**SV5 case study report**

The study visit in Iceland was my third study visit in Erasmus+ Culture of learning project. During this visit I wanted to focus mostly on the ways of motivating students. Being both an English teacher and a class tutor I wanted to learn what methods are used in Aslandsskoli to motivate students. Before travelling to Iceland I asked myself the following questions:

1. In what ways do teachers motivate students to learn in Aslandsskoli?
2. What methods are used in teaching students the right attitude and positive behaviors?
3. How are students rewarded and punished when necessary?

The problem of motivating students is particularly interesting for me, because in my work I often search for new ideas and solutions to diversify students’ process of learning. My ambition is to create the lessons in such a way that gaining knowledge and learning new skills would be a pleasure for them. I would also like the sense of responsibility and fear of getting a bad mark not be their only motivation.

The visit in Aslandsskoli allowed me to look at the issue of motivating students in a completely different way. In this school exists a well-thought and well-prepared system of rewards. It is based both on noticing and rewarding successes of individual students but also on the fact that individual successes are the crucial part of the success of the group.

They use the system of gaining points, the rules are clear and the results are presented in a graphic way. A very interesting thing is the fact that all the classes take part in this competition, what gives them a chance to compete with their friends from other classes. This system is modified to fit the specific needs – certain skills, attitudes or behaviors. This method is very effective in an Icelandic school.

After coming back to Poland I analyzed the situation in the classes that I teach and in the class that I am a tutor of. I decided to make some changes and see if the methods based on the ones that I learned in Aslandsskoli will be as good in the conditions of polish school. The skill that I wanted to use in this experiment was learning new vocabulary. In one of the 5th grades I introduced a new way of rewarding students. They were given clear instructions what conditions they have to fulfill to get a reward. Once a week the students were given a list of ten new words. A week later they wrote a short quiz on these words. They did not get marks for these tests, only the points as feedback. What is more, those who got 60% or more, threw five corn seeds in a small jar. When they collected the full jar they got a reward. They also could decide themselves what the prizes were. They could have chosen a lesson with a film, a language game etc. Also those students who got minimum 75% of the points from three consecutive tests got an individual reward – a “very good” mark.

The students very quickly realized that the better they write the tests the quicker they get the reward. This method eliminated also the stress which could be caused by the fear of getting a bad mark. Although learning the new vocabulary was an additional and not compulsory work for the students, most of them made an effort to do it. After three months of using this method I conveyed a survey in this class to find out what are students’ opinions on this method. The questions were:

1. Did you like this form of learning new vocabulary?

NO / A LITTLE / YES / VERY MUCH

1. How hard did you learn new vocabulary?

NOT VERY HARD / A LITTLE / VERY HARD

1. How many words did you memorize?

NOT MANY / ABOUT A HALF / A LOT / ALMOST ALL

1. Would you like this method to be continued?

NO / YES

The results of this survey showed that the Icelandic system can be also efficient in Poland. The system which is based on strengthening positive behaviors and rewarding them is not only attractive for the students but also effective. The situations in which we can minimize the stress and discomfort caused by the fear of getting bad marks become more enjoyable, and the process of learning is faster and more effective. An additional benefit of this method was the possibility for students to choose their rewards. It gave them the sense of having an impact on their own process of learning and brought in a small competition.

The students in this class, after three months, not only enriched their English vocabulary in comparison to other classes in which this method was not used, but also a lot of them found a way to learn English easier and with more pleasure.

Of course, during this experiment, there were some students who did not make an effort and did not even try to learn new vocabulary. But it was a very tiny percentage (just two students).

The actions started after my visit in Iceland are only the starting point for further activities. The experiment showed that the system of individual and group rewards is effective. I could observe the improvement in students’ language skills, and also a positive impact on integrating the class, because students motivated each other and strengthened their sense of belonging to a group.

In my further work I would like to improve this system and introduce it in all the classes and also use it somehow in teaching correct attitudes and behaviors.

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