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## ROZVOJ UČEBNÍCH DOVEDNOSTÍ U DYSLEKTICKÉHO DÍTĚTE NA ZŠ

### DEVELOPING STUDY SKILLS OF A DYSLEXIC PUPIL AT BASIC SCHOOL

### LE DEVELOPPEMENT DES SAVOIR-FAIR DE L'ENFANT DYSLEXIQUE DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT AU COLLEGE

**Diplomová práce:** 90–FP–KAJ

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### ***Poděkování:***

Děkuji všem, kteří mi s touto prací pomáhali, a to ať v počáteční fázi inspirace či při konečném čtení. Zvláštní dík patří paní Mgr. Věře Bitljanové, MEd. za její trpělivost, cenné rady a osobní čas, který mi věnovala při mnohahodinových debatách a konzultacích, bez kterých by tato práce nikdy nevznikla.

## **Anotace:**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá ověřením hypotézy, že výuka učebních dovedností zaměřených zvláště na čtecí strategie a techniky může efektivně napomoci při rozvoji jazykových schopností dyslektického dítěte na ZŠ. Projekt této práce byl prakticky testován na ZŠ po dobu jednoho měsíce na dvou paralelních devátých třídách a částečně dále pak v šestých, sedmých a osmých třídách na studentech, jejichž úroveň anglického jazyka se pohybovala v rozmezí začátečník – středně pokročilý a jejichž míra dyslektických obtíží byla v limitech lehké – střední poruchy čtení. Aktivita, které jsou popsány v tomto projektu jsou založeny na restriktivním jedno-aspektovém úkolovém čtení. Dyslektičtí žáci během nich potvrdili, že takto strategicky rozdílný přístup k textům pozitivně ovlivňuje míru úspěšnosti jejich zpracování. Praktické ověření a hodnocení výsledků ukázalo, že dyslektičtí žáci inklinují k samovolnému používání takto naučených přístupů k čtecím materiálům, což je důkazem toho, že čtecí strategie a techniky jim pomáhají při řešení úloh založených na zpracovávání cizojazyčného textu.

## **Abstract:**

This diploma thesis deals with an examination of the hypothesis that teaching study skills, especially reading strategies and techniques, can effectively help in developing language skills in a dyslexic pupil at basic school. The project of this work was practically tested for a month period of time in two parallel 9<sup>th</sup> grades at a basic school in the whole length and partially at 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades with students whose knowledge of English was in between beginner and pre-intermediate level and whose dyslexic symptoms varied from light to mid affection. Activities described in this project are designed for restrictive one-aspect task-based reading. The dyslexics proved this strategically different approach to texts positively influences the rate of their performance while reading. The practical verification and evaluation of results of the project showed that the dyslexic pupils incline to a spontaneous usage of such acquired approaches to reading materials, which is a good proof for reading strategies and techniques being a good help in processing a foreign language text.

## **Resumé:**

Ce mémoire s'occupe de la vérification d'une hypothèse que l'enseignement des savoir-faire orientés vers des techniques et des stratégies de la lecture peut effectivement aider au développement des capacités linguistiques chez les enfants dyslexiques au collège. Le projet de ce travail a été vérifié aux collèges dans les neuvièmes, sixièmes, septièmes et huitièmes classes, pendant un mois. Le niveau des connaissances linguistiques a été varié des débutants aux avancés. Le degré des problèmes dyslexiques a balancé entre faible et moyen. Cet ouvrage décrit les activités qui sont basées sur la lecture restrictive à la tâche d'un aspect. Les élèves dyslexiques qui ont fait ces activités, ils ont vérifié que cet accès aux textes qui est stratégiquement différent influence positivement la mesure du succès au travail. La vérification pratique et l'évaluation des résultats montrent que les élèves dyslexiques inclinent à l'utilisation spontanée des stratégies acquises en travaillant avec les matériaux littéraires. Donc les stratégies de lecture aident les élèves à résoudre les devoirs basés sur le travail avec un texte dans la langue étrangère.

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# **I. ACADEMIC**

## **I.A. SUBJECT**

It has been quite a long time since I left my basic school. The time was merciless on me and I forgot many things I had learned there. I cannot remember detailed definitions from Mathematics, Physics, or History. On the other hand, what survived are methods, algorithms, and attitudes that we used for solving problems. These skills seem to be like riding a bicycle. Once mastered, one knows it even if they have not practised for ages.

As a teacher I always try to keep this fact in mind, not to over-whelm my students with facts that will only stay in their minds for a particular examination and then get lost for ever.

From my own experience, I think that the most valid gift that a basic school can give to its students is the ability to be good at orienting in our rapid and day-by-day changing world. Whether the students will be successful in their future lives after leaving the school can depend then on their ability to learn by themselves, to self-educate, not having their tutors and teachers at hand.

That is the reason for me, as a teacher, why I try to integrate study skill lessons into ELC. There are many subjects in this area to be learned and shown to the pupils, starting with general principles of learning hygiene to time management, for example, from taking notes to a very specific process how to successfully write an essay. Such lessons are meant to help students in recognising their capacities because a study skill by nature does not contain any definition that could be learnt by heart. It must be practised. It covers a process of discovering oneself and finding what suits from the general principles best to each personality.

Restricting the broad area of study skills teaching to ELC, I face to four language skills that the pupils should be helped with: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Since the largest amount of learning materials for a foreign language practice seems to be in the written form (magazines, exercise books, the Internet, etc.) I focused my attention on reading and reading skills training. Having started gathering materials on teaching reading in ELC, my attention was driven to a specific group of pupils, the dyslexics, who have difficulties in reading by nature.

Being specialised on TEFL on the second grade of elementary schools, I did not turn to the technical matter of using tools for decoding single letters or putting letters together to be able to read a syllable. This is what elementary teachers or special pedagogues do in their reading lessons. I focused my attention on techniques of perception a supra-segmental material by pupils at basic schools, especially in dyslexic pupils that all went through the remedial program for basic reading at their elementary school.

Due to the natural variety of texts I focused my attention to variety of approaches to these texts, which is exactly the study- reading skill I wanted to improve in my students. In my college lessons on dyslexia, I found out that the methodological manuals and instructions for teaching reading skills to dyslexics were not very different from what was suggested to do in common classes with students, having not any particular problems in reading. The rule that was highlighted most was the principle of offering variety, system and scheme when teaching reading skills to a pupil.

Having taken this rule into consideration, I built up a project. The aim of the project was to prove that teaching study skills, especially reading techniques, in English language classes can help dyslexic pupils to reach better results in language learning and, which might be even far more important, to increase motivation for further reading in English.

## **I.B. T H E O R Y**

The theoretical chapter explains theoretical background and starting points from which I stemmed while preparing the content of lessons for my project, which is designed to support my thesis on the basis of testing in the real school terrain. This chapter deals with three main theoretical parts that influence the thesis. They are: reading theory, dyslexia theory, and their natural permeation: reading of dyslexic children. This blend of theories is based mainly on the research in functioning of the brain hemispheres.

I chose this topic because reading is a skill everybody needs to survive in the modern world. People often do not even realize how much they read and how difficult life would be if they did not master this skill. They would not know the works of the world's well-known writers and poets, parents would not be able to read fairy-tales to their children at bedtime, or read news and surf on the Internet, or, even more practically, they would not be able to find the right bus in the timetable, the right film in the program, the right recipe in the cook-book, they would not know the closing time in markets, advertisement in announcement papers, articles in travelling guides, traffic signs or manuals for operating videos, cameras, etc. Reading could not entertain them, give joyful time, or help them in every day routines.

Concerning the list above, it is apparent that there is no single reading but several readings for several purposes in human lives. Each purpose and each type of text requires then a bit different approach and reading strategy the reader uses while reading. Thus, reading is not only an extremely important skill but also a demanding one since it is not a passive process as it requires choosing the right reading technique that fits best to the reading purpose.

Additionally to the activity of the reader, not only choosing the technique makes reading active but also the personality. The reader interferes with the reading process a great deal

because reading is an active process of “*thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving*” (Zints, Maggart, 1989, p 16) because “*it constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions*” (Grellet, 1981, p. 8). Each individual differs in depth of thinking, reasoning, predicting, etc. and reading results vary in these skills, too. One aspect seems to be crucial when listing what influences reading. It is dyslexia, the specific reading disorder. How dyslexic children perform and how they can be helped while reading will be developed in more details furthermore.

### ***1.B.1. Reading definition***

Before writing about reading of a dyslexic person, it might be useful to look at reading in general to make clear what reading is and why it is important to profoundly deal with it while teaching a foreign language at basic school. Buzan (1983) writes that reading is “*the individual’s total interrelationship with symbolic information. It is usually the visual aspect of learning*” (p. 27). Since many students learn in school from written materials it is more than crucial for teachers and other specialist to pay attention on this area because “*proficient reading is an essential tool for learning a large part of the subject matter taught at school*” (Ott, 1995, p. 50). In other words, it means that good reading habits can significantly influence the overall school performance of pupils in almost all school subjects. That is the reason why reading in general is so important and why it should be studied deeply by teachers to understand it correctly.

Looking closer at what is happening in human brains while doing reading activities, we might be surprised at how complex and difficult this everyday activity is, most of us do unconsciously. It is not only one part of the brain that works. Reading is almost the whole brain activity. However, it is not only our brain that works. First of all, our eyes contribute to our success in reading. They are the means through which our brain can practically see. Secondly, there is a flow line connecting eyes and the brain centres, through which the text goes in electric signals to its destinations. These places are the third and the most important members taking part in the reading process. It is obvious that the superlative “the most” is a bit hyperbolized because if any problems had occurred in the previous process and the flow of text did not arrive perfectly they cannot work perfectly either. Being aware of this reading complexity may prevent teachers from wrong evaluations of the quality of reading results the pupils; for example, there can be an excellent and efficient reader in the class who is dark-blind and shows poor reading results since he/she cannot simply see the text well.

Since the brain centres as mentioned are relatively the most important factors influencing reading, the following paragraphs are going to show how they work while reading. Medical

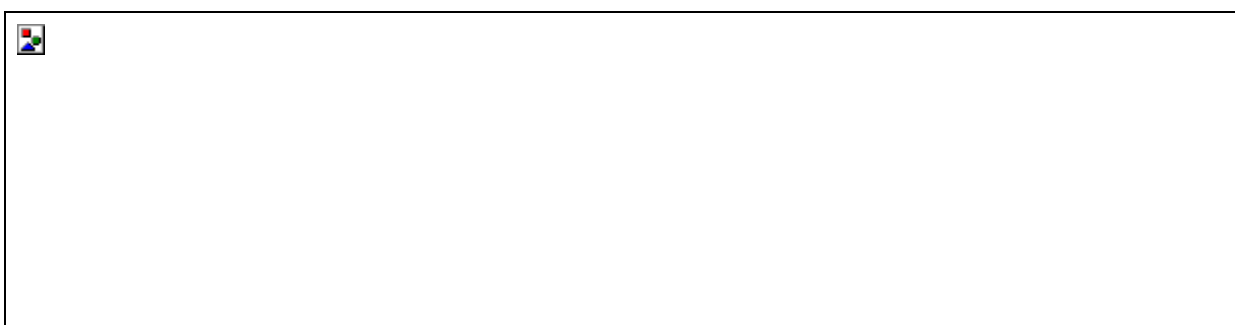


results show that the brain developed so that it has its specialization centres. While reading many of these centres contribute to reading performance, thus reading is not a one step process. It consists of many processes that only if they work well together, make reading smooth as desirable. The components contributing to reading follow in a short overview: Each text consists of letters. These letters usually do not have a precise meaning; therefore the only task for the brain is to decipher them, to distinguish which letter is which. Letters being put together make a more difficult structure, a syllable. This cluster of letters can have a meaning and so our brain needs another specialist; centres dealing with this more complex structure. Syllables standing side by side make a word. The word has a certain meaning, function and connotation, therefore other parts of brain are needed to process the word as a whole, and other areas are involved and asked for help, including extended memory, for example. The array of words makes a clause or a sentence, which have also some additional marks such as commas, exclamation marks, question marks, dashes, inverted commas, bold or underlined words, etc., which graphically stress some parts of the sentence. Such a structure gives a global meaning for all words included. Sentences being put together make a paragraph which can be even more than simple addition of its sentences. There can be some hidden message, thought or mood foreshadowed by means of alliteration, simile, metaphor, etc., which are literal methods of putting words together to evoke a certain reply. Paragraphs make a story, an article, a recipe, a poem, etc. To be able to read such a complex structure of letters/syllables/words/sentences and paragraphs so that “*understanding the language of the author of a printed message*” (Maggart, Zintz, 1989, p 8) and “*getting out of the text as nearly as possible to the message that the writer put into it*” (Nutall, 1982, p 5) i.e. interacting “*between a reader and a text in order to derive meaning*” (Maggart, Zintz, 1989, p 8) would be possible, the effort of the brain has to be enormous and, furthermore, demanding on cooperation of each centre even with centres that are not directly involved in reading process itself as limbic system, the centre of emotions, or motor-kinetic and voice centres. The last mentioned parts of the brain are required while reading aloud or while dramatic reading performance, for example. These hints show that there is no simple, single reading but several readings, each of them obviously being even more difficult when dealt with a foreign language. And moreover, it shows that the final efficient reading stage consists of parts that have to work perfectly otherwise the result of reading may only be poor and partial.

Since my focus aims mainly at supra-segmental process and outcome of reading, I gathered for my project the theory focusing on approaching and utilizing the reading materials. As pupils should read for a purpose to achieve a certain result, I focused my attention on reading strategies and concrete techniques allowing efficient reading, which are the basic skills for

further development of critical reading and critical thinking in general. One factor seemed extremely important to be investigated for my work. From my own experience as a student, there was very often reading taken synonymously with reading aloud. I always suffered from it because when I was reading aloud I was able to manage it perfectly, on the other hand, at the end of reading I never knew what I had read. I tried to investigate what the differences in these two processes are; if any.

I found out in various sources that while reading aloud it is desirable not to chop words but read them whole at once and moreover to join them with the surroundings, stress them and use the appropriate intonation. To be able to do this, the eye span [number of letter being read at once] of the reader has to be broader then just one letter or even one syllable. Readers have to be able to read longer groups of letters or even words at once as the next picture, taken from *Buzan, (1983)* shows.



**Fig. 2** *Diagram showing eye movements of a better and more efficient reader. More words are taken in at each fixation [eye movement], and back-skipping, regression and visual wandering are reduced (p. 33).*

In L2 such a reading may be an obstacle many students cannot overcome since the condition needed is to have fixated certain syllabic patterns and typical letter combinations so that they could be read fluently in one sight fixation. If this condition is not fulfilled the reader tends to part words into shorter clusters, to skip and wander, keep looking back to what they have read to make a control analysis (as the picture below shows), and to do other disruptive steps as *Buzan (1983)* describes.



**Fig. 3** *Diagram showing poor reading habits of slow readers (p. 32).*

Such back-skipping and visual wandering are very demanding on both graphical and lexical analysis of the text, and on keeping the thread of the text message, especially when the reader is asked to produce the sound of what is being read. Thus, reading aloud is much more demanding and difficult for readers to perform. The readers often put all their capacity to presentation not to perception, which means that after reading aloud they often do not have the least hint what the text, they read, was about. Therefore, I excluded reading aloud from my lessons, as reading aloud is a very special skill that has to be trained separately. In my project, I only trained my students in eye span broadening while reading silently because I took it for more important, because as *Grellet(1991)* says “*very few people need to read aloud in their profession*”(p. 10). *Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995)* state to the same peculiarity of reading aloud that “*it is quite difficult for the speaker to pay attention to the reading of a text when reading aloud, particularly in public*” (p. 96). *Grellet (1994)* continues in this thought saying that reading aloud could “*tend to give impression that all text are to be read at the same speed*” ( p. 10), which is an impression that is certainly untrue, because it does not take into account reading techniques and the purpose for reading.

To support technically the findings about reading aloud, The Lee Effect described in *Matějček (1995)* based on feedback voice analysis, shows how extremely difficult and demanding it is for a person to read aloud. In this experiment the experimentees have earphones that delay what they are saying approximately 0.2 sec. This trial shows that they are almost unable to speak fluently, their speech is chopped, they cannot help themselves from making slips, and they are unable to pay attention for a long period of time because of exhaustion. This experiment on voice feedback analyses while reading aloud/speaking has a very similar outcome whenever the pupils are asked to read out loud. Therefore, it is wise not to interchange these two activities. Especially by dyslexic pupils who suffer from problems in reading in the first, initial phrase of distinguishing letter shapes.

These pupils have some special problems with reading that are even more visible in reading in a foreign language. The next subchapter will shortly review what dyslexics have in common and what else should be taken into consideration while teaching reading in ELC to those children.

### ***1.B.2. Definition of dyslexia***

First thing first, dyslexia is a more complex problem than might meet the eyes. There is not a perfect, precise and fully exhaustive definition of dyslexia. The phenomenon is such a broad theme that the definitions in various sources differ a lot. As a short demonstration the following pattern of definitions can serve.

According to the encyclopaedia *Britannica*, dyslexia is “*a chronic neurological disorder that inhibits a person's ability to recognize and process graphic symbols, particularly those pertaining to language.*” (*query=dyslexia*)

The web site *dyslexiaa2z* adds that „*Problems can show themselves in reading, writing, number work, short-term memory, hand control and visual processing. Timekeeping, sense of direction and interpersonal skills can also be affected*“ (*whatis.html*). Such a definition even broadens the area of possible problems that go beyond the linguistic meaning of dys- and lexis. [The prefix “dys-“ means imperfection and ‘lexis’ means put into words. Putting both words together, the etymological meaning of the word is difficulty in expressing written language (writing) and processing the written language (reading).]

Furthermore, the authors of the *Nottsdyslexia* server strengthen that dyslexia „*is a combination of abilities and difficulties affecting learning in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in speed of processing, short-term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. It [dyslexia] is particularly related to mastering and using written language, which may include alphabetic, numeric and musical notation*“ (*dyslexia.html*). Matějček (1995) gives 4 more definitions dated from 1904 to 1968 (p. 19). As the previous ones, they all highlight some aspects and some leave unnoticed.

