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Behavioural Problems in Large Teenage Classes

Bachelor Thesis

Brno 2010

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis deals with discipline problems in large classes. It focuses on teenage students where there is not only problem with their age but also with a fact that they come from various elementary schools and their different levels of English also contributes to the problem.

The theoretical part defines the term large classes, discipline problems, categorizes and explains their causes and outlines methods how such problems could be eliminated or reduced.

In the practical part of my thesis I present some ideas and sample lessons using the methods proposed in the theoretical part. These methods were applied at a secondary vocational school where I teach English. On the basis of the authentic use of the teaching activities these will be assessed and commented from the view of their effectiveness.

The aim of my thesis is to suggest solutions of coping with this problem as it appears quite frequently in Czech schools.

KEY WORDS:

disruptive behaviour, behavioural problems, motivation, pair-work, group work, using board and sheets, setting rules

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá problematikou chování ve velkých třídách. Zaměřuji se na jednu specifickou skupinu studentů, a to na studenty středních škol.

Praktická část se věnuje definici termínu problémy s kázní, rozděluje a vysvětluje příčiny kázeňských problémů a navrhuje způsoby, jak tyto eliminovat nebo alespoň snížit.

V praktické části předkládám některé návrhy a ukázkové hodiny, ve kterých jsou aplikovány metody zmíněné v teoretické části. Tyto metody byly použity na střední odborné škole na které vyučuji. Na základě skutečného využití učebních aktivit ve třídách tyto hodnotím a komentuji z pozice jejich účinnosti.

Cílem mé práce je navržení řešení, jak se vypořádat s touto problematikou, které se poměrně často vyskytuje na českých školách.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA:

rušivé chování, problémy s kázní, motivace, práce ve dvojicích, skupinová práce, využití tabule a cvičných listů, vytyčení pravidel

Declaration

I hereby declare that I have worked on this thesis independently and used only the sources listed in the bibliography.

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury.

Souhlasím, aby práce byla uložena na Masarykově univerzitě v Brně v knihovně Pedagogické fakulty a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům.

In Brno, April 2010

Zita Růžičková

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank to my supervisor PhDr. Alena Kašpárková for her guidance, valuable comments on my work, patience and kind and supportive approach.

Šumperk, 15th April 2010

Zita Růžičková

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Introduction

This bachelor thesis deals with behavioural problems in large classes particularly at secondary schools. I chose this theme because this is a problem which not only me but many other language teachers encounter during their teaching careers. As bad and disruptive behaviour may rather considerably affect the teaching process in a negative way, I reckon that it is crucial to find methods how to eliminate or at least reduce it.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part of the thesis concerns the definition of the term large classes and behavioural problems, tries to categorize them and find their causes. The causes are not always only connected with student's problematic personality but they may have more extensive roots which are often connected with student's momentary mood, students' family background, school subject matters or teacher's personality and his presentation skills. Only after being able to find causes we can look for solutions and take some action.

The practical part focuses on various teaching methods used in practice. The applied activities will be consequently evaluated and analysed from the teacher's and students' points of views. In order to be able to get some feedback from the students to see how effective they find the activities I use a questionnaire distributed to all students taking part in the model lessons. Analysis of the activities should provide solutions leading to the improvement of the above mentioned problem.

I hope that all the gathered information and research results will contribute to my better teaching performance and more enjoyable lessons for students as well. The ideal outcome of the work would be that students themselves would discover that good behaviour and paying attention to the lesson would help them remarkably to understand subject matters. Last but not least I would be glad if other language teachers could benefit from my findings.

Note: for easier understanding and avoiding repetition, the pronoun *she* will be used to substitute a teacher and the pronoun *they* to substitute students.

I Theoretical part

*„For every person wishing to teach,
there are thirty persons not wishing to be taught.“*
(anonymous)

1. Defining the basic terms

For more comprehensible notion of the work it is necessary to define some of the crucial terms such as behaviour, teenagers, large and multilevel classes. These three terms are closely connected and all together make the gist of the problem.

1.1 Behaviour

There are many definitions of the term *behaviour* in various general or medical dictionaries. It can be looked at from many perspectives but for purposes of this work the following formulation found in the Collin's Discover Encyclopaedia is the most meaningful:

Behaviour is a specific response of a certain organism to a specific stimulus or group of stimuli.

These are predominantly stimuli that form the particular behaviour or behaviour patterns. I will deal with these later in my work.

1.2 Large and multilevel class

According to N. Hess (2001:2) large classes comprise of thirty or more students and I claim that the ideal number of language students in a class is about twelve. This number is just right for many variations used in the lessons, which are role-plays, pair-work, group work but also individual work and still the students get sufficient attention from the teacher, either as a group or as individuals. It is not necessary to remark how important the individual approach of the teacher is but classes which are larger do not get such attention and this is also a reason for their worsened behaviour.

The Czech law states that for language lessons the permitted maximum of students is twenty-four and it is not an exception that many classes really consist of such number of students. Based on my own experience I have to consider this a big problem as the quality of the lesson is significantly reduced and it is very hard for the teacher to manage the class with at least satisfying outcome.

Students who proceed from elementary schools to secondary schools come from completely different environments from the respect of the level of English they mastered at previous schools, the learning habits, methodology used by their teachers and also interpersonal relations. N. Hess (2004:2) declares that multilevel classes are kinds of classes that have been arranged by age-group with no thought to language ability. This is a crucial insight which has to be taken into consideration as teaching such groups is very demanding, exhausting but also challenging and it requires special attention and good teaching management.

1.3 Teenagers and teaching teenagers

According to Wikipedia adolescents, colloquially teenagers, form an age group of people who are on their turning point between childhood and adulthood. Their beings undergo a transformation that involves biological, social and psychological changes. It is not possible to define exact age of teenagers but it ranges somewhere between twelve and nineteen years of age.

The changes in teenager's personalities are so remarkable that they have to be taken into consideration even during the teaching process. R. Frost in his article *Teen angst* for BBC Teaching English web page [www..teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/teen-angst](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/teen-angst) says that teaching teenagers can be very stressful and frustrating experience as they tend to be less motivated and unpredictable. They often do not want to be taught. On the other hand they can also be very rewarding and fun if being attracted by the lesson matter.

2. Behavioural problems

Behavioural problems are usually interconnected with poor discipline. It is usually a teacher who is responsible for students' suitable behaviour and blamed if it is absent but the larger the class is the less manageable it usually becomes. Problems with discipline are a „nightmare“ of many teachers especially of those who have just started their careers. If a young teacher does not manage to set up good discipline, her teaching job starts to be very demotivating for both, herself and her students as well and she finds herself in a vicious circle of a lack of interest and motivation and antipathy towards everything connected with the job or language lessons. Such feeling is the beginning of the end.

2.1 Causes of behavioural problems

If behavioural problems emerge in classes it is necessary to define them as soon as possible in order to look for the efficient solution. The teaching process consists of two main substances: these are students and teachers. As both of these are human beings with their particular psychological and physical features they play their roles in determining the causes of poor discipline. Some speculations incline to the idea that these are only students' personalities or their various mental disorders that are reflected in their behaviour. In addition to this statement there are much more incentives originating from several sources. Before we look at some of the causes in more detail I would like to point out some of the most frequent ones:

- inability to cope with assigned tasks
- too easy tasks
- day of a week or time of a day
- problem students
- dislike of the subject or the teacher
- poor lesson management
- size of the class
- background problems (i.e. poor family conditions)

These are just the most obvious causes. Thanks to their visibility the teacher gets a chance to fight them by means of using suitable teaching methods, activities or types of interaction. The survey showing their frequency according to students will be presented in the practical part.

2.1.1 Too easy / too difficult tasks

As it was mentioned earlier that large classes consist of many different personalities, students with different intelligences, abilities, values, social backgrounds and interests. Despite the fact that this diversity may offer lots of advantages, we will concentrate on problems it may bring along as well.

Some tasks are too easy for some students, which causes their restlessness and boredom. At the same time various types of activities (i.e. problem solving, filling in words, writing a poem, songs, poetry etc.) may be too simple for one group of students that means that they finish earlier and get bored and fidgety. This can of course work the opposite way – when some tasks are too difficult students get frustrated and agitated, give up and spend time talking with their mates not paying attention to the matter.

Here teacher's management skills are proved. It is necessary for her to have always an extra activity at the disposal for the stronger students and spend more individual time with students who have problems.

N. Hess (2001:3) also recommends that this is the right time to establish cooperative and interdependent learning when students are made to help each other and provide necessary support to their mates who need that. This brings them double effect of practising the matter themselves and being able to help and transfer their knowledge from the position of an educator.

