

Technická univerzita v Liberci
FAKULTA PEDAGOGICKÁ

Katedra: anglického jazyka
Studijní program: učitelství všeobecně vzdělávacích předmětů pro ZŠ
Kombinace: informatika – anglický jazyk

Použití prvků dramatické výchovy v úvodní části hodin
anglického jazyka

Using Elements of Drama Activities at the Beginning
Phase of English Language Classes

Die Benutzung von Elementen der Dramatischen
Erziehung in der Einleitungsphase der Stunden der
Englischen Sprache

Diplomová práce: 02-FP-KAJ-0091

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Počet

Stran	Slov	Obrázků	tabulek	pramenů	příloh
71	18441	0	0	17	5

V Praze dne: 15. května. 2003

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Poděkování

Chci poděkovat vedoucí mé práce Lence Pávové za podnětné rady a doporučení, které mi trpělivě poskytovala kdykoliv jsem jí o ně požádala.

Poděkovat chci také své rodině a přátelům za neobyčejnou podporu a pomoc v normálním životě, bez kterých bych tuto práci nikdy nemohla ve zdraví dokončit.

Resumé

Práce se zabývá způsobem uvedení vyučovací hodiny a vlivem úvodu na její další průběh. Konkrétně, je zaměřena na možnosti aplikace dramatické výchovy v inicializačních částech hodin anglického jazyka s cílem obrácení pozornosti žáků k výuce, udržení jejich soustředěnosti a především zvýšení jejich motivace k práci se zpracovávaným tématem. Součástí práce je praktický projekt, který dokazuje, že začínat hodiny anglického jazyka dramatickou aktivitou je výhodné, protože dramatické aktivity svou dynamikou, tvořivostí a zajímavostí příznivě ovlivňují další průběh vyučovací hodiny a usnadňují učební proces. Projekt byl testován na základní škole ve 3 skupinách žáků ve věku od 8 do 14 let jejichž úroveň angličtiny byla začátečníci, mírně pokročilí a pokročilí. Závěr projektu ukazuje, že dramatická výchova v hodinách angličtiny není jen doplňkovou či okrajovou metodou, ale že může být využívána jako efektivní vyučovací metoda pro každodenní výuku anglického jazyka.

Summary

This diploma thesis deals with a way of commencement of an teaching lesson and its influence of on the rest of the lesson. Particularly, it concentrates on possibilities of application of drama elements at the beginning phase of an English language lesson with the aim to gain the pupils' attention, keep their concentration on the subject and increase their motivation to the topic of an English language lesson. An integral part of the diploma work is the practical project, which proves that opening of the English language lessons with a drama activity is useful because they have a positive influence on the course of the lesson and facilitate the learning process by their dynamics, creativity and attractiveness. This project was tested at the elementary school with three groups of pupils (beginners, pre-intermediate, and intermediate) of age 8 to 14 years. The outcome of the project indicates that drama in language learning is not only a supplementary or a marginal method, but it shows that drama in language learning can be used as an effective teaching method for everyday teaching of English language.

Zusammenfassung

Die Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit der Einführungsart der Lehrstunde und mit dem Einfluss dieser Einführung auf weiteren Verlauf der Lehrstunde. Konkret beschäftigt sich die Arbeit mit Anwendungsmöglichkeiten der dramatischen Erziehung. Es geht v. a. um Anfangsphasen von Stunden der englischen Sprache – das Ziel ist die Aufmerksamkeit der Schüler auf den Unterricht zu lenken, ihre Konzentration zu halten und die Motivation zur Arbeit mit dem Lehrstoff zu erhöhen. Als Bestandteil der Arbeit steht das durchgeführte Projekt, das erweist, dass die Einführung der Lehrstunde mittels der dramatischen Aktivität sehr günstig ist, denn diese Aktivität beeinflusst positiv das Verlauf der Lehrstunde durch Dynamik, Schaffenkraft und Originalität und erleichtert so den Unterrichtsvorgang. Das Projekt wurde im Englischunterricht einer Grundschule getestet – drei Schülergruppen (Anfänger, Mittelstufe, Oberstufe) im Alter vom 8 bis 14 haben daran teilgenommen. Die Diplomarbeit kommt zum Schluss, dass die dramatische Erziehung im Fremdsprachennunterricht nicht nur als eine alternative Unterrichtsmethode gelten muss, sondern auch als eine effektive Unterrichtsmethode für jede Art von Sprachunterricht.

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KEY TERMS

To make this Diploma Thesis clear, several important terms which will appear throughout the project should be explained so that they cannot be ambiguous for the teachers of the English language.

Elements of Drama

To be less confusing, I decided to use the term elements of drama which gathers all the features connected to drama in education, for example: a special classroom equipment, seating arrangement, pupils' and teacher's attitude or previous drama-in-education experiences of the pupils. The term also covers single stages of drama activities, values and goals of drama, benefits of drama and the drama principles as they are described in the Chapter 1.1 *Drama in Language Learning*.

Drama

The term drama is mainly understood as drama in language learning but also as creative drama, drama in education, educational drama, children's drama, creative dramatics, informal drama and other terms which all result from many different translations between Czech and English. In the Czech language the terms are '*drama ve výuce jazyků*', '*tvořivá dramatika*', '*výchovná dramatika*' and '*dramatická výchova*'.

Drama Activities

In this diploma project, a drama activity means any single activity, consisting of at least one element of drama, even though it may not be a pure drama activity. It can be a dialogue or role-play, but also an activity of movement, or a non-verbal or spatial activity. It may be composed of several pieces of drama-in-education techniques as well as it can be made up of only one.

1. A DRAMA ACTIVITY AS A STARTER OF AN ENGLISH LESSON

*“I hear and I forget,
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand.”
(Chinese proverb)*

The post-revolutional arrival of the autonomy of decisions into Czech schools has noticeably changed the Czech school system. Schools have modernised not only their appearance but also their teaching methods. This fact has been reflected mainly in language teaching where the usage of foreign textbooks have made language lessons colourful and fresh and it has shown how variable and flexible the language teaching can be. Many teachers have tried new, alternative, non-frontal ways of educating children, and one of the methods is drama in education.

In the year 2000, I took part in the Basic Course of Drama in Education for teachers (*Základní kurz dramatické výchovy pro učitele*), organised by The Association for Creative Dramatics (*Sdružení pro tvořivou dramatiku*), where I was introduced to the main approaches, methods and techniques of drama in education. As I started to discover how drama in education works globally, I focused on its usage in English language lessons. Although this field is deeply developed and widely used in schools of English-speaking countries, it has not been generally explored in the Czech school system yet. This fact has made me consider focusing my diploma thesis on the subject of drama in education in English classes in Czech schools.

During my teaching experiences and observations in four Czech basic schools I learned that drama activities were used only as a minor teaching method in the Czech teaching system. When investigating, I found out that for many teachers drama meant dialogues and role-plays which left out a wide spectrum of possibilities for the use of drama in effective foreign language teaching and learning.

This project concentrates on using drama elements at the beginning phase of an English language lesson, with the focus on gaining the pupils' attention to

the subject, keeping their concentration and increasing their motivation for the topic of the lesson.

1.1 Drama in Language Learning

1.1.1 What is Drama and a Drama Activity

'Drama is a unique teaching tool, vital for language development.'

(Maley, Duff, 1991:6)

Drama is a complex system of educating children, based on learning through the pupils' experience. To explain it thoroughly, I decided to use various quotations from six authors, Doughill, Machková, Maley and Duff, Wessels and Way, who see drama and drama activities from slightly diverse angles and all together depict what drama and drama activities should mean for language teachers.

In Czech schools, drama is usually associated with theatre and that might be misleading for teachers. Even though both drama activities and theatre have the same basis – 'imitation of the action' – as Aristotle said, and they overlap, drama activities do not mean plays in front of a passive audience, rigid dialogues, short sketches, and mechanically memorised words of other people. Right on the contrary, they require active involvement of pupils in role-plays, games, simulations, improvisation, mime, and drama games. As John Doughill (1987) makes it clear: "the two fields are entirely separate, informal drama being concerned with the participants' experience, and theatre with interpretation." (Doughill 1987:1) This is the essential difference between drama as a "theatre" and drama as a teaching method.

Eva Machková (1998) looks at another important point of drama. She says that "drama in education is an exploring and experiencing of an action in the fictional situation through role-plays and drama-acting." (Machková 1998:32, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 1*) This expresses the possibility of trying out the language in the safe world of a classroom among well-known mates. The fact of knowing that the class is simulating an action makes pupils feel comfortable and facilitates their learning.

Drama activities can be demanding but also entertaining for pupils because they have to use their creativity and imagination. Alan Maley and Alan Duff (1991) introduce drama activities in these words: “They are activities which give the pupil an opportunity to use his or her own personality in creating the material on which *part* of the language classes is to be based. These activities draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express himself or herself through gesture.” (Maley and Duff 1991:6) Indeed, it is important for the pupils to use their own ideas, opinions and senses, and such participation challenges them to work harder because they know that they can create their own piece of the lesson. The teacher usually gives either a form or a topic and the rest depends on the pupils.

Simply but exactly is drama in education described by Charlyn Wessels’. Her interpretation of drama gathers all the previous statements about drama in education in a straightforward way. She says: “Drama is doing. Drama is being. Drama is such a normal thing. It is something that we all engage in daily when faced with difficult situations.” (Wessels, 1998:7). From this quotation it may seem that drama is an uncomplicated teaching method but to understand it entirely, we have to experience it.