As known, everybody is a unique person. So every dyslexic pupil is a unique person having a particular display of dyslexic problems with a particular depth of effect on reading and learning. Therefore a precise definition of a dyslexic pupil is a very peculiar task, even for the fact that dyslexia often goes hand in hand with other special educational needs as dysgraphia, dyscalculia, attention deficit, hyper/hypo activity disorder, etc. Therefore, it is always better to speak about a certain dyslexic person with certain dyslexic problems.

However, we have some indicators all the definitions on dyslexia share and come out of. We might talk about dyslexia when “*there is a significant discrepancy between ability to read and intellectual potential*” (*Natchez, 1964, p. 2*) or when the person, as *Ott (1997)* writes, seems “*wordblind*” because they “*do not recognize a word however many times they saw it*” (p. 53). This fact does not mean that they are totally blind, suffering from a disability, illness or low intelligence. The web page on *dyslexics.org.uk* states that they have „*a brain difference, which often gives them some superior abilities.*“ They may be good at sports, numbers, music, art, intra- or interpersonal skills, and other skills conveying the command of language in general. Therefore, dyslexia is no shame or disease. It cannot be cured and it is not a disability, either. Dyslexia is just a different ability and should be taken so by both the teachers and schoolmates.

Speaking about certain indicators showing that it may be dyslexia, a short list is followed, taken from the server *Dyslexiaa2z.com*. Problems are divided into three categories: reading, writing, and the others.

### **Reading**

- *confuse letters that look similar: d - b, u - n, m - n*
- *confuse letters that sound the same: v, f, th*
- *reverse words: was - saw, now - won*
- *transpose words: left - felt, help - hepl*
- *read a word correctly and then further down the page, read it wrong*
- *change words around: the cat sat on the mat (the mat sat on the cat)*
- *confuse small words: of, for, from*
- *have difficulty in keeping the correct place*

### **Writing**

- *not know whether to use his right or left hand*
- *leave out capital letters or use them in the wrong places*
- *forget to dot the 'i's, and cross 't's*
- *form letters and numbers badly*
- *use margins and does his writing slope on the page*
- *use punctuation and paragraphs in the wrong places*

### **Other Indicators**

- *Late developer*
- *Other members of the family may have had similar difficulties*
- *Easily distracted and poor concentration*
- *Auditory difficulties*
- *Confusion between: left/right, east/west, up/down, over/under*
- *Sequencing difficulties:*
  - *Nursery rhymes*
  - *Months of the year*
  - *Numbers in tables.*
- *Holds pen too tightly*
- *Confusion with mathematical symbols (plus/minus etc.)*
- *Has problems telling the time*
- *Problems with tying shoelaces etc*
- *Mixed laterality (i.e. uses either right or left hands or eyes, in writing and other tasks)*
- *Particular difficulty copying from a blackboard*
- *Short term memory problems relating to printed words and instructions*
- *Inability to follow more than one instruction at a time*
- *Cannot use a dictionary or telephone directory*

*(whatis.html).*

This list contains various important indicators that have to be taken into consideration, even in researching the supra-segmental stage of reading I deal with in my project. It will save teachers from mistakes if they bear in mind that dyslexic students may still have serious problems in the lower levels of reading, or in activities and skills accompanying the reading

process. Hence, it is important for the teachers to pay attention to writing legibly and non-chaotically on the blackboard and to be highly systematic in sequencing steps and giving instructions to those children. Moreover, be patient with small mistakes, letter confusions, work disorganization the dyslexic pupils tend to perform, and grade these mistakes and messy order with sympathy and understanding. Additionally, in reading lessons, preparing photocopies for each person of whatever text that will be read would be useful.

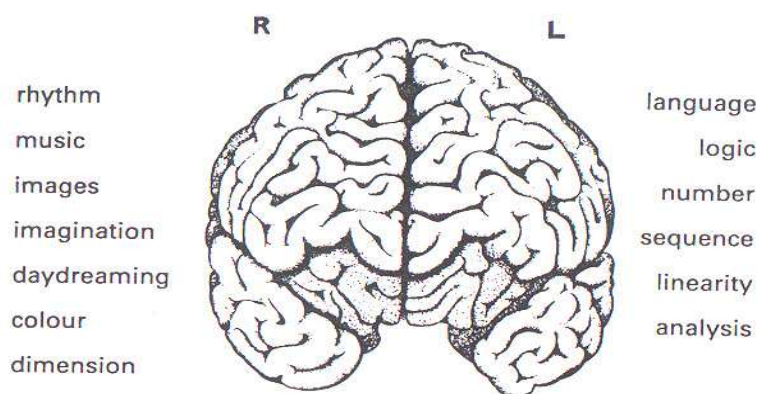
### ***1.B.3. Dichotomy of reading***

Speaking about reading we have to keep in mind that the reading material contains various aspects. There is a language part in all texts [morphological links, syntactical structures, etc.], a logical structure [sequence of thoughts, reasoning, true/false statements, etc.], a sound [music, rhythm, etc.], a shape [letter font, colour, dimension], and also a personal touch [memory flashbacks, feelings, imagination and mood evocation]. Moreover, speaking about the material written in a foreign language, there are very likely some unknown words and some unknown pieces of grammar, too. These aspects can be set into two main categories that go hand in hand with the two brain hemispheres functions. Dichotomy in this context means, the way of reading is typical for one or the second hemisphere, and consequently, dichotomy is the focus on a certain aspect of the text listed above.

When trying to understand deeply the process of dichotomised reading one has to drive their attention to the functions of the brain hemispheres. It might look as if each of the hemispheres supervises exactly half of the body and psychics, consequently, half of the reading. It is a wrong judgement. Biologists, mathematicians and cybernetics found out that the nature of nature is not being symmetric. Whatever systems that are made of two equal parts are never so equal if we look closer. Human faces, leaves, or even artificial intelligence based robots are not symmetric in their appearance or function. Neither are the hemispheres. There always prevails a lateral dominance of one of them.

Summing up, as the picture below taken from *Buzan (1983)* will show, there are certain centres responsible for some mental processes occupying either left or right hemisphere. The person having developed left or right brain dominance tends to perceive whatever material mainly through their preferred hemisphere. Thus we have two main types of readers: those who read for “what” is in the text and those who read for “why”. In words covering reading, and reading in a foreign language especially, we have those who read for facts, language, sequence analysis and logical structures, and those who read for opinions, imaginations and mood. Those who are left dominant are then able to operate more easily with the language, with deducing foreign words out of prefixes and suffixes, and to answer narrow focused

questions demanding logical thinking. On the other hand, those who are more right dominant are more attracted with the holistic message of the text. They tend not to focus on separate parts and their gentle logical links. Using the technical parable for characteristics of each dominance, left dominant pupils are able to zoom in on certain parts of the text and analyse it. Right dominance then enables pupils to zoom out and look at the text from the big picture.



**Fig. 3** *Front view of the two sides of the brain and their functions (p. 14).*

Both ways of reading, either focusing on parts of the text or on the text as a whole, are equally important and should be developed in schools. Sometimes, depending on the type of text and the reading purpose, it is more effective to use just one of the ways, which is what I tried to persuade my students when training dichotomised reading in my project plans.

Thinking about dichotomised reading, as explained above, we stand in front of the basic conceptual question: whether we should even teach it in foreign language reading classes, where it might be extremely important to use both sides of the brain at once, and not to separate left and right brain skills. While reading in ELC there are almost always unknown words in the text and pupils should be able to cope with them somehow, as to guess out of some linguistic or whatever contextual hints, or even look them up in the dictionary if necessary i. e. the question stands if it would be more useful to use all brain capacity and potential to understand as much as possible. I am convinced that the answer is no, because such a complex reading is not a realistic point at basic schools, and switching brain potentials too much while reading would interrupt reading with such looking up new words and other interruptions, especially when reading a longer part of a text where the overall image of the story could be damaged by such a chopped reading. Thus, dichotomised reading can help a great deal in ELC based on reading skills because it guides students while reading. It always gives them a certain task to focus on while reading, which means that the teacher practically decides on which brain hemisphere shall be prevailingly plugged into reading and which

should be depressed, so as not to negatively influence the reading process. In other words, the teacher in dichotomy based reading classes will choose the hemisphere that will be dominant and that will be the authority the reader will ask for answers, which means that the teacher will set up the purpose for reading that goes hand in hand with a certain reading technique that suits the concrete purpose best.

What convinced me to study dichotomy of reading and its validity for teaching reading techniques to the dyslexics in ELC was the Japanese research in neurobiology of reading described in *Matějček (1995)*. He reports on a particular case in which a group of Korean bilingual people, who lived in Japan, have been also taught the Korean phonetic writing, Hangul, which they read it with their left, linguistic hemisphere, similarly as the Japanese ideograph writing, Kandzhi, and Japanese phonetic syllable writing, Kana. Natural-born Japanese, who did not know Hangul, read it as symbols by their right, non-verbal hemisphere, and both the Kana and Kandzhi with their left hemisphere, as is typical for a language. The same result was proved in children reading Latin writing with their left and Hebrew writing with their right hemisphere; and vice versa (*p.38-41*). This significant acknowledgement about people's approach to a text on the level of letters [known or unknown, proceeded either as language with left, or as space symbols with right hemisphere] is applicable on more complex structures [words, clauses, sentences]. This basic division fundamentally results in two key approaches to any written text I used when preparing my project materials and tasks.

- Textual analysis and emotionally esteemed opinion based on feelings. The research also showed that the personal receiving is even more important than the global reality of the material and that when teaching reading techniques one thing seems to be crucial: pointing out the feedback questions back to the same area that worked on processing the text task. That was the key I used while checking understanding after reading in my teaching practice lessons. As a demonstration of what this result means, this example may serve: even an average Czech pupil can read Japanese writing but not with the task to translate it linguistically. For example, the pupil can read it as pictograms, space lines, and can be asked for associations in creative reading lessons. When reading English, which is my focus, even children with a very restricted vocabulary can read British newspapers as long as they are given an appropriate task, as to find the main gist, not to translate the whole text or to analyse its morphological, syntactical, or lexical structures.

Moreover, dyslexic pupils, despite only seeing symbols sometimes, can successfully read English texts if the task enables them to do so.



This theoretical conclusion is what methodologists and practical teachers came up with: What makes reading difficult or easy, is predominantly the reading task and the reading purpose, not the reading material itself.

#### ***I.B.4. Understanding the text***

Since comprehension of a new piece of information is the reason why people read, pupils being no exemption, it is essential to be clear what we mean when speaking about the understanding of a text in a foreign language.

In general, language as a tool for expressing thoughts and feelings is limited. Words never describe variety and different intensity of personal experiences of the author. The better the writer is, the closer they can get to the essence of their inner experience. Moreover, the closer can the reader relates to the writer, the better the chance is to understand him precisely. Additionally, every writer is influenced by his personal surroundings, nature, personality, historical and geographical circumstances, etc. Not taking these aspects into consideration, a great number of world famous works would not ever be completely understood. Such a full contextual understanding is not a realistic task at basic schools, therefore we often have to set limits of comprehension, levels, to which extents the pupils should go, i.e. we have to choose one aspect of the text only that will be focused on. Setting these limits is of high importance when reading in a foreign language, particularly with dyslexics, who tend to fail in complex multitask operations.

It is not always necessary that the pupils should understand all words included in the text. Sometimes the task does not require it, because the purpose for reading may be different than collecting precise facts, overviews or finding exact pieces of information. *Harmer (1998)* states, for instance, that “*reading text can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite imaginative responses and be the springboard for wellrounded, fascinating lesson*” (p. 68). It shows that reading can have many purposes, going from simple setting up the atmosphere, towards translation with comments. Logically, different purposes demand different approaches to the concept of understanding them.

Each of the levels of understanding aims at different aspects of the reading text. Being able to cope with the given aspect of the text in a foreign language is what I mean when writing about understanding the text. Sometimes it may be the ability to translate the article with or without the guidance of some kind of dictionary, or to follow steps written in a foreign language by physical response. Sometimes, just to get the feeling that the classroom has changed into the surroundings the text describes. Setting aspects that should be focused on is a limitation. Such

a limitation then correlates with reading strategies and techniques for reading, which are to be further described in the following chapter.

## **I.C. METHODOLOGY**

The methodological chapter is going to discuss the general performance of dyslexics in an English language class and the possible ways how they can be helped to improve their learning of a foreign language and reading in particular (ch. I.C.1.). Then it describes the natural process of how the reading material should be processed while reading, to enable students to comprehend more easily (ch. I.C.2.A., I.C.2.B.). At the end, the general approaches towards teaching any skill - including reading skills are discussed. Finally, there follows a chapter on how the comprehension of a text should be checked after reading (ch. I.C.4.).

### ***I.C.1. Dyslexics in English language classes***

There is no perfect recipe for how to deal with dyslexic pupils in ELC besides endless regards. Every single person is a unique being with their individual approach to learning in general, and to learning a foreign language as well. Variety in people can be seen in the ELC, too. Thus, the first and foremost rule is to accept students' variety and differentiate the lesson so that the teacher tries to teach as every single pupil learns best. Thus, the main rule cannot differ to the main rule the teacher has to keep in mind, even if teaching in a non-dyslexic class.

As non-dyslexics are individualities, the dyslexics are as well. These children "*do not fall into set categories*" (*Reading disabilities, 1964, p. 3*). Thus the general approach to these children should not vary from the approach to any other individuals being gifted in some area and being less gifted in the other. Methodologists conclude that in the second grade of basic schools, differentiation can be the most effective method because it takes the individuality of students into account. Researchers in dyslexia in *Ott (1997)* then came up with the conclusion that differentiation with multi-sensory teaching can have a great benefit when working with dyslexic pupils because it enables them to use simultaneously audio, video, and tactile skills while learning. This can help them to do the task through utilising their strong areas and exercise the weaker ones at the same time (*p. 64-5*).

As dyslexics often suffer from various mixtures of symptoms (see ch. Definition of dyslexia), they might have some weaker areas in learning a foreign language. They tend to read extremely slowly, and, if not given enough time, they tend to panic and skip words to make their reading faster. They also interchange small words in English often. The task of the

teacher is to help them to overcome the problems that might arise. One way to do it is setting the task for these people so that they can use their stronger areas while working on the task. For teaching reading techniques, I used a lot of differentiation mainly in time and task, which means that I gave dyslexic pupils more time for reading in class or even left some parts of the text as their homework, so as not to stress them by the pace the rest of the class might have. Similarly, I worked with the reading tasks that used to be more one-sided, so as not to overwhelm them. The multi-sensory approach, recommended by specialists in dyslexia, that joins seeing, body language, hearing, touching or singing for example, was used only for vocabulary clarifying and while pre-reading activities in my project.

### ***I.C.2. Reading***

*“One of the chief myths that students believe about reading is that they must read every word...fortunately, not every word in a book must be read, nor must every detail be learned” (Langan, 1990, p. 395).* It is always important to consider the reason for which we approach a certain piece of reading text. However, myths strongly touch our inner approach to the world, and it is always very difficult to convert people, who believe in some myth, that it is not true. My great trial was to persuade my students that if they consider the reason they approach a certain text, they can choose a certain reading strategy and read the text using a certain reading technique which enables them to read more effectively in English because such an approach is the reflection of the most natural process of reading.

#### **I.C.2A. PHASES OF READING**

To help pupils to successfully go through the reading material in a foreign language, teachers can lead them by guiding their reading. A useful tool may be serving giving a certain task for students to focus on while reading. Moreover, as it is almost impossible to catch on with the text after the first reading, there should be more readings of the text, each time being led by either a bit different or just modified task; i. e. by a different purpose for reading. It can solve two problems at a time, firstly, the pupils will have the text read more than once and thus they should become more familiar with it which is of an extreme importance when working with a text in a foreign language. Secondly, the motivation should not decrease if they have a different purpose for reading the same piece of text more than once. The reading procedure then goes in three stages: pre-reading, while reading and post-reading, and finishes in some follow-up activities based on what they have learned and what new the text has brought.

As reading is an active process, the main goal of the first stage is to catch students' attention in order to make them actively involved. The pre-reading activities should thus give a

purposeful framework for what is to follow, should provoke students' interest, and as *Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995)* write, “create ‘a need to know’ by telling them how the reading fits in with a later activity they are going to do” (p. 97). This preparatory stage should engage the information gap, since as in real life, people usually read for exploring the message of a text. Obviously, if the task demands it, students should be prepared for reading even linguistically, which might mean that the unknown vocabulary needed for successful reading and completing the task can be introduced to them as well as some relevant background links. There are a lot of ways for teachers to raise the interest for reading. For instance, asking pre-reading questions; setting up a problem, the answer on which could be found in the text; predicting the result of reading; brainstorming all related ideas about the topic the students are going to face; making vocabulary mind maps related to the theme of the reading material; etc. Sometimes the teacher may plan this stage as homework for students, to investigate individually the area that is going to be covered in the text of the next reading lesson, in order to push students into the involvement through gathering relevant pieces of information for the further reading.

The second stage is called while reading. This is the stage during which the development of the main reading strategies takes place. The task has been set, the text handed out, and the students know what to focus on. Here the role of the teacher is to show students how to handle the task as efficiently as possible. It might happen that students use effective reading strategies in L1 but are unable to transfer them into L2, as *Harmer (1991)* highlights; consequently, they might not understand the text and might fail in doing the task. As understanding written text means “extracting the required information from it as effectively as possible” (Grellet, 1991, p. 3), it is crucial for students to use the appropriate strategy while reading in ELC (p. 25).

Each step the teacher makes should be followed by checking students' understanding. The final stage of reading is a general, in-dept, feedback on students' comprehension. It can be done by multiple-choice questions; solving the problem having been set before reading; comparing brainstormed ideas with the real results of reading; deducing unknown vocabulary from the context; discussing predictions with facts; or formulating own opinions, etc. Lastly there can be one more stage that goes beyond the particular text. This stage is a further reaction on the message of the text, which is absolutely in concord with what happens in our everyday lives. When reading advertisements, for instance, we call to what suits us and what we like best. When reading an offer, we write an order. When reading a controversial article we react on it, when reading mail we write a reply on it, when reading a cinema guide we go and buy or book tickets, when reading an excellent, unknown, author we tend to find more

information about him and his works, etc. Thus, we should somehow further work with the message of the text too. Such follow-up activities are natural and it is advisable not to exclude them from reading classes even for the point that they help students to develop the natural cause-effect reaction on a text in a foreign language. The first three stages of reading mentioned, help students to successfully go through the text. The last one gives the real sense and connections to the real life situations because it trains the structure of the common action – reaction procedure which goes even beyond English lessons because the students are very likely to face it in their future lives.

