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Poděkování

Děkuji vedoucí mé diplomové práce Mgr. Věře Burešové a Donně Sarvay za užitečné rady a podnětné komentáře, které mi pomohly mou práci dokončit. Dále děkuji svému manželovi Janovi za psychickou podporu, kterou mi po celou dobu poskytoval.

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Abstract

Tato diplomová práce uvádí některé metody výuky angličtiny pro děti ve věku od 5 do 8 let. Ukazuje jednotlivé možnosti využití obrázků, her a tématicky zaměřené práce pro motivaci malých dětí a pro vnášení skutečného života do třídy. Praktická část je založena na teoriích expertů, na názorech učitelů z praxe a na zkušenostech vycházejících z testování vlastních materiálů.

This Professional Project states some methods and possible ways of teaching English to young learners. It demonstrates different possibilities of using pictures, games and topic-based work for motivation of young learners and for bringing real life into the classroom. The practical part is based on experts theories on teaching English to young learners, on opinions of some teachers with experience and on testing my own materials.

Diese Diplomarbeit legt einige Methoden des englischen Sprachunterrichtes für 5 bis 8 jährige Kinder vor. Sie weist auf verschiedene Möglichkeiten einer Ausnützung von Bildern, Spielen und thematisch orientieren Arbeiten zur Motivierung kleiner Schüler, sowie zur Vitalisierung des Klassenlebens Ansichten erfahrener Lehrer und auf Testen eigener Materialien aufgebaut.

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CHAPTER 1

A. Why Teach English to Young Learners

Teaching English to young learners has become a very common in our country during the several last years. English is taught in the first terms of the basic schools, in young learners' courses organised by language schools, in summer camps and even in the kindergartens.

It is said that children learn foreign languages easier than adults. It is probably true, and there are several possible reasons for this. Children are very enthusiastic and consider learning more as a game than as a hard work. They are not burdened with the duties, obligations and anxieties as the adults are, and they also are not influenced by the number of rules of Czech grammar as the older people are because their brains are fresh and open. As J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Giard (1992) say young children have a great facility for understanding and imitating what they hear. "They are less distanced from the golden age when they acquire their mother tongue naturally" (J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard, 1992: 24). This means that it is possible to start learning English at a very young age. But the teacher shouldn't forget that the children five-to-eight-years old are still more children than pupils or students and that the way of teaching should be equivalent to their age. That means lots of games and pictures should be used because they are a natural way of perceiving world for children of that age.

Some of the teachers who teach English to young learners have lots of experience and their methods are very good. But there are also lots of teachers without any experience. Sometimes they are not teachers at all. There are lots of people teaching English to young learners just because they can speak English. But this is not enough. It seems as if the general opinion is: 'Small children can be taught by anyone who knows a bit of English.' But

this is not true. When thinking about teaching English to young learners, we must consider that the first teacher who teaches small children doesn't teach them only vocabulary, grammar and skills, but she or he also does something much more important. She or he wakes up the children's relationship to English. From personal experience I know that if she or he can not motivate them and wake up a good relation to English, their interest can be lost for a long time and maybe forever. When I was 7 years old I was taught by an older man who was very good at English but could not make the lessons interesting for children. I just sat at the table and did exercises from a textbook. I did not like it at all because I had no motivation or interest, and that was why I didn't like English for several years. But if the teacher motivates children and respects their age, interests and hobbies, the children can develop a good relationship to English for the rest of their lives. And this is very important.

As the methods of the teachers who teach young learners are very important for the further development of the learners' English, they will be considered, developed, tested and evaluated in this Professional project.

B. Natural Need of Games and Pictures

The natural need of the young learners, who are five-to-eight-years old, is the need to play games. They like games very much, and it is good to take advantage of this fact for language learning. One of the reasons for using games is that when children play games, they think about the game itself and not about the language they practice. They start to use the words and phrases automatically, without thinking, which is good. The game can also bring real life into the classroom. C. Retter and N. Vals (1992) support using games for language learning by giving three reasons:

1. Children like [games].

2. Games offer a natural context for communication between children.

3. It is sometimes difficult to persuade children to say anything at all in a foreign language. Games motivate them to speak. (Retter and Vals 1992 :1).

Children are usually very enthusiastic when they start doing something new. It is the same when they start learning a foreign language. The teacher should be able not to let the enthusiasm slip and use it for further motivation. When children start learning English, they would like to attend three lessons and be able to speak English. It is not possible, of course, but the teacher can help children a bit. She can begin teaching with topic-based work and choose the topics which are familiar to children. In this case, children can leave the third lesson and be able to name at least some of the things which belong to "their" world. They can feel they know English because they can use it, and this can motivate them for further learning. According to W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg (1991), "When you are concentrating on a particular topic, the content of the lessons automatically becomes more important than the language itself. This means that it is easier to relate the lessons to the experiences and interests of your pupils" (Scott and Ytreberg, 1991: 84).