Finally, the last and probably most illustrative explanation of drama is given by Brian Way (1996). Here is an example of what Way calls the ‘precise’ function of drama: “If a learner of English asked you ‘What is a blind person?’, you might simply reply, ‘A blind person cannot see’, and this would probably satisfy him intellectually. But if you replied, ‘Shut your eyes and try to find your pen on the desk in front of you’, you would be involving him in the actual experience of being blind, and would thus satisfy him not only intellectually, but emotionally as well, and possibly inspire in him feelings of empathy with all blind people.” (Way, 1996:3)

These are one of the closest and most accurate explanations, which try to give teachers a rough idea of what drama activities are. However, to be fully understood, drama activities have to be experienced, acted, done and practised.

1.1.2 Benefits and Advantages of Drama in Language Learning

Teachers often need arguments and motives to become interested in a new teaching method or technique. They want to know *why* they should test it. The following section sets itself an aim to attract the language teachers for experimenting with drama techniques in their English language lessons by presenting the benefits and advantages of drama in language learning.

According to Doughill (1987), the main advantages of drama techniques are simulation of reality, developing self-expression and allowance for experiments with the language. Simulation of reality is not only a motivating factor, but mainly important preparation for the language usage in real life; it means that the teacher establishes such circumstances in the classroom in which pupils use the language in a meaningful manner. Similarly, developing of self-expression helps pupils to become more confident in the use of the foreign language. Drama techniques are based on a ‘wholeperson’ approach to language learning. Finally, allowance for experiments with the language strengthens pupils’ courage to speak and consequently make mistakes, which might be traumatic for some learners.

Drama techniques also provide a heterogeneous way of language learning as it is aimed on all the types (auditive, visual, tactile) of learners. The advantages mentioned above play the essential roles in drama in language learning, where pupils must feel safe in the class and where atmosphere is vital for accurate development of learners. Language experimenting with any kind of blocks and discouragement is senseless.

Another considerable advantage of drama activities is that they “help to bridge the gap between the cosy and controlled world of the classroom and seemingly chaotic composition of language in the world outside,” as Doughill (1987:6) declares. It is always much easier to speak to ‘my-level’ colleagues than to ‘natives’. For some pupils even the classroom might be stressful environment. Then the chance to improve and try the language among the people who have the same aims and possibly similar problems should be taken as full advantage.

In conclusion, cross-curricular drama techniques, which are widely used in Anglo-American school systems, provide an extensive range of usage (described in chapter 2.2 *Types of Drama Activities Which Are Suitable as Introductory*

Activity). They focus more on pupils' own discovery and experiencing rather than simple introduction of a language by the teacher. This makes them not only an effective method of learning but also a popular technique with pupils.

1.1.3 Functions of Drama in Language Learning

The main function of drama is the involvement of all parts of the personality – intellectual, emotional and physical. And that is what makes it so popular in Anglo-American school system. Learning the language is not only a matter of intellect. Learners necessarily need to touch all parts of their personality to remember and use the language.

One more function of drama is that it changes the relationship between the pupil and the teacher into a relationship of co-operation and partnership. As Machková (1998) declares, “the pupil-actor is a partner to the teacher in a creative, original and independent attitude towards a problem and its solution.” (Machková, 1998:43, for the original Czech citation see *Appendix IV, item 2*) Thus the teacher is rather a facilitator who helps the pupils to learn and his ambition should not be only to correct, forbid, dictate or require but mostly to support, advise, suggest and recommend.

1.1.4 Values and Goals of Drama in Language Learning

According to Machková (1998), the main values and goals of drama in language learning are “social and emotional growth, development of communicative skills, development of imagination and creativity, ability of critical thinking, advance in self-control and introspection, build-up of aesthetic, art and cultural knowledge.” (Machková 1998:51, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 3*). These all are closely connected to the communicative approach and task-based learning which have been more and more popular in language learning in recent years. Thus I see helpful to look at each of the goals in detail.

Social and Emotional Growth

Nearly all the experts put the social growth on the first place of drama-in-language-learning goals. To understand the others, to be able to live together with

them, we should try to enter their positions and to feel as they do. And drama enables that as simulation is its main tool. Consequently, being someone else in different situations helps us to judge people more objectively and be more tolerant to the others.

Role-plays (simulations, plays, dialogues, etc.) are also closely connected with the emotional experience because in given situations pupils come across various emotions.

Development of Communicative Skills

The more we speak, the more we learn how to speak. This does not apply only to vocabulary and grammar but also to the “art” of communication, which means also the non-verbal part, miming and the complex expression - the often forgotten, but integral part of communication in language classes. As Machková (1998) says “doing drama develops the skill to express the thoughts, attitudes and feelings, it also builds up the ability to pass them on the others in a way they would understand what the speaker wants to tell.” (Machková 1998:52, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 4*) This ability is important especially for young learners who often have communicative problems.

Development of Imagination and Creativity

What can often be seen in English language lessons is a pupil repeating dialogues from a tape or following pictures in textbooks, even in higher level classes where pupils could improvise. Great opportunity for drama techniques is especially the part of English language lessons where pupils can imagine where the given dialogue or scene could take place, can act the scenes and add their own extra ideas. Drama in language learning also supports pupils’ creativity and imagination because it emphasises their originality. Sometimes giving examples of the required language is redundant (if it is not necessary for understanding the instructions) and for some pupils might be rather bounding.

Ability of Critical Thinking

The drama techniques often use a problem-solving method, when pupils are given a situation, characters and context and they have to solve a problem. For

example, a boy runs away from his home, the pupils know the reasons for his runaway (bad marks), they can imagine how his parents feel at 8 p.m. when the boy is still not at home, and finally they can decide what the boy is going to do next (return home or stay out?). That demands the ability of asking questions, judging various situations and then voting for the best situation. The drama – imitation of the action – helps pupils to see the situation from the outside and then their decision and all the discussion about the problem is easier than in real life but still involving enough.

Advance in Self-control and Introspection

The most significant feature of drama in language learning is that it uses the encouraging method of co-operation instead of competition. Thus all the pupils have their own space to express themselves and they are given opportunity to do what they like most and be good at it. Observing the others and evaluating their work also helps to support one's self-confidence, and consequently self-control because the pupils' most important evaluators are their mates.

Build-up of Aesthetic, Art and Cultural knowledge

As the integral parts of drama in education are plays, poems, songs or novels, many drama activities (especially role-plays, communicative activities and word games) are based on various texts from famous writers, poets or singers. Pupils discuss the meaning and message of the text and then they may analyse its form or just interpret it. Such discussions or analyses are worthy for the pupils as they learn about classic writers or poets or when analysing a pop-song and its message. These activities provide pupils often surprising discovery of opinions and ideas they have not expected.

1.2 The Introductory Phase of an English Language Lesson

“It’s easy to forget (...), that each person enters the room in a different mood (...). If the group is to work together, it needs to be in harmony.”

Maley, Duff (1991:2)

People do often remember the very first impression of their bosses, lovers or teachers. The first impression is strong; although it might be misleading, and usually takes a long time to change. It is the same with an introductory activity; the first thing done in the classroom strongly influences the rest of the work. The introductory activity has a great power as it affects pupils’ attitude towards the lesson and gives it pace and atmosphere. Thus it is important not to waste this best time at the beginning of the lesson and to use it effectively for the successful opening of the lesson.

1.2.1 Features of an Introductory Activity

The purpose of an introductory activity is not only to introduce the topic or theme of the lesson, put the group together, engage the pupils for further work or collect materials, but also as Maley and Duff (1991) say “to mark off what has gone before from what is to come, help to wipe out immediate worries and concerns, put the pupils in a relaxed state and increase awareness of others and oneself.” (Maley and Duff 1991:38) These key features of an introductory activity are going to be discussed in the following section.

Introduce the Topic

Imagine yourself that you are going to do something but you do not know what and you do not know how. The feeling of uncertainty and insecurity definitely does not positively contribute to the process of learning. The topic of the lesson should be introduced to the pupils as soon as possible. The pupils do not have to be told what exactly is going to be done, they might discover it during the introductory activity or they might be lead to it, but at least by the end of the introductory activity they should know or anticipate what is going to happen in the next stage of the lesson. Discussion about the following work could be set at

the end of the introductory activity or the pupils may guess it. If they are on the wrong track, they must be told or navigated to the right direction. Without knowing what is going to happen, the teacher cannot carry on with another activity successfully because the pupils might be confused.

Put the Group Together

There is a new trend in Czech schools based on creating language classes not according to the original forms but rather according to the pupils' level of English. Thus pupils from different forms meet in English language lessons which means that they might not know each other very well. If the teacher intends to let the pupils work together, which will obviously happen one day, he or she should use the first few lessons for setting or improving the relation teacher–pupil and pupil–pupil. That might seem as a waste of time but later, when the group co-operates well and the teacher does not have to solve problems such as who is going to work with whom, the teacher will gain this time back.

Engage Pupils for the Further Work

After a first bite people decide whether they finish the food or not. The same happens with the pupils. If the first activity “tastes bad”, the teacher will probably not see enthusiastic faces in front of him or her. The first activity should promise what will happen, in what rhythm and atmosphere. It should gain the pupils' attention and engage them with the English language learning as much as possible.

Mark off What Has Gone Before From What Is to Come

The pupils wait in the classroom for their teacher. Usually his or her arrival means that the lesson has started. However, at the beginning of the lesson the teacher often has to execute the class administration and in the meantime the pupils start to talk together. The introductory activity defines the beginning of learning noticeably and the pupils know that they have to start to pay attention. Therefore in order not to lose the time, the introductory activity should start as soon as possible otherwise the pupils' interest will be aimed at their affairs and to gain it back can cost a few minutes.