Obviously, dyslexic pupils can benefit a great deal if reading goes in these natural steps, since guiding them is what helps most. If the teacher does not push them into the ocean of reading but chop the whole procedure of reading into small pieces that are trained separately, dyslexic pupils could learn how to get prepared for making them oriented in the complex wholeness of any difficult piece of text.

#### I.C.2B. READING STRATEGIES & TECHNIQUES

Speaking about text, there are two basic types of reading them: intensive and extensive reading. Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) say that extensive reading is “*the way we usually read when we are reading for pleasure – perhaps a novel or a biography*” (p. 95). The goal of such a reading is to catch the overall idea of the text. The reader does not have to worry about unknown vocabulary and additional details. The focus is more on fluency. On the contrary, intensive reading is “*more an accuracy activity involving reading for detail*” (Grellet, 1991, p. 4). Students should be able to answer both vocabulary and detailed content questions after reading. Both of these ways of reading are equally important and should be trained to develop efficient reading skills leading to critical reading in general.

Concerning the technical matter of reading, we distinguish two basic techniques. They are: skimming and scanning. “*When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer*” (Grellet, 1991, p. 19). To do that, as Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) point out, we are “*probably not reading every word, maybe reading only the first sentences of each paragraph*” (p. 95). The focus of such a reading is the getting-to-know of the piece of text. When scanning, on the contrary, as Grellet (1991) points out “*we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passages to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whatever it be a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information*” (p. 19). Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) compare this technique to looking through the program in the case we

want to know what is on TV at 8 p.m. We scan the page, skipping the time before 8 p.m., until we find the time we want, and then we read it carefully (*p. 95*). This example shows that the type of a text, or narrowing it to the school surroundings, the purpose of the task, correlates directly with the reading strategy. Thus, choosing the right technique logically leads to a more efficient going-through the text both for non-dyslexics and dyslexics. The dyslexics may benefit even more because using techniques is the most natural and the most one-sided approach to the text, which is exactly what helps them most since the multitask approach at a time often puzzles them to a great extent.

### ***I.C.3. Study skills***

A lot of achievements in school subject matters are not dependent on the intellectual capacity of the learner. Sometimes it is more important that the student is able to cope with the data, to take a stand, to “know how”. Such an ability is labelled a learning or study skill. These skills obviously penetrate into all subject matters and to real life as well. That is why they are so important. They are the keys that might help in solving variety of problems that go beyond the English language classes.

Roughly divided these skills cover the area of note taking; outlining; hygiene of learning; time management; summarizing; paraphrasing; using library and dictionaries; reading graphs, tables; and last but not least - reading skills.

As reading makes up a large part of the majority of school subject, these skills covering reading might be very important. It stands for reason there is no perfect recipe how to become an efficient and progressive reader. Many times it has been said that each person is an individual, doing things in their own way, which suits them best. Psychologists and pedagogues researched study skills in order to find out how to approach sets of problems. They found out that any approach may help some people but for others it may be almost useless. Some people do not follow the pattern that the researchers found because their individuality is more different to the average results. All conclusions about study skills in general may help, but do not necessary have to. Thus, no teacher should feel disappointed in a particular case that the method does not function at all. It is important, for the teacher, to show potentiality to students and offer them variety of ways and opportunities to test and find what suits each individual student best.

An important question that arises is: How to do it, how to teach skills that we cannot teach because they are not knowledge? The only way we can teach is by training them, which is a bit more specific to teaching language in general because skills will be learned and taken over only if the pupils see on their own eyeballs that they really work. No matter how the research

in this area might be valid and helpful if the pupil does not believe and try, they will never discover the positive asset of any research.

To enable students to test whatever skills, including reading techniques, the teacher has to prepare the task and material so that it would crystallize clearly that some of the approaches advised may be better and more effective than the old ones the students were used to. Only then, when the students can clearly see the new approach functioning, they are motivated for its further use. Thus, the task of the teacher is to enable the students to live up the methods, and not learn their definitions by heart.

If we take a look back on dyslexia, which is a different ability in a way that usually does not fit to the ordinary processes, it starts to be clear that training different skills can have an outstanding benefit on these children, with regards to become more efficient readers.

#### ***I.C.4. Checking understanding***

As the theoretical chapter says, understanding means extracting the required information and being able to cope with the text on the level the teacher had set when giving the reading task. Thus, the feedback should then check only how the students dealt with the task, not the reading text as a whole; i.e. checking their understanding might mean explaining vocabulary; giving situational context of the plot; doing multiple-choice exercise; discussing; reasoning; explaining one's own opinion, etc., but not all of these at the same time. Students might take it unfair when being given a reading task and then being asked questions aiming at a completely different aspect of the text.

From the technical point of view there are dozens of means how to check understanding. The methods may be divided into two main categories: verbal and non-verbal checking. Since one of the most useful and wide-spread means for checking understanding after reading is verbal questioning, I will focus my attention on this method only.

First, before the question types will be described, are factors that can highly influence the whole reading and reading feedback. It is important to keep these factors in mind to avoid false analyses of the reading performance of students. The first factor is the atmosphere in the class. It is well-known that only a friendly, encouraging teacher will support students' effort to react on the questions. Additionally, it is important for both the teachers and students to be conscious that even a wrong answer, which will probably occur in classes, is an outstanding opportunity for learning if dealt with respectful understanding and followed by an explanation. In such a case, the student who was mistaken may avoid the mistake next time, without being discouraged to answer in class. Similarly, when asking for one's own opinion connected with the reading text, it is extremely important to appreciate and value every

attempt to answer, so as to show respect to students' ideas. It is always good to show students that there is no single answer the teacher wants to hear. Something worth mentioning is the plural "students", which means that the teacher should give an opportunity to all of the students in the classroom to answer in order to show respect for each individual. If such regard is paid for the students, the atmosphere tends to raise and the number of side-effects influencing willingness to answer teachers' question decrease. The second factor influencing success of any reading is the distribution of the text. It is necessary to hand out the text so that each student [pair, group – depending on the type of the activity] has their own one. The goal of reading is comprehension, not remembering. What the teacher should not test is the memory. Additionally, the text is a working material, and students should be allowed to work with it; for instance, to make notes, underline, highlight, cross out, or to take it home for revising or completing homework. If these two basic conditions are fulfilled, the atmosphere in the class is set on a tensionless level, everybody has their own piece of the reading paper, we may talk about validity and reliability of feedback questions that are going to be categorised in the next paragraphs.

Concerning the general characteristics of questions, it seems crucial to mention the language and intellectual level of them because both should not be much above or under the level the students are on, otherwise it could discourage students from co-operating with the teacher.

The questions, according to *Nutall (1982)*, have four basic forms corresponding with the answer forms. Yes/No questions fit into the first category. Students are asked to answer briefly yes/no. These questions test basic understanding of the text. The second category of questions is called alternative questions. They offer an alternation, a choice between two statements, and students decide which one is true. A deeper understanding is checked with Wh- questions. They require the answer to: who, what, which, when, and where. Even a bit more profound comprehension is checked by how/why questions. The answer to these questions is more difficult because it requires a full sentence answer of various structures and a deeper comprehension of the context and relations in the text (*p. 128*).

Taken from the angle of presentation, *Nutall (1982)* furthermore divides questions into 5 types according to which cognitive process they employ. This division directly corresponds with Bloom's taxonomy of knowledge and touch the basis with dichotomized reading in a way, because it builds stairs from a one-aspect understanding to an efficient reader who uses both sides of the brain at a time without being puzzled with the complexity of the material. As I was testing my project on basic school, I gave tasks covering the lower levels of understanding, and consequently I asked feedback questions prevailing aiming at the lower



levels of the question division. I allowed myself to ask the higher levelled questions only if all the lower ones have been carefully discussed before.

The Nutall's division mentioned above can be described as follows. If the information the teacher wants to get can be explicitly found in the text, the teacher asks questions of literal comprehension. Such questions are pointing out at the essential understanding of the basic frame of the text. The teacher can demand the name of the main hero, the place of the story, or other general characteristics that have been mentioned implicitly in the text in various parts. It is quite common to use Yes/No questions or alternative questions at this stage. It is important for the teacher to make sure that all pupils are able to answer these questions before the teacher goes on to further questions. This type understanding is the basic starting point for them. Questions involving reorganization or reinterpretation of the text lead students to put some literal information found in different parts of the text together or to reinterpret information from different angles. Such questions are more demanding to students since they require thinking-through the text as a whole, finding relevant pieces of information and using one's own words to re-express them. Even more complicated questions are questions of inference. They outreach the linguistic understanding of the text and require joining deeper intellectual processes for answering to them. For the reader to be able to answer them, it is crucial to be able to read between the lines and somehow implicate the message found there. If the reader is asked to introduce their opinion, specify their reasons for them, judge the text, or to compare their own ideas with the others, we speak about questions of evaluation. To be able to answer to a question from this category, the student must be able to analyze the text in-depth, to join the message of it with their previous knowledge, and not only to say but also to support their personal view and opinion. If asked to look at the text through glasses of feelings and emotions, the students answer questions of personal response. The students are asked then to express how the text influenced their own personality. Nevertheless, such questions require both comprehension and feelings because when the pupil does not understand a word he is unlikely to be able to gain any feeling relevant to the message of the text. Thus the last category is the most difficult and often students are able to answer to its questions only if they previously covered the lower categories that make the steps to this last peak of the pyramid (*ibid*, p. 132-133).

Generally speaking, the better the students, both in English and intellectual/emotional capacity are, the higher level of questions can be employed. Nevertheless, there is no rule forbidding what question you can ask them if the language and mental development of the students are taken carefully into account. Even young learners are able to answer, to a certain extent, the questions from all of the categories. Moreover, the higher level the question is, the

higher level of thinking skills is practiced. As thinking is one of the crucial goals of the whole education process, we should not avoid sequencing even those higher-levelled questions both to young learners and to beginners.

The contribution of the reading lesson is not equal to number of questions and number of categories covered in the class. It is always necessary to follow the aims and objectives of the lesson and the nature of the reading material. If we want to employ those higher-levelled spheres of thinking it is advisable to briefly go through the previous question categories to make sure the students understand the language, the message of the text, relations among information included, etc. so as to be able to get a valid evaluation and personal response to the text. It is important to be conscious that even a text written in a simple language for total beginners given to advanced students may evoke an intellectual discussion and emotional responses of a high level. Similarly, a great asset to learning may have a very difficult authentic material given to beginners if it is followed by questions from lower categories. The first example demonstrates thinking based, and second language based benefits. Both are equally important and they train skills every proficient reader must master.

Last but not least to mention, is the fact that when asking questions in reading classes, we should bear in mind that our goal is to check understanding, to give students a feedback leading toward better understanding in general. When asking questions based on reading, the first issue is to really ask questions based on the reading, not to disrupt students' attention, and not to cut the thread that has been created in their minds while reading.

Consideration of all the mentioned methodological approaches to reading, study skills teaching and checking understanding leads me to the following thesis that is to be examined in the project.

## **I.D. THESIS**

Teaching different reading strategies to a dyslexic child and using appropriate reading techniques in ELC at basic school can lead to a more apparent comprehension of the printed message in a text, to a higher motivation for reading, and to the improvement of the command of English in general.

## **II. PROFESSIONAL PROJECT**

In this chapter the professional project will be described. It is based on experts' theories (see ch. I.B. and I.C.) and data from interviews, observations, discussions, teaching practices, and other relevant sources I gathered to support my thesis. The documentation and reflections on the lessons, having been taught according to my findings, are submitted, too.

### **II.A. REVIEW OF THEORY**

The project is designed in accordance with Nutall, Grellet, Buzan, Matějček, and other methodology, psychology, and pedagogy experts' theories that all deal with the area of teaching reading techniques in ELC, especially to a dyslexic pupil, in order to develop an effective and efficient reader.

They all highlight the fact that reading is a crucial skill needed not only for the English language but also for almost all subject matters. Therefore, it is particularly fundamental to teach its variety, which may mean, in one case, the ability to find a single number on a page, and, in another, understanding the plot of a story. Speaking in other words, the importance of teaching reading skills is in making students aware of different types of texts and different reading techniques applicable to them. If the students know how exactly they should read the text and what to focus on, they will not get overloaded with the amount of information each piece of text can provide.

The experts also say that only if the reading task is sensitive to students' capacity, it does not discourage them from reading, and thus they can learn and benefit from reading. Especially for dyslexics, it is always important not to make reading a psychical struggle, not to support their negative attitudes to reading as a torment since it is the area of one's possible public failure.

To avoid these negative outcomes, the reading skills in the project are approached through the task reading method, looking at each piece of text from one angle only, showing one single crystal-clear aspect of the text, and suggesting one reading technique that corresponds best with the reading task. Furthermore, the project tries to investigate whether such a systematic [guided] reading can help dyslexic students to understand better, whether the motivation for reading increases, and whether there are some hints of taking up the techniques that were suggested.

## **II.B. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

In this section the practical steps, of investigation needed to be made before the project was tested, are described. It contains both general data I collected from various sources, which deal with teaching reading technique and dyslexic reading, and also specific information relevant to the unique environment I was to test the project in.

### ***II.B.1. Project model***

With regards to the theories of reading experts and dyslexia researchers, I tried to design my reading lessons in order to support the thesis of my final paper. Worth noticing is the fact that it helped me a great deal to do my own personal investigation into teaching/learning area to see through my own eyes what the authors of all the books had been writing about. During my teaching practice course, I did ten focused observations at Lesní Basic School, two whole-day observations in a special dyslexic class at U Soudu Basic School, both in Liberec. I interviewed four teachers, two of them teaching at special dyslexic classes, some fellow-students of mine who dealt with the similar area of interest during their teaching practice, and obviously, I discussed with dozens of pupils at whom my attention aimed mostly. At Jablonec n. N. Consulting Service Centre I had a whole-day meeting with a special pedagogue, specializing in dyslexia problems. I also talked to the parents of dyslexic pupils and went to see a remedial lesson of reading at U Nemocnice Elementary School in Rumburk where I also studied psychological and school reports on dyslexic children involved in order to be able to prepare realistic reading lessons and to be able to judge rightly all possible situation in my future teaching practice. My goal was to gain ability in distinguishing precisely which exhibition of dyslexic problems is truly a cause of dyslexia and which may be influenced by other factors as behavioural problems, adolescent changes, hyperactivity, other SENs, etc.

When interviewing the teacher, in whose class my teaching practice was going to take place, I narrowed my questions to the areas of language knowledge and achievements of her students; their interests; materials and methods the teacher uses; dyslexia remedy programs; and reading with dyslexic children in English. All my findings, either directly or indirectly, became a basis for the design of my lessons in the project.

### ***II.B.2. Interviews***

What helped me the most while preparing my teaching practice concept framework was talking to people involved in the same area as I was. These sources provided me with dozens of clues in general understanding of dyslexics' reading. Two interviews, one with a special pedagogue and the second with a teacher at a specialized dyslexic class, were made. One of

these is written down and submitted in App. 1. For the concrete preparation of my project, I interviewed the regular teacher of English at the school in which I was going to test my reading project. The main goal was to find out if the teacher uses supplementary materials in classes, both graded and authentic, how often and which way, i. e. what methods she uses, what skills are covered, and how dyslexics handle such a reading. Obviously, there preceded some general questions on students' language command, textbook usage, classroom arrangement available, number of students, frequency of dyslexics, in-class society stratification, co-operation, behaviour, etc., to make sure the class, by its nature, would be able to go through my intended project.

I found out that the teacher considered her classes ordinary and able to co-operate. Nevertheless, having seen my reading materials for the project, she was afraid that the students would not be able to cope with such a high-levelled language (some of the materials are copied in App. 2). She claimed that a few times she used supplementary materials taken from much easier sources than mine and still the students were not able to read [translate] the texts. She appreciated the selection of my topics but discouraged me strongly from using such difficult materials, largely due to vocabulary included. Concerning the methods, she mainly used reading texts as sources for pronunciation practice and vocabulary translation, which gave me a spark of chance and it affirmed my idea to try to handle reading in a different way. I was determined to change the approach to reading and believed the students would be able to work with the materials without any insuperable difficulties. Therefore, I hardly changed any of my sources.

To dyslexics, I found out that no extra help, besides time allowance, is usually given to them. There exists a program for the remedy of reading in the elementary part of the basic school [grade 1 – 5]. There pupils are helped by teaching them reading shapes of letters and letter formations in words. As the usual methodological approach to reading fails with them, they have extra classes after school where reading [in Czech language only] is taught consistently to multi-sensory approach. They play with letters, draw, build letter houses, etc. These classes are on a voluntary basis and it is up to each parent to decide whether they sign up their child, or not. Fortunately, the majority of parents accept this opportunity and enrol their children. From grades 6 to 9, however, dyslexics are not given any further help. They are only not asked to read aloud, as psychologists suggest, because the failure in doing this activity could negatively influence their self-esteem, and furthermore, the cruelty of peers to these children can increase because while reading they often show their weakest point, and thus become more vulnerable. Dyslexics, as said, are also given more time without any further help when reading occurs in language activity. However, it often leads to the sad fact that they are not

given any opportunity to answer the teacher's checking questions to show they "know" since they are usually the last that process the text and accomplish the task.

All I had learned from the interviews helped me a great deal in matching my general knowledge to the unique surroundings. It also enabled me to deeply understand the usual way people work with dyslexic pupils and it pushed me to think hard over my intentions. I had to go through my texts again, go step by step through my reading tasks and tailor some parts to ensure that students I will have in front of me in a couple of weeks will be able to cope with my project. To sum it up, the interviews helped me narrow the focuses of my lessons. Without talking to the teacher, I would have been forced to prepare many side-tracks if the lesson did not go in the direction it was supposed to. The interview with the teacher forewarned me, and thus I was forearmed for the situation I was going to face in my own classes.

### ***II.B.3. Social games***

At first I thought about a questionnaire rather than the games. At the end I decided on this type of class survey. Nevertheless, the fact why I decided not to make any questionnaires is at least as important as the result that the games came up with. Thus, here follow some of my hints and thinking processes dealing with the peculiar problem of making a valid questionnaire.

