper, what the basic story is.

#### **Concept**

It is advisable to start with a concept. Participants will start writing the text first "on the fly", then they will see what needs to be improved, deleted or redone and can start writing on the page. When

writing, it is a good idea to progress from simple to more complex headings and subheadings.

### Sources and citations

If the output will be a professional text, participants should also familiarize themselves with the use of sources and citations that will be used in the writing process

It is also important to focus on the typography of the text, and to choose the type of font. It is also important to pay attention to the correct structure of paragraphs or the writing of

Basic rules for professional text:

- ✚ clarity
- ✚ professionalism
- ✚ critical, factual writing style
- ✚ accuracy and correctness of content
- ✚ omit irrelevant information and empty words
- ✚ appropriate terminology

### Strategies of teaching and learning

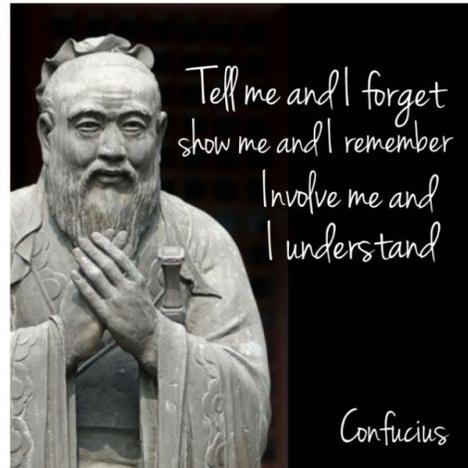
When working with students, the teacher can use his pedagogical sense, acting talent and, of course, experience. Since ancient times the words of Confucius have been true: Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand.

### The basic principles of a teacher should be

- praise
- encourage the perception of personal progress
- "record" learning achievements
- set an individual realistic target
- allow time

### Things to avoid

- compare yourself to others
- exaggerate failure as a measure of failure
- use punishment carefully (risk losing confidence)
- not to have exaggerated demands and expectations
- not rewarding failure



## Maintaining Concentration

Maintaining mental focus is important. Working on improving concentration may not require that much time or patience. An effective strategy that a teacher can introduce students to is the "Be Here Now" method. This simple and effective strategy helps bring your wandering mind back to the task at hand: When you realize that your thoughts are no longer focused on your studies, say to yourself, "Be here now," and try to control your wandering thoughts and focus back on the study material.

For example, you're in class and your attention wanders from the lecture to the fact that you're craving coffee and the last bagel in the café has probably run out. When you say to yourself: "Be here now," you fix your attention back on the lecture and keep it there as long as you can.

Follow your mental wanderings. Make a note of every time you catch your mind wandering away from what you should be focusing on. As you get better and better at returning to the task at hand, the number of times you break your focus should decrease.

After training on this module, the Teachers would be able to:

- ✚ differentiate "Literature and Brainstorming" as a subject to 'Arts Integration' as a pedagogical approach.
- ✚ explain why Literature Art Integrated Learning (LAIL) can lead to more holistic learning in learners.
- ✚ prepare LAIL plan/s in different subjects.
- ✚ conduct LAIL sessions using LAIL module and skills as facilitator.
- ✚ facilitate/hand-hold teachers in refining their LAIL skills for classroom teaching learning.
- ✚ appreciate art as a tool and technique of artistic and creative expression.

## Notes to the teacher

Above all, the teacher must be aware of what the aim of the teaching is and how it will contribute to the fulfilment of the competences of individual students. He or she should have teaching experience and, ideally, his or her own literary and publishing activities. This will make it easier for the trainer to meet the basic aims of teaching, which could be expressed very simply in slogans: Teach creative writing, not about creative writing. Teach literature, not about literature.

Like any ethnically distinct minority that has been marginalized for historical and social reasons, Romani people take an a priori negative, defensive position in relation to the majority society and close themselves off into their own community. Prejudice and negative experience on the part of both the majority and the Roma minority are a source of mutual distrust, which often manifests itself in hidden and open hostility. Mutual distrust marks social communication between individuals of both groups from an early age, and unfortunately, even school is not a place that most Roma children would consider friendly.

Over the past fifty years, there has been no effort to integrate Roma children into the school groups of other children on the basis of respecting their cultural identity as equal to that of the nation in which they live. There was talk of the so-called "Roma problem", which was addressed in schools in accordance with the government's policy towards the Roma minority at the time. This was an effort to assimilate, i.e., in layman's terms, an effort to "paint Romani children white".

