



To be recommended!

In the coronavirus crisis it is mainly the primary-school children who do not have support from home that suffer most. In order to restore these children's reading, writing and arithmetic abilities, the SI club in Oldenburg has launched an intensive learning project in cooperation with the Nadorst primary school in Oldenburg – a project which could also encourage others to follow suit.



What is the project about?

Two to three times a week and over a period of six to eight weeks, three student teachers at Oldenburg University cooperated closely with the school's teachers in supporting primary school pupils who were particularly underprivileged in small age-related groups, with priority being given to "reading", "the extension of vocabulary and composition of texts" and "basic arithmetic operations".

Teachers at the school proposed 27 girls and 14 boys in classes 2 to 4 (aged between 7 and 10) as participants in the project to the school principal.

Besides finding themselves "left behind" in the curriculum due to schools having to close because of coronavirus and lacking support with school work to be done from home, their own willingness to learn was a criterion for children to be able to take part in the project.

This intensive support raised the participation of socially disadvantaged children in education and made a specific contribution to equal opportunities, with a personal approach, a clear description of learning contents and time taken for individual attention being particularly important.

The project was a win-win situation for the students, giving them valuable practical experience in their future profession.



With distance and face mask: Student teacher Pauline Pohl and two hardworking pupils doing some arithmetic training (photo: school)

How is the project financed?

The Soroptimists created a financial basis with the proceeds of a very successful Christmas campaign involving the sale of more than 2,000 German Christmas stollen, which they called “Little Optimists”. This made it possible to finance the lessons given by the students.

In the project, the students are employed by the school itself as temporary educational staff and get an appropriate, contract-based payment. This is handled by the staff recruitment system operated by the state school authority and is familiar to schools.



The „Little Optimistics“
(photo: private)

How well has the project been accepted?

All of this resulted in around 100 hours of special, concentrated lessons being given. Teachers felt that the compacted nature of the lessons was most successful. In their opinion, giving individual lessons over a long period would not have had the same “push effect”. And the children were also motivated by their quick learning success.

The greatest challenge lay in establishing a relationship between the students and the children. It is only in a learning atmosphere based on trust that children are willing to talk openly about their learning disabilities and to specifically ask for help and accept this help. The decision to appoint student teachers familiar with the requirements who had given proof of their personal aptitude in a preliminary talk with the school principal and who were already known from previous work placements proved to be just right. These educational staff members quickly gained the children’s trust. The exchange of information with teachers was specifically focused thanks to their teacher training background.

Following suit – how does that work?

Quite simply in fact! Three partners need to cooperate:

- A sponsor
- A school and
- Contacts to a university. Let it be mentioned at this point that the University of Oldenburg is already preparing specific cooperation by the planning of seminars that will give credit points for the students.

Who are the counterparts?

The SI Club Oldenburg

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The primary school Nadorst

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