

Dissemination

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Project title: Teaching Foreign Language to Young Learners

Code: A1

Visit to Oslo University College, Faculty of Education and International Studies

20-30 April 2009

Tuesday 21 April

10.00

We had a formal meeting with the international coordination team. During the first week (from Tuesday to Thursday) I visited the classes and the kindergartens with two French colleagues. After the introducing Catrine had a presentation about the Norwegian education system, the Oslo University College and especially about the Faculty of Education and International Studies.

12.00

We visited Bygården Kindergarten (Bygården barnehage) where we observed an English lesson with 4-5 years old children. The teacher, Abbey is a native one, so she can use English fluently. The theme was about Teddy's birthday. Children made a cake in the morning, at midday they had a playful lesson where they can use their English by songs and activities, for example, to make a puzzle with the cards in small groups leading with the teacher's sentences in English. After the activities they celebrated Teddy with a cake and drink. She used Norwegian and English language parallel. One assistant helped her. The lesson took 30 minutes.

14.30

We observed three English lessons for teacher students. It was a resource lecture about differentiation. At the first lesson students worked in small groups together. Every group had a 'station' with a chart of differentiations. They used sticky notes to reflect and leave a comment, suggestion or question about the chart and after it they moved on. When they arrived back at their own chart they could review the notes had left for them. At the second lesson they had a presentation about these topics: why differentiate how we can use differentiated instruction, and strategies that support differentiation. At the third lesson they had a discussion activity of the examples guided by questions, for example: How does this example differ from the traditional teaching? How does it fit some of the key elements of the differentiation classroom? How was introduction differentiated? How were students grouped?

Wednesday 22 April

11.00

We visited Davina's Kindergarten (Davina's barnehage) where we observed an English lesson with 5-6 years old children. This kindergarten is a private one. Davina is a native teacher. She uses the Teddy project and lots of added materials. She is like an actress; she is not only singing a song or tells a poem, she acts them out. The lesson was joyful, full with lots of activities. When she used the booklet children could observe the original tools because she put them in front of the booklet. They could touch it and in this way she could involve them into the organization of the lesson. She used English language during the lesson and not very often Norwegian language only if it seemed necessary. One assistant helped her. The lesson took 30 minutes.

13.00

I had a formal meeting with Elena who is the coordinator of 'Learning English with Teddy' project. She let me know the materials. Teddy's box is included: teacher's book in Norwegian, 10 pupil booklets, DVD, songbook and CD, lotto.

Teddy is based on the idea that every child can learn English. The materials aim at giving all pupils good mastering experiences through play and social interaction. It takes into account that children learn in different ways, among other things, the teaching appeals to the use of several senses.

Julie Monsen has developed the teaching materials, has thirty years of teaching experience says: My experience in developing Teddy has shown that all children can learn a foreign language using orally based, practically oriented teaching.

Teddy is based on development psychologist Vygotsky's development theory on the relationship between learning and development, 'the zone of proximal development'. Vygotsky's belief is that what you can do today with somebody else; you can do on your own tomorrow. Teddy builds on the method in TEAACH. In order to give a child good mastering experiences, the teaching is structured and definite. This gives the child security, because the teaching situation is predictable and clear. Security gives the child the possibility to use his/her own sense and abilities, which are a condition for all learning.

They are going to the end of this project (it takes a year) and now Elena is working on the evaluation.

Thursday 23 April

8.30

We observed three English grammar workshops for teacher students. They practised grammatical things, for example types of verbs, phrases, fragments and so on. Students were future primary and lower secondary English teachers (because of the Norwegian educational system).

11.30

I had a meeting with Geir who is the international coordinator at the faculty. We had a discussion about the partnership between the Norwegian and the Hungarian Colleges, about the subjects what we can offer each other.

13.00

I had a formal meeting with Elena, who is the coordinator of Teddy project and Christine, who is a French colleague and also an English teacher. We had a discussion about the Teddy's project. We shared our national and personal experiences on English teaching.