Help to Wipe out Immediate Worries and Concerns

Pupils often come to the class with their heads full of things which happened before or which are to come (a math test, problems in the family, with their friends, etc.). If the pupils are busy with their problems, whatever the teacher does passes them untouched. Thus the introductory activity should count on such a possibility and should be designed in such a way that it would involve the pupils' concentration and attention so that they forget about the world outside the classroom.

Put the Pupils in a Relaxed State

Pupils might come to the classroom frolicsome after the physical education class or, on the contrary, they could be sleepy after lunch. Both the states are undesirable. Hence, depending on the situation, the introductory activity is to settle the pupils down or stir them up. The introductory activity must be prepared for both (or even more) situations and must manage to prepare the pupils for learning.

Increase Awareness of Others and Oneself

The whole-classroom atmosphere is essential for successful learning. The pupils must feel safe and supported not only from the side of the teacher but also from their colleagues. When preparing an introductory activity, the teacher should think of the concrete pupils he or she prepares it for. For instance, if the group is composed of rather shy pupils, the very first activity should not be individual miming in front of the others. The introductory activity must be designed for the particular group concerning the pupils' experience with the drama in order to support their awareness.

Materials for the Further Work

Teacher's objectives of the introductory activity may be either to gain some language (sentences, expressions, vocabulary, etc.) for further work or to find out what the pupils already know about the topic of the lesson – they answer some questions and consequently the teacher decides whether to revise or to continue. Such an introductory activity comprehends the technique of eliciting

and is an important base for activities which will follow. It means that the teacher must clearly specify what outcomes he or she expects from this activity.

1.2.2 Comparison with the Other Phases of the Lesson

All the above mentioned characteristics of an introductory activity are the integral part of the introduction itself. Some of the attributes (collecting materials for further work or putting the pupils in a relaxed state) could also appear in other phases of the lesson, but usually take part at the beginning of a 45-minute lesson as later there could not be enough time to finish or develop them properly.

The introductory activity in comparison with other phases of the lesson should be dynamic in order to start the lesson positively and has to pass into the following activities logically. The introductory activity should introduce the subject and theme of the lesson, and also present the aim and objective (if it is not purposely hidden). The following stages of the lesson frequently come out of the introductory activity or at least are somehow connected to it. Otherwise, in later phases of the lesson the topic is not usually introduced and the pupils should be already tuned for the English language learning and should not be disturbed by their problems from the outer world. To prepare the pupils for smooth work in the rest of the lesson should be an aim of the introductory activity.

1.3 Drama Activities at the Beginning Phase of an English Language Lesson

Drama in language learning can be used in all stages of the lesson but it nicely covers demands of the introductory activities because of the wide spectrum of tools that drama in language learning has. If the teacher wants to introduce the topic, he or she may use any of activities of movement, for example miming. During the very first few lessons, the group needs to be put together and here the communicative activities or activities done in a circle can serve well. To engage pupils for further work is not an easy task. Using drama activities, the teacher can employ some of the word games like crosswords, puzzles, or word-chains, which are very popular with pupils, especially the young ones. The introductory activity also has to mark off what has gone before from what is to come and this is again a task for an outstanding activity which would gain the pupils' attention – it can be any role-play or spatial activity. The right choice of an introductory activity influences the rest of the whole lesson so it must be done precisely, judging all the important aspects such as number of the pupils, the topic of the lesson, demands of the lesson, the state of the pupils, the previous and following lesson, the day of the week and the number of the lesson of the day.

In my teaching project I tried to prove that drama activity incorporated at the beginning of an English language lesson gains the attention of pupils, helps them to keep their concentration on the subject and increases pupils' motivation for the topic.

2. METHODOLOGICAL PART

This teaching model is based on the presumption that learning process is more facilitated and effective if the pupils' attention and concentration will be pointed at the topic of the lesson. The project assumes that one of the ways to gain pupils' attention, help them to keep their concentration on the subject and increase their motivation for learning English language is to start the English language lesson with a drama activity focused on the topic closely connected with the contents of the lesson. As Maley and Duff (1991) say, "drama helps us to keep all thirty people active all the time by making use of dormant potential in the room. ... [drama activities] help to get rid of the diffidence and boredom that come from being passive most of the time." (Maley and Duff, 1991:12).

To start an English language lesson with a drama activity successfully, the teacher's preliminary preparation should be discussed. In the next chapter the needs for drama activities are reflected and the types of drama activities are ruminated.

2.1 Basic Needs for Drama Activities

Drama activities are demanding for preparation as not only they must be well planned, but also the pupils, the teacher and the classroom should be adapted for experimenting with drama.

2.1.2 The Language Needs

Preparation for any lesson has deeper background developing from the curriculum, the personality of the teacher, and the psychical and cognitive level of the pupils.

Since the pupils are the most important "component" for any kind of drama, the teacher has to consider their attitude towards it. Before he or she starts to practice any drama techniques, the pupils need to have some overall knowledge and skills. They will need a certain amount of language to be able to use it for the drama activities.

Nevertheless, even a complete beginner not knowing any English can start with drama. For instance miming is great for the elementary levels. However, not all the lessons can start with miming and besides, even miming must be set by

using English. The language known by pupils could be divided into three groups: the language used by the teacher, the language used among pupils, and finally the language used for the activity.

The Language Used by the Teacher

The language used by the teacher is most essential for drama activities. In the very first lesson, the pupils should be exposed to the language that the teacher is going to use frequently. Therefore, the commands like *stand up, sit down, come to the blackboard, make a circle, walk around the class, work in pairs* etc. are suggested to be introduced at the very beginning.

The Language Used among Pupils

If the teacher wants to eliminate using the Czech language to minimum, the pupils have to be familiar with the language they want to produce because many drama activities are pupil-based. The language that the pupils need to produce might be for instance: *What did she say?, It's your turn., What shall I do?*, etc. Even though it seems unlikely, if pupils know (and are able to use) such simple phrases, the chance they will not use their mother language grows rapidly and that should be also the teacher's aim.

The Language Used for the Activity

Beside the teacher's commands and the phrases "in use", the last part of pupils' known language is the language needed for the activity itself – the dialogue, song, verse, or whatever the teacher needs in the concrete activity. The vocabulary used should not be new for the pupils as this paper is focused on the introductory activity, which means the very first activity in the lesson. The pupils must feel comfortable during the introductory activity, and if they work with the "already known" material, they feel safe, which contributes to improving of the learning process. Re-cycling of materials that the pupils prepared for homework might be enormously effective.

2.1.2 The Teacher

Personality

The personalities of teachers are so diverse that finding some common characteristics for majority of teachers or a teachers' profession could seem impossible. When trying to analyse the specifics of this occupation, certain qualities, significant for this job, can be found. Important traits are abilities like expressing thoughts simply, attracting pupils, communication and co-operation and also objective and fair evaluating.

In literature many categorisations of the teachers can be found. According to Čáp (1993), there are paidotrops (teachers focused more on pupils) and logotrops (teachers focused more on the subject). Paidotrops usually work at lower grades, while logotrops rather work with older pupils. Tonnuci (1994) sees disparity between a teacher accenting transmission (presenting the knowledge, attitudes, opinions) and, on the other hand, a teacher educating constructively (assuming that "the pupils know" and creating conditions for active gaining of knowledge, skills, attitudes and opinions). Finally, Koř'a (1994) develops the portrayal of a suitable drama teacher in the following words: "the task of the teacher is rather to help the child to discover the characteristics of connections in the world. In the centre of attention in education there are meetings with child, mutual understanding and respectful dialogue."(Koř'a, 1994:16, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 5*). Machková (1998) presents an idea about a perfect drama teacher who "not only lets his abilities melt and recast into a pupil's personality but is also able to find self-realisation in the teaching." (Machková, 1998:32, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 6*)

These quotations show that the teaching profession can be explained variously. Personal qualities of teachers-to-be are first tested during the entrance exams at Faculty of Education. There the examiners try to choose such students who are patient with children, noise and confusion resistant, who are able to tolerate agitation and permanent disturbance, who are willing to take responsibility not only for children safety, but mainly for their development. Next, the successful applicant should be confident in speaking to children and their parents, and he or she should realise that the feedback and co-operation with other adults is rather occasional.

A teacher using drama in language learning should fulfil all the above mentioned requirements and in addition should be creative, communicative and co-operative. Moreover, he or she should have a certain degree of communicative, theatrical expression.

Qualification

Nowadays, there are more possibilities to study drama in education. In this thesis only the types of studies aimed on students or graduates of Faculties of Education or professional teachers are mentioned. The secondary schools of education and supplementary studies for actors are left out intentionally.

Drama in education can be studied as a special discipline at Divadelní Akademie Múzických Umění (DAMU) in Prague and at Janáčkova Akademie Múzických Umění (JAMU) in Brno. It is a five-year study which can be internal or external, finished with the degrees BcA or MgA.

Another possibility is to study drama in education as one subject within a programme for teachers at Faculties of Education in Ostrava, Praha, Brno, České Budějovice, Ústí nad Labem and Plzeň. These faculties offer studies of drama in education within the programme for teachers of first grade, special pedagogy or as a separate discipline depending on the relevant offer of each faculty.

The last and probably the most spread are additional courses for teachers. These are offered by Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy University in Brno, Divadelní Akademie Múzických Umění in Prague and mainly by the Association for Creative Dramatics. These seminars, workshops and long-term courses are accredited by the Ministry of Education.

The main subject at all forms of studies is practical drama in education. At the beginning, the participant perceives drama-in-education experience from the pupil's point of view when he or she is lead to the personal development by the instructor in the same way the teacher leads his or her pupils. Then the methodical reflection follows when the participants try to explore the theme from the teacher's point of view by examination of the methodology, techniques of the work, motivation etc.