There are two basic ways how people learn new things. Some people need to hear the new information several times to remember it (experts usually call them aural people). The rest of people need the information to be written. They are called visual ones. There are also some people who need to combine both ways of learning, but this is only a simplified model of how people learn new things. One of the disadvantages the young learners have when learning English is that there is a difference between spelling and pronunciation in English. The children who are attending the first term of the primary school can hardly read and write in

their mother tongue, and the children who are attending kindergartens can't read and write at all. The teacher, thus, can use only the oral form of the words when presenting and practising vocabulary. This is good for aural pupils but not for the visual ones. One of the things which could help the visual pupils is using pictures during lessons. It can make the lesson more interesting and help not only the visual pupils but all of them. This view point is supported by W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg (1991) as they advise: "Don't rely on spoken word only... you'll need to have plenty of objects and pictures to work with" (Scott and Ytreberg, 1991:5).

These reasons support using pictures, games and topic-based work for teaching English to young learners. From this point of view, this Professional Project will demonstrate different possibilities of using pictures, games and topic-based work for motivation of young learners and for bringing real life into the classroom.

C. Developing skills

When talking about teaching English generally, there are four language skills that students should be trained in: reading, writing, speaking and listening. But the children who attend a kindergarten or the first term of the primary school only learn to read and write in their mother tongue. It is very difficult for them, and they have lots of troubles with it. That is why the training of the first two skills--reading and writing--should be probably postponed for the time when they are able to read and write in their native language. For the beginning, it is enough to train them in listening and speaking. W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg (1991) support the point that "Listening is the skill that children acquire first, especially if they have not yet learnt to read" (W. A. Scott, L. H. Ytreberg, 1991: 21).

When teaching listening, we should consider that it is not necessary to understand every word. What is important is to understand the meaning; J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard (1992) call it "...the general content of a spoken text" (J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard, 1992: 56).

It is also necessary to have in mind that listening needs very good concentration. It is very difficult for young learners to concentrate for a long time. That is why the exercises should not be very long. The suitable activities can be 'Listen and...' designed by J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard (1992). These are some of them: "Listen and repeat, listen and perform, listen and draw (colour) or listen and match." These activities can help to "...increase concentration and consolidate new vocabulary and structures" (J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard 1992: 58-60).

The other skill you can train with young learners is speaking. Speaking is very difficult for beginners because their vocabulary is very limited. It is not easy to express yourself in a foreign language if you know only several words. At the beginning it is probably good to teach children how to answer some questions. The answers can be very simple, for example: "Yes, I do.", "Yes, I like..." or "Yes, I have." Later we can teach them to ask questions. Then the children can make simple dialogues or role play. Making dialogues is a good practice. It brings real life into the classroom, because in real life you usually use spoken language for speaking to another person. W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg (1991) give several reasons for using dialogues and role play: "Pupils speak in the first person. [They] learn to ask as well as to answer." They also use a short complete language with tone voice, stress, intonation, facial expressions (W. A. Scott, L. H. Ytreberg, 1991: 41).

The information and materials that will be tested in this Professional Project are based on W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg's Teaching English to Children (1991), J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard's The Primary English Teacher's Guide (1992) and Fun Pad magazine by Creative Child Press.

D. Hypothesis/Thesis

This Professional Project is based on the following thesis: Teaching English to five-to-eight-year old children whose natural way of perceiving the world is to listen and speak is different than teaching it to older children who can also read and write, but there are several methods which can make the teaching efficient. W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg (1991) assert that "Children have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which they find enjoyable" (W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg 1991: 6). If we want the teaching to be enjoyable, we should teach children the vocabulary they use in their everyday speech, and we should teach it in the situations they experience in their everyday lives. Since their lives are full of playing, we should give them the opportunity to do the same in English. If children find the lessons interesting, they enjoy them. Then the teaching becomes easier for teacher and learning becomes easier for children.

E. Paper Parts

In Chapter II the practical experience from teaching the first form of the primary schools is discussed, and in Chapter III the results and analysis of the Project are summarised.

CHAPTER 2

All the materials which are presented and evaluated in the practical part of this Professional Project were tested in a Czech primary school. I taught two groups of first form pupils, who had English twice a week. Each lesson was twenty minutes long.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

If you are working with a course book you will probably work with the topics which are in the book. You can change the order of the topics or you can add or leave out some topics, but the textbook will give you the general idea about what to include and what not to include. If you are not using any textbook (as I did not use), you must choose the topics yourself. It is a very difficult and responsible work.