To find out more about the students I was going to teach, I decided to make a sociological survey and psychological profile of the classes. I wanted to know quite a broad scale of information that could help me to analyse precisely the students' work and behaviour and that could cast the right light on the driving force behind my students' performance. My point was to learn the students' attitudes towards learning and learning English; their interests, problems, and family relations; attitudes to school and authorities; to identify class leaders and losers; and other factors that could interfere with the performance during the lessons. I went to the psychological centre to ask for standardized questionnaires aiming at these areas every teacher has to have precisely mapped. Unfortunately, I was refused and said that only a psychologist is allowed to work with such tests and that the key for them has almost the status of "top secret" material. I could not even have a look at some test patterns to get inspired. Therefore, I had to give up. Thus, I decided not to make the questionnaire all by myself because the interpretation would probably not be very valid and would probably not vary to the standard Gauss' layout, showing that the class is absolutely the same as the regular teacher had said: ordinary; i. e. following the average of this age. Thus, I accepted that the middle-majority is interested in music, movies and other teenage topics, that only a mass minority likes reading and practice it in their leisure time, and that I can unlikely cover up the marginal

students from the layout. No question that this attitude was a speculation. To make sure that this profile matches, I sequenced some pre-phases before my reading project. These were mostly icebreakers followed by a discussion about the topic that the questionnaire should have covered.

Thus, instead of the questionnaire I used in the very beginning of my project another method of gathering data: activities. In these activities, being drawn as social games, the students acted and their actions were very natural, and thus more legible and easier for interpretation than paper questionnaires in which students may hide many things and cast fog on some answers.

These activities proved that my deduction coming out of general knowledge was unconditionally applicable to these concrete surroundings. Most of the students like English but not reading. If they read, they read only in Czech, and besides a minority of exemptions, only magazines. Texts written in English are too difficult because they contain too many unknown words. Concerning the social structure, during the game “the raft”, for example, it showed that each group has a leader. [A group of people is standing on a piece of paper that stands for a raft floating on the sea. The crew can swim around the raft. From time to time a shark approaches the raft. Everybody has to get on board as quickly as possible. The shark then bites-away a piece of the raft and disappears for a minute. The situation repeats and the raft grows smaller and smaller. The crew has to somehow manage to keep everybody on board or to victimize someone.] Usually the leader was the one who was most talkative and who was taken for the strongest and the smartest one. The status of dyslexics showed to be quite low as assumed. Some of them had good ideas when the group was asked to solve the problem of the shark but their voices were too low and the others either did not hear them or did not take any notice of them. They very often gave up before they tried to persuade the rest of pupils and they had a tendency to sacrifice their lives to save the others. Almost always when I drew the group’s attention to their ideas, they were accepted immediately with appreciation and they became sort of advisers for the group leaders.

All these findings proved that no questionnaire was needed and all general assumptions fitted to the classes perfectly. Moreover, children enjoyed these games a lot which not only helped me to get to know them but it also established a warm friendly atmosphere, which was crucial importance for further cooperative attitude in my reading project.

#### ***II.B.4. Testing time***

The project I intended to make was time demanding a great deal. First, I had to find a school and a teacher that would allow me to disrupt the regular teaching plans and to take over some

classes for the four week's period of time. I found it impossible to fit what I intended into a class of English where my project would fill only a part of each lesson ordinarily designed to follow the textbook. As one of the specifics about teaching skills is that students have to live the training up, I had to gain enough time to prepare all stages necessary for it. Dealing with reading materials, reading of which alone takes a couple of minutes, even forty-five minute lessons seemed sometimes not enough to contain all stages I needed the students to go through for a clearer crystallization of a certain technique asset.

Fortunately, having explained my attempts to the teacher of English, she allowed me to take over all classes I needed and to test the project on them. I did not have to follow the book or the annual subject plan. I was given two ninth grade classes at disposal, one eighth, and three seventh for the whole four week's practice teaching. I was also allowed to give out full-scope credits to students for whatever I wanted to test, which also helped to confirm me as the authority.

I focused my attention on the ninth classes mainly. I supposed that their level of English enables them to handle the reading techniques more easily. And moreover, in these classes the percentage of dyslexic pupils was the highest. For these two main reasons all parts of the project were tested only in the ninth grade parallel classes. The rest of the classes experienced only partial bits of the reading activities in order to affirm the fact that it is possible to teach reading skills even at lower grades than at the final one.

### ***II.B.5. Materials***

Each reading lesson was established to work on some of the reading skills. The texts had to be chosen carefully, to enable variety in exercises because, as *Grellet (1991)* writes, "*it is an important factor in motivation and it is necessary if different skills are covered*" (p. 10). Also the texts had to be appropriate to the reading techniques I wanted to work on various criteria such as: length, amount of unknown words, pictures and other clues, topics, pre- and post-reading actions possible, etc. I picked up texts that would be attractive for the majority of students mainly in terms of the content. My foremost intension was to cause an information gap, a "*need to know*" (*Gower, Phillips, Walters, 1995, p. 53*) that would emerge by the time the text is handed out. All topics for my reading materials were from various areas of common life, shared knowledge of which everybody should have mastered. The materials covered themes as fairy-tales, horoscopes, up-to-date world burning issues, etc., mostly coming from sources as *The Bridge* magazine, *Longman Reader Series*, and *The Guardian* newspaper. Some of them were graded, which means that the language they contain fits to a certain level of knowledge of English of a non-native learner, and some of them were



authentic. The task was always designed to respect the difficulty of the language of the text and to offer a certain technique that would clearly lead to the most effective handling of the piece of text in order to satisfy the aims and objectives of the particular task.

### ***II.B.6. School***

The teacher of English is the only person teaching English at the second grade of the school. She takes over the pupils at the sixth grade and leads them up to the ninth grade. There is a special English classroom at the school where only lessons of English take place. One of the positives is that very many useful aids are concentrated in one place. The walls there are full of grammar charts, and the classroom library full of books. A video recorder is also available, and the seating arrangement can be changed very easily. The teacher systematically uses one edition of books. The students in ninth grade, who I focused on primarily, are on the pre-intermediate level of English. Each group has about 20 percent of dyslexic representation. The school stands in a small town, and it is small itself. No outstanding problems in behaviour as serious vandalism, bullying, or drug addictions are beyond the border of normality.

The school cooperates very well with the diagnostic centre for special educational needs. Fortunately, most parents cooperate with the school and psychologists with a high interest, and do not take dyslexia either for a shameful or for an unworthy-noticing label. If their child is sent, at the request of school, to the consulting centre for SENs, they tend to agree and further cooperate with teachers and other specialists. Some cases in which parents refuse any extra help exist, which is prevalingly a matter of lower educated parents of the lower level of social stratification where usually other problems interfere with dyslexia such as: intellectual deficit, low family living standard, unemployment or alcoholism of parents and various abuses in the family, etc. In such cases the school is helpless. If the family's attitude is negative, the school cannot force them to do anything. Generally speaking, however, the level of cross cooperation between parents and school is satisfactory and so are the results. While teaching my project, I did not have any problems with students whose remedy in dyslexia problems was neglected because I actually did not come across such cases. However, I had to be theoretically prepared for anything. I had to investigate many areas, even if I did not use some of my findings, and even if some of the ways, I went through for my project, were just a sort of blind alleys.

## **II.C. PROJECT**

This project aims at developing reading strategies of dyslexic children in ELCs at basic school and includes a variety of sources and materials gathered for working on reading techniques.

At the beginning there are some icebreakers sequenced to establish a warm, friendly and co-operative atmosphere for further work in reading focused lessons. The reading focused lessons are divided into three main stages. The aim of the first one is to enable students to generally realize that there do exist different reading strategies, and to discover that there are several purposes for reading, several reading tasks that can be set, and thus several approaches to reading any piece of written material. The second stage aims at two different points. The first one is to practice the techniques that have been covered so far, the second one is to switch the topic of reading and sequence some language games so that the students would not become bored after having been constantly exposed to reading and working with reading materials only. And finally, in the third stage of the project there is a complex analysis of a text sequenced to prove how much the students have learnt about the reading techniques. At the very end, the project closes at pupils and regular teacher's evaluation of reading techniques that have been taught.

Concerning the arrangement of the reading techniques, the project starts with extensive reading and techniques conveying it, and ends with intensive reading with a critical analysis and categorisation of a text, which means that what graduates is not the difficulty of the text but the task for reading.

### ***II.C.1. Project outline***

As I was testing my project during the four week's time in forty-five minute's lessons, the amount of plans, materials, reflections, and conclusions is quite large. There is no room for a full description of the project from the beginning to the last dot of it. For that reason, here follows only a framework of the project, showing the wholeness of my intention. Chapter II.C.3. provides then some detailed demonstrative plans and reflections for some of the lessons in my Project.

Reading the detailed lesson plans, one can come up with the question what reading strategies the whole project develops and what the sequence of steps is, and why it is so. The answer to these key questions of all structural projects may be very easy in this case and it can be summed up in one golden rule I tried to bear in mind while preparing the project. To introduce as many strategies as possible in order to show the broadest possible variety so that each student could pick up their own strategy that suits them best and test variety of

techniques and to start with easy reading tasks and gradually add more and more difficult ones.

The first lesson was focused on getting-to-know activities because I wanted to know my students first. After this introductory lesson, I started with reading. I gave my students the easiest tasks and texts for reading in order to get rid of unnecessary fear of reading in a foreign language. The reading aim was to catch the main gist of a fairy-tale. I reinforced this stage by bringing audio-visual aids and by picking up a commonly known story in their native language in order to enable my students to feel success in reading in English. At the next stage, I brought quite a hard authentic text, however, with quite an easy task to show my students that they are able to read such a text, on a certain level, of course. The point of this lesson was to motivate students and to show what makes a text difficult or easy is the reading task. Gradually, I added reading lessons aiming at skimming, scanning and gist reading. During these lessons I always pointed out the fact that I do not want any information except what I had asked for. The reason for this was quite easy; I wanted to teach my student to approach each text according to the reading task given to them. Finally, when we went through all main strategies and techniques I came with the most difficult type of reading, intensive reading for details. The aim of this final lesson was to find out whether the students are able to join all knowledge from the previous lessons and successfully cope with the most difficult type of reading. At the very end, to get the evaluation feedback of the project, I handed out School Report Forms and requested, on a voluntary basis, my students to fill it in and give me grades for each lesson. Worth mentioning is also the fact that I sequenced a non-reading lesson filled with various language games around the middle time of the project in order not to wear out my students with reading.

From the foreshadowed sequence of the structure of the project it is apparent that the main body of the project is moveable. The only steady parts are the beginning and the end. Hence, no strict sorting of majority of the lessons in the middle exists.

### ***II.C.2. Characteristics of classes***

The project testing took place at Škola U nemocnice in Rumburk during my four-week teaching practice in September/November 2001. The project was implemented in its full length in two parallel 9<sup>th</sup> grades there. Additionally, some partial bits of the project were also tested on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The conclusion I made in my reading-focused lessons in these lower grades was in absolute concord with what I found when working with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Therefore, I will not analyse these findings separately. My foremost intention then focuses on 9<sup>th</sup> grades as they experienced all the stages of the project fully.

I found it useful, being given the opportunity, to test my reading lessons in parallel groups of the same grade, for I thought the reliability of my findings might raise if the number of respondents would be higher. Obviously, the amount of pupils, having been set into two different groups, brought some difficulties in analyses of their performances. Sometimes, the eyes of a random passer-by would probably see that, even though the lessons were taught the same way, they were not the same at all when the public changed. Different pupils in a different group showed different results, depending on the actual time of the day the lesson took place, their temporal mood, number of absent pupils, etc. These factors influenced pupils' learning to an indispensable amount. However, various factors influencing learning, besides dyslexia, could not be examined in details in the tunnel view of my project. Thus, if the lesson differed in the parallel groups only because other factors than dyslexia, I did not pay attention to them when reflecting the lessons if the effect the factors had was not more than enormous. In the next chapter when describing the procedure of my lessons, I am not going to divide the two parallel classes but write about them as they were one pattern of students, thus enabling myself to mention only that relevant information which can be taken for valid because of showing results that would probably be achieved in other similar class surroundings.

When reflecting on the lessons, I will not analyze the results of the teaching/learning processes in parallel classes if they differ just in these general characteristics which I gained during the observations: Group A was very quick. People performed rather individually than co-operatively, their logical capacity seemed high, which caused that once they caught on the core of the subject presented, they did not want to go back to it again and practice it, despite the fact that practicing is even much more important than pure understanding when we deal with a foreign language. They took the stage of dealing with anything they thought they knew for unnecessary and time wasting. Additionally, if anyone finished the task earlier, as a sort of competition, they tended to show it to the rest of the class by stirring aloud with their neighbours, not about the task and not in English, unfortunately. Except the dyslexics, the pupils were not much willing to test anything new. They used to handle the tasks usually quite well but not exactly the way the teacher had showed. They were not willing to break the old routines of work. On the other hand, the dyslexics closely co-operated with the teacher, mainly due to the fact that they had no old routines that worked with them well. A similar division of the class could be seen during the warm-ups. The dyslexic population took these stages seriously and got prepared well for work that would follow. The non-dyslexic part of the class did not like to do the warming-up very much. They were eager to know the new fact, new information, without any revision of what they had already known, without making any

links to their previous knowledge. They did not co-operate and enjoy these preparatory stages, either. The dyslexic pupils usually enjoyed these stages a lot and once again their attitude gave the teacher a reason why appreciate them in front of the others. This fact led to two effects. Firstly, their motivation almost glared in their eyes and, what is even more important, they were prepared for what was to follow and succeeded in it. B group was a bit slower in pace and lower in the level of knowledge. Nevertheless, they all enjoyed any warming-up. They were willing to speak, share ideas, and cooperate with their classmates. The group was quite noisy too, stirring almost all the time. The teacher did not suppress it because the noise was always around the problem that came up, and thus leading to its solution. In reading the group had more difficulties because the knowledge of English and their self-confidence in language were relatively low.

I also found some characteristics that were the same for both classes. The motivation in the dyslexics worked like a charm. When giving voluntary work, for example, they were the first standing in the queue. Finally, what was common for all of the students in both classes was the tendency to speak Czech when explaining their ideas. Obviously, even though some people might object to it, the teacher did not inhibit it. Her focus was on teaching a certain aspect of the language, and thus, when preparing for it, she would not depress the students' interest by forcing them to speak a foreign language which causes them a lot of problems. Obviously, when asking questions, she spoke English a lot, using mainly the system of asking where the teacher asks a question in the full form and then simplifies it, giving stress to the main words so that the students can train the gist listening. These finding helped me to get to know the class better and to prepare for the learning routines they were used to doing.

### ***II.C.3. Sample lessons and reflections***

#### **ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 1**

Topic: places (U.S.A.)

Resource: articles from The Bridge magazine

- Aims:
- to practice scanning
  - to practice skimming
  - to practice reading comprehension by writing a Czech summary
  - to practice speaking in public
  - to practice writing letters
  - to teach new information about some American states
- Objectives:
- students will realise that there are several reading techniques
  - students are able to distinguish what information is relevant

students are able take over the main gist from the text  
students are able to introduce what they found in the text to their peers  
students know some famous places in USA

Materials: texts (see App. 2); each group one state  
geographical map of USA  
paper strips

### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to introduce the topic and raise motivation for further reading  
to attract students' interest and revise some basic geographic facts about USA

Work form: whole-class oral discussion

Teacher displays the map of the USA and asks several questions:

Who has ever been there?

Who would like to go to the States?

Which part do you like best? East, West, North, South?

What states of the US do you know?

What cities do you know?

What places of interest are famous?

What for? What is there? What does it look like?

Everything the students come up with, the teacher shows on the map. If not mentioned, the teacher adds some places such as the Grand Canyon; the Rocky Mountains; the White House; the Statue of Liberty; Salt Lake City (the place where the Olympic Games were taking place at that time); Cape Kennedy; etc.

Then, to raise students' consciousness about the map jumping, the teacher adds in Czech that what we have been showing was a large country, which has almost everything from the nature treasure and human cultures we can imagine, and that it is obvious that such a big country has to have places that differ much from each other. Some of them are localized in industrial zones, the other in almost untouched nature. Thus, the country differs a great deal depending what state of the Unite States we are in.

## STAGE II: READING

- Parts:
1. Setting the task
  2. First reading
  3. Second reading

### 1. Setting the task

- Time: 5 minutes
- Aim: to relate the schoolwork to real life situation  
to introduce the chosen states that will be described
- Work form: frontal speech

Students are given the roles of travel agents who work in the Travel Agency USA. They are informed to work in groups, being specialized on one state only. They will be given opportunity to choose which one from those the teacher can offer. Thus, each group that is going to be established will be a section of the Agency, being in charge of one state travelling profit. They will have to introduce their state so that foreign travellers would come, which means that they will have to know a lot about their country in order to be able to attract as many travellers as possible. Students [travel agents] will be given much information and the task will be to work them out and pick up just those most attractive and most important. Then, they will have just a couple of minutes to introduce their state. If done well, the rest of the agents will give them the accreditation and they will appoint them the official representatives of the state. At this part, the teacher uses mainly the Czech language for clearer comprehension of the set.

Next, the teacher announces the names of the states and let students show them on the map if they know where they are. Some general characteristics, able to be deduced from the geographical position and spread, are added. Finally, the teacher releases the materials for each group.

### 2. First reading

- Time: 5 minutes
- Aim: to practice scanning  
to practice deduction  
to become familiar with the text
- Work form: group work

Each group should cast an eye on the text, skipping the bold text, and underline all known words and phrases. When finished, the group raises hands for the first checkpoint. To do nothing else but scanning, the groups are informed to be given only 2 minutes for the underlining.

When finished, the teacher goes around the class and speaks with group members about what the context of the underlined words might be, thus training their deductive skills.

### 3. Second reading

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: to practice skimming  
to raise consciousness of reading in a spiral

Work form: group work

The teacher gives instruction to read the text again, now with the bold text that can be checked at the bottom of the page. If any new connections between words and senses arise, the phrase should be underlined as before.