Other subjects like voice education, physical education, acting education, art of speech, pedagogy, psychology, theory and methodology of drama in

education and other more specialised subjects, according to the type of studies, are all components of drama in education.

2.1.3 The Environment for Drama in Language Learning

The Group of Pupils

According to Machková, “the only need (to practice drama in education) is a group of pupils, a room and a tambourine; the other things are helpful, but not essential” (Machková, 1997:41, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 7*). The groups of pupils can be various, the ones composed of 10 – 20 pupils work best because they are big enough to offer various personalities and multifarious opinions and ideas, and at the same time are small enough to enable the pupils know each other well. Moreover, if the group contains pupils of approximately the same age it is easier to choose the engaging topic for all the members. The groups can be girlish or boyish only but frequently they are heterogeneous. Equal experience with drama in education is advantageous as it can easily happen that for someone the work is too difficult or, on the contrary, too simple. Sometimes it is possible to take advantage of more experienced pupils as leaders, but generally it is better if the group progresses together.

The relationships in the group should be friendly and relaxed but also respective. Certain rules should be observed in the group such as no late arrivals, mutual respect, no disturbance while working etc. Also, to make the pupils interrupt the activity they are working on and turn their attention to the teacher, clear signals should be arranged, for example clapping or rising hands.

The Classroom and its Equipment

While using drama in education as a teaching method, majority of teachers usually have to stay in ordinary classrooms. Unfortunately, schools which have a special classroom for drama in education are still exceptional.

But even a regular classroom can be modified for running, laying down and doing other activities demanded by drama in education. It should be possible to move the desks and chairs to the walls and make room for sitting in a circle, catch and chase etc. Valuable and fragile objects should be moved away from the

reach of pupils so that they could freely move without fear of breaking something. The floor should be clean so the pupils can sit or lay down on it. Simply “the space where whatever can happen”, as Way (1997:36) says, should be created.

The Teaching Aids

Nowadays, in the time of multimedia, when the teacher tries hard to attract pupils' attention and deliver some knowledge in the most interesting form, he or she needs some teaching aids. The most essential is a tambourine, which the teacher can use for leading the pupils with some rhythm and for starting or finishing activities. A tape recorder with CD player is also crucial (assuming the teacher is able to operate it.) as it serves not only for listening activities, but also the teacher can also evoke various feelings in pupils or just bring about certain atmosphere during a run of an activity. Another useful aids for suggesting the topic or theme of a lesson can be diverse pictures, photographs, or pieces of textile.

2.2 Types of Drama Activities Suitable as an Introductory Activity

Drama activities are variable and they differ a lot. Such diversity is valuable for language learning because it makes the lessons kaleidoscopic. However, in usage such multiplicity may cause problems to teachers especially when drama activities are used as starters. Therefore a short description of types of drama activities suitable for introductory activities and suggestions for its usage in lesson openings is the subject matter of the following paragraphs.

2.2.1 Role-plays

Role-plays activities are based on creating characters and their behaviour which is based on studying the person's characteristics and a situation in which the person is. During such exercises pupils can analyse the characters, their feelings, thoughts and attitudes. Simultaneously, the pupils have to deal with the person's everyday situations. These should be chosen appropriately to the age, experience and interest of the pupils. Younger pupils might be interested, for example, in a runaway from home, while older pupils can be attracted to the question of punishment.

Example activities:

- **Who Is It?**

One pupil goes behind the door and the group chooses a well-known person which can be connected with the topic of the lesson. The pupil from behind the door has to find out who the person is by asking questions. The group has to answer only the truth.

- **Hats**

The teacher supplies the class with a bigger amount of various hats and caps. Each pupil gets or chooses one hat and imagines the person who could possibly wear such a hat. The pupils pretend being that person. At the beginning, they can walk in a certain manner and then they can play short dialogues.

- **Market**

The teacher tells the pupils where they are. It always is a place with a lot of people such as railway station, market, airport etc. Each pupil chooses a person who could be at this place and acts a short scene. As all the pupils act at the same time a spectator might have a feeling he or she is right on the place and the pupils are not ashamed of being watched as they all speak at one moment.

2.2.2 Activities of Movement

Activities of movement are special for using the body as the main tool, not the language. This could seem strange in language classes, but they can be very useful in many situations, for instance when introducing a topic, gaining pupils' attention or calming them down. The movement used here does not serve for muscle strengthening or adopting certain locomotive components, but for developing the ability to understand the body, to connect movement with fantasy and feelings and to embrace the feeling of the space around.

Movement activities gather also spatial activities, miming and other non-verbals based on locomotion.

Example activities:

- **Imaginary Object**

Pupils stand in a circle and pass an imaginary object around – it can be a snowball, a table tennis ball, a Christmas decoration, an egg, a warm cookie or a heavy rock. The way of transmission of an object depends on what it represents.

- **Miming Chains**

All the pupils are behind the door. The teacher calls one pupil in and asks him or her to perform a certain activity like lightening a candle, washing a baby or doing the dishes. Then the pupil performs this activity to one pupil from behind the door, and this pupil “passes” the activity to another pupil and in this way, in a chain, they transmit the activity until all the pupils saw the activity. Then they discuss what the activity was like.

- **Statues**

Pupils walk around the room in the rhythm of music or a drum. When they hear a signal, they freeze in the position they are at the very moment. In this way they remember three positions which followingly connect and fluently move from the first to the second, from the second to the third and from the third again to the first. The teacher tells the pupils the way they should move to change the three positions (slowly, lightly, like robots, like on the moon, etc.).

2.2.3 Preparatory Activities

Preparatory activities serve mainly to induce atmosphere, to calm pupils down or in contrast to stir them up, to relax and to de-stress them. At the same time such activities can be used when the teacher needs to change the topic or the tempo of work. Machková (1998) subdivides these activities into:

- a) Stirring Activities – activities with a physical effort, allowing noise and shouting when pupils are very active
- b) Relaxing Activities – activities done in sitting or lying when pupils get relaxed as the centre of activities is in calm concentration of pupils’ bodies, the topic of the lesson might be brought up
- c) Concentration Activities – activities based on rhythm, counting, or reaction to a change when pupils focus on certain object, process or component. (Machková, 1998:136-7, for the original Czech quotation see *Appendix IV, item 8*)

Example Activities:

- **Catch and Chase** (stirring activity)

A well-known game in which one pupil chases the others. When he or she catches somebody, the roles change. This game has many varieties and sometimes the chased pupils have a certain chance “to save” themselves.

- **Body Relaxation** (relaxing activity)

Pupils walk through the room and eschew each other. When two pupils meet face to face, they have to do the U-turn and then carry on walking. Pupils can move like robots, frogs etc.

- **Marionettes** (concentration activity)

Pupils work in pairs where one is a marionette and the other a puppeteer. The puppeteer touches the marionette in two places from which he or she leads imaginary strings (approximately 15 cm long) and then directs the marionette by pulling the strings.

2.2.4 Communicative Activities

Communicative activities are not focused only on the technique of speech and voice, but mainly on talkativeness, understandability and formulation of thoughts. Such activities free the flow of speech and increase fluency of talking. Drama in language learning uses so called *mumbo-jumbo* or *gibberish* which is a language composed of senseless clusters of phonemes, where the meaning is not given by the words but by the intonation, rhythm, pitch and accent.

Example Activities:

- **Moody Dialogues**

The teacher gives pupils short dialogues. (*A: Hello! B: Hello! A: Where are you going? B: Mind your business!*) Pupils in pairs act these dialogues in various moods (happily, sadly, surprisingly etc.).

- **One-word Stories**

Pupils sit in a circle. The teacher starts to tell a story (e.g. *Once upon a time...*) and the pupils try to develop it observing the rule that each pupil can add just one word. The teacher pays attention to grammatical and logical correctness.

- **Singing Sentences**

The teacher gives pupils a character (e. g. mother, teacher, shop-assistant). Each pupil chooses one sentence typical for the person (*Where have you been? Open your textbooks on page 15. Can I help you, sir?*) and the way of saying the

sentence (slowly, rhythmically, in high pitch). Then the teacher calls the first pupil and he or she has to repeat the sentence until the teacher stops them. Other pupils add their sentences gradually and finally they make “a song”.

2.2.5 Word Games

All the puzzles, word-chains, crosswords and other word games demand a lot of pupils’ concentration and creativity because they are connected with writing and producing (e.g. poems, words) and mainly with alert self-control while looking for the solution. However, the final products should not be the aim of the activity. For example, when working on a fairy tale, the real goal of the activity is the process: looking up the new vocabulary in dictionaries, creating a plot, organising paragraphs etc. The fairy-tale is a reward for the pupils and the teacher as well, but the main value of such an activity lies in the process of writing.

Example Activities:

- **Fantastic Words**

Each pupil writes down three consonants on a sheet of paper. Then the pupils swap the sheets and add three vowels to form a fantastic word. They again swap the papers and add a definition of the word or they use it in a short sentence.

- **What Cannot We Do?**

Pupils tell what they cannot do in certain situation, at certain places, or certain state. What cannot we do in a swimming pool, in a gallery, in Africa, at the North Pole, or during scuba-diving ?

- **Unfinished Stories**

The teacher reads a short story without ending and the pupils individually have to finish the story. To make the activity different, the pupils can be given the atmosphere (reserved, warm, nervous, snobbish) or genre (a horror-story, a newspaper magazine, a letter, a narrative) in which they have to finish the story.