Before I decided which topics to cover I discussed it with a teacher who already taught English to young learners and had some experience with it. I asked her which topics she covered in her lessons. She said that the most important thing is to cover the 'children's vocabulary'. It means the vocabulary which children use in their native language in everyday life, e.g. food, animals, activities and so on. Then I looked into books Teaching English to children by W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg, page 99, and The Primary English Teacher's Guide by J. Brewster, G. Ellis and D. Girard, page 40. They also gave some concrete ideas which topics to cover. From these three sources I made my own list of topics and vocabulary for each topic.

A LIST OF VOCABULARY AND PHRASES FOR EACH TOPIC

Animals

Dog, cat, duck, cow, pig, monkey, elephant

Is it a ...? This is a ...

Family

Mother, father, baby, family

He is ..., She is ..., This is ...

House

Door, window, table, house, bed, small, big

Point to the...

Food

Bread, roll, cheese, hamburger, egg

Do you like...? Yes I like...

Fruits and vegetable

Apple, orange, lemon, cherry, strawbwrrre, tomato

Drinks

Juice, tee, coffee, milk, cocoa, water

Do you want...? Yes I want...

Colours

Sun, orange, flower, pen, tree, ball, shoes, yellow, orange, red,
blue, green, brown, black

Touch something ...(blue).

Face

Eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hair

Touch your ...

Numbers

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Activities

Write, draw, jump, sing, play football, play tennis

Can you ...? Yes, I can ...

Topic: Animals

New vocabulary: dog, cat, duck, cow, pig, monkey, elephant

New structures: This is a ... Is it a ...?

Aims: The aim of the lessons is to teach children names of animals, structure 'This is a ...' and question 'Is it a ...?' in connection with animals.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * mime the animal when they hear its name
- * say the name of the animal when they see its picture or hear its voice
- * draw an animal I say to them
- * say the whole structure 'This is a ...' when they see a picture of the animal or when they see another child mime the animal
- * ask question 'Is it a ...?' when guessing animals

Aids: pictures of animals

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to repeat and understand new vocabulary

Instructions: Show children a picture of one animal and say to them: "This is a dog." Let children repeat it in chorus and individually several times. Then do the same with other animals.

GAME MIME AN ANIMAL

Aims: to practise using new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to say the name of the animal when they hear its voice

Instructions: Mime an animal and let children guess what animal it is. Then ask 1 child to mime another animal and let other children guess again. Do the same with other children and other animals.

Note: This game is described in detail on page 42

DRAWING ANIMALS

Aims: to practice listening and understand new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to draw the animal when they hear its name

Instructions: Say to children: "Draw a cat", "Draw a dog"... Let them draw it. Do the same with the rest of the animals.

WHAT IS IN THE PICTURE ?

Aims: to practise using new vocabulary and a new phrase

Objectives: children should be able to say the name of the animal which they see in a picture

Instructions: Ask one child to show her or his picture to the others and let her or him say: "This is a cat."

GAME GUESSING GAME

Aims: to practice using new vocabulary in spoken language

Objectives: children should be able to say new words in connection with question 'Is it a...?'

Instruction: Ask 1 child to go to the black board and think of one animal which they have learned. Let the other children ask her or him: "Is it a ...?" If it is the animal she or he thinks, she or he says yes and the child who guessed it can go to her or his position. If it is not the right animal, ask another child to guess.

Notes: This game is described in detail on page 45

Commentary on the topic:

Children liked this topic very much. They love animals and talking about them in their native language and they liked it in English too. In this particular topic pictures were very helpful for children and for their motivation. I used coloured snaps of animals from the Ranger Rick magazine and children liked them very much. Everytime I showed them a new picture they looked at it and discussed it in their native language at first. It meant that they were interested in them. The pictures made the lessons more enjoyable and brought a piece of 'real nature' into the classroom. They also motivated children to speak when I asked them what animal was in the picture. Children also asked me if they could learn more vocabulary because they wanted to see more pictures.

Topic: FAMILY

New vocabulary: Mother, father, baby, family

New structure: 'He is my father.' 'She is my mother.' 'This is a baby.'

Aims: The aims of the lessons are to teach children new vocabulary and to teach them to talk about their family using new structures.

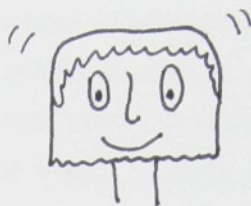
Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * repeat new words and understand them
- * draw a picture of a particular member of family
- * say which member of family is on their picture
- * use **she** and **he** together with mother and father
- * understand and use structures 'She is my mother.' and 'He is my father.'

