

TITLE

Please write the title of your Good Practice

Debate "Everybody has to have university education"

NAME of INSTITUTION

Palangos Senoji Gimnazija

NAME and CONTACT DETAILS

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SUMMARY

Please describe briefly the overall goal and objectives of your example of good practice.

It is a language and research-orientated project, where students were trained how to make convincing speeches using quotations from various sources to support their arguments. In addition, listening and critical-thinking skills were also developed.

TARGET GROUP

Please indicate age, gender, nationality, the average number of students in your courses, level of their language proficiency according to the Levels of Language Competence according to CEF (please see Appendix 1).

Students aged 22-36, all females, Lithuanians and 2 Russians, a group of 9, language proficiency B2-C1

LANGUAGE

Which language do you use as a medium of instruction for your target group?

English

ACTIVITIES

Please describe briefly the activities (e.g. who is doing what and when, timetable etc.)

Students work in groups of 3, research is done either in groups or individually, the roles of the speakers are divided within the group, teacher is available for consultations before presentations. They meet twice a week.

METHODOLOGY

Please give a description of the methods you use. Indicate the tools/instruments including visual aids, questionnaires, handouts, teacher-developed materials etc.

Systematic training how to make a speech using key notes, survival games, agree-disagree exercises

EXAMPLES

Please list up to 3 examples of the material you have developed and bring them along for display at the workshop.

Survival game, definition game

OUTCOMES

Please describe the results of your good practice

A number of years had passed since the students left school and they said they lacked competence, self-confidence, they needed more speaking practice in order to persuade the listener, the debate method seemed to be the most effective

CONSTRAINTS

Please describe the difficulties (if any) in the implementation phase.

Note taking of the opponent's arguments

If possible, please specify how your good practice relates to the aims of *CHAGAL*

As the students go back to university after a longer break, this method gives them an opportunity to acquire skills necessary to participate in seminars, lectures, presentations, and it develops tolerance .

A Description of My Good Practice

Adult students come back to school after a considerable gap of time from 3 to 10 or even more years. They have their own reasons for doing that and, as a rule, they have different expectations:

In many cases that is the idea to go to college or university and after graduating to have a chance to get a better job. If it is a 60 hours or longer language course, most often it is for a job.

Students seem to be quite motivated and ready to take responsibility for their progress. However, the majority of them lack self-confidence, especially when it comes to express their point of view and convince the listeners. Being exposed to the audience is a hard barrier to overcome. Classroom discussion and debate method guarantees active participation of each student. Moreover, it helps to overcome the fear of audience (stage fright).

Before students get ready for debating they need to be systematically trained in how to construct a well-structured argument and support it, how to make a convincing speech or presentation. In addition, topic-related vocabulary has to be developed, too. Listening and critical thinking skills are also improved.

In this description I am going to focus on some of the ways how to help students prepare:

Agree-disagree exercises. They are done in a chain. The 1st student gives a statement with a support, the 2nd either agrees or disagrees and provides his/her own support(explanation), etc. This type of oral exercise develops speaking, listening, critical thinking skills, and it is also an effective way to consolidate students' vocabulary.

Definition games. They are very useful in cases when the speaker does not know or cannot remember the word. This exercise also helps to develop speaking and listening skills. The vocabulary may be topic-related but not necessarily has to be so.

The teacher prepares a set of cards with words. Students are divided into groups of 3. One of the students is a referee and keeps the time as well as registers the points for the correctly guessed words. For example, the referee stands behind one student and demonstrates (pantomimes) the word. The student in front of him/her describes the word and the third student has to guess the word. Students do 5 words each. All the groups working in the same classroom but they have a different set of words. Time limit: 5-6 min.

Survival game. "In a hot air balloon" (On a Boat). The objectives (aims) of this task are to provide good arguments and to select the most reasonable arguments. Persuasiveness, critical thinking, and presentation skills are developed.

The students are divided into teams of 5-7 people. They have to choose to play the roles of prominent people and be ready to explain why they are so important for the world. The team has to get into an imaginary air balloon or a boat. Unfortunately, they have to get rid of 2 companions otherwise, all of them will die. Each member has to give a good cause why s/he should stay on board and the team has to decide whose reasons were the best.

When preparing for a debate students are divided into teams of 3. They are offered additional materials – books, newspapers/magazines, Internet. Research may be done individually or in a team as homework. Students decide on speaker roles by themselves. The teacher is available for consultations. It is advisable to start with the resolutions on those issues that the students are most interested in or which are widely discussed in the local community or even country-wide. For example, "Smoking in Public Places Should be Banned" or "Everybody Should Have a University Degree".

To sum up, debating helps to acquire a number of skills that are necessary both for studying at college/university and for a job. Adult learners practice in doing research, organizing ideas and transforming them into constructive speech, develop listening skills, note-taking skills, writing skills, critical thinking, team competence and decision making skills. As a result, they become more self-confident and acquire language competences at the same time.