There exist many different activities of each category. I presented only examples of those which I had the chance to test in my teaching project (even though often only adapted versions) and some activities which I wanted to use but did not have the opportunity, and still found them attractive. Of course, many of them are well-known and it is only a question of form which makes it different or remarkable, and that is why I described only their core, so that all the teachers

could understand what is possible to do in the classroom and could add his or her own modifications of the exercise or game. Concrete changes and peculiarities of each activity generally arise from the real contact of a specific teacher with a particular group working on a certain subject.

3. THESIS

The teaching project is going to support the thesis which claims that drama activities incorporated at the beginning phase of an English language lesson gain the attention of pupils, help to keep their concentration on the subject and increase their motivation for the topic of an English language lesson. Thus the teaching project tries to illustrate and prove that opening of an English language lesson with a drama activity is useful because it helps the smooth course of the lesson, increases pupils' motivation and co-operation, which result in a comfortable and engaging learning process.

4. PAPER PARTS

In Chapter 5 the background and the course of the practical project is described and in Chapter 6 results and practical outcomes of the teaching project are discussed and evaluated. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for the future development in the drama-in-education area are presented.

5. THE TEACHING PROJECT

This project was developed on the idea that drama activities placed at the beginning of an English language lesson can positively influence the course of the lesson by affecting the pupils' attention, motivation and concentration for English language learning. This assumption is based on the theories of Way, Machková, Duff and Maley, Doughill and other experts dealing with drama in education and drama in language learning, who agreed that drama is a teaching tool suitable for language learning for its variety, experiencing, creativity, and enjoyment.

The above mentioned characteristics of drama in language learning is important for the beginning phase of a language lesson because the start of the lesson affects the rest of it with a great power. Therefore the teacher must gain as much of the pupils' attention and enthusiasm for language learning as possible right at the beginning phase.

Furthermore, the heterogeneity of drama in language learning is a forceful teaching tool for its multiple usage in numerous ways, conditions and situations. Concerning the situation, the beginning of every particular English language lesson needs a specific introductory activity. In other words, the lesson which follows after a lesson of physical education requires a different introductory activity than the one after the lunch break, or a lesson in the morning should probably start in another way than a lesson in the afternoon. Similarly, a group composed of girls has not the same attitude towards a certain topic than a group of boys. All these various conditions for English language learning should be adjusted by an introductory activity to a satisfactory teaching environment.

Consequently, experiencing is vital for drama in language learning for the reason that it assures that the pupils remember much better what has been done due to employing all the three parts of reception (audible, visual, tactile), which greatly supports the learning process. Moreover, experiencing in English language lessons is not experiencing with the English language only, as pupils have to add their own life experience, which considerably raises their learning motivation.

Last but not least, it brings creativity into English language lessons. Pupils are often bored by doing drill exercises. These are very important, primarily at the beginnings of learning; however, even drill exercises can be done in a creative way. For instance the activity *Singing sentences* can be used for reinforcing a

certain grammatical pattern in a new and amusing method. This way drama in language learning can increase pupils' eagerness for English language learning and considerably accomplish the effective learning process.

Finally, drama in language learning is fun. Unfortunately, the pupils' enjoyment deserves much more emphasis than it is usually placed upon language learning, and there are still a few teachers who require memorising vocabulary or who overwhelm pupils with grammar because they think it is the only right way.

However, drama in language learning is not just fun and entertainment, though it is enormously popular with pupils because it facilitates their learning and gives a fresh look at English language lessons, as it is proven further in the Teaching Project.

5.1 Preparation for the Teaching Project

As I participated in the Basic Course of Drama in Education for Teachers, I became curious about its application in English language classes, mainly at the beginning phase of an English language lesson. The literature I had studied has proved that drama activities could be used as successful starters of an English language lesson.

Furthermore, I was interested in the influence of such a lesson opening on the course of the lesson and on the pupils. My presumption was that the drama activities, when properly prepared and implemented at the beginning of the English language lesson, can gain the pupils' attention, fortify their concentration on the subject and raise their motivation for further work in the lesson.

During the preparation for the teaching project I looked up for the authors dealing with drama in education and drama in language learning and I tried to modify the activities they suggest for my purpose, which is suitable introductory activities.

When trying to design the activity, the following factors must be respected: the age of the pupils, their level of English, the topic of the lesson, the length of the lesson, the kind of lesson preceding the English language lesson, the number of pupils in a group, the classroom equipment, the pupils' attitude towards drama in language learning, and their experience with drama in language learning. During the preparatory phase of the project I focused only on collecting various

drama activities, studied the way they work, what is needed for employing them in a lesson and how they can be modified in terms of the above mentioned factors.

I also considered that the drama activities proposed to be performed in English language lessons are going to be *introductory* activities. Hence, the incorporation of the principles of an introductory activity as suggested by Maley and Duff (1991) was necessary. They maintain that an introductory activity should fulfil the following requirements: “to mark off clearly what has gone before from what is to come, put the pupils in a relaxed, uninhibited state and increase an awareness of others and of oneself in relationships with others.” (Maley and Duff, 1991:38).

Then a plan of four weeks at Elementary school followed when I arranged the implementation of the Teaching Project. I decided to teach one week without using drama activities at the beginning phases of lessons and closely observe the course of the lessons. In the following three weeks I intended to apply the drama activities as introductory activities and again observe the lessons carefully. Then the observation of the two different teaching styles would result in the comparison of the first and the ensuing three weeks and should serve as a base material for further evaluation.

Finally, I have chosen two more methods of evaluation, discussion with my mentor and discussion with the pupils. The former was meant to be acquainted with my Teaching Project and about my intentions with its accomplishment, she was given a set of question (for questions and answers see *Appendix I*) and she gave me her comments on them. By contrast, the latter was not informed about the project, drama activities implementations and its appraisal so on the last lesson the pupils were asked about the lessons generally. I had prepared three types of questionnaires; a special one for each group because of the age of the pupils (for samples of questionnaires see *Appendix II*). All the questionnaires had been prepared in the Czech language for better and accurate understanding.

5.2 The Teaching Project

The Teaching Project was tested in ZŠ Angelovova, Prague 4, which is a large urban community school with extended language learning and approximately 800 pupils. The second language, which is mostly English but also

German and French, is taught from the third grade and its teaching is provided by upper-grade teachers. Thus I had the opportunity to work with variously sized groups of pupils who differed in age and level of English. For my professional project I chose three groups which seemed suitable for their characteristics, described below, which appeared to be divergent enough for making some conclusions about the project.

5.2.1 The Teaching Conditions

My mentor, Marie Hrubá, specialised for teaching English as a foreign language of upper grades, also taught young learners so I could choose the classes for my project from fairly various pupil groups. The only thing I had to preserve was the theme and the topic according to the whole-year curriculum, but the form of introducing it to pupils was completely up to me, which I appreciated.

My mentor was very supportive to my project. Discussions with her were inspirational and pragmatic not only because she is an experienced teacher, but also because she is seriously interested in developing her own teaching style. Therefore she wanted to see what can or cannot work with her pupils in order to improve the learning process. Intending to get her professional opinion about my project, I gave her two copies of the questionnaire focused on the teacher's influence on the course of the lesson. My mentor filled in the first copy before the beginning of my project and the second one when the project was finished. Her answers are analysed in the chapter 5.3 *Evaluation of the Teaching Project* and the originals are presented in *Appendix I*.

The practical testing part of my teaching project was completed in four weeks, including one week for preliminary observations, during my teaching practice. Very advantageous was the offer that I could choose which groups I wanted to teach so I favoured the groups with the highest number of lessons in that period of time. Finally, I taught The Group One five times, The Group Two eight times and The Group Three five times. I always taught the whole lesson, which means 45 minutes.

5.2.2 Class Profiles

Note: All the pupils from all the groups were considered not having any previous experiences with drama in education.

The Group One – the 4th form

Age of the pupils:	9-10 years
Level of English:	Beginners, one month of English
Number of pupils in the group:	13
Number of lessons per week:	2
Textbook:	Project English 1

Short characteristics of the group:

This group was made of pupils from four classes in the fourth grade who chose to learn English, beside German or French. They did not know each other well. There were eight girls and five boys. One girl who came from India was advanced in English so she had her own learning program and she usually did not participate in activities. The group was as much co-operative as young learners can be. Sometimes when an activity had to be stopped for time reasons, the pupils wanted to continue. The activities had to be short, vivid and various. At the beginning the pair work was slightly problematic for the reason that the pupils were not used to it so they expected the teacher's help and wanted to be in pair with their friends. Also, all the pupils usually wanted to perform what they had prepared. Work with this group was nice and satisfying because the pupils were active and the amount of acquired language was apparent.

The Group Two – the 6th form

Age of the pupils:	12 years
Level of English:	Pre-intermediate, three years and one month
Number of pupils in the group:	17
Number of lessons per week:	4
Textbook:	The Project English, by Tom Hutchinson

Short characteristics of the group:

This group was a real teacher's dream: co-operative, prepared, thorough, smart and attentive. They knew enough language to do more complicated activities in which they collaborated efficiently not only among themselves but also with the teacher. They obviously liked English and they wanted to learn it seriously. The work with this group was pleasure because it was apparent how much they liked learning the language.

The Group Three – the 9th form

Age of the pupils:	14, 15 years
Level of English:	Intermediate, five years and one month
Number of pupils in the group:	17
Number of lessons per week:	3
Textbook:	The Project English, by Tom Hutchinson

Short characteristics of the group:

The group was unco-operative and despite they had been learning English for a long time, their knowledge was deficient. The work seemed to be unproductive because all the activities took a lot of time due to the pupils' reluctance to speak. Not by coincidence, the teachers called this group "a cemetery" among themselves. I had to use an enormous effort to make the pupils speak aloud, pay attention or do what I wanted them to do as they often were doing their own "more important" work. This might have been caused by their "difficult age" because their English teacher told me that such teaching was normal in this group.