### **STAGE III: SUMMARIZING**

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: to practice overall understanding  
to prepare students for presentation  
to teach that understanding does not mean precise translation  
to teach the difference between facts and opinions

Work form: group discussion

Each group goes through the text again. They write a rough review of the text on a strip of paper. Each person in the group takes a paragraph and summarizes it in Czech for the others. If any information would be important or attractive for the travellers, the group writes it down on the piece of paper.

The teacher goes around the class, helping the groups if necessary. When facts from the text are gathered, the teacher advises that the advertisement material should be enriched somehow. Students cannot lie, obviously, but they can expand the text, with some deductions, in a way that is in concord with what is truly in the text.



#### **STAGE IV: PRESENTATION**

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to practice listening to each other  
to practice speaking in public  
to show the real outcome of the work

The group comes to the blackboard. Either a spokesperson or each of them will introduce their state. The rest will listen and decide whether to go to the state or not i. e. whether the group will be given the accreditation or not.

#### **STAGE V: FOLLOW UP**

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to revise school work at home  
to revise letter writing  
to mix facts and opinions in a syntactical writing  
Work form: voluntary based homework – written

One person in each group can be a volunteer. His homework will be to write a postcard to the teacher from the state he represents. The condition is to write it so that the name of the state is not noticed. If the teacher can identify the state according to the description, the student will be given a credit.

The teacher gives an example:

Hi Peter,

I am sending you a card from the most beautiful country in the world. It is a place of movies. You know, I love going to the cinema. The first place I visited here was L. A. It has that famous boulevard with the stars all over. Beverly Hills was nice too but the sea was quite dirty.... (=California).

### **REFLECTION**

#### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

The introduction turned into a real conversation with a quick pace. They got used to the fact that they could speak Czech and they did. What pleased me was the tendency of the best pupils to try to speak English even though they were not forced to. They made a lot of mistakes but they were speaking very fluently and they were able to express their thoughts, which was, at large, the aim of this stage. Thus, I corrected only major mistakes. As they did

not know the English words for some objects they came up with, I wrote some of them on the blackboard, e.g. the Statue of Liberty. Their brainstorming of facts about the USA surprised me quite a lot, both positively and negatively. They came up with sequoia parks; the Rockies on one hand, on the other with Canada and the Amazon River. However, all of them became excited in speaking about the country majority teenagers admire like the land of milk and honey.

## **STAGE II: READING**

### 1. Setting the task

Students understood the task very well. They also proved good thinking abilities and imagination when deducing what probably the state will be like according to its geographical location and spread in terms of tourism, industry, historical sights and other things affecting travelling tourism. Despite the limited set of states each group chose its state without quarrelling. They all seemed to be satisfied with their state. The groups were established on a voluntary basis and were made by three people. By a coincidence, it happened that there was no group full of dyslexic pupils only. These children were spread all around the groups so that the teacher could easily monitor their work and cooperation with their peers, which was on a very satisfactory level because none of the dyslexic pupils was an odd man out.

### 2. First reading

Taken from a wide view, it happened what I supposed would happen in reading in general. Despite the fact that I strongly emphasized that the task is just to scan for known words and that there will be given another time for further reading, non-dyslexic pupils [those who have not problems in reading] tended to join all phases of reading together to get rid of reading as soon as possible. They did not want to read any text more than once and fell into a false conclusion that once read, fully understood. Never did it happen that dyslexics would read the way they were not supposed to. Then, because of doing the task fairly abysmal difference in pace occurred between dyslexic and non-dyslexic readers on one hand, on the other the fact that those who pushed fast their reading were never so well informed about the text as those who were reading it properly step by step. Thus, what I could see was not reading difficulty in dyslexics but following-instruction reluctance in non-dyslexic readers.

The time limit of two minutes was exaggeratedly low. It should force students to do the scanning exactly the way I suggested. Nevertheless, whenever I set limits I always updated them according to the actual situation in the classroom.

Whenever a group finished, I came around for a minute and asked questions on the context of the words the group underlined. Then I gave each group instructions on how to do the second reading, what to focus on, and what the output of reading should be now.

### 3. Second reading

During this stage, I walked around the class, helping them mainly in showing that often, especially for the task I gave them, they do not need the vocabulary they tended to ask about. I often asked about the context of the words they did not understand to elicit the probable meaning of the unknown words.

### **STAGE III: SUMMARIZING**

There occurred a wide discrepancy between the parallel groups. B group, which was more playful, fell down to the role-play. They became real travel agents, which caused that they were much slower in pace because there arose discussions in the groups whether to publicise some facts or not, e.g. whether to mention tornadoes, which the state is famous for, however, which are dangerous and might frightened the tourists. Group A, generally working more efficiently because of higher language knowledge, was performing more professionally. They did the task well but were not so much in the roles. Their performance was rather impersonal. They worked hard, without any disgusts, but lacking any sense of personal touch. Naturally, without any instruction the groups organized their work. Some of them passed the piece of paper so that each member could write his summarization; some of them chose a secretary who wrote all notices down.

### **STAGE IV: PRESENTATION**

My point was to provide a text with a variety of information so that each person could chose what suited him best. Many times I had to refuse to translate words or phrases, saying that students can skip them if they do not know them. The text was broad enough to find information each student should understand.

Each group had an excellent presentation in quite good Czech, with excellent structure and transitions, which was, as the Czech language teacher told me, quite uncommon. Listening to the presentation I could hear that they did not present only the facts that were in the bottom vocabulary in Czech but many of those that could be found in headings, picture labels, and mainly in the text itself. It is true that all students noticed only bits of the text [4-6 major pieces of information out of about 15] but their presentation had a logical structure and natural flow. For an unknown onlooker the performance seemed a good spectacle. Some of the

groups even introduced their presentation with a name of the travel agency and some advertisement clichés.

However, a notice to be added, almost none of the students was a good audience. They tended to adjust the rough edges of their own presentation and stir while the other students were speaking in front of the blackboard. One of the reasons why they behaved so selfishly was the fact that the whole lesson was time demanding and they did not have time to do everything properly within the set time.

#### **STAGE V: FOLLOW UP**

Because of the time pressure I had to give this homework after the bell rang. Nevertheless, almost each group had a volunteer who kept the text and decided to write the homework. Some of them even kept the format of a real postcard and drew a picture representing an aspect of the state on the backside of the card.

### **CONCLUSION**

The lesson showed that a good introduction is what makes each lesson successful. All the students loved speaking about the USA. It was a topic that truly caught their attention. At the stage of introduction, it was a really good idea not to force them to speak English because if the teacher did so, their whole attention would probably go to the language and not to the involvement into the lesson. Moreover, insisting on speaking only English would take much more time for them to express themselves. And time was what we lacked, as usual. The lesson should have had sixty minutes, at least, to finish properly everything that was prepared.

The lesson also proved that such a systematic step-by-step approach to a text is good for weaker students having problems in reading. The so-called A students take it for redundancy to read a text more than once and to follow teacher's instruction how the work should be done. It was very apparent during the presentation stage when no abysmal difference between the dyslexics, who followed the steps suggested, and ordinary readers occurred. All the presentations were really good. Nevertheless, I cannot avoid the conclusion that if A-grade students took the steps suggested seriously, their results would not be at the same level as the result of ordinary D-grade students. They could have been much better. Thus, what happened was that dyslexic readers and other weaker students achieved in this activity the same successful result as those who used to be the strongest in the class. The difference between a dyslexic and non-dyslexic reader disappeared because the approach helped to dyslexic readers a great deal. On the other hand, the result of good students stagnated almost at the same level, as a matter of non-willingness to cooperate.

## ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 2

- Topic: attack against USA
- Resource: The Guardian
- Aims:
- to practice scanning
  - to practice deducing the context of a text
  - to practice distinguishing between facts and opinions
  - to introduce the idea of the task being more important than the text itself
  - to raise discussion on burning issue of the time
  - to practice reasoning
  - to introduce authentic material to students
- Objectives:
- students will realise that they can cope with the very hard material
  - students are able to join their background knowledge to their schoolwork
  - students are able to understand the main gist of the text
  - students are able to introduce what they found in the text
  - students know some new facts about the event
- Materials:
- reading texts (see App. 3)
  - headlines from The Herald Tribune, September 12, 2001
  - paper strips

### STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION

- Time: 5 minutes
- Aim:
- to raise motivation and introduce the topic for further reading
  - to brainstorm basic facts about what they already know
- Work form: whole-class oral discussion

The teacher writes WTC on the blackboard and asks what it means, where it is, in which country, and what happened there. Students reply in basic English or Czech and give as many facts as possible. Having answered all these questions, students are asked to come up with all words that could somehow deal with this cluster, being labelled as WTC.

### STAGE II: READING

- Parts:
1. Pre-reading
  2. Setting the task
  3. First reading
  4. Second reading

## 1. Pre-reading

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to prepare vocabulary for the reading text  
to narrow and focus the core of the topic that is very broad

Work form: individual work with dictionaries

Students are given a strip of paper to write at least eight words they heard in connection with this event in headlines, newspapers, TV, etc. The teacher gives his own set of about 15 words, showing newspaper headlines. All the words can be written in Czech.

When finished, students are told to choose half of their lists and find these words in the dictionary. They are advised not to choose the simplest ones because their list will serve for their vocabulary while reading the article. If they translate a word they know, they will miss the opportunity to help themselves. At the end, the teacher gives his own choice he expects to appear in the article and asks some students about their choice.

## 2. Setting the task

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to introduce the method for reading  
to give instructions  
to introduce the final product expected after reading

Work form: frontal speech

Students are given some information about the source for reading, the level of English, and the date of release. Then, they are given the article. The article is cut into pieces. Each piece (one or two paragraphs) deals always with one message only. On the back of the piece of paper, there are some more words that occur in the paragraph. The teacher chose the set of words according to the vocabulary they had covered in their regular English lessons, however, that are very likely not to be in their active vocabulary. If anybody wants to have look, they may use this help. Moreover, if anybody is not certain about anything in the text, they may come and have a look at the whole article, to see their paragraph in the context.

The teacher gives one or two pieces of the text to each person, leaving them in believe that each person has a unique part of the article. Nevertheless, the teacher has two sets of the text, and there are always two people who have the same paragraph.

### 3. First reading

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to practice scanning  
Work form: single work

The students are asked to scan the text and write down all words they know. If done, they should connect the words in sentences and make a story from them. The teacher gives an example and works out the first paragraph, using the words students know: The US – with Britains – against Islamic terrorism – Tuesday’s devastating terrorist attacks on New York and Washington – people died.

During their work, the teacher goes around the class, showing other words they missed to mark as known ones, eliciting their meaning.

### 4. Second reading

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to practice deducing unknown context  
to practice overall understanding  
to prepare students for presentation  
to teach that understanding is possible even if we do not know all the words  
Work form: pair work

The teacher announces that there is someone in the class who has the same paragraphs. Pupils should go around the class and find their counterparts. These pairs are supposed to check what they underlined and what story they made up. Each couple will make a final version of their paragraph review.

### **STAGE III: PRESENTATION**

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to give understanding feedback  
to be able to support statements by facts  
not to be frightened by English  
to teach that there are always some facts and some opinions in any text  
Work form: oral presentation

Each couple is asked to read their key words in the paragraph aloud, translate them, and show the connections between them (in Czech). The pieces of paper are numbered so that the presentation could go from number one to the last part of the article. If done so, a certain summarisation of the whole article should emerge, based on reading and students' background knowledge interconnection.

#### **STAGE IV: FOLLOW UP**

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to revise students' schoolwork  
to practice distinguishing between facts and opinions  
to show interest in students opinions  
to teach that only an opinion based on a fact may be taken for valid

Work form: homework

Teacher explains the fact/opinion conception and difference. He tells that so far we have been speaking about facts only. Afterwards, the teacher announces that he would like to know students' opinions on the matter and he gives voluntary homework – writing a fact/opinion chart. One part of the piece of paper should contain facts we know and the other what we think about it. The teacher gives an example, highlighting that an opinion always covers reasoning “why” we think so.

## **REFLECTION**

#### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

I thought this three letter's abbreviation would spark a discussion, swift like a broken down avalanche. However, B group even did not know what the letters mean and what event they are connected with. Group A knew many facts. Many of the students that answered my questions were dyslexics who were eager to show they knew. It was not accepted with respect by the rest of the class who did not have a clue what they spoke about. Those, who knew too many things, were laughed and scorned.

In B group, I had to explain the news in brief and only then they were able to catch on the topic, admitting these events ring a bell after all. What was similar for both groups was the interest to know more details. Speaking about whatever connected with the USA worked like a charm with them.



## **STAGE II: READING**

### **1. Pre-reading**

Working with such a difficult authentic text, it is always very crucial to carefully prepare the pupils from the linguistic point of view. When asked about words connected with the event, the pupils brought up many useful words; mainly proper names of places and people involved. Many times it showed in this lesson that the best way how give instructions is the say-and-show way. I always explained what they should do and then I gave an example how I would do it in their shoes. When giving my choice of words, showing the headlines, I pointed the less sure students into direction. Their vocabulary list were of a great asset in the next reading stage.

Despite the fact I announced this lesson in advance, highlighting the equipment needed, many students did not bring their dictionaries. I had to be on hand, serving as a walking dictionary, which did not teach the lesson how to work with a dictionary.

### **2. Setting the task**

This stage was the hardest part of the lesson because it set the students face to face to a newspaper article of high-levelled English. Naturally, the students were not much happy about working with such a material. They took it too difficult and tended to refuse working with such a material. My foremost task was to persuade them that I did not expect any perfect translation of the whole newspaper. Moreover, I had to make them believe that I would not grade them if they did not know something. This stage should have been labelled as “getting rid of the fear of English” instead of “setting the task”.

However, finally it showed that the reading task was not so frightening and so difficult as they thought it would be. None of the students even used the chance to look at the whole article to see their paragraph in the context. They could easily understand the piece of text without any further help.

### **3. First reading**

A breakthrough came when I picked up my words from the first paragraph. I came to agreement with the classes that they knew all my words. After that I asked myself questions about the possible connections among the words. Logically, having answered these questions, I made up a summary of my paragraph. They could see that reading newspapers does not have to be a torture, and became willing to try it. During their first reading, I had to go round the class, talking to people about certain words they did not underline, showing that they should have underlined them because they had known them. These words, the meaning of which I

was eliciting, were mainly of Latin or Greek origin. Such words had a different spelling or a different ending from their Czech counterparts, however, the root of them was the same as the Czech loans had, i.e. known to Czech speakers by intuition at least.

#### 4. Second reading

I expected there will be some inquisitive questions about the words the peer's underlined and about their built-up concepts. However, in most cases it was me who had to go around the class and ask questions, comparing the work of each person in the pair, pointing to the shared points, and making logical conclusions.

For that reason I decided not to make pairs in B group and not to distribute the article in two copies. I gave each person only one paragraph and each person was fully responsible for its work-out and presentation. The rest was the same. I was walking around, asking questions, and leading students to conclusions.

Concerning dyslexics in both groups, they generally did not have any outstanding problems with guessing the meaning and the probable context of words. The problem was that their guesses were sometimes not much logical and that they tended to shift the meaning a bit astray from the original message.

#### **STAGE III: PRESENTATION**

All the students were good at transitions and fluent in their presentations. In this activity they paid much more attention to their colleagues' speech and fluently reassembled to their speeches, all this despite the fact that their notices, which they came to the blackboard with, were sometimes awfully scratched, and full of crosses and written in abbreviations or single words only.

Presenting their choice of words first, each pair gave the opportunity to check the correctness for the rest of the class. It also enabled all students to become aware of the thought flow that gave the logical connection to the separate words.

#### **STAGE IV: FOLLOW UP**

I had to announce the homework during the break in A group. In B group even the presentation part interfered to the break. For that reason I did not announce the homework at all here. Come to think of the homework, two pupils in A group volunteered. Both of them were dyslexics. Their essay was divided exactly as I showed. It contained visibly divided facts and opinions and the support for their theses.

## CONCLUSION

The activity was well prepared. The only problem was the time. Having taught the first parallel group, I wanted to change the lesson so that it would not be so crammed. However, in such a guided reading lesson, during which so many steps have to be made, it is always problematic to cross any stage out. Teaching reading skills is time consuming if taught carefully. What I felt to be a drawback of the lesson was the lack of teaching the English vocabulary. I wanted to finish the lesson with sharing vocabulary lists that would be announced on the board, and copied by all the students as a cluster vocabulary for the topic. Unfortunately, the time was regardless to us and we could not sequence this vocabulary closing up to the lesson.

I also found out the ability to understand the meaning and the ability to express the understanding being two very different things. Many students told me they felt the message but they could not say it in the right words.

I appreciated the help of the regular teacher who helped me to go around the class, talking to people about their words, and asking questions elicitation the probable meaning. I myself had to drop twice, at least, in each person and talk to them, asking what their words can mean; e. g. British forces-Oman-help --> What is the subject? Where are they now? What are they going to do?

Walking on the corridor during the break, I was stopped by the Czech language teacher who told me how enthusiastic the pupils were, being able to read real British newspaper, which proved I was right in sequencing such a difficult text into my reading project. The other day two students even brought me some newspaper's articles they collected about the same topic. The next lesson I pinned the news down on the notice board for the rest of the class.

## ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 3

Topic: Indians

Resource: Literature by doing

Aims:

- to practice deducing unknown words
- to practice skimming
- to teach possible ways of guessing the context
- to introduce the multi-sensory reading
- to teach new information about the original people in USA
- to sum up reading approaches for the final lesson
- to experience the colour, shape, and sound of a language
- to convince students that using techniques appropriate for the task is useful

Objectives: students will realise that a certain technique makes the work go easier  
students will distinguish hints that can help them when reading a text  
students are able to answer content questions

Materials: reading texts (see App. 4)  
Wagner, Chopin, Grieg, and Mozart's music  
vocabulary lists

### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to elicit what they have already known  
to raise motivation through guessing what the article might be about

Work form: whole-class oral discussion

The teacher asks about what they know about the Indians, which tribes, what their daily routines are, etc. The teacher asks simple English questions and accepts even the Czech answers if the thought behind would be too difficult for the speaker to translate.

After that, the text is shown to the students. The teacher shows how it is parted and he adds that it is a piece of the text an old Indian, called chief Joseph, wrote about a century ago. Next, the teacher asks if they know any other Indian artist, writer, painter, poet, etc. These questions should lead students to the curiosity because there are not many well-known pieces of Indian literature in here. The teacher asks question why they think the text has survived so long, and moreover, became famous [that time a song by Rednex called The Spirit of the Hawk was striking the top-ten in the local radios – a part of the song took over a part of this text].