In line with the idea of a single school system and the policy of Roma assimilation, all the specifics of Roma children were deliberately suppressed as undesirable. A large percentage of schools, unfortunately, to this day has not abandoned this trend. As a result, today an estimated 80% of Roma have only primary education (including incomplete education, as evidenced by the results of the 2011 census). In addition, the poor experience of the Romani people is equally responsible for the current situation. of Roma parents and grandparents with school during their childhood, and this experience is then reflected in today's children quite logically continues to be passed on to these children. and tastes of Czech children.

### **Problems of a Roma child before and when entering school**

Most Romani children do not attend kindergartens or other preschool institutions and only come to school with experience of family life. When entering school at the age of six, the child is suddenly

confronted with an unfamiliar, alien, sometimes hostile environment that he or she must face alone, without the help of the family (and community) on which he or she has depended until then. In most cases, school will not help. He will not encounter anything familiar - there are no Roma teachers (with the exception of those schools where Roma assistants), the materials and textbooks are adapted in content and design to the understanding of Czech children.

Traditional family Roma education does not give the child the kind of foundation that the teacher expects of the average first-grade pupil, and so misunderstandings arise from the beginning of school work that can quickly be reflected in the child's school failure. The main problems that a child begins to face soon after arriving at school are: - lack of time and space for home preparation - parents' reluctance to provide basic school supplies - priority to work at home (caring for siblings) rather than at school - unaccustomed to a fixed daily routine, strict rules and activities requiring prolonged concentration - inability to make independent decisions and be responsible for oneself - underdeveloped fine motor skills, ignorance of drawing and writing - ignorance of concepts that are not needed in practical life and which children acquire from books and encyclopaedias - language barrier even in children who no longer speak Romani but still use the Czech ethnolect

The target group of learners is not expected to have any significant knowledge of literature or orientation in literary genres and literary realities in general. Most of the participants will have a full primary education, and some will have a secondary education, which corresponds to the educational structure of the Roma population in the Czech Republic.

It is important for teachers to motivate their students, to literally ignite them for literature, to make them feel they need to write and feel it a passion. For a long-lasting writing it is also important to guide the participants methodically.

Everything good and rewarding that one does is meaningful if it is a long-term systematic activity. The teacher should develop a plan with the students and, above all, be able to motivate them. Self-discipline is then extremely important for the participants. Without discipline, it is impossible to engage in regular writing. Writing is a long-term commitment. It is not just about hours alone in front of a computer or at a blank sheet of paper with a pencil. It is all about the careful preparation that is needed to succeed.

The teacher should schedule with each participant how many hours per day or week they can devote to writing at home. The number of words or pages written per week that the participant turns in also helps. Regularity and discipline are prerequisites for success here. It is also important for the teacher to discuss with the student the reward for meeting the weekly goal.

It is important that the teacher does not compare pupils with each other. Everyone has different

writing abilities, different amounts of free time, and different levels of talent. Both criticism and unnecessary comparisons can backfire and demotivate students.

It is important for the teacher to continuously monitor the manuscripts of each participant and give them positive feedback. This can be critical, of course, but he or she must never demotivate the participant. This includes advice on stylistics, grammar, plot construction or graphic design.

The text can of course be edited, rewritten, added to, changed under the influence of the teacher. It will be a success for the pupil and the teacher if the work is a complete final version.

Teachers should conduct lessons in a way that assigns instructions to participants based on their ability and interest in a way that is attractive to them and respects the learning style of individual learners.

Share your ideas with pupils, collaborate, complement each other. This communication-based principle is very important for establishing trust.

Participants will not work at the same place and everyone may be at a different level. The teacher can use different teaching resources such as text materials, worksheets or samples of existing book texts. Make use of group work and working in teams.

Some students find it difficult to manage both group and independent work within a limited amount of time. When designing an assignment, the teacher needs to respect the time available to complete it. It is important to keep the attention of the participants and to use their time meaningfully.

Home preparation and production is also important during the creation of a literary work. The teacher must be sure to guide the pupils carefully and clearly and that they understand what is expected of them, not only in the homework. The whole environment needs to be stimulating and positive so that participants feel comfortable and fully engaged in the process. The teacher should

praise effort, motivate, give feedback and concentrate fully on teaching.

### **Methodological help**

It is a good idea to seek answers to the following questions with the participants of the seminar

- How many minutes/hours can a participant devote to writing per day/week?
- How many words will the participant write per day/week?
- What would be a reward for him/her? What motivates him/her while writing?