5.2.3 Examples of Complete Lesson Plans with Commentaries

Remark 1: I chose seven of the most illustrative lesson plans. The lesson plans are not in chronological order.

Remark 2: Since all the introductory activities are in fact pre-activities and are very short (from 5-10 minutes), they do not contain typical stages of an activity such as: Introduction, Presentation, Run, Checking, Closing.

The Lesson Plan 1 – Calling to the Radio (Role-play)

Basic data

The Group One

Lesson: 2nd

Textbook: Project English 1, pages 7 and 8

Topic of the lesson: Listening

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* the pupils will be able to ask and answer simple questions and will be able to understand the new listening exercise.

Contents of the lesson

Warm up – Calling to the radio

Calling to the radio was a typical role-play, based on the dialogues which pupils prepared as homework (see *Appendix V*). The pupils worked in pairs where one of the pair was a DJ in a radio and the other wanted him or her to play a song for somebody. They could choose a song they want to play as well as a person the song was for. The pupils had five minutes to prepare it and then all the pairs performed the dialogues to the rest of the class.

The rest of the lesson

The pupils worked individually on the exercise (number 4, page 8), then they controlled it in pairs, but with the person behind or in front of them and not within one bench. Then we checked it all together.

After that we worked on the listening activity (exercise number 14, page 8). The first listening was for overall understanding (*How many people were talking?*) with the textbooks closed. Then the pupils listened to individual lines, I stopped the recorder after each line and the pupils repeated it focusing on correct

pronunciation. For the third time they listened with eye support. After the pupils got the idea of the dialogue, they tried to modify it as it is in their homes (they used names of their friends and changed the country) and they acted it in groups of four (a postman, mother and two children).

Commentaries on the introductory activity *Calling to the Radio*

This introductory activity was a typical role-play activity: one pupil was a DJ in the radio, the other called him to play a song for his or her mother, sister, etc. The fact that the pupils prepared similar dialogues for homework helped them to understand the instructions and after a short preparation all the pairs wanted to perform the dialogues in front of the others.

This teaching experience gave me a chance to see how the pupils react to drama activities. Some pupils repeated the dialogues without any emotions, focusing only on the correctness of the words and not on the message. However, memorising the dialogues was sometimes demanding for the pupils due to their low language competence which caused mere repetition. For the same reason, to imagine the situation and "just talk", concentrating on the rhythm, intonation and accent was above their capability. They were afraid of forgetting words or lines and that prevented them from speaking naturally. But even the shier pupils added to the dialogue their own ideas. They asked for the song they liked and changed the person for which the song was meant.

Similarly, there were three pairs who really enjoyed the activity. They were acting the DJs with gestures and voice modifications. One pupil even asked me for a tape recorder to illustrate he was in the radio.

After all, I consider the activity as successful as the pupils seemed to like it and they tried to do their best. I was pleased with their co-operation and the enthusiasm for the activity.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson

The aims of this activity were to motivate the pupils for further work and to strengthen their attention for the rest of the lesson. The motivating factors of the activity *Calling to the radio* were the known material, which facilitated the course of the activity itself and, consequently, ensured the pupils about their abilities, then the interesting topic because the pupils enjoyed pretending to be a

DJ, and finally their own participation concerning the form of the dialogue (e.g. they could ask for the song they like).

The activity was demanding on the pupils' attention as they had to concentrate on what they say not only during the performance but also while observing their classmates' presentation.

All together the introductory activity made the pupils ready for the following English language learning and had positive influence on the rest of the lesson in terms that the pupils participated in the following activities without any behavioural problems and their learning results were satisfactory.

The Lesson Plan 2 – Miming (Activity of Movement)

Basic data

The Group Two

Lesson: 5th

Textbook: Project English 1, page 82

Topic of the lesson: The good old days

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* the pupils will understand the text *The good old days*, they will be certain when using the names of illnesses, they will be able to form simple past tense negative with both regular and irregular verbs, and they will be able to use new vocabulary (*rich, false teeth, plastic, real, filling, electric drill, anaesthetic, poor, dead, brace*)

Contents of the lesson

Warm-up – Miming

Each pupil prepared an illness for miming. Then he or she mimed it in front of the blackboard to the others who tried to guess the illness according to its symptoms. Questions were allowed but the answers could only be mimed by the miming pupil.

The rest of the lesson

We wrote to the exercise books: *Date, Title: Simple past tense – Negative* and the pupils wrote down three examples of simple past tense – negative. Then each pupil read one sentence. After that we worked on the vocabulary (*At the dentist*). Next activity was reading, we read the text we listened to the day before and focused on correct pronunciation of the new vocabulary.

Commentaries on the introductory activity Miming:

The miming is based on expressing ideas (vocabulary, action, etc.) through movement. Each pupil had to perform a different illness (headache, toothache, flu, cough etc.) and the rest of the pupils had to guess which illness it was. There were very supportive pupils in the group and they watched carefully each pupil who presented “his or her illness” and did not lose their attention. They sometimes asked for a few details, but as the miming pupil could not speak, his or her answers were rather ambiguous. Still, the pupils managed to discover almost all

the illnesses. They really liked the activity and, still using English, they even made up some illnesses like Anthrax or a “kneeache”.

The activity was funny and entertaining and the pupils liked it a lot. At the beginning, I was a bit afraid of shy pupils who would not want to participate in individual miming, but as they saw how simple it was (for example a pupil “with a headache” held his head and had a painful expression), they dared to act an illness too, and that is what I consider as a valuable side effect of the activity.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson:

The Miming revised the vocabulary and grammar from the previous lesson and it motivated the pupils for the new vocabulary by setting the atmosphere of illnesses in the classroom. As the pupils concentrated on precise acting and guessing of the chosen illness, they forgot about the football match the boys were playing with another class that afternoon and which concerned them at that time more than the English language. So due to the pupils’ true involvement, the introductory activity had a great impact on the rest of the lesson which was rather quite and demanded a lot of concentration and patience. As the pupils had some physical activity at the beginning of the lesson, they better tolerated the sitting part further on.

The Lesson Plan 3 – Atoms (Stirring Preparatory Activity)

Basic data

The Group One

Lesson: 4th

Textbook: Project English 1, page 7

Topic of the lesson: Numerals (11 – 20)

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* the pupils will be able to write, pronounce and use the numbers from 11-20 correctly, they will fix the phrases *How old are you* and *What's your name?*

Contents of the lesson

Warm-up - Atoms

The pupils ran or walked around a room according to the rhythm of music from the tape recorder. When I stopped the tape and exclaimed a number (e.g. four), the pupils had to get into *atoms* of four. Since the activity was not meant as a competition, I did not leave out any ungrouped pupils but continued with another turn. The game finished with number three as I needed groups of three pupils for the following activity.

The rest of the lesson

We continued with the game *What's this?* from the textbook (page 5). Next we did the listening activity which was focused on the correct pronunciation of numbers and we wrote them to pupils' notebooks. Then I showed the pupils cards with numbers (not in a row) and they had to say them.

After that we played the following scratching game. Numbers from 11 to 20 were randomly written on the black board. The pupils formed two teams and they could choose the names for their teams (we had Tigers and Monkeys). Then a member from each team came to the blackboard and as I said the number, the pupils must scratch it as fast as possible. Who scratched it first gained one point for his or her team.

Commentaries on the introductory activity Atoms

The introductory activity Atoms belongs to preparatory ones and is based on movement. Its aim, technically, is to divide pupils in groups composed of

different members than accustomed. The groups are made up of pupils running around the room and gathering *randomly*.

The pupils understood in a minute what I wanted them to do as they knew the activity, which is called "Molekuly" in the Czech language. During the activity, the girls sometimes did not want to be in one group with boys and vice versa, but there were twelve pupils so they always had to form some groups. When somebody was on strike, number twelve did the trick because then everyone had to participate.

The music I played was quite fast so Atoms was a lively activity. The young learners enjoyed it, especially when I played the music twice as fast as normal speed is; then the pupils laughed and ran quickly.

At the end I needed to quiet them down, but even though I clapped my hands instead of music to slower the pupils' movements, but still it was a bit problematic to tranquil them. Fortunately, the activity which followed was done in a form of a group work and the pupils soon found out that they have to become quiet otherwise they would not be able to work.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson

The lesson was devoted to numerals so I found it suitable to start the lesson with an activity based on recognition of numbers which pupils already knew (1-10). That provided good motivation for subsequent learning numerals from 11 to 20 because they felt secure about the numbers we just revised.

Although the activity required a certain amount of concentration, it provided some relaxation, too. As the pupils listened to the music and had to focus on catching the numbers, they concentrated only on the activity and nothing else. That, consequently, relieved the tension from the previous lesson when the pupils wrote a test from math.

The running part of the activity was very energetic and made the pupils very active, which resulted in a higher level of noise in the classroom. On the other hand, the success of this activity had a motivating influence on the role-play (*What's this?*) which followed immediately afterwards.

In the role-play the pupils were keen to prepare the dialogues and they appreciated the creative work. The variability of the groups was beneficial

because the pupils worked with the classmates they usually do not co-operate with. It was good not only for the final product of the activity, which was the dialogue, but mainly for the social environment in the group.