Friday 24 April

11.30

I had a chance to join the teacher's informal meeting at the early childhood department and I could personally talk to the other colleagues about the education system, differences and same things. We could share opinions and ideas about our own teacher training customs, pro and contra.

12.30

I visited Frogner Kindergarten (Frogner barnehage) and observed an English lesson with Abbey. The theme (Teddy's birthday) was the same as she did on Tuesday with another group, but she used another way to work on it. At first they welcomed Teddy as usually. After it she showed them the pictures of the booklet and they spoke about the situations. She used Norwegian and English language parallel. They practised the names of some animals, for example duck, cow, cat, dog and horse together. After it was an individual work, everybody chose an animal from the bag and she or he tried to say the name of it in English or Norwegian. Abbey helps them if it was necessary. And finally they worked in three small groups. They had sheets with different animals on them. They tried to sing the Old MacDonald's song together. When they heard an animal's name they had a look their sheet and they put a marble on the picture if it was on it. At the end of the song they checked their work and said goodbye to Teddy. One assistant helped her. The lesson took 15 minutes.

I had a short interview with Abbey after this lesson. I asked some questions, which were focus on: how this project could be adapted in Hungary, for example; what you think about the booklets (My interest was focus on appeared Norwegian customs in it, for example, Teddy with a Norwegian passport, Teddy is skiing in winter.); how necessary and important is to work with native speaks in early childhood.

Monday 27 April

9.30

I visited Davina's Kindergarten (Davina's barnehage) again where I observed an English lesson with 3-4 years old children. Bridget is a native teacher. She started her lesson with saying hello Teddy. They told a poem together about Peter and Paul who are birds. After that they counted with the grandmothers. She involved the children into a part of the activity, for example, to put together the grandmothers. After that they practised three animal's name (cow, horse and sheep). They sang together the Old MacDonald's song with these animals. She used mostly English during her lesson. Two assistants helped her. The lesson took 15 minutes.

11.30

I joined an informal meeting with some of the faculty's teachers at early childhood department. They were interested in the Hungarian Educational Systems and actual difficulties. I spoke about our subject for future primary teachers, which one would like to make them ready teaching English in early childhood.

Tuesday 28 April

9.00 – 14.00

I observed the international students' presentations of Multi-cultural Identity in a Global World course.

Each presentation took approx. 18-20 minutes, followed by a few minutes' questions. The presentations were focus on the following points: Why did they choose this topic? Short overview of the report, some dilemmas/challenges working with the topic, what did you find interesting? What could you want to do further research on if you had the time?

The titles of the representations were: The role of the teacher, "Great, a multicultural classroom!" Teaching in a multicultural context, Cultural Inclusion, Treatment of culture in the Catalan and Norwegian educational systems: focusing on multiculturalism, Children's rights in Norwegian kindergartens, (He)art!, The interactional relationship between the teacher and the child(ren).

Wednesday 29 April

9.00 – 12.00

I observed the international students' presentations of Multi-cultural Identity in a Global World course.

The titles of the representations were: Nonverbal communication in the classroom, the influence of globalisation in a classroom, Children's autonomy in the classroom, Relationship in the kindergartens and in the schools, Participation in Norwegian school lessons.

12.00

I joined a semi-formal meeting and a Goodbye Lunch with the students of Multi-cultural Identity in a Global World course. I had a chance to talk to international students about standing and learning in another country's college. Geir, who is the leader of the international course summarized his general opinions and feelings about the course and got information about the evolution.

Summary

If we would like to welcome international students, the language can be a difficulty; because in our college we have not courses in English, maybe because of we have not foreign students at the moment. We need to examine this problem and have to work on it.

The materials of Teddy's project seem to be useful in Hungarian kindergartens. We have to work on in-service trainings if we would like to start it in practise and we need to think about how we can involve this knowledge into the graduated level.