If we know how much time we need to write a story or tale, time is suddenly limited and we can schedule our time and work well. It is important that the participant actually reaches a certain word count, because time set aside for writing does not guarantee that it will be used for the actual writing. Thus, the time should not be used to think about writing, but already for the writing itself.

You need to know how to write a compelling introduction, how to create vivid and dynamic characters, how to put together a plot line, how to keep the reader's attention, how to write a gripping and surprising conclusion, etc. Because writing always takes a lot of work." says Cindy Kenney. Realizing that writing is hard work can make your job easier.

Finally, please remember that you are not alone in this - even famous writers agonize over their writing! Joseph Heller put it bluntly, "Every writer I know has trouble writing."

A unified written Romani language has not yet been defined. The spelling is usually adapted or inspired by the majority languages of the individual countries, and in the Czech Republic and Slovakia the so-called Slovak spelling is used, which has already found its way into original literary works and into dictionaries and textbooks. An effective tool is also teaching sheets that introduce participants to the Romani language, its origins and the current situation. On the next page is an example of such a teaching tool.

### About the Language

**Bohemian Romani** or *Bohemian Romany* is a dialect of Romani formerly spoken by the Romani people of Bohemia, the western part of today's Czech Republic. It became extinct after World War II, due to extermination of most of its speakers in Nazi concentration camps.

Before their extermination in the 1940s, speakers of Bohemian Romani, the Bohemian Romanies, were one of several nomadic populations of Bohemia. They led a peripatetic (or semi-peripatetic) way of life, travelling around the country (especially during the warmer seasons of the year) and offering their services to the sedentary population of the Bohemian countryside. They were mostly horse-dealers, peddlers, tanners, and entertainers.

The first ancestors of Bohemian Romanies probably arrived in Bohemia in the 16th and 17th centuries, from Slovakia via Moravia. Small-scale migration of Romanies from Slovakia to the Czech Lands (as well as backwards) continued throughout the following centuries. The Bohemian Romanies have always been a numerically insignificant minority. In 1939, there were ca. 6,000 people of different Romani groups in the territory of today's Czech Republic (Nečas 1995). Of these, a smaller fraction, perhaps some 2,000 people, lived in Bohemia. The proportion of different Romani groups in this figure is unknown, though the estimate of 500-1,500 of Bohemian Romanies cannot be wildly off the mark.

Other Romani groups in Bohemia, who spoke different dialects of Romani than the Bohemian Romani,

included the Sinti and a few families of the Kalderar (or Kalderaš) Roma. The Sinti appear to have been the first Romani group to be established in the region, some of them arriving from southeastern Europe as early as in the 15th century; they mostly inhabited the German-speaking parts of Bohemia. The Kalderar, on the other hand, were relatively late newcomers, having had migrated from Wallachia in the second half of the 19th century. In addition, there were also several non-Romani peripatetic groups in Bohemia, who spoke Czech or German or argots based on these languages.

The self-ethnonym of Bohemian Romanies was simply *Rom* (plural *Roma*). They were called "Hungarians" by the Sinti; this probably reflects their origin in Slovakia, which was then part of Hungary. They were called "Poles" (*Poljako*, plural *Poljača*) by the Kalderash, which is one of the ethnonyms the Kalderar use to refer to different Romani groups. The sedentary population referred to all peripatetic groups, including Bohemian Roma, as "gypsies": *cikáni* in Czech or *Zigeuner* in German.

In the early 20th century, Bohemian Romani was, at least in some groups of Bohemian Roma, gradually becoming a non-native ethnic language, acquired in late childhood and used mostly for secretive purposes (cf. Lesný 1916: 214–216, Lípa 1960: 50). Clearly, a development had started toward a Para-Romani variety, that is, a specialized non-native variety spoken by Roma, which has the grammar of a majority language (Czech in this case) as well as an access to Romani-derived lexicon (Elšík 2003: 44).

The Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti in the 1940s brought about radical death of all Romani dialects of pre-war Bohemia, including Bohemian Romani. Only ca. 600 (i.e. 10% of) Czech Roma and Sinti survived the genocide (Nečas 1995), including perhaps a hundred of Bohemian Roma. Bohemian Romani ceased to be used by the survivors due to a complete social disintegration of their communities, and they ceased to transmit the language to their children. The last known speaker of Bohemian Romani died in the 1970s.