Aids:

1. Pictures of a woman, a man, a baby and a family.

2. Paper bags with pictures of mother, father and baby; each picture on one bag. There should be one bag for each child.



Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to repeat and understand new vocabulary

Instructions: Show children a picture of mother and say to them: "She is my mother." Let them repeat it chorally and individually several times. Then do the same with father and baby.

DRAWING A FAMILY

Aims: to practise listening and using new vocabulary

Objectives: Children should be able to draw pictures of their parents and then say to the rest of the class who is the person on their picture.

Instructions: Ask children to draw their parents. While they are drawing, walk among their desks and ask them quietly: "Who is this?" Let them answer using the new structure. When they all finish their drawing ask them to show their pictures to the rest of the class and let them say: "She is my mother." or "He is my father."

PAPER BAGS

Aim: to present new vocabulary

Objectives: children should understand new words and be able to repeat them

Instructions: Give each child one paper bag with pictures of mother, father and baby. Then show them a picture of mother and say: "She is my mother. Who has got a picture of mother? Come here!" Let them come to you and say: "She is my mother." Do the same with father and baby.

Note: The same activity can be used for practicing. Each child has got one paper bag and you say to them: "All mothers come here." But this time do not show them the picture before. You can also say to them: "Make families" and they have to make groups of three with one mother, one father and one baby. Children liked this activity very much.

Commentary on the topic:

This topic was good according to children's interest. They liked talking about their families and drawing pictures of their parents. At the beginning of the second and third lesson they asked me if they would draw the pictures of their parents again. But the structures were very problematic for them. They learned the first structure 'She is my mother.' rather easily but then they used it for masculine gender too. They said: 'She is my father.' I explained to them that in Czech they also use 'ona' for a woman and 'on' for a man, but it did not help very much. They still mixed both structures together. Maybe the reason was that they concentrated on the new nouns mother and father more than on the structure. But some of the children had the same problem even when they knew the words mother and father very well. We had to practise the structures again and again.

The activity with paper bags was very successful and children enjoyed it very much. The idea comes originally from W. A. Scott and L. H. Ytreberg (1990:36). They suggested to use big paper

bags with holes for eyes which children could wear on their heads. But I did not have such big bags so I changed it a bit. I decided to use smaller bags which children wore on their hands and used as puppets. They really loved them and it was also very funny to watch them during the activity. When they were asked to make families they made them and then they took mother-bags and father-bags and 'kissed' each other by putting their paper bags lips to lips. It was really very nice and very enjoyable for them.

Topic: HOUSE

New vocabulary: door, window, table, house, bed, small, big

New structure: Point to the ...

Aims: The aim of the lessons is to teach children new words and new structure and to teach them how to express that something is small or big.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * repeat and understand new words
- * point to a thing when they hear its name
- * say the name of the thing I point to
- * understand and accomplish command 'Point to the ...'
- * give the command 'Point to the ...'
- * answer question 'What is this?' using new words
- * say if a thing is big or small

Aids: Pictures of new vocabulary. It is also possible to use real objects in the classroom and use only the pictures of the things which are not in the classroom (bed...).

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Point to the door and say to children: "This is a door". Let them repeat the word door. Do the same with the rest of new words except the words big and small. Where possible use real objects in the classroom. For things which are not in the classroom use pictures.

GAME POINT TO THE...

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to point to the thing they hear

Instructions: Give children instructions: "Point to the window, point to the door, etc. Let them do it all together. At the beginning you can help them and point with them.

Note: This game is described in detail on page 43

GAME WHAT IS THIS?

Aims: to practice new vocabulary and structure

Objectives: children should be able to answer your question, using new vocabulary in connection with structure 'This is a ...'

Instructions: Point to the window and ask children: "What is this?" Let them answer the whole sentence: "This is a window"

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new words: big and small

Objectives: children should understand new words and be able to repeat them

Instructions: Show children pictures of big and small doors. Say them: "This door is big.", "This door is small." Let them repeat it. Do the same with the rest of the pictures.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to understand new vocabulary in yes or no question and be able to answer it

Instructions: Show children one picture and ask: "Is this door old?" Let them answer. Do the same with the rest of the pictures.

GAME BIG OR SMALL

Aims: to practice using new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to use words big and small when talking about big and small things

Instructions: Show children a picture of big door. Let them stand up and raise their hands, which means BIG. Then let them say: "Big door." Do the same with small door but let children squat down. Continue with other pictures.

Commentary on the topic:

The new vocabulary from this topic was rather closed to children because they use the things in their everyday lives at home and at school. They liked the moving activities when they pointed to something or when they mimed words big and small. These moving activities were more enjoyable for them. I could see that when they were asked just to say if the door is big or small they became bored soon. But as soon as they were asked to stand up and squat down they had lots of fun and were not bored at all.