Finally, to close up the anticipation part, the teacher reveals the title of the text and asks for a guess whether the text is going to end happily or not.

### **STAGE II: READING**

Parts: 1. Pre-reading  
2. Guessing meanings – lecture  
3. First and second reading

#### 1. Pre-reading

Time: 10 minutes

Aim:           to raise awareness that what is most important in reading is the task  
                  to prepare students for reading  
                  to find whether their guesses were right

Work form:   individual work

The students are announced that the text has two parts. To find out if their guesses were right, it is enough to read the introduction. There are some basic facts both about the writer and the text. The students are strongly warned that the language of the text is difficult and that the task is not to translate but to simply find whether the text will be sad or joyful. The students are also told to be given only one minute to find it out. Additionally, they are told that the vocabulary list should be used only if they would not be able to understand the crucial words for that task. The teacher also adds that there is no need using them, in fact.

The teacher passes the text to each person. Each pair is given one vocabulary list where almost all words are translated, moreover, in the form and meaning that suits to the text context.

Having read the introduction, the teacher asks again whether the text would be positive or rather negative. Expecting the answer to this question, the teacher refuses any other information. The students will probably not read as was suggested and they will be enthusiastic to translate the introduction because the vocabulary list enables them to do it. Such efforts will be rejected. It is also very likely that the students will not keep the time limit and that they will spend much more time on the intro, looking up all the words they do not know. Finally, the teacher makes them realise that their work was useless because he did not want them to translate the intro and find all unknown words. This tough dealing should lead them to the awareness that it is better to do what one is supposed to do, i. e. to be economical and effective in reading, otherwise one has to fight with a text much longer than necessary.

## 2. Guessing meanings – lecture

Time:           15 minutes

Aim:           to introduce methods for guessing the meaning without the dictionary  
                  to show the non-linguistic parts of a language

Work form:   lecture

As we were working with a vocabulary lists, the teacher follows up with the idea how to deal with a text if we have not any dictionary. Some techniques are introduced.

## ***CONTEXT***

The teacher writes the word “assault” on the blackboard and asks what it means. The word is chosen so that they should not know it. After that, the teacher adds “The terrorist” before the word and “on the USA was horrible”, and he asks again. At the moment the students should be able to bring up many synonyms to the unknown word, showing that the context helped them a great deal. Even if they were not able to guess the meaning at the beginning, seeing the word in the context gave them a clear idea about the meaning.

## ***SOUND***

Not only where the word stands in a sentence but also how it sounds can help us. Each word has its own music which evokes a certain feeling about the word’s meaning. It is similar to any other music. The teacher plays three different music pieces and asks if they can find any differences. The conclusion should be the fact that music can speak a clear message even if we do not understand the words.

At the end of the playing the teacher announces that he developed his own language and wrote 2 messages for the students in it. One of them is a hard talking-off, the second one is a praising. Their task will be to guess which one is which.

*Message 1:* NOR ESTRAKA MAGNYS ETYRFONE AGYYZ NEXONER

*Message 2:* BELLAI MEACI CLEPANIA SINEA AKVI ENAI

It should be easy, even because of the pronunciation, to distinguish which message is which. The teacher sums it up, saying that there are certain letter combinations that are even in Czech often negative/positive such as:

N, NR, RT, ST, ZR – NIKDY, NE, ČERNÁ, RAKEV, SMRT, STAŘÍ, ROZRUCH, HŘÍCH  
L, VOWELS – LÁSKA, BÍLÁ, MLÁDÍ, KLIDNÝ

If pronounced properly, the sound of these words could foreshadow the probable meaning behind them.

The teacher, however, has to add that listening to the words is not a miraculous charm how to understand the language message. It has to be added that it is only one of the ways that can help. It goes without saying that sometimes we can be 100% right, using guessing out of the sound, the other time we can fall flat to 0%. Thus, the sound of words can be a crutch but it cannot be the rule how to understand the unknown words.

At the final end of this stage, the students are asked to invent their new language and write two sentences in it, one positive and the other one negative.

When finished, volunteers may read their messages and the rest of the class can give a guess.

## ***VISAGE***

Besides the sound, also the shape and the colour of the word can help us. The teacher writes the word “dreadful” on the blackboard, supposing the students do not know it. Afterwards, he writes “dark” in front of it and he adds “mysterious, curious, spooky, awesome”, and finally he adds that the description is about “churches and cemeteries at night”. The buzz words for the students should be: dark, cemeteries, at night. Connecting these words together, a picture of a certain imagination, covered in dark shades, should arise in their mind, enabling them to guess the probable meaning of the adjectives they did not know before.

## ***GRAMMAR***

The teacher writes the word “headquarters” on the blackboard, which nobody should know. In a second he adds “the” in front of it, asking what the definite article means and says about the following word in the term of parts of speech. Finally, he adds the phrase “I go to” in front of what he has written. At this stage, the students are asked where he could have gone. They should be able to come up with the conclusion that the mysterious word stands for some kind of building. Moreover, the teacher shows the ending “-s”, asking what they know about this grammar point, eliciting that it might be either the third person singular of a verb or the plural form of a noun. All this should demonstrate the fact that, even though the students have never seen the word “headquarters” before, they sort of know a lot about it.

### **3. First and second reading**

Time: 10 minutes  
Aim: to practice skimming  
Work form: single work

The teacher reinforces the students, saying that it is not a shame if they do not know all the words in a text. Even a native speakers sometimes do not understand precisely all words in a high-levelled text. Because of the break in reading caused by the lecture, the teacher sums up what the expectations were. In about a two minute’s time the students should read quickly the text and find if their expectations were right.

Once again the teacher asks a simple yes/no questions, refusing any additional details since they were not the object of the task.

When the mood of the text is agreed, the students are asked to prove the text being negative. The students should read it again and underline all negative expressions in the text. After that, they dictate them to the teacher and he writes them on the blackboard and explains. The

teacher asks about the event described. At this point the students are asked to summarise the plot, using the negative words from the blackboard.

The teacher will hopefully be able to congratulate them and prove they could perfectly understand the text without the dictionaries despite the fact they did not know all words. For instance, there is the word “shelter” most students will probably not know. However, the word being in the phrase with “no”, should enable them to guess that those people in the text lack of the unknown thing called “shelter”. Moreover, from the context, it should be clear that the word points to something the people need for live, and not for fun.

### **STAGE III: FOLLOW UP**

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to show connection between written and spoken language

Work form: whole class discussion

The teacher asks about the colours that the text evokes, about the mood of it, and about the sound that we hear when reading it. When the matter is discussed the teacher asks what the text would have been like if Chief Joseph had recorded it on a cassette and what his speech would sound like.

To show that words have a certain connection with the sound, the teacher plays the part of the song by Rednex where this speech occurs. The recording is a voice of an old tired man who lost everything. So is the message.

Any additional discussion about the Indian history can follow if time.

## **REFLECTION**

### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

The students came up with a lot of information. Most of them were based on the shared knowledge of Karl May’s books. They knew many things but the teacher had to ask direct question otherwise no reply would have come. They knew where the Indians live, how and what they haunt, what weapons they used, what they wore, etc., but they were not able to connect these facts and make a fluent speech. All the time the teacher had to ask questions and pull the answers from the students. However, the topic seemed to suit them perfectly. They became eager to know more, which was the best starting point ever.



## **STAGE II: READING**

### 1. Pre-reading

Most of the students guessed that the text would be in concord with the sad history of the Indians, i. e. negative.

I predicted they would not use the technique suggested for reading the introduction. That was the reason why I prepared the usual book-like surroundings and why I gave them the vocabulary lists, even if it was unnecessary for the task. As I assumed, all of them kept looking for a great number of the words in their vocabulary lists. My impolite method of refusing any additional information to my feedback question, let them recognise their hard work being useless because they did what they were not asked to. When talking about it, they claimed that they could not understand the text if they did not look up the words, however, they agreed they would have been able to do the reading task and, moreover, they would have saved the time. This practical exercise showed them that it is necessary to choose the right strategy and technique for any reading. I proved their own finding by adding some more examples taken from the common life as the scanning of TV programmes, skimming newspapers, or reading a love letter.

### 2. Guessing meanings – lecture

As I mystified the lecture into “showing reading tricks”, they became eager to be shown how to magically handle the English so that they would be easily able to understand the message.

## ***CONTEXT***

They perfectly understood and were able to come up with the unknown word.

## ***SOUND***

When speaking about the sound of the words, some upgrades of the lesson plan became necessary. Because of the time and some technical problems, I was not able to bring the recordings. Thus, because majority of them cannot imagine the great classical pieces by names, I had to describe the music for them through some other means. I hummed the tune of the compositions, saying what instruments are playing. It would be certainly better if we had the opportunity to hear the original version, nevertheless, my example was perfectly illegible for them and they understood the main concept of the music atmosphere.

When inventing the new language, a huge discrepancy between the parallels occurred. The first group did not like the idea of playing with the language at all. At the end of this stage, no one wanted to share their sentences. The other group, on the other hand, enjoyed this stage a

lot. Everybody wanted to read their sentences aloud. They took it for a great fun and performed with joy.

### ***VISAGE***

They caught up the words I supposed (dark, churches, and cemeteries at night) and brought up many synonyms to the concept of the darkness. They unconsciously translated the whole raw of the adjectives; despite the fact that they did not know which of their guesses goes to which of the unknown word.

### ***GRAMMAR***

Both parallels came up with the conclusion that the word is a sort of building. By consequences, both of the classes came up with the word “hairdresser’s” because of the word “head”. I appreciated their logical guess, pointing them into direction that we are dealing with the whole head, which is a symbol for leading, and for something important. They finally realised the right meaning of the word.

### **3. First and second reading**

As I played a fair game with them, they got used to the fact that I demanded answer only to the question I had given them before reading. Having been taught the lesson while reading the introduction, they only did what they were supposed. They skimmed the text quickly, answered to my question, and waited for what would follow.

The students even dictated the phrase “no shelter”. When I asked them what a “shelter” means, they did not know. But they did know that it is something the people do not have, which was exactly the way of thinking I wanted to teach them.

At the end, when summarising the story, I dared to ask more questions as I saw they might be able to figure out. I led them to look again at the text. The additional task was to find what graphical means are used to strengthen the fact that the person is tired. Not only did they come up with the bold words, but they also noticed that the sentences are very short, as if the person was short of breath. Moreover, they noticed that many repetitions occur in the text, which may also be a sign of the exhaustion and despair.

### **STAGE III: FOLLOW UP**

The discussion was quite fertile. The students occupied their imagination and brought up many good ideas. However, the students who were rather analytical and strong in logic stood a step back to those whose preference is in arts, emotions, and the imagination.

I was not able to manage to play the recording “The Spirit of the Hawk”. I asked a volunteer to read it out loud instead. In the A group, where people do not like performing, I had to be the volunteer. In the other group many hands went up and the person I picked up read it very well. She used a very good intonation and, even for a person who does not speak English, it was quite clear that the text is no funny story.

## CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, the lessons went swimmingly. No difficulties occurred. Once again it showed to be useful to have two parallel groups. In the A group, for example, the activity “inventing languages” was a failure. They did not enjoy it. They took it for a waste of time. The B group, on the other hand, liked it very much, and doing the task, they showed they perfectly understood its purpose. Thus, we always have to take the audience into account and cross some activities out, or rebuild them, so that they would match with the nature of the audience present.

Many times during the lesson I saw a spark in the eyes of the students, saying they caught up on something. A great number of interconnections were crossing their brains in the lesson. However, this is only the first stage. I am afraid that they will forget most of what they have learned if they do not systematically practice.

As usual, the lesson was extremely crammed and quick in the pace. There was no single second for taking a rest and despite of it we had problems to finish before the break. After all, it showed that it was not that big pity we did not have the audio aids. If I had brought them, we would not certainly been able to finish on time.

## ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 4

Topic: Robinson Crusoe

Resource: Longman Series – level 2

Aims:

- to practice deducing unknown multi-word phrases
- to practice listening for a gist
- to practice intensive reading
- to teach text categorisation and analysis
- to teach reading between the lines
- to teach reasoning

Objectives:

- students will be able to analyse the text from different perspectives
- students will be able to support their opinion by facts they have read
- students will be able to categorise any piece of writing from different angles

Materials: tapescript (see App. 5)  
tape recorder and tape

### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

Time: 10 minutes  
Aim: to lead in the topic  
to prepare categories for the further analysis  
Work form: whole-class oral discussion

The teacher announces that the lesson will be focused on books. He starts with asking Yes/No questions (e.g. whether they read books or not; whether they like them; whether they read in English/Czech, etc.). After that warming-up, the teacher starts asking Wh-questions (e.g. what kind of books they read; what their favourite genre is; what their favourite book is; what they liked when they were younger, etc.). If somebody mentions a book, which everybody should know, the teacher asks for a brief description of the book. Finally, the teacher asks what it is that can be found in each book, each tale, and in each movie or computer game. The output of this question is a set of categories that the teacher elicits from the students. These categories should at least cover these areas: the hero; place and time; plot; theme (hidden thoughts, morals); mood and atmosphere; reader's point of view.

### **STAGE II: READING**

Parts: 1. Pre-reading  
2. Raising expectations  
3. First listening  
4. Second listening, first reading  
5. Second reading

#### 1. Pre-reading

Time: 10 minutes  
Aim: to clarify the categories through giving an example  
to present Robinson Crusoe  
to set the groups of specialists  
Work form: whole-class oral discussion

The teacher demands a book the knowledge of which everybody shares. If no suggestion comes, the teacher appoints the book called Winnetou. All students should be familiar with the story since it has been filmed. The teacher leads students through the categories and he asks questions corresponding separately with each of the categories.

When the practice is finished, the teacher publicize the book, on which the lesson will be based. He asks who knows it and who has read it. Very briefly the teacher elicits the content of the book. After that he leads the students through the categories, asking how the book fits in them.

Finally, the teacher tells the students that not only the whole book but also separate parts of any work can be analysed and put into categories. The teacher introduces the name of the chapter from Robinson Crusoe. To make the reading easier, the teacher let establish the groups of experts, each of them specialising only on one aspect of the text.

## 2. Raising expectations

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to prepare vocabulary  
to raise motivation

Work form: group work

Each group of specialists is given some time to think what words can be in the text from their own point of view. The teacher helps them to come up with words that really are in the text by asking questions (e.g. if they cut a tree, what tool they need; what has to be cut off the trees to get the clean trunk; what Robinson is like; what adjective could describe his physical/psychical features; where he lives; etc). When they have about five dark horses, they should put them on the blackboard for the other people. The teacher very quickly goes through the words, explaining their meaning.

## 3. First listening

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to practice listening specific words  
to gain the overall idea about the text

Work form: group work

The teacher plays the tape and the students pay attention if they can spot a word they had expected to be there. After that, each group is given some time to discuss what each member

of the group had caught about the plot, time, hero, etc. They are allowed to speak in Czech this time.

#### 4. Second listening, first reading

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to get familiar with the text  
to gain more specific idea of the text  
Work form: group work

As the text is quite difficult in terms of the language and length, the teacher hands out the tape scripts. Afterwards, he plays the tape again. This time, each group should pay more attention on the sentences that are related to their own category. If the text is too difficult, the teacher will put on the blackboard some key words he supposes they might not be able to guess on the spot.

#### 5. Second reading

Time: 10 minutes  
Aim: to pick up related phrases from the whole text  
to find support from one's own ideas  
to teach proving and reasoning  
to teach reformulating and paraphrasing  
Work form: group work

Students are asked to write a short review of the story from their category's point of view. They should go through the text and underline all sentences saying anything related to what they should write about. The teacher goes round the class, helping students with their reformulations of the stated facts.

### **STAGE III: PRESENTATION**

Time: 5 minutes  
Aim: to present the work  
to practice reasoning  
Work form: group presentation

Each group of specialists goes to the blackboard and introduces their category. Each person in the auditorium, and the teacher is no exemption, is allowed to ask the question: How do you know that? Everything the group presents has to be supported by a statement from the text.

#### **STAGE IV: HOMEWORK**

Time: 5 minutes

Aim: to practice what has been done in the lesson

Work form: individual work

The teacher announces the homework on the voluntary basis. Each person, who wants to gain a plus, should write a description about their beloved book in the terms of the set categories.

### **REFLECTION**

#### **STAGE I: TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

It was very good that we started with the easiest sort of questions which demand only Yes/No answers. For all the students it is usually very demanding to switch on English language at the beginning of the lesson. Even if they had some problems to answer these simple questions at the beginning, at the end the situation turned out for the best and they were able to answer more complicated questions demanding whole-sentence reformulation.

Generally speaking, talking about books was a hard nut to crack. Almost none of them liked reading and did read. If they read, they read only magazines. Most of the famous tales they know only thanks to the film. However, despite their lack of knowledge and interest in books, they were able to set the demanded categories, which was the main goal of this stage.

#### **STAGE II: READING**

##### 1. Pre-reading

Leaving to pick the book to be set into the categories on students' choice broke out a wild discussion. None of the classes came up with a book everybody knows. My suggestion was taken by both of the classes; however, it showed some gaps in students' inductive thinking. They were not able to categorise the series of the book or film because it contains more than one part. Neither was it possible for them to pick up the most significant hints from each of them and make a unified piece. Thus, I had to restrict my suggestion to the best known part called The Treasure on the Silver Lake. Only then the students were able to cope with the task and to analyse the book in terms of the categories.

Analysing Robinson Crusoe went a bit more smoothly. Nevertheless, I had to lead them all the time by asking the same questions I had already said twice before (e.g. what the main hero's name is; where he is from; where he lives; has he got any friends; what he wears and eats; has he got any enemies; when it happened; if it is realistic; if they would survive in such conditions; who the book is written for, etc.). The answers to these questions naturally made a narration of the story.

## 2. Raising expectations

It showed that the text was quite difficult for the students. If we had not done this stage, the whole lesson would have probably scrambled down like a house of cards. It also showed that the students know a lot of words. However, when they see them in a less common context, they need a help to bring the new meaning to light. It is mainly due to the fact that they learn foreign words by heart, having one column of the English words and the second with the Czech equivalents. Thus, they are hardly able to abstract from this peer-to-peer relation and they tend to use the Czech context for English words, which is a nonsense that can lead to a situation when they are not able to use the verb "to cut" in a different context than with a knife and a finger and blood.