The Lesson Plan 4 – Discussion in a Circle (Relaxing Preparatory Activity)

Basic data

The Group Three

Lesson: 1st

Textbook: Project English 2, page 59 – Problems with Justin

Topic of the lesson: Problems with Justin

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* better understanding of the spoken text, pupils will be able to use the negative and question form of the present perfect tense

Contents of the lesson

Warm-up – Discussion in a circle

Pupils and I sat in a circle in a free space in the classroom and we discussed the topic – in this case *What do you know about Justin?*, a character from your textbook. Pupils should have got an idea about a boy – *what he likes, what he looks like, what his hobbies are...* They were supposed to create their opinions about the person and his characteristics, habits and hobbies based on what they knew about him from the textbook.

The rest of the lesson

The following activity was connected to the discussion. In groups of three, the pupils wrote down possible problems that Justin could cause. Then we read it and chose the most possible ones. After that we listened to the article *Problems with Justin* (see *Appendix V*). First, the pupils listened for overall understanding (*How many people is talking? What happened?*), then for details (*Who has written the article about whales? What has Justin done? What hasn't Justin done? Who is Mr. Bailey?*). After that the pupils worked in pairs and had to join sentences from the exercise 1 on page 60. We controlled it together and listened again to the correct sentences from the tape-recorder.

Commentaries on the introductory activity – Discussion in a circle

This activity was based on discussion and its main aim was to motivate pupils for the next listening activity. We sat in a circle and discussed a textbook character Justin. The pupils answered questions like *What does he look like?* or

What are his hobbies?. The discussion was stumbling because pupils did not participate much. To get the answers I had to ask the pupils directly (*Tell me, Monika, what do you think Justin does in his free time?*), otherwise the questions would stay unanswered. Another problem were the answers itself (*I don't know.*). After while, the activity was still awkward so I rather continued to the next activity.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson

The discussion in a circle was meant as motivation for the listening activity which followed. After the unsuccessful start, I had to fight all the lesson with boredom and unconcern from the side of the pupils who stayed apathetic for the next 45 minutes (and maybe for the rest of the day, as I learned later from my mentor.) Such an indifference could be caused by the “teen age” but also an inappropriate textbook. The topics in Project English 2 seem to me a bit childish for 15-year-old pupils. Maybe New Headway, with its communicative approach, would be more interesting for them. Another reason of such failure might be again the pupils’ age for starting with drama activities. It is more demanding to start with them at the age of 15 than earlier because the pupils are already accustomed to certain methods and it takes more time to redirect them to a new style of work. Also they are rather shy and speaking in front of others may cause them some problems.

The Lesson Plan 5 – Two Circles (Concentration Preparatory Activity)

Basic data

The Group Three

Lesson: 1st

Textbook: Project English 2, page 57

Topic of the lesson: Test on simple past tense vs. present perfect tense, story telling

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* revision of the simple past and present perfect tense

Educational aims: story telling

Contents of the lesson

Warm-up – Two circles

The pupils stood in two circles and each circle walked in a different direction. When I clapped my hands, they stopped and turned to the person from the other circle. They asked him or her *What did you do yesterday evening?* and answered the same question. They put their hands up when they finished. As I saw the all hands up I clapped my hands again and the pupils started to walk. That repeated several times while I had to watch for different combinations of pupils.

The rest of the lesson

Further in the lesson, the pupils wrote a test. Before the test I explained what it was going to be about and how it would be evaluated. After the test I asked whether they had any questions and we roughly went through the test saying what the correct answers were. The next activity was Story telling, page 79, which was focused on the use of simple past and present perfect tense. The pupils chose one of three pictures in pairs and prepared a short life story about the person on the picture.

Commentaries on the introductory activity Two circles:

This introductory activity was meant as a preparatory one. It was a bit time-consuming to make the pupils form two circles and walk around, as they thought it was silly, but after all, to my surprise, they took it as a good opportunity “to gossip” and participated quite lively. They seemed to enjoy the activity

because they were talking to each other fairly sincerely, even though often in the Czech language. I tried to prevent them from speaking Czech by supporting their English language competence, but not very successfully. Bearing in mind their "silent learning style", I was glad that they spoke, to be honest. Even my practice teacher was surprised about the amount of spoken language.

The aims of the activity (to remove stress from the following test and lighten the atmosphere in the classroom) were fulfilled and I considered this activity as successful compared to the experience with previous drama activities done in this group.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson

Further in the lesson the pupils wrote the short test on the usage of simple past and present perfect tense. The test was announced the previous lesson and that caused the pupils' nervousness. After the activity *Two circles* I could observe (and my mentor confirmed it too) the change of the pupils' attitude towards the test. They accepted it much easier than before and they seemed to me more communicative about the results. Also the next activity, *Story telling*, was positively influenced by the introductory activity which lightened the atmosphere in the classroom and the pupils were attentive to prepare a short life story about the chosen person. As the co-operative atmosphere was set in the beginning, the pupils worked without any comments.

The Lesson Plan 6 – Singing Sentences (Communicative Activity)

Basic data

The Group One

Lesson: 4th

Textbook: Project English 1, page 3

Topic of the lesson: Questions with the verb be

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* to form the questions with the verb to be.

Educational aims: Pair work to strengthen co-operation, focus on finding the answer themselves

Contents of the lesson

Warm-up – Singing Sentences

The communicative activity *Singing sentences* was based on rhythmical repetition of sentences. All the pupils stood in a circle in free space in the classroom. Each pupil prepared one short “sentence”. In this case I wanted them to chose a greeting (e.g. *How are you?, Good morning, Hello everybody! How do you do?, Hi, I am fine today, and you?*). Then I pointed at one pupil and he or she started to repeat his or her sentence in a manner chosen by him or her (e.g. slowly, in a low voice, quickly, as a robot, etc.) and continued repeating until I pointed at the pupil again or until I stopped the activity by clapping hands. I pointed at the pupils randomly, but always more pupils spoke together. Then the pupils made a chant composed of several pupils’ voices repeating their greeting in a certain manner.

The Rest of the lesson

After the introductory activity, we checked homework and then we worked on the question form of present simple tense. We discussed what makes a question question. At the end of the lesson, we reviewed vocabulary with pictures. First, I went quickly through the pictures in order to confirm which pictures pupils know. And, then I asked the pupils questions, for example *Is it an elephant?* and the pupils answered *Yes it is*, or *No it isn't*. Then each pupil got a picture and asked his or her classmate. As we had some time left, for a great success I added *Singing*

Sentences once more, this time with questions (e.g. *Is it an elephant?, Is it an apple?, Is it a car?, etc.*).

Commentaries on the introductory activity:

As an introductory activity, I chose the communicative drama activity *Singing sentences* which seemed to me as a perfect opening for this rather grammatical lesson. The pupils could prepare greetings and create their own manner in which they were going to “sing” them. The other reason why I incorporated this activity was that it belongs among the communicative ones (we actually greeted each other), which was important for strengthening the relationship between the pupils and me.

This activity also helped to force proper pronunciation by drilling concrete structures, which was essential for the beginners. However, also wrong pronunciation could have been fixed easily by the constant repetition, so I had to watch for proper pronunciation, and my mentor, Mrs. Hrubá, helped me a lot.

The main element of drama in this activity was repetition of the sentences which, consequently, improving pupils’ pronunciation, contributed to better understandability of spoken discourse. Constant repetition of one sentence kept the pupils concentrated and the fact that they could create and say their own sentences kept them motivated.

The demands of the activity were accurate to the pupils’ level. They seemed to be challenged (to pronounce their sentence correctly with one breath) and at the same time entertained. They had to be attentive to see the signal to stop or start saying their sentences and their full attention transmitted into the next stage of the lesson, when they had to discover what makes a question question and then when they asked the questions themselves.

At the beginning they had slight problems with understanding the instructions, but after the explanation with examples and minor help of the Czech language they understood well and lately they enjoyed the activity a lot. I asked them to exaggerate and pretend being real English people and they liked it very much. I added two more unplanned turns because the pupils were really fond of the activity.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson

Such opening of the lesson led the pupils to learning the English language in good mood, willing to work, ready to learn and co-operate.

Even though it was not directly connected with the topic, the activity motivated the pupils to speak English. The core of motivation was laid in the pupils' own contribution to the activity, which was creating the greeting sentence. The pupils felt secure to exaggerate and experiment with pronunciation in the safe environment of the other ear-splitting voices, thinking nobody else could hear their own. Moreover, concentration on "singing" untied the pupils from immediate worries and it was consistently transmitted into next stages of the lesson where it had a positive effect on learning the questions. At the end of the lesson, the pupils wanted to "sing" the questions they had just learned, which intensified the new piece of grammar. I successfully closed the lesson with the same activity where the sentences were just "questions".

The Lesson Plan 7 – What Is in the Bag? (Word Game)

Basic data

The Group Two

Lesson: 5th

Textbook: Project English 1, page 77

Topic of the lesson: Question in simple past tense

Aims of the lesson: *Cognitive (instructional) aims:* the pupils will be able to form affirmative sentence in simple past tense.

Contents of the lesson

Warm-up – What Is in the Bag?

The pupils sat in a circle and I told them a brief description of a person. (In this case the person was a 12-year-old boy who played tennis in his free time.) Then I said what was in his pocket or bag (for example, there was a tennis racket in his bag) and then , each pupil added one thing which was in his bag and which had to be suitable for the person (for instance, a 12-year-old boy would not have a computer in his bag).

More demanding is the variation of the game when all the words must start with the same letter or have the same number of syllables, but that was not what I intended to do with the class.

The rest of the lesson

After the introductory activity we revised how the questions in the past tense are formed. Then the pupils filled in an exercise on it. Then the pupils checked it in pairs and we went over it together with each pupil writing one sentence on the blackboard.