It was also good to use real objects where possible because they were located all over the class which was good for the pointing game. And as I normally use lots of pictures during the lessons, using real objects was an interesting change. I could see that children were interested in it because they themselves tried to find as many of the things as possible. I thought we would have to use a picture of the house because it was not possible to see any real house from the window. But as we have our lessons in an art classroom they found a house made of a big paper box which was made by their older colleagues for a puppet performance. So

when they were asked to point to a house they all pointed to this paper house.

Topic: **FOOD**

New vocabulary: bread, roll, cheese, hamburger, egg

New structure: Do you like...? Yes, I like...

Aims: The aim of the lessons is to teach children names of some food which they probably eat often and are familiar with. The aim is also to teach them ask their colleagues if they like some food and to be able to answer the question.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * understand new words and use them in spoken language
- * ask question 'Do you like ...?'
- * understand question 'Do you like ...?' and be able to answer it.
- * say which food they like

Aids: pictures of food

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to understand new vocabulary when they hear it and be able to repeat it

Instructions: Show children a picture of cheese and say: "This is a cheese." Let children repeat it and then continue with other words.

PRACTICING NEW PHRASE

Aims: to practice listening to new phrase and answering it

difficult for some of them but during repeating the game, almost all of them learned it.

Topic: Fruits and vegetables

New vocabulary: Apple, orange, lemon, cherry, strawberry, tomato

Aims: The aim of the lessons is to teach children names of some fruits and vegetables which they probably eat often and are familiar with. The aim is also to practise asking their colleagues if they like some fruits or vegetables and to be able to answer the question.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * understand new words and use them in spoken language
- * ask question 'Do you like ...?'
- * understand question 'Do you like ...?' and be able to answer it.
- * say which fruit or vegetable they like

Aids: pictures of fruits and vegetables

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to understand new vocabulary when they hear it and to repeat it

Instructions: Show children a picture of a strawberry and say: "This is a strawberry." Let children repeat it and then continue with other words.

PRACTICING NEW PHRASE

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary

Objectives: children should understand new vocabulary in question 'Do you like...?' and be able to answer the question about themselves.

Instructions: Ask one child: "Do you like a strawberry, Ann?" Let her answer. Do the same with other children and other fruits and vegetables.

DRAWING PICTURES

Aims: to practice new vocabulary and structure 'I like ...'

Objectives: children should be able to say which fruits and vegetables they like to eat using new vocabulary and structure 'I like ...'

Instructions: Ask children to choose the fruit or vegetable they like the most and let them draw it. Tell them they can only choose the fruits and vegetables they have learned. Then let them show the picture to the rest of the class and say: "I like ..."

GUESSING GAME

Aims: to practice new vocabulary in connection with question 'Do you like...?'

Objectives: children should be able to understand and ask the question: "Do you like...?" and use new vocabulary in spoken language

Instructions: Ask 1 child to go to the blackboard and think the fruits and vegetables she or he likes. Tell them they can choose only the fruits and vegetables they had learned. Let the other children ask her or him: "Do you like...?" If it is the thing she or he thinks, he says **yes** and the child who guessed it can go to her or his position. If it is not the thing, ask another child to guess.

Note: for more information about this game see page 45

Commentary on the topic:

This topic was chosen according to children's interest. As we

talked about what they liked or disliked during the lessons, I learned that most of them liked most of the fruits and vegetables. I think it is good to choose the fruits and vegetables they like because it supports their motivation.

During the lessons, when I asked them if they liked or disliked a particular fruit or vegetable, I could see one interesting thing. When I asked them about some fruit or vegetable which they really liked they were very happy. They smiled and were proud to answer. But when I asked them about a fruit or vegetable they did not like they were a bit disappointed. They answered the question but immediately they started to hold up their hand again and shouted at me to ask them about their favourite fruit or vegetable.

From this point of view it would be probably good to ask children before starting the topic which fruits and vegetables they like and to teach them the vocabulary they themselves choose. I know that in the future, if they want to speak English, they cannot learn only the fruits and vegetables they like. They must learn also those which they do not like. But at the beginning, when their motivation is extremely important and the topic is connected with structure 'I like ...', they should probably have the possibility to choose.

Topic: Drinks

New vocabulary : tea, coffee, milk, cocoa, water, juice

New structure : I want ..., Do you want ...?