2.1.2 Bad time of a day or a week

Language lessons are not always in students' timetables placed at the most ideal time. Their English lessons sometimes follow some very difficult subjects and tests or they are too early or too late in a day. The ideal time for demanding lessons such as languages, maths or science is the third lesson in the class timetable just after the snack break. This is time when students are already fully awake and refreshed but still not too tired to be maximally productive.

Although it is not always possible to get the most convenient time so even here the teacher has to try her best to make the lesson useful and adequately pleasant.

If the lessons are too late during the day it is appropriate to make them more relaxing and choose activities which are not suitable for "best-time" lessons. Such activities should correspond with students' interests and these for example are working with websites, listening to and analysing songs, watching video or working with magazines. For early morning lessons teacher is advised to select warm-up activities that involve physical movement, brainstorming, facial exercise and a lot of practise to start up students' minds.

3 Too large classes - problems

As this work deals with behavioural problems in large classes a separate chapter will be devoted to suggesting possible measures and solutions to help to cope with.

3.1 Prevention of potential problems

R. Frost in his article concerning teaching teenagers recommends that preventing behavioural problems is essential. Among the crucial points he mentions as very important are the following observations.

First of all a teacher must be firm at the very beginning as there is always a chance to relax later and still the teacher's approach can be to a certain extent friendly. Hand in hand with this suggestion comes a need to establish rules, which also involves assumption that students have to be treated fairly, and consistently.

Teacher as well as that must know the disciplinary procedures and steps the institution he works for offers which gives her more confidence and feeling that she is supported when she is in need of that.

On the other hand it is also a teacher herself who has to do the job to provide motivating, funny and interesting lessons. It is also necessary to take into consideration students' likes and dislikes, personalities etc. Next to this it is a commonplace that the teacher has to have her eyes wide open and act accordingly, i.e. she has to avoid too long and senseless activities, note students' moods and other signs which may disrupt the teaching process.

The teachers are also advised to treat teenage students as adults – but it is still significant to remember that they are children and need special and individual attention as well.

Last but not least praising good work and highlighting positive things is also very important in order to motivate students for following work (2009).

Even if Frost's ideas are perfectly right and useful I would like to add some other insights, which I recorded during my teaching career:

It is pointless for teachers to raise their voices during lessons – the outcome usually is that students try to be even noisier or they are noisy on purpose in order to provoke the teacher. Frequent threats should be also omitted as they often have a demotivating effect on students.

Teachers are also recommended to bear in their minds that individual approach is not always necessary as students should get space to work creatively and independently even if it is sometimes more time-consuming and demanding.

As told above teachers must treat students fairly – they cannot afford to show that they like some students better or less as this is a very sensitive field and students note such affections greatly quickly.

It is also obvious that if teachers require that students have to work hard they must

show themselves that they are well prepared and their attitude to teaching, students and language itself has to be positive, inspiring and challenging.

Consistence of lessons is crucial just as well – lessons have to follow each other in a logical order, students should feel themselves that they are making progress and be aware of meaningfulness of the activities they carry out.

3.2 Direct action during lessons

All the above mentioned items concern prevention of problems. But still not always the prevention is sufficient and behavioural problems may occur. In such cases it is necessary to act immediately and firmly. At the same time teachers should be careful and as J. Harmer (1991:252) in his book *The Practise of English Language Teaching* points out, they should avoid any kind of physically or mentally painful punishment. Teachers' personalities also vary, which brings along various ways of coping with difficulties and some teachers can manage them easier then the others.

Let me present you some of the measures that can be taken:

Teachers must act immediately - this mainly concerns rude and impolite behaviour or forgetting bringing school aids. As for not bringing homework or textbooks it is necessary to be persistent and systematic and form a kind of system of punishment to avoid repetition of this misdemeanour.

Identifying the „trouble-makers“ i.e. students who behave disruptively which disturbs not only a teacher but it also drags always attention of other students – when they are identified teachers should take measures which calm them down, for example occupy them with some extra task, appoint them to teacher's assistants or just stop them from disturbing the rest of the classrooms using a reprimand.

Seating arrangements:

- 1 - problem students should sit separately and at front desks
- 2 - adjust seating in accordance with the activity which is carried out (groups, pairs, teams)

- 3 - according to the activity either each group should consist of both strong and weak students in order to help each other or a teacher makes groups of good students and groups of weaker students to be able to work more intensively with weaker students and give independence to better students
- 4 - problem students must not be together in one group
- 5 - changing seating order now and then is also helpful as it always gives students new incentives during work with new mates

Appointing group leaders – they are intended to maintain discipline, allocate individual tasks and explain them to students, act as group spokesmen and help weaker students

Stopping the class – this is applied when the situation in the class is unbearable. Students must be informed why the teacher stopped it and what was the disturbing element. When students calm down and are able to concentrate again it is possible to continue. Sometimes unfortunately it is necessary to start again from the very beginning.

Changing activities – either choose calming down activity such as writing or practising something using workbooks when students are getting too wild. On the contrary if the activity is getting boring it is good to apply an interaction during which students are allowed to involve themselves, move around or get a chance to be in a contact with their mates.

Using space outside classrooms – this choice is beneficial because “the change of scene“ gives students new incentives and at the same time different or authentic environment allows students to try out their knowledge in real situations (walks through town, following maps, finding places or shops)

Good background = the institution – when problems are unbearable it is necessary to exploit the institution’s code. This is applicable mainly in dealing with more serious problems, such as constant forgetting school aids, truancy, and persistent indiscipline during lessons or frequent lateness. At the same time the cooperation and communication with parents is a need.

Code of behaviour – last but not least it is necessary to design a set of rules and make sure that everybody keeps them (here I of course mean not just students but also the teacher).

4 Possible solutions for problem of large classes

The literature and methodology guides suggest a lot of didactic advice that should ease this problem and it is up to the teacher and her experience what she finds the best working. Also the structure of the class matters a lot, as students differ in intelligences, (let me remind their types according to Gardner's classification: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist intelligence), interests, motivation, educational, cultural and social background and their levels and abilities in general. Some other factor that must be taken seriously here are students' age, sex or their temperament types.

On the basis of my own teaching practice I have realized that activities, motivators or „threats“ which work in one class do not have to work in the other class and vice versa. The teacher is a professional and she is responsible for everything that happens during her lessons. Sensible self-confidence of teachers is necessary as she must believe in what she does and why she takes certain measures. The choice of right activities is also a sign of her competence and she must also trust in her own abilities and be aware of the fact that she is the authority in the class and her class performance must not deny it. The teacher must not take personally anything unpleasant that happens during her lessons. As R. Frost notes to the British Council teaching forum - it is her job to master the class but still she is the nearest target for the students no matter how popular or not in favour she is (2009).

Further on I would like to describe in more detail some didactic aids useful for coping with large classes.

4.1 Setting up routines and rules

*„Rules are here to
guide us
not to bind us.“
(anonymous)*

N. Hess reckons that especially with new students it is inevitable for teachers to establish rules before students start to make their own. For each institution the general school rules such as greeting, standing up when a visitor or a teacher comes into a classroom, cleaning the classroom after lessons, handing in assignments, helping a teacher bringing school aids etc. may differ. It is advisable to observe institution rules first which gives a teacher the chance to get used to them and get adopted and if necessary she can add her own adjustments.

In this work we are though more interested in rules concerning the educational procedures in classes themselves even if they are closely related to the institution culture as well.

Having a system of rules and routines is very important for both, the teacher and the student, which is also a reason why both of these substances should participate in its creation. Teachers definitely do not want to feel like “policemen“ and students are more likely to keep the rules if they get a chance to think about them and form them themselves. Bellow there are described the main assets of having rules.

Rules give clear ideas of what is allowed and forbidden during lessons. Such things for instance are when students can or cannot walk, can or cannot speak aloud or to their mates, what is the polite way to ask for something, it sets routine concerning handing in homework or other assignments (projects, seminar work etc.), rules also give idea how to check up the attendance.

Rules are also absolutely necessary for evaluation, this includes what will be evaluated, when (due dates) and how tasks will be evaluated (marks, comments, points plus graduated scale).

Soon both teachers and students will discover that good rules will bring them

sense, stability and safety and specially teachers will appreciate that having rules will prevent them from frequent repeating instructions. In general the course of lessons will be smoother and less time demanding.