Then we worked on the exercise 3, page 77, Mr. X (see *Appendix V*). The pupils had to discover a person according to what he or she had in his or her pocket. At the end of the lesson we did an activity called *Two circles*, described in the lesson plan 5, focusing on practising past simple tense. The pupils asked each other *What did you do yesterday?* and answered.

Commentaries on the introductory activity What is in the bag?

The word game *What is in the bag?* was chosen as a starter because it was closely connected with the topic of the following activity (Mr. X). It was also good practice of already known vocabulary. As the pupils had to react quite fast, they had to be concentrated and prepared to speak. Their concentration was transmitted into the later phases of the lesson where it contributed to the effective revision of simple past tense.

During the introductory activity pupils had to pay attention to what already was in the bag. It was demanding but at the same time entertaining. Some pupils could not remember the things in the correct order, so the others were prompting them occasionally. That contributed to the supportive atmosphere in the classroom. The pupils managed to remember a lot of words as we ended up with two turns, which meant 32 words. Some of the words were a little controversial (e.g. arm) but all of them were somehow connected with a 12-year old boy. Sometimes they passionately discussed whether he can or cannot have such a thing in his bag, but not so much that it would destroy the activity.

The aim of the activity was to motivate pupils for the next “detective” activity about Mr. X. The pupils’ motivation was provided through their own creation of the boy’s character by adding certain things to his bag. The activity also required the pupils’ concentration and attention as they had to remember certain rows of words and in addition they had to add new ones. I considered the activity as well done because it fulfilled its aims and also the pupils liked it.

The influence of the introductory activity on the rest of the lesson

The activity had a positive impact on the course of the lesson in terms that the pupils were relaxed and co-operative since they enjoyed it a lot. Also the fact that they contributed to the characteristics of the boy with the words they came up with was motivating for them.

Later I found the pupils’ participation during the activity *Mr. X* very productive. They saw the relation with the introductory activity and they were of the opinion they already knew what to do, which simplified the instructions. The whole lesson was very effective and the pupils understood the question forms in simple past tense well.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Discussion of Findings

The teaching project was based on the idea that every start of a lesson influences the rest of it and thus the introductory part is the most important, because every work done at this point affects pupils' attention, concentration and motivation.

As I took part in the Basic Course of Drama in Education for teachers and studied the related literature, I realised that elements of drama can contribute to successful opening of a lesson. Therefore, I designed the project which was intended to find out whether it was possible to gain pupils' attention, help to keep their concentration on the subject and increase their motivation for the topic of an English language lesson by using drama activities at the beginning phase of English language classes.

The project was tested on three groups, described in chapter 5.2.3 *Class Profiles*, at the elementary school ZŠ Angelovova during my block teaching practice. I decided to experiment with three groups in order to get more convincing results because each age group (9-10, 12, and 14-15 years of age) responded in a different way to the drama activities and thus to study only one group would be insufficient.

To obtain some conclusions about the validity of the statements in this teaching project, I collected information from the following sources:

- a) the practice teacher's opinions about the project
- b) the comments from the pupils involved in the project
- c) my own observation of the project

During the project, my mentor Mrs. Hrubá observed and commented on every lesson I taught. As she had been informed about my intention of introducing the English language lessons with an activity containing a drama element, she gave me her opinions about the effect it had on the course of the lesson immediately afterwards. Hence, I could change some details in the following lessons according to her relevant comments, if need be. Due to her close acquaintance of the pupils I avoided several misunderstandings and after the first trial I did not have to test whether the activity would work again or not, like

starting the lesson with discussion in The Group Three, which was deadly silent at any occasion.

Her remarks were generally positive. She was surprised by the pupils' participation and ease with which they accepted the drama activities. She also supported my thesis, saying after one English language lesson: "I can see some positive influence of those special introductory activities on the course of the lesson but I also see the thorough preparation."

From the questionnaires I gave to her I could notice her optimistic attitude towards the introductory drama activities. In the first questionnaire, filled in before the beginning of the teaching project, she says that the way of starting a lesson *might* change the rest of it. But, in the second questionnaire, filled in after the end of the teaching project, she was sure about it.

Another example of supporting my thesis was that before the project she considered strictness and respect as the main tools for influencing the lesson. But after the project, and many discussions about it, she added that also the lesson planning and the teacher's attitude is a fundamental tool for giving a course to a lesson.

To find out what the pupils' feelings about the introductory activities were, I gave them questionnaires after the teaching project had been completed. I asked whether they liked the activities and which ones (for the samples of questionnaires see *Appendix II*). The pupils from The Group One enjoyed the lively activities such as Atoms or Miming. On the other hand, the pupils from The Group Three preferred the communicative ones, for instance Discussion in a Circle or Singing Sentences. Nevertheless, the pupils from The Group Two were exceptionally perceptive to all kinds of drama activities; they co-operated according to my instructions and gave the impression of enjoying the learning English language by any means.

The fact that the pupils liked the drama activities confirms their answers. Here are a few selected examples: *I liked Atoms because we could run in the classroom. Miming was interesting. I liked scenes because we could make up things.* (For the list of complete answers of all the three questionnaires see *Appendix III*)

The most popular activities are shown in the graphs in *Appendix III* . It was the activity Atoms in The Group One, followed by the Singing Sentences and Numbers, while in The Group Two Atoms again and then Scenes and Two circles. What all these favourite activities have in common, is a certain amount of movement and some free space for the performance. It proves that young learners like moving, acting, singing or doing anything that demands some physical effort and a certain amount of creativity. Therefore, inserting such an activity at the beginning phase of the lesson satisfies the pupils' need to move, run, talk, etc., so they can later participate in learning English language, having gained a lot of new energy.

As The Group Three was not very co-operative, many of the questionnaires were answered ambiguously (*I don't know, I don't remember, I don't understand, etc.*) For that reason, in this group, it was problematical to make any conclusions about the project based on the pupils' answers.

According to my teaching experience, The Group Three was difficult to teach. To make the pupils active seemed to me impossible, especially during the first week of my teaching practice. Then the ice broke a bit but still it was hard to make them co-operate not only at the beginning of the lesson but at any time. My mentor confirmed my findings and she suggested to change the style of work. The first change was to insert rather passive activities (reading, writing) instead of active (listening, speaking) and another change was to let the pupils' work more on their own than to want them to co-operate with me or among themselves. This advice helped me a lot but I had to change some of the drama introductory activities. For instance, the activities I practised in free space with the younger groups I did at their desks, or instead of speaking they could write down their suggestions. After those changes pupils collaborated quite well and I considered their language learning as productive.

My own observations of the three groups showed that to start with drama activities at the age of 14 and 15 is much more demanding than it was with younger pupils. The Group Two worked particularly well, in terms of co-operation and interest, as the pupils here were young enough, in comparison with The Group Three, to be eager and curious to try new "games", but at the same time old enough, on the contrary with The Group One, to collaborate with each

other without any organisational problems. Very interesting findings were that the level of English was not a significant factor influencing the co-operation and enthusiasm for the introductory drama activities.

Unfortunately, my intention to observe the differences between two teaching styles, one *without* and the other *with* drama activities at the beginning phase of an English language lesson, was not carried out because during the first week of my teaching practice, when I wanted to test teaching without drama introductory activities, I got acquainted with the pupils. Therefore, to say that the lessons without drama introductory activities had not such a learning effect would be wrong for the reason that the conditions were dissimilar.

Some minor problems such as misunderstanding instructions, disruptive behaviour or low willingness to co-operate appeared, but I do not consider them as serious obstacles to finishing and evaluating the teaching project.

The whole teaching project seemed to be successful. The implementation of drama activities at the beginning phases of an English language lesson was in majority of cases beneficial and had a positive effect on further stages of lessons and hence confirmed my thesis.

6.2 Conclusion

In my Teaching Project I wanted to prove that using activities containing elements of drama at the beginning phase of English language classes enhances the learning process because it gains the pupils' attention, helps to keep their concentration on the subject and increases their motivation for the topic of an English language lesson.

The theory presented in Chapter 1 claims that drama activities could serve as effective introductory activities with a positive influence on the rest of the lesson and could facilitate the pupils' learning process because they can effectively introduce the topic, engage the pupils for the further work and thus increase their motivation. Moreover, the activities can put the group together, which means not only set a friendly atmosphere among pupils, but also include the teacher as an equal member of the group, which is important especially for older pupils. Also, dynamics of drama activities can help to remove instant worries and concerns and gain pupils' attention and concentration essential for

learning. In addition, drama activities can supply materials for further work, which is vital particularly for the teacher's need to know what pupils' knowledge of a certain piece of grammar or topic is.

My teaching practice at the elementary school provided evidence for the theories presented in the theoretical and methodological chapters of the thesis. On the basis of my practice teacher's and the involved pupils' questionnaires, as well as and my own evaluations and observations, I can say that the quoted theories correspond with the practice and that the Teaching Project accomplished its aim. The practical part of the Teaching project also proved that the drama introductory activities must be thoroughly planned and organised, otherwise they can not facilitate the learning process and motivate pupils to learn the English language.

Finally, to suggest some implications for the future teaching, I would like to recommend using of drama activities as starters of English language lessons for it supports pupils in participation and co-operation in the English language learning. However, if a teacher decides to use drama activities as starters, while planning it, he or she must consider and respect factors like language needs, classroom equipment, pupils' attitude towards drama in education and etc.

To conclude my diploma thesis, I would like to suggest the possibility of investigating the topic of introductory drama activities in further research which could be aimed on controlled personal development of pupils. Such a research would demand closer co-operation with pupils and more time than the block teaching practice allowed.

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