Aims: The aim of the lessons is to teach children names of some drinks which they probably drink often and are familiar with them. The aim is also to practise asking their colleagues if they want some drink and to be able to answer the question.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * understand new words and use them in spoken language
- * ask question 'Do you want ...?'
- * understand question 'Do you want ...?' and be able to answer it.
- * say which drink they want

Aids: pictures of drinks

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new vocabulary

Objectives: children should be able to understand new vocabulary when they hear it and to repeat it

Instructions: Show children a picture of cocoa and say: "This is a cocoa." Let children repeat it and then continue with other words.

PRACTICING NEW PHRASE

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary

Objectives: children should understand new vocabulary in question 'Do you want...?' and be able to answer the question about themselves.

Instructions: Ask one child: "Do you want coffee, Ann?" Let her answer. Do the same with other children and other drinks.

DRAWING PICTURES

Aims: to practice new vocabulary and structure 'I want ...'

Objectives: children should be able to say which drinks they want using new vocabulary and structure 'I want ...'

Instructions: Ask children to choose the drink they would like now and let them draw it. Tell them they can only choose the

drinks they have learned. Then let them show the picture to the rest of the class and say: "I want ..."

GUESSING GAME

Aims: to practice new vocabulary in connection with question 'Do you want ...?'

Objectives: children should be able to understand and ask question: "Do you want ...?" and use new vocabulary in spoken language

Instructions: Ask 1 child to go to the blackboard and think of the drink she or he would like to drink now. Tell them they can choose from the drinks they had learned. Let the other children ask her or him: "Do you want ...?" If it is the thing she or he thinks, he says yes and the child who guessed it can go to her or his position. If it is not the thing, ask another child to guess.

Note: for more information about this game see page 45

Commentary on the topic:

Children liked this topic, as well as the previous ones dealing with food, fruits and vegetables. The choice of vocabulary was successful because children knew all of the drinks very well. Before I started the topic I was not sure about coffee. I did not know if it is a right vocabulary because I thought that most of the children had not drunk it before. But I was very surprised. Most of them drank coffee and they liked it. When they saw my surprise about it they all were very proud when I asked them about coffee and they could answer 'Yes, I like coffee.' or 'Yes, I want coffee.' Generally, they were glad when I asked them about any drink. They like talking about themselves and so they liked both structures 'I like ...' and 'I want ...' because they could present their personal opinion about something. So I can summarize that all the three topics dealing with food and both structures were chosen successfully according to children's age and interest.

Topic: Colours

New vocabulary: sun, orange, flower, pen, tree, ball, shoes, yellow, orange, red, blue, green, brown, black

New structure: Touch something ... (blue)

Aims: The aims of the lessons are to teach children seven colours and names of the things which represent each colour and to teach them the structure of the sentence, e.g. This is a blue pen.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * say what colours different things are
- * connect each colour with one thing which is typical for it
- * touch a thing of a particular colour

Aids:

1. Pictures of sun, orange, flower, pen, tree, ball and shoes. The pictures should be large enough so that whole class can see them and should be drawn in relevant colours (yellow sun, orange orange, red flower, blue pen, green tree, brown ball and black shoes)
2. Two or three sets of small flash cards with the same pictures and same colours. Number of sets depends on number of children in class. There should be one flash card for each child.

Number of lessons: four lessons

This topic is presented in detail on page 32

Topic: Face

New vocabulary: eyes, hair, nose, mouth, ears

New structure: Touch your ...

Aims: The aims of the lessons are to teach children to understand and to use new vocabulary in spoken language and to understand and to use phrase 'Touch your ...'

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * understand and use new vocabulary
- * touch or draw the part of the body they hear
- * give instruction: "Touch your ..." and "Draw ...", using new vocabulary

Aids: your own face or a picture of someone's face

Number of lessons: four lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new words

Objectives: children should be able to repeat and understand new vocabulary

Instructions: Touch your nose and say: 'This is a nose.' Let children touch their own nose and repeat the word **nose** after you. Then do the same with the rest of new vocabulary.

GAME TOUCH YOUR NOSE

Aims: to practise listening to new vocabulary and phrase and using the phrase

Objectives: Children should be able to touch the part of the body they hear and later they should also be able to give the instruction 'Touch your ...' themselves.

Instructions: Give children instruction: "Touch your nose." Let them fulfil it. Then repeat the same instruction with different parts of face. Later you can ask one child to give the instructions instead of you.

Note: This game is described in detail at page 44

DRAWING A MONSTER

Aims: to practise understanding new vocabulary and names of colours

Objectives: children should be able to draw the part of the body they hear

Instructions: Ask children to take paper and coloured pencils. Then tell them they will draw a monster. Give them information about the monster, e.g.: "It has got one big red nose, three big green eyes, two small brown mouths and six big violet ears." Let children draw what you dictate. If they do not know numbers yet, show them the numbers using your fingers.