As mentioned above the process of making routines is very individual due to teacher's personality and a kind of class she teaches. Still there are some practical suggestions for teachers how to prevent disturbances and reach clearer lessons. These are designed by N. Hess (2001: 182) and introduced in her book *Teaching Large Multilevel Classes*. As for these suggestions I would like to add my comments based on my attempts to apply them in practise:

Write down day's activities on board: I find this very useful as it gives very clear idea to students what is the lesson going to be about, they know what to anticipate, it also shows them that the teacher is well prepared for the lesson. If students copy these lines into their notebooks it helps them to realize at home what to study or what to practise

Keep few cards on the teacher's desk to write notes (so-called reminders): as lessons go along teachers rather often encounter matters which are necessary to revise but not today, they also serve as reminders for certain tasks that should be handed in by appointed students

Have extra pens and pencils at the disposal: it is quite frequent that students forget or lose their writing utensils during the day. Having a couple of them ready always prevents annoying other students asking for some.

Have prepared required number of handouts or sheets: it is always useful to have some spare ones. It is advisable to have not just handouts for a concrete lesson but systematic teachers have these ready in advance for at least a term. Keeping them in order in a file also contributes to smoother work.

Practise repeated class rituals: very useful and applicable for all levels – this can involve little pair-work on a certain theme (weather today, how are you today, what made me happy today etc.), celebrating birthdays, introduction of a special student or a special

person (each student gets a turn during the term). These little speaking activities at the beginning of lessons calm students down and make them work or listen to their mates and automatically switch over students' minds from Czech into English.

Practise the „three before me“ rule – i.e. students who work in groups have to ask three classmates first, before they report the information gained to the teacher. This idea contributes to students' maximum participation in tasks but still the teacher's supervision is rather crucial here to make sure that students really speak as much as required.

Some other useful routines that I use are:

Despite the fact that students like rich and variable lessons it is helpful to start lessons in the same way to make them realize that the lesson really started. This involves waiting for the class to calm down, greet everybody and expect the same from the students.

System of signing up for special tasks or projects – a special sheet containing the name of the task, the name of the student, due date and confirmation by the teacher that the task was really handed in serves to it

There are always appointed students who clean the board, make sure that chalks are ready, distribute tests, notebooks or other sheets

I always check if students sit in their places – sometimes they try to mingle so as to sit with their friends which is usually a problem due to their chatting and not paying attention to the lesson

One more important remark: if the teacher changes activities during her lesson she should do so very fluently as any gaps between them might end up in losing students' attention. Gaining back once lost attention and interest is very difficult.

Anyway, as students and teachers design routines both sides should strictly keep them. Sometimes though there are situations when some of these do not work properly. In such cases they can be modified or replaced, but this should not happen too frequently as they would start losing their seriousness. We can completely change them and start again from the very beginning at the new semester, term or a school year.

4.2 Pair-work

Pair-work is one of the most frequently used teaching interactions not only in large classes but in language lessons in general. To be more specific it is predominantly an oral classroom activity in which the whole class is divided into pairs where the partners are supposed to work together and practise or improve their language skills by means of conversation, mutual writing or listening. The aim of such interaction is the exchange of information and follow-up feedback.

4.2.1 Advantages of pair-work

As mentioned before pair-work is used in teaching English very often that is due to its numerous advantages.

The greatest and most acknowledged asset of pair-work is the fact that it allows a large number of students to actively communicate at the same time. There is also an opportunity for students to talk to their friends without being told off for it (they of course must speak English). Students also have the opportunity to speak about things they often might not discuss in Czech, they can exchange and share interesting views, opinions and ideas on various topics.

According to Underwood role-play's connectivity to other language activities such as pre-listening, post-listening or mutual writing can be greatly exploited in the teaching process. This can be carried out thanks to its simplicity to arrange it and variety it offers in choosing speaking partners (1987: 76).

Since a role-play is in fact a kind of rehearsing in a „safe environment“, students do not need to be as stressed before they speak in front of the whole class or groups. This kind of interaction helps in advance with the help of their partners or teachers get rid of mistakes, practise making respond, extend their vocabulary and memorize sufficiently what they want to say. Hand in hand with this insight students' cooperation, tolerance and ability to help each other is also considerably encouraged and later on consolidated.

All the above listed advantages can only occur if the role-play activity is well planned, the topic is correctly selected, activities are carefully explained and all necessary aids such as activity sheets, dictionaries, posters, leaflets or other materials are ready to be used.

4.2.2 Problems with pair-work

Despite the fact that pair-work is rather useful there are some difficulties and potential problems about it that teachers should be careful about otherwise it may turn out unproductive and unpleasant for both sides. Some of the main ones were outlined on websites www.flesl.net that deal with teaching advice and teaching materials for English teachers. The advice how to cope with the individual problems will follow:

High noise level: it is caused by two elements:

- 1) if a half of the class speaks at the same time it is obvious that the noise level will be higher – on the other hand this may indicate that most of the students really work and that is why the teacher does not really have a reason to stop it or interfere somehow
- 2) a teacher is not able to pay attention to all the students which may lead to the fact that some students may start chatting instead of working - J. Harmer (1991: 244) in his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching* suggests that the best solution for this problem is that the teacher should stay at the front of the classroom to overview everyone and after pair-work is finished organize a feedback where each pair has to show how successful they were.

Another advice lies in the teacher walking round the classroom devoting time to each pair. The time spent with each pair though should not be too long in order to let students enjoy some level of independence and creativity

Using mother language: having been teaching for quite a few years I can confirm that this problem occurs rather often. Once the teacher stops watching students they switch over to their mother tongue – firstly the teacher should explain the students before the activity that they must speak only English for their own sake because it is them who need to learn it.

Another solution is that the teacher should walk round the class and listen, encourage and help students. Constant pleading them to use English is also necessary. It is likely that within the course of time students get used to it and will take speaking English for granted.

Partners with no information to offer – this happens if one of the students has no information to exchange either because the selected topic is not of his interest or because he just can't make up his mind about what or how to say. In such situations it is important to choose the topic that is relevant to students' age and interests and also a technique called „rotation“ should help. This is based on changing partners several times during the activity. The individual conversations are quite short in order to speak to quite a few mates and not to make the whole activity too long and monotonous.

Incorrectness – it would be foolish not to expect that students will manage to avoid mistakes when speaking in pairs. Here the teacher should be tolerant and not correct every mistake otherwise students may lose interest in speaking. If some mistakes are really serious and other students could profit from them, the teacher may gather them as she walks around the class and point them out after or during the feedback with the whole class.

4.2.3 Management of pair-work

Good management of the pair work is also imperative and teachers should be very careful about it and spend satisfactory length of time preparing it. If it is so it usually pans out. Below you can find some helpful tips for teachers how to make pair-work function.

- 1) think out well what is the topic for the pair-work
- 2 prepare carefully all necessary materials in advance
- 3) give students clear and detailed instructions, it is also useful to tell them beforehand what is the activity good for
- 4) if you need to set the pairs (good students in pairs with weaker students, problem student with authoritative students) do not make it too obvious to students

- 5) be careful about discipline and act accordingly, i.e. either observe the class from the teacher's desk or walk around and check students
- 6) carry out a feedback afterwards
- 7) if there are some signs that the activity starts to be boring or tedious stop it at once
- 8) use pair-work regularly so that the students could get used to it

4.2.4 Activities suitable for pair-work

Pair-work can be used for all language functions i.e. speaking, writing, listening and reading. The most common activities are:

- role-plays on various topics (in a shop, phone conversations, job interviews etc.)
- pre-reading and post-reading tasks (discussions on topics described in texts)
- split dictations (useful for improving listening and pronunciation)
- gaining information (to practise making questions)
- checking each other's writing and follow-up discussion over the mistakes
- to practise description (one student describes a picture the other one draws it)
- vocabulary drill
- problem solving
- grammar review

4.3 Group-work

The principles of pair-work and group-work are rather similar as pair-work can be classified as sub-category of group-work but still using group-work in lessons (i.e. groups of at least 3 students) is less frequent and the preparation I dare say is more demanding.

4.3.1 Advantages of group-work

Advantages of group-work are mostly the same as those mentioned in role-play section but still I would like to agree with those quoted by J. Harmer (1991: 245) in his textbook *The Practice of English Language teaching* where he claims that:

„In some ways group work is more dynamic than pair work: there are more people to react with and against in a group and, therefore, there is a greater possibility of discussion. There is a greater chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises, and working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs, for the latter puts a greater demand on the student's ability to co-operate closely with only one other person. It is also true to say that group work tasks can often be more exciting and dynamic than some pair work tasks.“

Based on the advice provided to English teachers at www.flesl.net it is necessary to add up that one of the main group-work assets is the way it encourages enthusiastic and cooperative classroom atmosphere and „feel of class“ which is often suppressed by individual work. This cooperation feel can be also emphasised if groups are turned into teams that are competing among themselves.