The historical group of Bohemian Romanies must be distinguished from those Romanies groups that live in Bohemia presently. The latter are post-World War II immigrants from Slovakia (especially Romungro), who do not speak Bohemian Romani.

Bohemian Romani belongs to the North Central dialect group of Romani. It is most closely related to Moravian Romani and West Slovak Romani, together with which it forms the Western subgroup of North Central Romani. Although clearly a North Central dialect, Bohemian Romani also shares a few features with the Sinti dialects of Romani. In some cases, these are due to diffusion from Sinti into Bohemian Romani. While Bohemian Romani would have been intelligible to speakers of other North Central dialects, there is evidence that there was no inherent intelligibility between Bohemian Romani and Sinti.

Bohemian Romani shares with other dialects of Romani much of its Indo-Aryan vocabulary as well as numerous early loanwords from Western Iranian

languages (Persian and/or Kurdish), Armenian, Ossetic, and Greek. In addition, it shares with the other North Central dialects of Romani the layer of loanwords from South Slavic languages, Hungarian, and Slovak. Finally, the most recent loanwords originate in Czech.

## Selection of Romani authors for teaching purposes

**Vlado Oláh (1947 - 2012)** was a Romani poet, teacher and philosopher, founder of the Romani Matrix, co-author of the translation of excerpts from the Bible into Romani. Originally a soldier, he was influenced by Christianity and founded the Christian and educational association Matice Romská. He devoted himself to translating the Bible into Romani. He was the first Romani author to be accepted into the Czech Writers' Union in 2006. He is the recipient of the Milena Hübschmannová Literary Award for his contribution to Romani literature.

**Emil Cina (1947-2013)** was a Romani poet and writer, since 1900 he had regularly published his prose and poetry. (In addition to his own work, Emil Cina has also translated films from/into Romani (e.g. Black Cat, White Cat, 1998; ROMing, 2008). In 1997, he won two awards at the Amico Rom International Competition of Romani Artistic Creativity in Lanciano, Italy, for his prose and poetry for children.

**Ilona Ferková (1956)** Romani prose writer. She has worked as a coordinator of a Czech-Roma kindergarten and has published in a number of Roma periodicals. Author of several books of short stories and collections of poems. She draws inspiration for her works from real stories of Roma in her immediate surroundings. In them, she reflects in particular on the consequences of the assimilationist policy of the communist regime (removal of children to institutions, forced sterilization.)

**Iveta Kokyová (1972)** is a novelist and poet. She has worked as a field worker and consultant for the deaf in the organization Silent World. While working, she studied social work at the Evangelical Academy in Prague and started working as a freelance editor and presenter for the Roma internet television Romea TV. She is studying Romani Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. She publishes in the magazine Romano voďi, on Romea.cz, A2, Kamarádi and on the website of the publishing house Kher. He is a translator from/into Romani.

**Gejza Demeter (1947)** is Roma journalist and prose writer. He worked as a labourer, served in the police, worked as a newspaper editor and correspondent. He published several collections of poems and short stories. He is also the author of a book of Romani fairy tales, Paradise on Earth.

**Elena Lacková (1953)** is the author of prose works, short stories and a historical novel about the history of the Roma. She contributes to magazines and anthologies. She is a member of the Writers' Association (since 2008). Irena Eliášová (1953, East Slovakia)

Renata Berkýová (1985) is a Romani poet. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. She currently works in the non-profit sector at the Open Society Fund. She is the recipient of the Milena Hübschmannová Prize (2006).

**Erika Oláhová (1957)** is a writer, factory worker, cook and waitress. She has published several collections of short stories and has been published in magazines. Her work can be partly described as thriller or horror. She lives in Česká Třebová

## Romský program 3

PRACOVNÍ LIST 

### O čhonoro the leske daj

O čhonoro peske kamelas tedel tesivel viganos. E Edaj leske oda naši nikda avri kerđzas, vašoda, hoj hino sako džives aver. Jehkvar šuko, jekhvar thulo. Sikhliben: Phares vareso šaj keren koleske, ko kamel furt vareso aver. ■

### Měsíc a jeho matka

Měsíc chtěl ušít šaty. Matka mu to však nemůže nikdy splnit, protože je pokaždé jiný. Jednou hubený, jindy tlustý.

Poučení: Těžko lze vyhovět tomu, kdo chce pokaždé něco jiného. ■



### Foroskeri mišos the malakeri mišos

Foroskeri mišos ahes dživesa ke malakeri mišos. Kana peha gele andro foros. Kernas peske dzeka andro kredencos, ale te vareko avlas, mušinde pes tegaruvel. Kada pes la malakeri mišos napatisa-lolas. Naši cichones chalas the andre chev ehas tang. Thodžas peske o vjeci andro kufros the gelas khere.

