

## Open Academy Session: „A Lesson with a Difference”

Date, Time: Thursday, 31.03.2011, 10:30 – 12:30

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### Workshop content/theme

Presenting to participants an everyday situation of teaching English to students when the only language to communicate is English and the level of students is “beginner”. How does this happen? Is it hard? Is it more useful?

Different types of methods were presented to “cope with” the situation and keep the process going.

### Aims

Together with the participants, who had to imagine the situation, we were finding methods and techniques of teaching grammar, vocabulary, different categories – just using English.

Another thing we were aiming at was producing two posters with suggestions to the issue “Is it good or not to use only the foreign language which is being taught?”.

These issues were talked over and a list of methods was produced after 30 min.

### Method(s)/Approach

Mainly the learners-centered method was used; in the conversation that followed ideas were born and students and teachers came up with suggestions.

- What students came up with: They prefer teachers to use only the foreign language (English, German, Spanish...) because in this way they constantly practice and remember words faster.
- What teachers came up with: Using the native language is easier (especially after 30 or so years of teaching) and students understand you better.

### Further tips, sources, resource material or links

If you have to teach in a situation like this, what I recommend you do is to use:

- Lots of repetitions – activities repeating and training the category taught
- A great number of pictures, drawings, photos, cartoons, films, videos
- Miming and gesturing, body and gesture language
- Vocabulary games
- Learners-centered method (not the teacher, the students being active)
- Speaking
- Visualizing
- Realia (things in the room, around us)
- Predicting
- Montessori method
- Practising simple things, learning at least the basic things from the language
- Demonstrating real situations for using the particular language category and using it in improvised conversations
- Role-play, performance, drama
- Pair/group work giving all the students chances to speak, act and perform

## Impressions, Outcomes of the workshop

Some very original suggestions were made, such as:

- the best student, who knows the teacher's language, translates during the lesson
- the teacher should learn the students' language

Lots of ideas were shared and definitely new ideas appeared. Some participants were astonished by the fact that there are still places in Bulgaria where bi-lingual people have much of a difficulty with learning and speaking foreign languages. All in all the session brought a positive message and fun, both for the leader and the participants in the Open Academy.