Another sunny side of group-work is the fact that various groups can work on various tasks at the same time. This gives teachers an open area for assigning them according to students' interests or levels.

As for the methodology concerning organizing group-work it does not differ much from pair-work (anyway some potential problems are listed below) and even the range of activities it could be used for is more or less the same.

4.3.2 Problems and matters to consider during group-work

Next to bright sides that group-work offers there are some problems which teachers should bear in their minds and take necessary steps when approaching them.

Using native language – this problem and possible solution was already implied in connection with role-play

Reluctance of students to speak because of their poor knowledge of English – here I reckon that the best solution is to be very patient and keep explaining the students that

using target language is a crucial method how to learn it, no matter how many mistakes they make. Other people's mistakes often help to realize us our own mistakes.

Domination = the group is dominated by one or two students which results in taking possibility to speak from other students. Here again discussion and explaining the matter can help. At the same time the teacher should carefully observe each group and act when such problem occurs.

Animosities - this is not only typical for schools but in all kinds of collectives some people like each other and some do not. To ease this problem teachers can either form groups randomly at every lesson or assign group leaders who select members of their teams.

Group size – it is obvious that the larger the group is the more disobedience the teacher can expect. In my opinion, which was also supported by didactic materials I studied, the ideal number of students in a group is from four to six. Anything higher would cause problems concerning both the discipline and organization. I would also like to remark that for decision-making activities odd number of students is better not to get an equal number of voices in case of finding better solutions or so.

In general lot of teachers as well as students try to avoid group work as it requires perfect preparation and strict supervision from the teacher and hard-work and a lot of thinking and creativity from students. On the other hand though once the group-work (specially applied onto teenagers) work well, it gives plenty of satisfaction to both and may be motivating for further work.

4.4 Using the board

Another very effective tool that should help to control discipline in large classes and integrate a maximum number of students is using a board. Its merit lies just in fact that the whole class can work together at the same time without anybody being omitted.

G. Demes da Cruz in her article for September 2008 issue of www.languagemagazine.com explains that:

Teachers need the board to make the students' learning easier. Visual aids are very important in the classroom and the use of the board is beneficial to students whose

learning is motivated by visual stimuli. It also helps them focus on what is being presented, understand, and remember what they hear.

Today teachers can use whiteboard, blackboard, smart board or IWB (interactive whiteboard). No matter which one they use, they should be particularly careful about the following:

Everything that the teacher writes on the board must be legible for all the students and the writing or drawing on the board must be perfectly organized and well arranged (see the picture below).

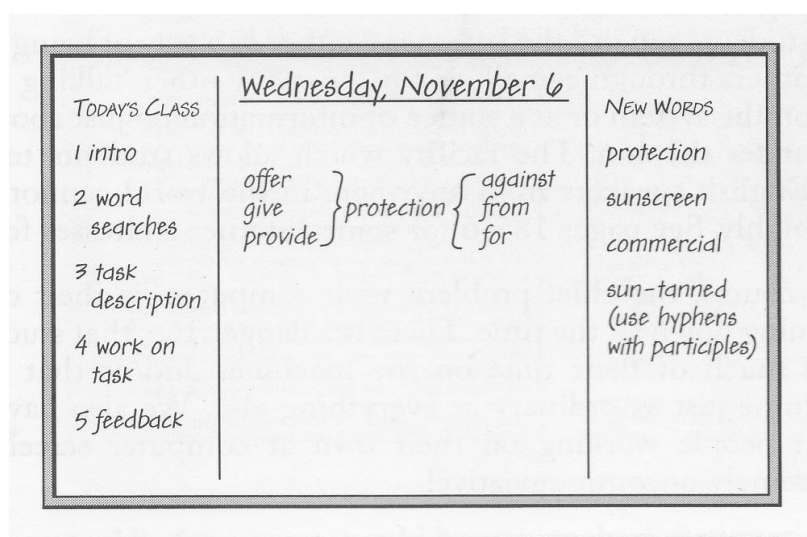


Figure 1: A well-organized board according to Harmer

All the students must be able to see the board and the teacher should also have a notion of what is happening in the class when writing on the board.

It is also very useful for the teacher to make comments on what she is actually writing (for example if these are answers for certain exercise, new vocabulary, chart for a contest etc.)

Every time the teacher requires students to copy her writing down into their exercise books she must tell them otherwise they may not do it. At the same time the teacher must check what she is writing to prevent some students from copying her mistakes.

To make the whole process smoother there should always be appointed a student who is ready to wash the board without any lag.

4.4.1 Board activities

Times when teachers used boards only for presenting new vocabulary are over. There are many more purposes they can be used for. In general they are supposed to enhance students' motivation and increase lesson's dynamics.

Here is a list of useful language activities using the board:

- before lesson: jokes, riddles, tongue-twister – to make students think about just as they are walking into the classroom
- giving instructions, informing about tasks or homework
- teaching and consolidating vocabulary (spider grams, vocabulary games)
- key words for reading, presentation or discussion
- using pictures for description or discussion
- recording games results, class discussions, names of students involved in various activities
- explaining grammar using pictures, time lines or graphs
- language games

4.4.2 Other comments concerning using the board

During my own teaching career I have noticed that plenty of students feel more relaxed when writing language than speaking it. Writing on the board gives them the chance to do this. At the same time their „significance“ grows because the whole class can watch them.

I think that one of strong points the board offers is its game-friendly mood. Students often play games using the board without realizing that they are learning or revising new subject matters such as vocabulary or grammar. As already said, games also encourage team spirit and spontaneity which has to be developed as well.

Finally I would like to exploit an idea published by J. Harmer (1998: 128) in his well-known methodology book *How to teach English* claiming that using chorus reaction in large classes also helps to involve a great amount of students. Together with

blackboard activities this may work well as chorus repetition, reading or performing role-plays of what is presented on the board. Such activities provide a great feedback or follow-up to studied matter.

Methods used to manage large classes made up of teenage students mentioned in the practical part of this work are not of course the only ones. As our market offers a large number of didactic and methodology books and creativity of many teachers is enormous I am sure that I could state many more other teaching tools for this purpose. Although I only used those that I mean to try, observe and analyse in the practical part of my thesis.

II Practical part

1. Aims of the research

The aim of my research is to try out, observe and analyse methods applicable in large teenage classes that are suggested and dealt with in the theoretical part. In addition to all that the main contribution of this work will be students' reactions to individual activities. These will show not only during lessons themselves where the teacher can watch immediate response but they will also be consequently evaluated by means of questionnaires distributed to all involved students.

1.1 Profile of the school and selected classes

The observation took place at the Secondary Vocational Automobile School in Zábřeh na Moravě where I have been teaching for almost three years. The school has nearly six hundred students, who study at all kinds of study programmes (3-year apprentice training centre, 4-year technical school, 2-year extension study and 3-year college). The greatest number of students studies the 4-year programme with the aim to get a school-leaving certificate. Those who successfully pass can continue their studies at the 3-year college to gain the lower-university degree.

Most students who come to our school (i.e. some 85 – 90%) chose to study English, the rest study German. These numbers clearly show that sizes of English and German classes remarkably differ. While there are often only 4-6 students in German classes, English classes have to hold more than 20 students. If the capacity of students in English classes exceeds the number of students specified by the law as a maximum number of students in language classes, they are often divided into two groups. But still there are classes with the maximum number of 23 students that makes the learning process rather difficult and unsatisfactorily efficient.

Another fact which contributes to the problem of large classes at our school is that many students struggle with their English as most of them are technically

focussed and despite the fact that a large number of them will have to take leaving exam in English (they have a choice between English and Mathematics at the moment) they do not study it hard enough and underrate its importance.

For my work I have chosen two classes that I find the greatest problem due to their sizes and reluctance of students to study English. Both classes differ a lot with regard to their levels of students' English and in each class there a different number of lessons per week.

1.1.1 Technical school class profile

This class consists of 23 male students who have English lessons three times a week but these lessons are not divided evenly which means that one week they have five lessons and the other week just one lesson because of to their training in the school garage. These boys are in their third grade of technical studies and they are supposed to take their leaving exams next academic year. They started their English studies at our school with the pre-intermediate course book.

I have been teaching them since their first grade and I find them the most tiring of all classes I teach at this school which can be caused by the following facts: the size of the class, low interest in studying languages which goes hand in hand with their low performance and also the fact that they have hardly any lesson every other week negatively influences the continuity of the teaching process.