Note: This game is described in details on page 47

Commentary on the topic:

This topic was very difficult for children. It was probably the most difficult one. They mixed up words **eyes** and **ears**. It was probably because they were similar a bit. Another reason why this topic was so difficult for children could be the fact that they do not normally think about their faces. It is natural for them that they have one nose and two eyes.

The teacher who had seen the lesson advised me not to talk about their face but about some monsters. The monster can have four eyes and three noses and that is why children will have a reason to think about it. It is a good idea, but in my class there was a problem because my children did not know English numbers yet. At the beginning of the year I decided to teach them later. And as I was already almost at the end of the topic **face** I did not want to interrupt it to teach numbers before. So when I talked about numbers of monsters' eyes ears and noses I said the numbers in English but I showed them by my fingers too, so that the children could understand. Next time I would change the order of the topics and I would teach **numbers** before **face**.

Topic: Numbers

New vocabulary: numbers from 1 to 10

Aims: The aim of the lessons is to teach children to understand and to use numbers from 1 to 10. Numbers from 1 to 5 should be taught in the first lesson and numbers from 6 to 8 in the second lesson.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * repeat and understand new vocabulary
- * show the number they hear using their fingers
- * say what number of other people's fingers they see

Aids: none

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY (lesson 1)

Aims: to present numbers from 1 to 5

Objectives: children should be able to repeat and understand new vocabulary

Instructions: Show children one of the numbers using your fingers and let them count it. Ask them what number it is in Czech and tell them how we say it in English. Let them repeat it. Do the same with all of the numbers from 1 to 5

Note: In lesson 2 do the same with numbers from 6 to 10

FINGERS GAME

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary and using it in spoken language

Objectives: children should be able to show the number they hear

using their fingers and say what number of other people's fingers they see

Instructions: Tell children a number and let them show the number using their fingers. Later you can ask some children to say the numbers instead of you; one child says one number.

Variant 2: When children are able to understand the numbers you say, you can change the game completely. This time you show the numbers using your fingers and ask children to say how many fingers they see.

MOLECULES

Aims: to practice listening to numbers

Objectives: children should understand the number they hear

Instructions: Let children stand up and move in a given space. Explain to them that each of them is one atom and that atoms make molecules by coming close together. Then give them instruction: "Make molecules of three atoms." They must make groups of three people who hold each other. Then ask them to move separately again. Continue the game by giving them different numbers of atoms in molecules.

Note: This game is described in detail on page 48

CLAP YOUR HANDS

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary and using it in spoken language

Objectives: children should be able to understand the numbers you say and be able to count from 1 to the number which you say

Instructions: Tell children a number, for example five, and let them clap their hands as many times as high the number is, in this case five times. Then let some of the children give the numbers instead of you; each child gives one number.

Song FIVE HAMMERS

To practice using numbers I taught children this song. As they attended a music class they liked singing very much and most of

them learned this song easily. The song comes from Miroslav Žbirka's tape Songs for Children, (1993, 27).

For the text of the song see page appendix

Commentary on the topic:

This topic was not very difficult for children but there was a small problem for me. Most of the children already knew the numbers. Some of them from their previous learning of English in a kindergarten and the rest of them from home. I do not know why, but it is a typical custom of parents to teach their children to count in a foreign language. The problem is that they teach them to count in the order. It means one, two, three, four, five, etc. But when using the foreign language in real life you seldom need to count in the order. You usually need to express that 3 means three and 5 means five. That is why I tried to teach children numbers not in the order. The games and activities I did with children are concentrated on expressing the numbers immediately when they see or hear them and not on counting in the order. I think it is more effective for their future usage of the language.

Topic: Activities

New vocabulary: write, draw, jump, sing, play tennis, play football

New structure: Can you ...?, Yes I can ...

Aims: The aims of the lessons are to teach children names of some activities and to teach them say which activities they can do and to ask other children if they can do some activity.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to:

- * repeat and understand new vocabulary
- * answer teacher's question using new vocabulary
- * fulfil teacher's instructions

Aids: none

Number of lessons: three lessons

Example of activities:

PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

Aims: to present new words

Objectives: children should be able to repeat and understand new vocabulary

Instructions: Draw a flower, or some other easy picture on the blackboard and say to children: "I can draw." Let them draw the same picture and then ask them to repeat the sentence after you. Then jump and say to children: "I can jump." Let them jump too and repeat the sentence after you.

DO WHAT YOU HEAR

Aims: to practice listening and understanding new vocabulary

Objectives: children should understand new vocabulary and be able to fulfil teacher's instructions

Instructions: Ask children to arrange their chairs in a shape of half a circle in front of the blackboard so that everybody can see the blackboard. Then give them instructions: "Draw a flower, Paul.", "Write your name, Ann.", "Jump, Alice." Let children fulfil your instructions. It is also possible to let children fulfil your instructions all together. In this case it is probably better to let them sit at their desks and use papers and pens for drawing and writing.