## 3. First listening

The main goal of this stage was fulfilled to the letter. They caught many of the vocabulary from the cassette. On the other hand, and that is no wonder, they were not able to sum up the contents of the story. The only thing, which both groups came up with, was the fact that Robinson had been making the boat for a long time. The fact that he actually did not bring the boat to the water stayed unrealized. What surprised me a lot was their afford to bridge the gap in their knowledge. They tend to make the foggy parts up. Sometimes they came with an interesting story, however, having nothing to do with the original version.

## 4. Second listening, first reading

Having played the tape for the second time, now with the tapescripts, the students seemed more confident about the plot. They really understood much more and were finally able to dissolve the plot. I decided not to write those possible unknown and problematic words on the blackboard with their translation. I only wrote the English words and asked for their possible Czech counterparts. To my great astonishment, the students had sometimes problems with words I had no idea they would. They sometimes struggled with multi-words even if their meaning was literal, non-idiomatic. It also made me stunned when I saw they do not know what



words are like: uphill, sadness, branches, or cut through, despite the fact that the context of the words speaks clearly. It was I who had to point to the context and ask a direct question what it could be if it stands before something and after something else. With such a help they were easily able to understand the words, however, without it they used to resign saying they did not know. It proved that still they have to be forced to think otherwise they give up easily.

### 5. Second reading

The students rather tended to stick partial bits of the story together to make their presentation. However, it was quite a hard task because the text contains relatively long complex and compound sentences that differ in grammatical structures. For that reason it was no easy task to stick them so that the grammar of all parts fits. I had to go around the class, encouraging students not to write the same sentences but to make up simple clauses, to paraphrase and use their own words and a very simple language that would serve the task better.

### **STAGE III: PRESENTATION**

Each group finally presented their point of view on the story. The ability to support one's own thought was too stretching to this stage of the command of English and reading skills. I had to be satisfied with a plane presentation without supportive links to the text. It was both too early for my students to do that and too crammed in terms of time, which was regardless to us again. The forty-five minute lesson was not enough to work out the text as it deserved.

### **STAGE IV: HOMEWORK**

As the presentation part had already trenched on the break, I did not give the homework in either of the groups.

## **CONCLUSION**

As this reading text and the reading task were the most difficult ever, I was happy to see they coped with it relatively well. This cherry on the cake that closed the whole four week's period of time of my testing, showed and unveiled many general things. One of them, definitely, is the fact that reading skills, or study skills, should be, exaggeratedly said, a separate subject. It is so demanding to change pupils' ways of doing things that it should deserve a separate lesson in the schedule. Although I had a month to train them, I sometimes felt like a coach under pressure who just preaches and tells how to do a somersault, and who has no time to let his team practice. It is said that practice makes perfect. The practice was what I lacked time for. This is probably the reason why my students did not show perfect results in this lesson.

They had been taught many things about reading but still it was me who had to remind them that they have known something for a long time. They still needed the tutor to point them into direction, to show what technique should be used and how a certain word should be looked at. It is out of question that it is easy to lead the mind processes of the student. It is very demanding on the teacher to ask a million complementary leading questions to make students think hard over a word or a phrase. But it is worth trying because the fruit of this effort is very sweet. It is very satisfying to see that sometimes it is not the teacher who has to ask but the student him/herself. I think that the earlier the teacher starts with showing ways, and teaching study skills, the earlier the fruit will ripen, and the earlier the students will ask themselves. Once they start asking themselves, they will look for the answers themselves too. In this lesson it was me who had to lead them. Tomorrow it can be them.

## **II.D. FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

The thesis of the Professional Project states that teaching reading techniques to dyslexic children in English language classes can become a significant factor in their general improvement in learning English. The model of the project aimed at investigating the validity and correctness of the thesis.

Thus, the practical model was based on principles of reading, methodology and psychology expert's theories, on developing an efficient reader and learner in a dyslexic pupil. These have been dealt with in chapters I.B. and I.C

According to these theories, the model was to practically test the interconnectedness of the theories and practical teaching in English language classes, and to either support or refuse the accuracy of the thesis. Therefore the whole design of all lessons in the Professional Project is linked to these expert's theories and researches. Hence, both parts of the diploma thesis are inseparably joined and dependent on each other.

After using the practical model at the basic school, it showed that the theoretical statement of the thesis was practically verified as justifiable and right. It emerged from all collected data and observations that came out of the practical implementation of the model. The verification was supported from three sources:

- 1) evaluation given by involved students
- 2) evaluation supported by observations and comments of the regular teacher
- 3) self-evaluation of the author, rising from practical outcomes of the lessons and reflections

In order to find out data based on students' own opinions, I suggested a Teacher's School Report Form (see App. 6) that would record objective remarks of students on their work during reading lessons.

The School Report was on an anonymous and voluntary basis so that no one could fear of being punished for their ill opinions. The data gathered led me to a plain and straightforward conclusion: most of my students felt they had learned a lot of new things about how to efficiently read, which contributed to their general improvement in learning English. They also learned a lot of factual information in reading texts from various areas, which enriched their knowledge in other subject matters. They appreciated up-to-date topic, interesting articles dealing with burning issues of that time, and discussions that usually followed each theme. The students also expressed that the originality of texts was more entertaining than working with textbooks articles that seemed to be rather artificial and far from their interests. Consequently, they appreciated the teacher's fair treatment and original approach to reading which was based on task completion. All the students felt they could really read in English, if reading was not restricted to bare word-by-word translation, which motivated them to a great extent.

Those who liked the reading lessons best were dyslexic pupils. Teaching reading techniques helped them to orient in the text much better. It resumed in the fact that they were able to come up with the answer to the teacher's checking questions, which was a state they had almost never experienced before. They showed indisputable hints of taking up techniques and, which is much more important, hints of their inner application. Whenever they faced another text, they tried to solve its task by using techniques and strategies that had been suggested in previous lessons.

The classroom teacher's evaluation and observations were highly positive. Her expert's point of view on the project implementation was very satisfying. The teacher was in all my lessons. Each of the lessons was preceded by a short consultation. In spite of the fact that she discouraged me from using some of the reading materials at the very beginning, she came after each single lesson asking me for a photocopy of the text used so that she could use it in future classes again. This simple fact shows that she was very pleased with the performance and potential of her students. She admitted that if the regular translation based work with texts was changed, the students were able to work with quite high levelled articles. Also, she pointed out to rising both motivation and overall reading performance of the dyslexics who became one of my best and most energetic students, even though she had known them as passive D-grade ones. For her full evaluation see App. 7, where she also points in more details to some pluses of the introductory parts of lessons, feedback work, motivation, logic

and structure of lessons, heterogeneity of articles, and other factors resulting in her stating that her students were efficiently learning and generally gaining English language.

In terms of self-evaluating point of view on the success or failure of the Professional Project, not much is to be added to what the teacher and students had already said. I found the project a success. The students were able to meet all the objectives of the activities and fulfil the aims (see ch. II.C.3). My students learned some of the approaches to written materials and showed that they can work with reading more plastically and creatively than in usual translation activities only. They realised they had started growing more self-confident and motivated in reading. Especially, the dyslexics became so motivated that in my English classes they got rid of the fear of reading completely. Vast majority of students then claimed that study skills and especially reading techniques are very important part of learning because they help them in other areas in their further studies of English language. Moreover, they stated that trying certain techniques and strategies is a very interesting activity because they can discover their strong areas and find their potential they did not know about.

This triangulation of sources for evaluation confirmed the validity of the overall conclusion that the thesis of this project proved right. All theories, the thesis was built upon, showed to be correct for the concrete surroundings of the testing school too. They naturally led to practice and were literally supported by the experience of this experiment of the model of my Professional Project, which showed that the theoretical background dealt with in chapter I.B. matches with the methodological approach dealt with in chapter I.C. and, moreover, that the theory and methodology investigated naturally led to practical teaching reflected in chapter II.C.3. The interconnectedness of the theory and its practical result showed that the theory, methodology and practice are inseparably interrelated.

Thus, having thought hard over all these three sides of evaluation and over the research I had made, I can make an overall conclusion and suggest some recommendations coming out of the project:

- Teaching study skills seems to be crucial at basic schools and it can help all students to improve their command of English and their chance to become a more efficient learner in general.
- Teaching reading strategies and techniques is highly important because the amount of reading in all subjects in the curriculum is enormous and students have to precisely know how to deal with different reading texts.
- The difference in performance in dyslexic pupils who have been shown how to work with texts seems to be so large that it can be taken for a must for any teacher to teach these pupils reading techniques and strategies.

- The choice of suitable pre-reading materials is the key for rising motivation of the students for reading; these warm-up activities should be carefully prepared in order to peacefully prepare the land for the reading.
- Similarly, any follow-up stage using information from the reading text is crucial to ensure students that their reading had a reason, filling a particular information gap they are eager to crack out.
- Time needed for practising reading skills is so enormous that it, unfortunately, seems impossible to fill them into a special program integrated to the regular school program, which means that teaching study – and reading skills should be integrated into all subjects taught at school, especially into the native language.
- The objectives of lessons should be fulfilled; i. e. if a lesson's objective is focused on scanning, the teacher should not distract students' attention by asking any additional questions during that scanning phase.
- Students must be given very precise instructions and the teacher should demand only those things he/she had previously said he/she would request.
- Working in pairs or groups gives better chance to help each individual with their own specific problems connected with learning.
- Audio-visual aids and texts that can be written on seem to be very important in helping students to understand better.
- Wide variation of texts, activities, and checking procedures is necessary as to not bore the students.

Teaching reading strategies and techniques in ELC can have a great affect on students' process of learning English language. Those who seem to benefit most are those pupils who have dyslexic symptoms of reading. For that reason, reading skills should be taught at basic schools, even if preparation of such reading lessons is extremely time consuming. The contribution of activities, training reading techniques and strategies, is valuable, and thus, worth investing the time.

The result of my Project supported the theory that acquired reading techniques can positively contribute and stimulate a student of the English language, and can especially have a significant effect on dyslexic pupils. Thus, reading techniques should be included in ELC, to both support learners' improvement in English language and to raise their interest in reading, in order that they become more efficient learners in their further development in English.

## APPENDIX 1A: INTERVIEW

### **Methodological support for the questionnaire:**

It is supposed to be an open interview that should find some overall borders, between which the problems about dyslexia could be. The structure of the questions (or micro-topics) is divided into three most important areas that have an effect on the process of education of the dyslexics.

As there occurs a variety of displays of the problem, I chose an interview, where I can give additional clarifying remarks to each question and leave the teacher fluently speaking, which is for her easier than just to fill in a questionnaire form, the questions of which would probably not match to her own experience, anyway.

I think that this research area is so dynamic and heterogeneous that it cannot be successfully processed through the standard social-metric processes. Therefore it has to be looked at from the wholeness since from the hermeneutic point of view, each strictly given question will be taken from very different perspectives, depending on each the individuality and the experience of the teacher. It is the same as asking a 4<sup>th</sup> year student of the Faculty of Education about e.g. types of reading. Anyone would answer to this quite a broad request quite easily and right, with no misunderstanding or misleading words. On the contrary, asking a question on the high school mechanics would make trouble. People would use blur words, the concepts of which would stay hidden for the researchers, I guess, despite the fact that they might have thought right.

#### Micro-topics:

##### **School - English**

- 1 - what are the specifics of a dyslexic child in EL classroom
- 2 - what is the most demanding activity for them (tempo, instructions, copying, sequencing, organizing, spelling...)
- 3 - do they use any helpers or techniques that could make their schoolwork easier (strips of paper for reading, special glasses, notebooks for putting down the notices...)
- 4 - are the tests the same for dyslexics as for the rest of the class; what are the differences (arrangement, marking system...)
- 5 - do they significantly tend to misuse their advantages in the marking system in any way
- 6 - what other areas are involved in dyslexia (memory, concentration, tense resistance...)
- 7 - what is the prevailing tendency in reading – to avoid reading or to do one's best, trying to overcome whatever makes trouble

##### **Schoolmates**

- 8 - are dyslexic children taken differently by their classmates (outsiders, classroom clowns, weird people...)
- 9 - how differently do they see themselves
- 10 - do they suffer from deprivations, self-inferiorities, etc.
- 11 - what is their position in the hierarchy of the class
- 12 - what type of personality they usually are (introverts – living for themselves; closed inside not allowing anyone to get across their inner walls **X** extroverts – trying to transform their mistakes into fun to entertain their schoolmates)
- 13 - are there any visible changes in their roles and behavior during the breaks and lessons
- 14 - what are their feelings about school (neurosis, fright, hate; bullying, etc.)
- 15 - looking back, do they find the school time being the worst part of their lives (if so, is it because of reading itself or rather the peers' reactions on their problems)
- 16 - what school do they usually enrol in (high schools **X** craft)

##### **Teachers**

- 17 - what opinion is prevailing in the staff room (to take over more of these children or to hand over these people to the special dyslexic classrooms)
- 18 - are pupils taught about differences in cultures, ages, skills...
- 19 - do the civil education teachers have on their syllabus any topics dealing with the fight against xenophobia and intolerance, or anything that could help pupils to understand differences among people
- 20 - what are their marks in those subjects that are not affected by their reading problems (aesthetics, ethics, arts, sports...)
- 21 - do teachers face the open mock attacks on such pupils

##### **Parents**

- 22 - is the approach to school co-operation of the parents of the dyslexics more outgoing than of other parents (good will to buy special aids, to do additional HW exercises, to attend special courses...)
- 23 - is the tendency to hide any differences (from both kids and parents) and not to stand out of the line

- 24 - are there any parental associations or assembly of families suffering from the same problems (as could be seen among the handicapped, who gather together to overcome the diseases and share knowledge and experience)
- 25 - is the approach to such a child different in the case of one of the parents being a dyslexic too
- 26 - what is the average amount of time needed for home preparation to a next school day
- 27 - does it often happen that the dyslexic seems to be prepared for the lesson ahead to keep pace with the rest of the class
- 28 - what is the main character of a dyslexic boy and girl

## **APPENDIX 1B: INTERVIEW**

## **REFLECTION**

(U Soudu - June 2001)

The format I chose really worked as I supposed. The skeleton of the questions smoothly led both of us (the interviewer and interviewee) to a three hour's conversation, covering various topics, reminiscences, feelings, and facts, too. The structure of the interview logically followed the nature of the matter so never had it happened that the interviewee would suddenly bring up a question that was sequenced in another cluster. The flow of her speech was fluent, and so was mine. All question prepared logically developed what she had been talking about so far.

Moreover, there occurred such situations in which she added some stories connected to the topic that showed me much more than just a plane answer that could have been filled in a form.

Unfortunately, I did not have any dictaphone. I had to put all my notices down by hand. As her speech forcing me to think and to join things together led me to some new discoveries and interconnectedness, I put down on the piece of paper only bits of notices, from which I wrote possible facts that are to be considered while working with dyslexics, which is, at large, exactly what I wanted to gain. That is why this interview is not a simple questionnaire-like form giving Y/N answers. It is supposed just to foreshadow some limits and things to consider for the preparation of my project.

1 – it does not have any specifics; all problems that occur in other classes can be seen in English; since it is a language, problems in reading are more visible; taking over the Czech language seems to be problematic since the pupils have not learned some language phenomena in their native language yet; language as a system (counting letters that make a word, counting words making a sentence, etc.)

2 – depends on the concrete education need, which differs in each individual case because a SEN does not mean dyslexia only; the teacher has to know every person to decide what fits him best

3 – not many of them do it voluntarily to help themselves; all of them have a notebook for all kinds of homework and other arrangements about school matters

4 – the tests are the same for all students, the difference is in the preparatory stages that are both deeper and long-termed for those who need it and in the time provided for completion of the task; the dyslexics are given more time and are tested only in the language they explicitly covered in the lessons; each phenomenon that is involved is evaluated separately (e.g. right meaning + right spelling are evaluated on their own)

5 – pupils exactly know their rights (e.g. the amount of quarter-year examination tests allowed per a day; the duty of the teachers to announce such an examination beforehand, etc.) and they keep their eyes on them; the older, the greater tendency is to misuse their pupil's rights;

6 – almost all

7 – younger pupils like reading despite the fact that it is not easy for them; they take it for a sort of game because that is the way reading is taught; the breakpoint usually comes around

the eight class when the necessity to work with supra-segments of language emerges; the older students do not like reading just because reading itself would make trouble but also because reading is an activity needed for another act – processing the text, memorizing facts, building a structure, giving opinion, etc.; they try to avoid reading to avoid what is to come afterwards;

8 – since almost each child has a problem in some area, they generally do not laugh at each other, which is probably not the situation most likely to be seen in an ordinary classroom, having integrated a lower number of the dyslexics

9 – cannot be said, it depends on each personality

10 – if so, they hide it so well that it is not seen

11 – it depends on the atmosphere that is being built at the time (e.g. there were times when whoever rose his hand was taken for the enemy of the class and the teacher's white boy)

12 – young pupils are usually introverts living in their world; the older they are, the more important it becomes for them to be appreciated by their colleagues; thus, they often start to amuse them in a way (e.g. by being rude to the teacher, not doing what they are supposed to, etc.)