Compared to other school classes this group can be viewed as from average to below-average with regards to their marks, performance in lessons, fulfilling home-tasks and mainly behaviour. The survey bellow shows their last school year marks in English lessons. These are marks that I gave them at the of their second grade.

<u>Number of students</u>	<u>A mark achieved</u>
0	1
4	2
7	3
12	4
0	5

1.1.2 Apprentice training centre profile

This group of apprentices also consists of 23 students (21 boys and 2 girls). They have four English lessons every other week as they spend one week at school studying theory and one week in the garage having their practical teaching. Most of these students came here from elementary schools with not very good marks and even if most of them were studying English for about six years they start at our school as total beginners. This fact indicates that they should have no problem with their English but the truth is often different and they struggle with their English for the whole period of their studies.

Even this group is too large and students have problems to keep attention for a longer period thus frequent changing of activities and „playful“ attitude is necessary to be introduced here. Please see the chart bellow to get to know students' level of English at elementary schools:

<u>Number of students</u>	<u>A mark achieved</u>
0	1
2	2
8	3
8.....	4
1	5

These are marks which students dictated me when I asked them to at the beginning of the term. From the chart it is clear that most of the students got 3 or 4, which is not a very good start and both of the girls got into this class after failing

their first school year at our school. Let me also point out that some of these students came here straight from the 8th grade of the elementary school after failing a year there as well.

1.1.3 Causes of problems in English lesson seen by students

In order to choose the most effective activities for both groups it is necessary to identify the most frequent causes of problems in their classes.

The following table gives an idea of individual causes ratio. The data was gained from large classes students I used for my thesis. They were asked to choose one of the options to answer the question: *What is the main cause of disruptive behaviour in your class?*

The students answered the question either according to what they feel personally or what they suppose the class overall feeling is. This impression I got when observing them during filling in the questionnaire.

Students were asked to fill in a questionnaire written in Czech. The questionnaire was anonymous in order to give students the chance to answer unreservedly what they feel. In spite of this I noticed that some of them were not able to express their ideas and copied information from their schoolmates. The questionnaire is the part of the enclosure.

Table 1: Students' idea of main causes of disruptive behaviour in the class

RANKING	PROBLEM	Number of students
1.	Too large classes	22
2.	Bad day of the week, bad time of the day	16
3.	Dislike of the subject	13
4.	Too difficult subject	11
5.	Too easy subject	6
6.	Bad organization of the lesson	5
7.	There is no use of the subject	5
8.	Dislike of the teacher	4

The outcome of this survey indicates that according to the students' opinion the size of the class and general dislike of the subject belong among the main problems and reasons why students' attention is often so poor, which is directly followed by indiscipline and disorder in lessons. It is rather obvious that these two elements go hand in hand as lots of tasks would not be that difficult if the teacher could afford more individual approach to students. This is though impossible due to number of students in classes. Later we will look at some of the possible solutions how to manage more demanding tasks in large classes. Bad day of the week and bad time of the day are in my opinion placed as second as students often try to blame others for their poor performance or behaviour without being self-critical.

1.1.4 Activities which students find important or attractive

In a form of a questionnaire the students of the both problem classes (altogether about 45 students) were asked to choose from the list of language activities those that they find of the greatest utility and the most enjoying. I presume that if students themselves determine activities that they find both useful and entertaining the lessons will be more interesting and perhaps even more motivating for the teacher to use such activities in the lessons.

The table below gives a survey of the most and the least popular activities as students selected them.

Table 2: Ranking of activities according to students' preferences

RANKING	TYPE OF THE ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
1.	Reading and translating	18
2.	Listening	17
3.	Work with the Internet	16
4.	Vocabulary	15
5.	Speaking: pair-work	13
6.	Grammar	10
7.	Individual speeches	4
8.	Written exercise (essays, letters, etc.)	2

Despite the fact that I reckon that the priority in teaching languages should be the ability to use it in spoken way, the students chose as the most wanted activity reading together with translating. This is very likely given by their need to be able to understand texts they are interested in such as popular magazines, song lyrics, PC games instructions and last but not least texts written in English which language teachers assign students as self-study materials. I find it ideal to combine reading activities with work with the Internet, as nowadays the Internet is very „student-friendly“. I am quite convinced that another reason why students chose reading and translating as their popular activity is, that these activities are more passive and perhaps do not require so much hard work as speaking or learning grammar.

Not surprisingly gaining and consolidation of students' vocabulary won the place in the first half of the chart. Both students and myself on the basis of my teaching experience can confirm that gaining vocabulary is a rather „painful“ process that is a reason why extra time should be devoted to it.

2. Individual activities and their evaluation from students point of view supplemented by the teacher's comment

This part of my work presents individual activities used in selected classes. Each activity is described including level of difficulty, length of the activity, material used and its aims. This specification is then followed by students' reactions and teacher's comments telling how it worked, if students were sufficiently kept occupied and whether the activity helped them to learn target matters.

2.1 Pair-work

As pair-work is often regarded as one of the most efficient language interactions involving a maximum number of students I decided to use it in my lessons. I also think that it is a happy choice to try and use it together with work on the Internet, which is so popular with students.

2.1.1 Preparing presentation using the Internet

Level: pre-intermediate to intermediate (technical school students)

Time: 2 lessons (1st work on the Internet, 2nd presentations)

Aim: seeking for English written information, speaking in front of the audience

Material: the Internet

Procedure: students in pairs were assigned with sub-categories of festivals in various countries such as Christmas, New Year's Eve + New Year's Day, Diwali, Thanksgiving Day, Halloween, Easter, Fools' Day etc. Each pair was asked to find information on the English written websites on the assigned festival. Students were also asked to discuss in pairs which information is suitable to present and which is not. Then students had to prepare their presentations and deliver them to their

classmates in the next lesson using the white-board, pictures and special vocabulary introduction.

Students' reaction: having discussion with the students concerning this task they commented this activity as both, quite interesting and useful. They enjoyed working independently on the Internet, which is something they come across every day. It was though more demanding for them to manage to read information in English as there were quite long texts on the Internet and they were only asked to elicit the most interesting and important facts. Some of them stored the information on the flash discs to work on it later at home. Students found it difficult to organize the information into a clear and coherent speech and the last part of the task that was the presentation was the most difficult for them.

Teacher's comment: students managed to work quietly on the computer during the lesson without being disruptive or feeling bored. They discussed in the pairs their issues and I reckon that they worked really hard to find the suitable information and process it for the presentation. Even though I still had to walk around the class and help them to find the good websites and elicit the right information. In order to give the students the right direction I had to write on the board the outline for them and keep checking that they follow it. Most of the presentations themselves were rather confusing as students did not organize them well or they elicited too complicated structures that they were not able to remember and present.

Despite all this I find this activity very useful for the following reasons:
The students were working without being disobedient or disruptive, speaking in front of the class is a great preparation for their leaving exams next year and also ability of students to listen to the others is consolidated here. Another element that contributed to the success of the activity (at least from the behaviour's point of view) was that the students were told in advance that their presentations would be marked.

2.1.2 Whose am I?

Level: elementary (apprentices)

Time: 20 minutes

Aim: use of “family” vocabulary, listening to each other

Material: exercise books, pens

Procedure: students in pairs tell each other the following sentences about their relations to their relatives – e.g. I am Pavel’s son, I am Jana’s friend, I am Božena’s grandson – they try to say as many names as possible. Student 2 listens, tries to remember everything he can hear and then he repeats it. After they both finish speaking, they draw into their exercise books family schemes for the partner they listened (S1 draws a scheme about S2’s family and vice versa). After they finish they share the information with the class.

Students’ reaction: according to students’ reactions the drawing the scheme into their exercise books was for them the most entertaining part of the activity (they called it “a spider”). They found it problematic to understand the instructions even if they were presented in Czech. After they understood them (I had to walk from desk to desk and explain them individually) they quite enjoyed the activity because it kept them busy as they like drawing or being a kind of creative and they also enjoy talking about their families because their vocabulary is sufficient for it.

Teacher’s comment: beside the fact that explaining the activity took quite a long time it was worth to put the effort in explaining the instructions individually to each pair. Students in this class are very weak not only in English, so individual attitude is a need here. Students also had to be pushed to speak and work in general as once the teacher turned away they started to talk in mother tongue or do nothing or just draw nonsense into their notebooks. Even here I had to tell students that they would be marked to make them work properly and so prevent them from being restless. When students finished the pair work, some of them were very keen on being asked to show to the class what they have done. Using pair work with this group is rather effective specially when supported by the element of competition and letting students

“produce” something (this time it was the drawing into their exercise books). Also using familiarizing element was very useful as students like talking about something they know very well.