Sikhliben: Vsadi lačhes, khere nekfeder. ■

### Městská myš a polní myš

Městská myš strávila několik dní u polní myši. Teď šly opět spolu do města. Libovaly si ve spíži, ale když někdo přišel, musely se ukrýt. To se polní myši nelíbilo. Nemohla se v klidu najíst a v díře bylo těsno. Sbalila si kufrы a šla domů. Tam si mohla spokojeně mrskat vousy.

Poučení: Všude dobře, doma nejlépe. ■

#### ROMSKÝ JAZYK

Romština patří do skupiny jazyků indických. Díky stěhování Romů kolem roku 1000 se začala vyvíjet samostatně. Má mnoho nářečí, jednotná spisovná romština ale není. Pravopis se přizpůsobuje nebo inspiruje hlavními jazyky jednotlivých zemí, kde Romové žijí. V Česku a na Slovensku se používá tzv. slovenský pravopis, kterým se píše v romské literatuře a sestavují se podle něj slovníky a učebnice. Romština se vyslovuje tak, jak se píše. Češi proto mohou psaný text číst stejně, jako by byl psaný česky. V Česku lze v současné době romštinu studovat na několika vysokých školách.

#### 1 Zakroužkujte v kvízu správná tvrzení.

1. Romština má mnoho nářečí. *ano ne*
2. Jednotná spisovná romština zatím není. *ano ne*
3. Romská literatura se nepíše. *ano ne*
4. Na žádné škole se romština nevyučuje. *ano ne*
5. Romština je románský jazyk. *ano ne*
6. Romština se vyslovuje tak, jak se píše. *ano ne*

## Notes to the learners

Romani has more or less been spoken in families or entire communities since they left India thousands of years ago. Folklorists and researchers who have worked with Romani communities in the past have produced some early word lists, glossaries, grammar descriptions and dictionaries that have been published in many languages and cover many different dialects. More comprehensive dictionaries compiled by Romani authors have begun to appear.

Romani is now taught in various institutions around Czech Republic: in university programmes, in primary and secondary schools, in cultural and community centres, workshops and summer camps. Educational materials exist in Romani and in translation. The number of these materials is increasing due to the growing interest in learning the language, which is important for a sense of pride in Roma identity.

Educational institutions, schools and cultural organisations where Romani is taught:

- Charles University -- Prague, Czech Republic
- Museum of Romani Culture, Brno, Czech Republic
- Dr. Rajko Djuric Foundation -- Prague, Czech Republic

Primary and secondary schools on voluntary basis



## Appendices

- 1) <https://kher.cz/>
- 2) <https://www.renenekuda.cz/kreativni-desetiminutovky/>
- 3) <https://www.czechlit.cz/cz/feature/literatura-romu-na-ceskoslovenskem-uzemi-po-roce-2000/>
- 4) <http://www.krajinoupribehu.cz/literatura-romu/>
- 5) [www.dnm-praha.eu](http://www.dnm-praha.eu)

- 6) <https://kher.cz/katalog/autori/>
- 7) <http://romove.radio.cz/cz/clanek/19359>
- 8) <https://new.ctenarskekluby.cz/storage/app/media//Metody/clanekromskeliteraturedoklubud ef-1.pdf>
- 9) <http://www.ctenarska-gramotnost.cz/kategorie/tvurci-psani/tp-tipy>
- 10) <https://ceska-literatura.phil.muni.cz/atelier-tvurciho-psani>
- 11) <https://www.zaedno.org/>
- 12) <https://www.i-skolak.cz/jak-na-psani-odborneho-textu/>
- 13) [https://www.skola-auto.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/OD\\_Literatura\\_pro\\_ucne-svet.pdf](https://www.skola-auto.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/OD_Literatura_pro_ucne-svet.pdf)
- 14) <https://lenavalenova.cz/jak-se-motivovat-ke-psani/>
- 15) <http://teachingliterature.pbworks.com/w/page/24002178/Warm-up%20activities%20%28chapter%2010%20activities%29>
- 16) <https://www.pf.jcu.cz/stru/katedry/pgps/ikvz/podkapitoly/b02romove/18.pdf>
- 17) <http://www.ctenarska-gramotnost.cz/tvurci-psani/tp-tipy/fantasticky-denik>