13 – those who are either doing nothing, or are under pressure during the lesson, have to somehow release the energy and to do something to make themselves visible; during the breaks the young students run very often in the corridor or on the playground near the school; they often come back to the lesson sweat all over; elementary class teachers often put physical education elements to the lesson and leave pupils not only to come around the classroom but also to do competitive action in language, hand in hand with competitions which need the motion); the older students mostly overcome their over-brimming energetic supplies by becoming somehow important, for which the cell phone fever is an excel tool

14 - as per usual they do not much like the lessons but they like the school because it provides them majority of their friends

15 - very often it happens that the dyslexic pupils tend to come back to the school to see their teachers, share their experiences, and remember old times; it also happens that the teachers let them come into the lesson and speak with other pupils about what they have experienced since they left the school, about how dyslexia influenced their lives, etc., which always burns an open discussion that can enrich the pupils horizons because it is not the teacher but one of them who is teaching the lesson;

16 - nobody signs in a lyceum; not more then 10 % go to high schools (textile, economics, engineering); vast majority goes to craft schools

17 - burnt out syndrome of the work that vanishes in vain; there should be better diagnostics since, at the special classes, there are pupils that went through the successful remediations and should be sent to an ordinary classroom; there are much more behaviour problems than problems rising up from the SENs;

18 - life has already taught them lessons, however, there are topics covered in the civil education that can even more help them to understand themselves and the outer world (e.g. self-discovery; evaluation of parents, friends, teachers; values; friendship, etc.);

19 - all the topics mentioned are taught in the way of burning up questions and finding answers, which is a method that enables pupils to re-feel their positions and points of view; however, it is up to them whether they want to participate and find any new solutions or to stay safely stuck at the same place

20 - in PE they are often very awkward; in arts they often do not have the sense for details; they like drawing but the problem is that they can successfully draw only what they are exposed to since any kind of creative inventions in techniques or conceptions is difficult for them

21 - sometimes the pupils can be very mean, saying things that hurt; especially if they are visibly better in some areas, which happens when the diagnostics is not good and the child should not have been sent to this class;



- 22 - the parents of each child attending this class had to sign a contract, which ties them to cooperation with the school; they do not make any problems in the material way, they pay for all special aids, however, this is all they are usually willing to do; any personal involvement is problematic; the parents come to the school only if any problem occurs in order to get information how the teacher is going to solve it, no personal investment usually happens
- 23 - both; it depends on what they take the "special" class for; in the past the word "special" meant something outstanding, something for the chosen ones, nowadays it is mostly taken for an euphemism for "dull";
- 24 - no more than 5 minutes after the school meeting the parents talk together while leaving the school
- 25 - they usually show more interests about the problems; however it is very difficult to tell the dyslexic parents apart since the diagnostics used to be poor in this area and many people did not know they were dyslexics
- 26 - it differs a lot; in one particular case the time is the same, in another it is ten times higher
- 27 - never was the teacher surprised to find that her pupils doing anything more than just what they were asked to do
- 28 - it does not differ from an ordinary boy and girl in an ordinary classroom

### ***Conclusion:***

This area of investigation is as broad as speaking about the nature of a human being. To gain the right picture, one has to take into consideration so many facts and circumstances that the amount of them pushes any logical line or structure to a holistic mess of hints which are involved in the problem.

I made two crucial discoveries. It surprised me that dyslexia is not the main problem in the dyslexic pupils. I thought that in such a class there would be children who have normal intelligence, social-educational background, behaviour, and interests in the educational process and who just cannot succeed because of their different ability in learning. However, I found out in our conversation that dyslexia is here only a marginal matter. The students were often of lower intelligence, bad living conditions, and home ill-treatment. This is a crucial problem because the teacher cannot focus on the remediation of one particular problem but she also has to consider so many side effects that might look like a SEN, having roots, however, somewhere completely else. As I supposed a discovery like that could come, I had chosen the first investigation as broad as possible. It paid because it showed me how complex the problem is and how silly it would be to focus on one particular matter, without taking into consideration all the background.

Secondly, I found out that dealing with SENs is a time taking activity because searching for the define answers needs sticking hundreds of treads together. Otherwise the research cannot be objective and valid.

Now I face the problem what to do next. I can either try to find a pure average dyslexic pupil and deal with what dyslexia brings into his life or I can try to collect more treads and show only some limits, obstacles and things to consider for every teacher who has a dyslexic pupil in his class. I think the second being more appropriate for my research. Thus, it is what I am going to do next.

## GEOGRAPHY

## KENTUCKY

**Nickname:** The Bluegrass State

**Capital:** Frankfort

**Statehood:** 1792

**Size:** 104,660 sq km

What do chickens, horses, country music, Abraham Lincoln, and bluegrass have in common? They have all made the state of Kentucky famous.

## THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

Before we talk about this state, we should explain that Kentucky doesn't think of itself as a state at all!

Kentucky is one of only four "states" in the United States that is actually a **commonwealth**. This old word comes from England of the 1600s. It means that the government is based on the **common consent** of the people.

How is that different from a state? In **practical terms**, today it is the same. But don't make the mistake of calling Kentucky a "state" if you're speaking to someone from Kentucky - you might get corrected! You will see the term "The Commonwealth of Kentucky" everywhere, from the state flag to local highway signs.

## KENTUCKY - NATURE PARADISE

Kentucky is a **gorgeous** place to visit because it has a kind of wild beauty. It is on the west side of the Appalachian Mountains and also enjoys the **racing waters** of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. In fact, Kentucky has more miles of **running water** than any other state except Alaska, so **whitewater rafting** is popular here.



Kentucky is also famous for its **Mammoth Caves**. You can take underground tours that **last** from one to six hours.

The area's beauty is just a **cover** for the **valuable resources** that lie underground. About half the state's land area is **blanketed** by forest, and underneath are large deposits of coal, **crushed stone**, natural gas, and **petroleum**.

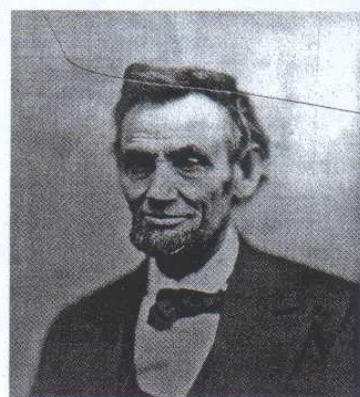
And now, what about those that made Kentucky famous? Here are the reasons:

**CHICKENS:** In the 1940s a businessman developed a recipe for cooking chickens (with 11 herbs and spices), gave himself the name "Colonel Sanders" and began a fast-food company. Yes! It was called "Kentucky Fried Chicken", now known as KFC. (There are some in Prague as well.)

**HORSES:** Kentucky is home to "the most exciting two minutes in sports," the world-famous annual Kentucky Derby horse race. (Did you know that some terms used in politics came from such races? Maybe you heard them during the recent US election: frontrunner, **inside track**, and to win by a nose.)

**COUNTRY MUSIC:** Country music originated in this region of the US. Today, many music stars come from Kentucky, perform here, or choose to live here.

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN:** This famous president was born in a **log cabin** in Kentucky in 1809.



**BLUEGRASS:** Yes, the grass in Kentucky is really blue. Well, kind of. In spring the small blue **tips** make a field of this green grass look blue. Bluegrass has a lot of minerals and **limestone** in it, part of the secret for turning Kentucky's famous racehorses from **mere** runners into world champions.

Mary Matz



VOCABULARY	in common	- společně
	commonwealth	['kɒmənweɪlθ] - svaz, společenství
	common consent	[kən'sent] - všeobecný souhlas
	in practical terms	['præktɪk(ə)l] - prakticky
	gorgeous	['ɡɔːdʒəs] - nádherný, úžasný
	racing waters	['reɪsɪŋ] - závodní vody
	running water	['rʌnɪŋ] - tekoucí voda
	whitewater rafting	['raɪtɪŋ] - rafting na divoké vodě
	Mammoth Caves	['mæməθ] - mamutí jeskyně
	to last	[lɑːst] - trvat
	cover	['kʌvə] - kryt, potah, úkryt
	valuable resources	['væljuəb(ə)l ri'sɔːsɪz] - drahocenné zdroje
	to blanket	['blæŋkɪt] - pokrýt
	crushed stone	['krʌʃd] - štěrka
	petroleum	[pi'trəʊliəm] - ropa
	inside track	['ɪnsaɪd træk] - výhodná pozice, výhodné postavení
	log cabin	[lɒg 'kæbɪn] - srub
	tips	[tɪps] - špičky
	limestone	- vápenec
	mere	[mɪə] - pouhý

*Note: Bluegrass music is Country music played on banjos, fiddles, guitars, and mandolins. The musical group The Blue Grass Boys, took their name from the nickname for Kentucky, and the name for their music came from the name for this musical group. Bluegrass music is played all over the US and it originated in the country, specifically eastern/southeastern US.*

See also Note on Badlands on pg. 4



## ● Nato drawing up plans for invasion ● Blair consulted by Bush ● Boston arrests

**Julian Borger** in Washington, **Richard Norton-Taylor** and **Ewen MacAskill** in London and **Ian Black** in Brussels

The US is opening consultations with Britain and its other western allies for a crusade against Islamic terrorism in the wake of Tuesday's devastating terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in which thousands of people died.

For the first time in its 52-year history, Nato is poised to invoke Article 5 of its charter, which declares an attack on any member state would be considered an attack on all, implying the possibility of automatic European support for US retaliation.

Nato is drawing up an emergency plan for a massive attack on Afghanistan if evidence — as is widely anticipated — emerges that the wanted Saudi terrorist now in hiding in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden, and his network were responsible for the attacks.

Nato's historic announcement came amid reports that

the intended targets for one of the hijacked aircraft were the White House and President Bush's personal aircraft, Air Force One.

"We had specific credible information that both were intended terrorist targets, and that the plane that hit the Pentagon may have been headed for the White House," said Sean McCormack, spokesman for President Bush's National Security Council.

The ruling Taliban government in Afghanistan will now come under intensive pressure from Washington to hand over Bin Laden or face the consequences. The initial Taliban reaction was to refuse to extradite him.

Under contingency plans being prepared, an assault would involve tens of thousands of ground troops, equivalent to the scale of the force deployed in Kosovo, Nato defence sources said last night.

Such a taskforce, which may take weeks to assemble, would not preclude an initial US cruise missile attack, they said.

President Bush warned

Americans that they faced a long, hard struggle against their terrorist enemies, and pointed towards an international operation.

"The American people need to know we're facing a different enemy than we have ever faced. We will rally the world. We will be patient. We'll be focused, and we will be steadfast in our determination. This battle will take time and resolve, but make no mistake about it, we will win."

Any multinational offensive would almost certainly involve British forces, many of whom are preparing for a huge exercise in Oman. It would also require the active support of Russia, the sources added.

Nato countries appear confident of securing it.

Mr Bush spoke to Mr Blair during the day and to other European leaders, and indicated there would be no knee-jerk reaction. Mr Blair and Mr Bush concurred that the vital thing was to move forward together in a united action.

Intelligence sources — ranging from the CIA to MI6, the

French, Germans, Russians and Israelis — were unanimous yesterday in pointing the finger of suspicion at supporters of Osama bin Laden.

They stressed, however, that they did not yet have the proof.

As momentum gathered behind the idea of an international mission, in the US teams of heavily armed FBI agents detained several people for questioning after raids in Boston and Florida on the trail left behind by the hijackers responsible for Tuesday's attack.

Justice department spokesmen said no arrests had been made, but said an unknown number of "material witnesses" had been taken into custody to help the FBI with the inquiry.

Some of the detainees were seized from a luxury hotel in central Boston where some of the hijackers are believed to have stayed the night before the attacks. At least one more person was taken into custody in Florida, where four terrorists involved in the hijackings are thought to have lived in the months before the attack.

"We will rally the world. We will be patient. We'll be focused. The battle will take time ... but make no mistake, we will win"

Police in Providence, Rhode Island, were also reported to have stopped and searched a train heading south from Boston, which was thought possibly to be carrying suspects who eluded the FBI net.

In Florida, the investigation centred on a flying school in Venice on the Gulf coast. The FBI traced a driving licence of one of the suspected hijackers, Mohamed Atta, to the home of a Florida man, Charlie Voss, who said that two foreigners had stayed with him in July 2000 while they took a course in flying small planes.

In abandoned cars found at Boston airport, the starting point of the two flights which crashed into the World Trade

Centre, investigators found a flight instruction video, Arabic aviation manuals and a Koran.

Police and FBI agents also raided houses in Coral Springs and Davie, near Fort Lauderdale, where Mohamed Atta and some of the other suspected hijackers are thought to have stayed.

The manager of a Coral Springs restaurant, Tony Amos, said he had identified one of the men in pictures shown to him by the FBI. He had eaten at the restaurant last week, Mr Amos said.

In the financial markets an uneasy calm returned by last night, but only after an orchestrated action by the leading central bankers to pump billions of dollars into the system. The Federal Reserve is now widely expected to make an instant cut in interest rates in an attempt to head off recession in America.

In London, the FTSE 100 index regained about half of the fall registered on Tuesday, although traders are still braced for wild swings in prices over coming days.

## APPENDIX 4: ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 3 - TEXT

274 LITERATURE BY DOING - UNIT FOUR: CHALLENGES



# I WILL FIGHT NO MORE FOREVER

## CHIEF JOSEPH

One of the briefest, most eloquent statements ever recorded on the subject of war was made by Chief Joseph, or Hinmatonyalatkit, of the Nez Percé. In 1877 Chief Joseph resisted the U. S. government's attempt to move his people onto a reservation in Idaho. For over a year, he baffled U.S. forces, as he struggled to lead his people across the border into Canada. At one point, he relaxed the pace, believing incorrectly that he had crossed the border. He was surprised and defeated. His statement of surrender is a message to all people.

**I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohulsote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say no and yes. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are – perhaps they are freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired. My heart is sad and sick. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.**

APPENDIX 4B: ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 3 – VOCABULARY LIST

### I Will Fight No More Forever Vocabulary

briefest – nejstručnější  
eloquent – výmluvný  
statements – prohlášení  
recorded – zaznamenaný  
subject – předmět  
war – válka  
made by – utvořen /+kým/  
Hinmatonyalatkit – indiánské jméno  
Nez Percé – indiánský kmen  
resisted – odporoval  
government's – vládní  
attempt – snaha  
onto – až k  
Idaho – stát v USA  
baffled – mátl  
forces – armáda

struggled – bojoval  
 to lead – aby převedl  
 border – hranice  
 into – do  
 at one point – jednou  
 relaxed – uvolnil  
 pace – tempo  
 believing incorrectly – protože  
    nesprávně věřil  
 had crossed – překročil  
 defeated – poražen  
 surrender – kapitulace, vzdání se  
 message - poselství  
 APPENDIX 5: ACTIVITY PLAN NO. 4 - TEXT

## Robinson Crusoe: Chapter 5

### The Boat

#### *I want a boat*

All this time I had been thinking of the islands that I had seen on the other side. I thought that if I could reach those islands, I might find a way of going farther, and perhaps even get home to England again. This made me think whether it was not possible to make a boat for myself - a boat like the ones the Indians make, cut out of a tree. I thought that I might cut out the centre of the tree with my axe, or burn it out with fire, so as to make a boat of it. But I forgot one thing: that I had no one to help me move the boat, when it was made, into the water.

#### *Making a boat*

I went to work on this boat more like a fool than any man ever did. I pleased myself with the plan, without ever deciding whether I was able to complete it. The trouble of getting it into the water came into my mind, but I gave myself this foolish answer to the question: "Let me first make the boat; I am sure I shall find some way or other to move it when it is done."

So I cut down a great tree. It was 1.8 metres at the top before it went out into branches. I was twenty days cutting through it at the bottom, and fourteen more days cutting away the branches. After this it took me a month to make it into the shape of a boat outside and three months more to cut out the inside. In the end I had made a very fine boat, big enough to carry ten men - big enough to carry me and all my goods.

#### *I can't get my boat into the water*

When I had finished this work, I was delighted with it. I just had to get it into the water. It lay about one hundred metres from the water, but the ground went uphill at first. So I decided to cut through the hill in order to make a road, but, when I had done that, things were no better: I couldn't move the boat at all.

Then I decided to bring the water up to the boat, since I couldn't take the boat to the water.

So I began this work. But when I began to make plans and thought how deep a hole I must make, and how broad, and how much earth must be thrown out, I found that it must be ten or twelve years before I could finish it. So at last, though with great sadness, I gave up the work.

## Vysvědčení

	+	
		-



<b>ÚVODNÍ HODINA</b> - symboly a přezdívky		
<b>POHÁDKY</b> - video Šípková Růženka		
<b>ÚTOK NA USA</b> - WTC - četba anglických novin <i>The Guardian</i>		
<b>HRY</b> - bojové lodě - vor a žraloci		
<b>STÁTY USA</b> - cestovní kancelář		
<b>PSYCHIA TRIE</b> - dopis		
<b>ZPRÁVA INDIÁNA</b> - triky pro odhadování neznámých slov - článek Chief Josepha		
<b>SKLÁDÁ NÍ SLOV</b> - rozpuštěná slova - předpony a přípony		
<b>HOROSK OPY</b> - znamení zvěrokruhu		
<b>ROBINSON CRUSOE</b> - poslech, čtení a rozbor knihy dle kategorií		

# CHOVÁNÍ

## OSTATNÍ

(vzkazy, rady,  
připomínky...)

ÚROVEŇ A ZNALOST ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA .....

CELKOVÁ ZNÁMKA  
Z PŘEDMĚTU UČITELSTVÍ AJ: .....

Třída 9. A; V Rumburku dne .....  
APPENDIX 7: FINAL EVALUATION

TU v Liberci, Fakulta Pedagogická  
Katedra pedagogiky a psychologie - odd. pedagog. praxe  
Liberec 1, Hálkova 6

### Výkaz o pedagogické praxi

Jméno studenta: Lukáš Valuš

Předmět: AJ

Studijní skupina:

Semestr studia:

Číslo učebny: 1.25 U Nemocnice 5, Rumburk, Dr. Pěšin

Číslo učitel: Alena Chroustovská

Termín pedagog. praxe: 17. 9. - 12. 10. 2001

- praxe, vypracování uč. - studenta
- nastavení a udržení přístupu uč. - žák
  - motivace žáků k aktivitě v jazykové učebně (potřebujeme, probrání, jazykové kontroly, plnění úkolů a vyhodnocování výsledků - bodování, zadávání domácího úkolu)
  - dopomoci slabším žákům / opřít. vzpr.
  - vyhodnotit žánry na základy s doprovodem - sledování a hodnocení jejich sebehodnocení - vyhodnotit jejich vlastní uč. - práci, kreativitu, spolupráci
  - volba zajímavých a věcně vhodných témat s perspektivou - níže odhodnotit a jazyk. úroveň žáků a jednotlivých žáků
  - využít rozmanitých forem vedení aktivit v hodině (individuální, skupin. práce, problem. vyhledávání, komunikativní metody, ...)
  - využít audiovizuální techniky (vide, magnetofon)
  - jasná a zrozumitelná formulace a vyhodnocení cílů, úkolů, problémů, instrukcí po krocích a log. sledu.