2.1.3 Dictate – Learn a dialogue

I used this task with both groups, as it is a useful activity from the behavioural point of view and language utility as well. I claim that sometimes it is necessary for students to learn and revise some every-day use phrases by heart to automatize them.

Level: all levels according to the level of the text

Time: 30 minutes

Aim: pronunciation, speaking and listening practise

Material: text – a dialogue, a pen, an exercise book

Procedure: a student 1 dictates to a student 2 one part of a dialogue and vice versa. The dialogue is rather simple and intended to practise a conversational matter that students are required to manage. After both students have their dialogue complete they learn it by heart to be able to perform it in front of the class.

Students' reactions: *apprentices:* students said that they liked reading aloud for their partners but had some troubles to write the sentences down – this is what they regarded as the most awkward part of the activity. They had good fun practising the text by heart and I found it encouraging that they would like to try to do the same activity again in the future. They also welcomed that they were given the text and they did not have to make it themselves.

Technical school students: the students complained about being asked to learn the text by heart. Most of them did not mind dictating and writing, just some were unwilling to write anything. They reckoned that the activity kept them busy but not in a way which they would like too much.

Teacher's comment: this exercise is great for practising perfect pronunciation, despite the fact that up to a certain extent this is a drill exercise. It also requires

considerable concentration of students, which prevents them from disobedience thanks to the fact that both of them are equally involved.

Still the effectiveness of the activity was in each group different.

The apprentices were working harder despite the fact that their knowledge of English is much poorer. They were motivated by the fact they can get good marks if they manage it well (this is in general a very strong motivator for them together with being praised as well).

The technical school students had to be more pushed to work and threatened by bad marks or extra homework they would get if they do not work properly. Even though they worked without much disturbances but did not find this activity very useful or attractive as they are usually reluctant to learn anything by heart.

2.2 Group-work

2.2.1 Making quiz and Competition

Level: pre-intermediate - intermediate (technical school students)

Time: 30-40 minutes

Aim: use of relative sentences and speaking

Material: an example quiz, pens and papers

Procedure: when the defining relative clauses were explained and practised students in groups were asked to make a test for the rest of the class using relative clauses (e.g. What is the name of a singer who comes from Italy and became an icon of the world pop music). Each group makes some 5-8 questions and then they read the questions out for the others to write answers or alternatively groups answer one by one. If the group that is supposed to ask does not score a point the other groups can take turn. This activity can be also done practising names objects or jobs (It is a thing which you use for stirring), animals or places.

Students' reactions: as expected students enjoyed more the competition part as it gives them more freedom and requires less thinking. They managed the grammar quite well thus the main problem was to have ideas for making the questions. As

students said later the activity managed to keep them busy and reasonably obedient. They were also excited to hear their mates' questions.

Teacher's comment: competition activities are usually a success with students as for the behaviour and involving a large number of students. Unfortunately they cannot be used too often, as they might lose their attractiveness. Students worked quite well in groups but still the teacher had to walk from group to group and check that they all are working and speaking only English. It is obvious that a similar activity can be used with other levels of students and for various kinds of grammar or vocabulary practise.

2.2.2 Read – translate – make questions

Level: elementary or can be also used with other levels (apprentices)

Time: 25 minutes

Aim: speaking, stronger students helping weaker students

Procedure: on the basis of a simple vocabulary game there are appointed four leaders who form four groups with other 3-4 students in each group. The leader is there to supervise, help and coordinate the work of the others. Students work together over a text that they were studying individually before. The leader invites „his“ people to read and translate the text. He corrects them or helps them with problem words. Then the whole group prepares a set of questions about the text to ask the other groups.

Students' reactions: students had no problems to form the groups. When I asked them they preferred working in groups to individual work. Some students did not like the leader and some complained that the leader did not want to listen to them. They also enjoyed translating more than reading.

Teacher's comment: all the class worked quite well. Some students though did not want to respect their leaders, which is more of a friendship factor. In most teams the leader really tried to do his best to act as a real leader. Neither of the leaders tried to take advantage of his position, on the contrary they tried to be helpful and supply the

teacher without dominating the group which really surprised me in a positive way.

I think that this is one of ways how to make students work without telling them off for most of the lesson. Next time when doing different kinds of activities even weaker students will have to get a chance to lead a group to make them feel useful and important. I dare say that using this method we managed to revise our subject matter in more intensive and entertaining way and I think that both, students and me as a teacher welcomed the chance to work more individually as I had to spend some time with each group separately.

2.3 Board activities

2.3.1 Draw and describe

Level: from elementary to intermediate (apprentices)

Time: 20-30 minutes

Aim: speaking, practising describing and present continuous

Procedure: the teacher starts to draw a simple picture on the board (a building, a person etc.) then she asks the students to come to the board and add something to the picture. The more frequently students come to draw the picture the better it is for them to feel that they are a part of the activity. When the picture is ready the teacher starts eliciting the language with simple questions such as “What/ who is it?”, „What/ why is happening...?” etc.

Students’ reactions: students were asked to discuss in pairs (in Czech) whether they liked this activity or not and why. Most of them enjoyed the process of „giving birth“ to the picture when anyone could come and participate in it. Answering the questions was more difficult as some of the students’ vocabulary is rather limited. Still students found it a great fun and would like to do something similar again.

Teacher’s comment: the activity seemed to be enjoyable for the students, even more timid students wanted to come to the board and draw something. Next time though the teacher should also ask the students who draw to comment on what they are

drawing to elicit more language. The follow-up activity when students had to answer the questions was in my opinion very useful as we had a chance to revise question forming and vocabulary. This activity can be also used in other variations for example as a competition between two teams. The greatest plus of this activity is that it involves a great number of students and they hardly realize that they are learning something. It is suitable for younger and more playful students as the older students might reject drawing that I have experienced with the 3rd grade students. With them the activity did not work this well at all. It was a problem for me to find a volunteer to come and draw something and this negatively affected the atmosphere of the whole activity. When I asked students why they are so reluctant they answered that they just do not know what to draw or if somebody drew something they were not able to identify it.

2.3.2 Various blackboard activities

Level: all levels

Time: according to selected activity

Aim: explaining grammar, vocabulary games and competitions, practising

Students' reactions: students are quite passive about using the board. Collecting their response concerning work using the blackboard they are usually scared to be called up. At the same time they have to pay attention instead of being too restless as they could be called up at any time. On the other hand they prefer having well arranged new grammar presentation on the board that they can copy into their exercise books. The students also welcome using the board for checking their translations or homework as this helps them to elicit and explain problems, which they have with their use of English. Students often learn a lot monitoring their mates' mistakes.

Teacher's comment: the board is one of the aids I use the most frequently. Students are passive when volunteers are asked to come and fulfil various tasks. The teacher has to call them by their names to make them come. But this experience is more often recorded with older students. They just sometimes find it too demanding to move around and prefer passive sitting. The blackboard is very useful for presenting new

grammar or vocabulary but still it is mainly the teacher who uses the board the most. Although the students usually find things presented on the board useful, which contributes positively to their behaviour during the lesson. As for more relaxing activities such as games or quizzes it is important to keep the time adequately short otherwise students start being restless and bored. Once there is a feeling that some students stop paying attention, it is better to start a new activity.

3 Conclusion

I have decided to present the conclusion individually for each class as these two groups differ remarkably and they also have to be assessed differently with the regard to their specifics such as load of demand put on them, their future careers, both behavioural and educational potentials or awaited outcome of their language education.

3.1 Conclusion I – Apprentices

This group of students who are not too bright and much progress should not be expected from their English acquisition was surprisingly better manageable than the technical school students group. I assume that the following points may cause this:

No students in this group are going to take the Maturita exam which means that the pace in lessons can be slower in the accordance with the curriculum, which was adapted to their intellectual and demand needs. At the same time the students can work more often in groups and the teacher may devote more time to individuals as well. This remarkably eases and sometimes even eliminates behavioural problems. The teacher can also more frequently choose game-like activities that keep students entertained and busy. This is given by the fact that the aim of language lessons at this level of education is not to prepare students for certain tests or future carrier but to provide them with the basics of English usable for further potential studies.

Problem students are usually seated at front desks but only supposing that there are free chairs there as the class with the capacity of 23 students is usually full and it is not fair to deprive keen students sitting in front positions from their chairs because of the badly-behaved ones.

Behavioural problems in this group were also caused by students' levels differences, this means that good students were bored and bad students were restless because they could not follow the pace. I usually resolved this inconvenience by making pairs or groups, when good students helped the weaker ones or I sometimes swapped the role with the good students and they pretended to be teachers and test

and provide advice to the other students. This interaction is very popular with both, the good and the weaker students.

Another point to mention here in order to demonstrate how to cope with poor discipline is to let students choose activities they like. Here I mean for example working on the Internet which they like a lot but it also brings the risk that the efficiency is not so high due to students' inclination to browse different sites than those they are asked to, they also like reading and translating texts which is another activity suitable for group work.

Games and various, predominantly vocabulary activities using the board are another useful method of keeping students involved and reasonably well behaved. Such interaction though must be fluent and swift and at the same time as large a number of students as possible should be involved. It is also obvious that the younger students are, the more willing to work with the board they would be.

I reckon that the main point here is not to fulfil only the role of a teacher but also of somebody who tries to understand the students, who wants to help them while using his or her enthusiasm, patience and positive approach, being able to realize at the same time that not much result can be expected. The best outcome of these lessons often was that the students were busy without much disturbance and managed to fulfil at least elementary tasks.

3.2 Conclusion II – Technical school students

Teaching technical school students compared to teaching the apprentices is more responsible work and the whole teaching process shall be reflected in students' knowledge presented at the Maturita exam next academic year. Some 80% of the students in this group chose English as their Maturita subject (they had an option – English language or Math) but unfortunately their enthusiasm, diligence and behaviour hardly prove this.

They are a very demanding group to work with. The main problem is the size of the class, which is a cardinal cause of the poor discipline here. At the same time the teacher has greater expectations from the students, which are often hard to meet

because of the bad atmosphere in the class and students' poor performance.

As a reaction to students' complaint concerning too large size of the group I tried to choose group-work or pair-work interaction, which not always was fruitful, sometimes it even ended as a failure. Students were reluctant to work hard enough to fulfil their tasks, used their maternity language more than the target language or pretended that they do not understand what to do. Even my individual approach to the pairs or groups was only efficient for the time, which I directly devoted to them, once I joined another group they started to be badly-behaved or unwilling to work again. Only thing that worked was threatening them with the bad mark. This is not though a motivator I like to use.

Using the Internet, which most of the students mentioned as an activity they prefer to do in English lessons, was not much success either. Students were excited to go to the IT room and they only managed to behave well if they could do on the Internet or PC only things of their interests and not tasks I required from them. The poor level of a presentation in English based on their work with the Internet corresponded to their negative approach to any work the teacher assigns them with.

Most of the other activities worked the same way. There was only a handful of students who paid attention to the teacher and tried to work hard. But it is impossible to work just with these and ignore the rest. These are states, which a good teacher should keep thinking about, and think of other efficient methods as there is not a point in giving it up.

As the situation in the class seemed to be inconclusive I decided to speak to the students' parents at the parents' evening. At the same time I had a discussion with the students. It was quite possible to come to reasonable conclusion, but only in theory. The lessons after the discussion with the students and the parents' evening showed a bit of improvement for a while but later on it again started to worsen gradually.

I consider this group rather uncooperative and very resentful to any effort to educate them. Let me suppose that this is mainly caused by their real reluctance to study language, as I cannot say that there would be some kind of aversion between them and me as their teacher. Despite of all this there is something positive about this particular class. Constant struggle with this group made me think more and deeper about the activities and interactions I use. It also taught me not to underrate the

preparation (which teacher sometimes tend to do with trouble-free groups) and as well as that I also realized that the teacher is only one part of the process and if the other part does not want to cooperate the result is usually vague and uncertain.

In the end I would like to say, that this theme is very extensive and can be looked at from many perspectives. Putting into practise some of the interactions and proving how well they work or not, gives me more ideas for my potential master thesis, which may be a follow-up to this work. There I could focus on creating class dynamics, efficient use of IT in language lessons or consolidating class teams.

RESUME

This work deals with discipline problems of teenage students in large classes at a secondary school. The aim of my work is to focus on defining causes of discipline problems and propose solutions how to remove them with regard to their efficiency in practice not only for my teaching but also for other teachers coping with similar problems.

In the theoretical part I analyse causes of discipline problems and suggest the most common methods of the solution. The methods proposed should be easily applicable in the practice and their incorporation into the lessons should be smooth.

The practical part contains profiles of the examined classes and a list of behavioural problem causes as students defined them. The main part of this section focuses on introduction of the interactions into the practice and their subsequent evaluations by both, the students and the teacher.

RESUMÉ

Tato práce se zabývá kázeňskými problémy dospívajících studentů ve velkých třídách na střední škole. V práci jsem se snažila zaměřit především na definování příčin kázeňských problémů a navrhnout řešení na jejich odstranění tak, aby byly v praxi účinné nejen pro mne, ale i pro ostatní učitele s podobnými problémy.

V teoretické části jsou rozebrány příčiny kázeňských problémů a navrženy nejběžnější způsoby jejich řešení. Tato způsoby jsou navrženy tak, aby byly co nejsnadněji proveditelné v praxi s možností jejich začlenění do běžných hodin angličtiny.

Praktická část obsahuje profil zkoumaných tříd, výčet důvodů, které mají největší vliv na nekázeň žáků tak, jak je žáci sami definovali, ale především uvedení některých aktivit do praxe s jejich následným zhodnocením jak žáky, tak i vyučujícím.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 - The questionnaire for students concerning causes of disobedience in classes and proposal of activities

Appendix 2 - Apprentices' work: Whose I am?

Appendix 3 - A song quiz prepared by a student

Appendix 4 - A poster by an apprentice

Appendix 5 - A map used by students

Appendix 1 – Two samples of questionnaire filled in by students and apprentices

OTÁZKA 1: CO SI MYSLÍTE, ŽE JE HLAVNÍ PŘÍČINOU SNÍŽENÉ POZORNOSTI V HODINÁCH ?

- | | |
|--|---|
| příliš snadné učivo | ☒ příliš velká třída (mnoho žáků) |
| ☒ příliš obtížné učivo | ☒ špatná doba dne či týdne (brzy ráno, pátek..) |
| ☒ nesympatie k danému předmětu | špatná organizace hodiny |
| nesympatie k vyučujícímu | myslím, že tento předmět mi k ničemu není |
| další – prosím udejte příčinu: | |

OTÁZKA 2: CO SI MYSLÍTE, ŽE BY POMOHLA PROBLEMATIKU CHOVÁNÍ V HODINÁCH JAZYKŮ ZLEPŠIT?

- | | |
|---|---|
| práce ve skupinkách | více společné práce s tabulí (pro celou třídu) |
| práce ve dvojicích | ☒ individuálnější přístup učitele |
| prosím navrhněte další zlepšení | |

OTÁZKA 3: KTERÉ AKTIVITY JSOU PRO VÁS NEJVÍCE PŘÍNOSNÉ ČI ZÁBAVNÉ?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☒ poslechy | ☒ procvičování slovní zásoby | ☒ čtení a překlady |
| gramatická cvičení | ☒ psaní (eseje, dopisy, popisy) | práce s Internetem v AJ |
| mluvení ve dvojicích | individuální projev | další..... |

OTÁZKA 1: CO SI MYSLÍTE, ŽE JE HLAVNÍ PŘÍČINOU SNÍŽENÉ POZORNOSTI V HODINÁCH ?

- | | |
|--|---|
| příliš snadné učivo | ☒ příliš velká třída (mnoho žáků) |
| ☒ příliš obtížné učivo | špatná doba dne či týdne (brzy ráno, pátek..) |
| ☒ nesympatie k danému předmětu | špatná organizace hodiny |
| nesympatie k vyučujícímu | myslím, že tento předmět mi k ničemu není |
| další – prosím udejte příčinu: | |

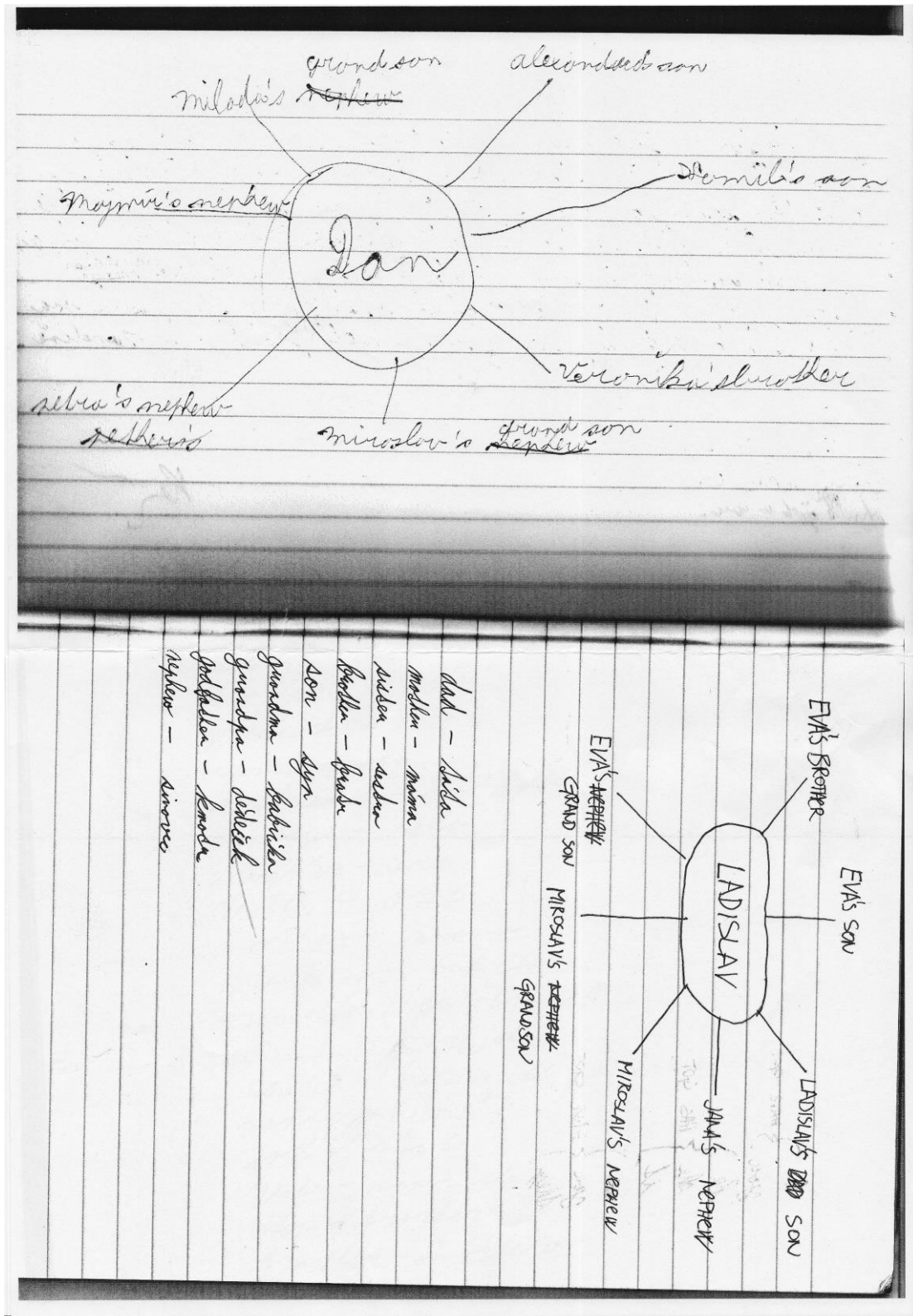
OTÁZKA 2: CO SI MYSLÍTE, ŽE BY POMOHLA PROBLEMATIKU CHOVÁNÍ V HODINÁCH JAZYKŮ ZLEPŠIT?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ práce ve skupinkách | více společné práce s tabulí (pro celou třídu) |
| práce ve dvojicích | individuálnější přístup učitele |
| prosím navrhněte další zlepšení | |

OTÁZKA 3: KTERÉ AKTIVITY JSOU PRO VÁS NEJVÍCE PŘÍNOSNÉ ČI ZÁBAVNÉ?

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☒ poslechy | procvičování slovní zásoby | čtení a překlady |
| gramatická cvičení | psaní (eseje, dopisy, popisy) | ☒ práce s Internetem v AJ |
| mluvení ve dvojicích | individuální projev | další..... |

Appendix 2 – Two pieces of work made by apprentices: Whose am I?



Appendix 3 – A song quiz prepared by a technical school student for pair-work

FRIDAY I'M IN LOVE

I don't care if Monday is
Tuesday'sand Wednesday
Thursday Iabout you
It's Friday I'm in love

Monday you canapart
Tuesday Wednesdaymy heart
Thursday doesn't even
It's Friday I'm in love

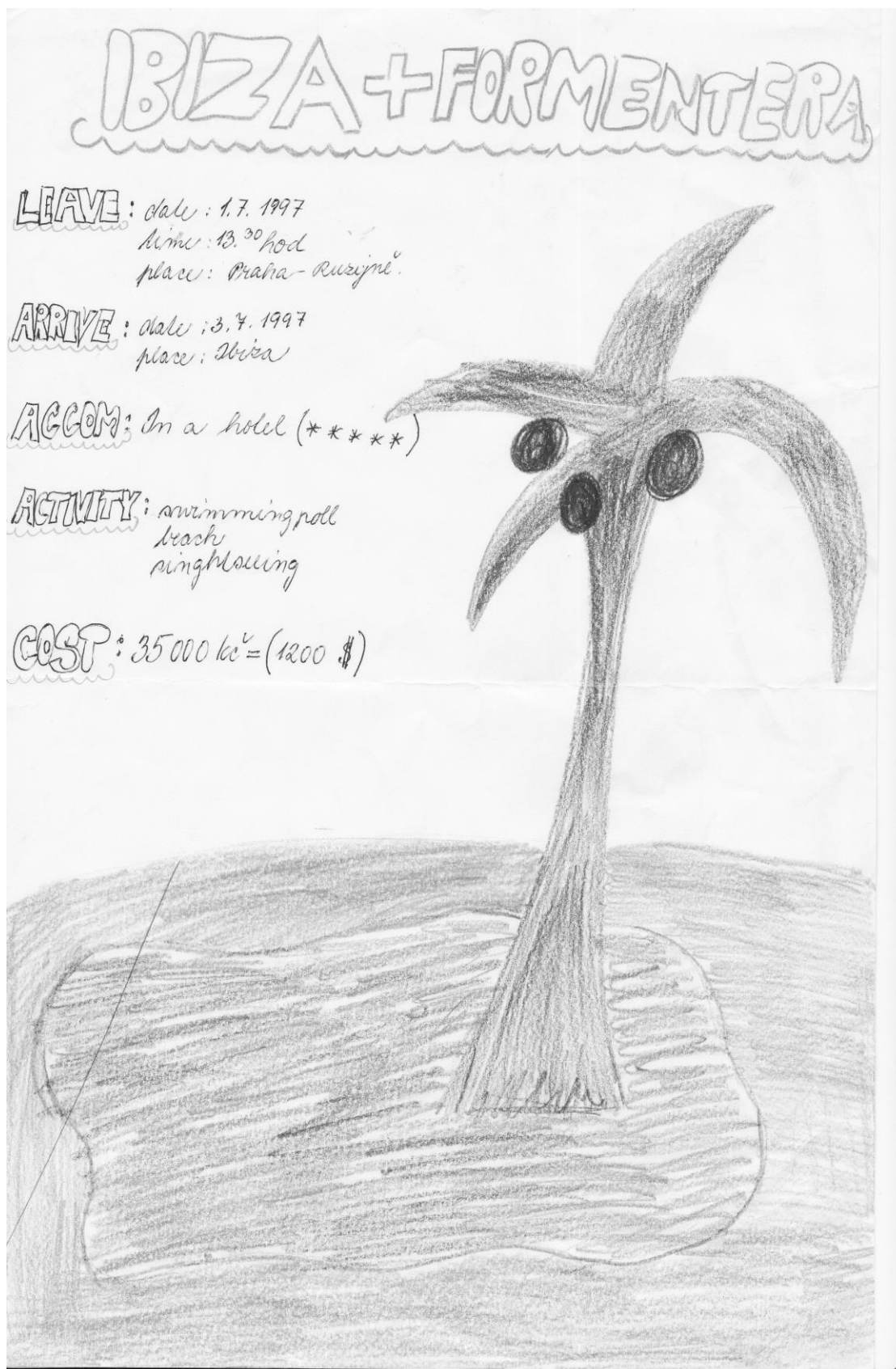
Saturday waait
And Sundaycomes too
But Fridayhesitate...

I don't care if Monday's
Tuesday Wednesday heart attack
Thursday looking back
It's Friday I'm in love

Monday you can hold
Tuesday Wednesday stay in
On Thursday the walls instead
It's Friday I'm in love

Saturday
And Sunday alwaystoo
But Friday never hesitate

Appendix 4 – Work by apprentices: Making holiday posters (individual work)



Appendix 5 – Technical school students planned their trip using the map in groups