CAN YOU DRAW?

Aims: to practice listening to new vocabulary and structure and using them in spoken language

Objectives: children should be able to understand new vocabulary and structure and answer teacher's question using new vocabulary

Instructions: Ask one child: "Can you draw?" Let her or him answer. If she or he answers **yes**, let her or him draw something on the blackboard. Continue with other children and other activities.

Commentary on the topic:

Children liked this topic because they took an active role in the activities. They were very proud when they could come to the blackboard and draw or write something. They could show that they really could do something. When I asked them if they could jump they were dissapointed a bit because they could not show anything special. That was one of the reasons why I decided to do the activity **DO WHAT YOU HEAR** all together. It was quicker and I could let all of the children draw and write. At the end they showed the pictures to each other.

When I wanted to do this activity at the beginning of the lesson, just as a warming up activity, I needed it to be quick. In this case I told children not to take papers but to 'draw' and 'write' just by their fingers on their desks. I thought it would not be very funny for children but I was surprised because they found it very enjoyable. It was probably because it was something new for them. Generally, children love the activities in which they can take an active part. That is why this topic was enjoyable for them.

Summary of all the topics:

The topics are in the order I taught them during the year. The questions I asked myself about the topics before I started to teach were: "Did I choose the proper topics? Will the children be interested in them? Did I choose the right vocabulary for each topic? Is not the vocabulary too difficult for the children?"

Now I can answer them. I think that with the help of the books and the teacher who had an experience with teaching English to young learners I managed to choose the proper topics. Children were usually interested in them and wanted to learn the vocabulary which belonged to them. Of course, there were some topics which the children liked more and some which they liked less than the others. It is natural. Among the most successful topics there were **Animals, Food, Fruits and Vegetables, Colours and Activities**. The most difficult topic was probably **Face**. I have suggested some changes in the commentary on the topic, which could probably make the topic more interesting for children.

The aims and objectives of the lessons were usually to teach children to understand new vocabulary, questions and structures and to use them in spoken language. Generally it is possible to say that most of the children succeeded. There are some weaker children, of course, who do not remember the structures or the vocabulary. But as we played the REVISION GAME (page 49) I found that most of the children were able to understand and use most of the vocabulary.

AN EXAMPLE OF ONE TOPIC

Below there is detailed information and several examples of how I covered one topic. There are all lesson plans, and at the end of each lesson plan there is a commentary on each activity.

Topic Colours

New vocabulary: Sun, orange, flower, pen, tree, ball, shoes, yellow, orange, red, blue, green, brown, black

Number of lessons: four lessons

Aims: The aims of the lessons are to teach children seven colours and the names of the things which represent each colour and to

teach them the structure of the sentence, e.g. This is a blue pen.

Objectives: By the end of the topic children should be able to say what colours different things are and to connect each colour with one thing which is typical for it. They should also be able to touch a thing of a particular colour .

Aids

1. Pictures of sun, orange, flower, pen, tree, ball and shoes. Pictures should be large enough so that the whole class can see them and should be drawn in relevant colours (yellow sun, orange orange, red flower, blue pen, green tree, brown ball and black shoes)

2. Two or three sets of small flash cards with the same pictures and same colours. Number of sets depends on number of children in class. There should be one flash card for each child.

Children are already able to

- * understand meaning of phrase "This is a ..."
- * say this phrase when they see a picture of something
- * understand and fulfil commands 'come here, stand up, sit down, point to the.., touch.., draw..'

General commentary

One lesson (20 minutes) is not enough for the weaker students to learn all new vocabulary. Most of them have no chance to practise it at home because their parents cannot speak English. So it is usually necessary to practise it for 2 lessons at least. When the games and exercises from the first lesson are successful I sometimes repeat them in both lessons because children like playing the games they already know and they usually do not want me to make many changes. That is why lessons 1 and 2 are the same.

Lesson 1 and 2

New vocabulary: Sun, orange, flower, pen, tree, ball, shoes.

Aims: The aim of the lesson is to teach children use new words and to understand them.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson children should be able to say the new words when they see the pictures and to point at the things when they hear the words.

Aids: Pictures and small flash cards with new vocabulary.

Stages

1) Aim: to present new vocabulary

Instructions: Show children one picture and say: "This is a ball." Let them repeat it chorally and then individually. Do the same with the rest of the words. Then show children the pictures again and ask them: 'What is this?' Let them answer.

2) Aim: to practice listening to new vocabulary.

Instructions: Tell children: "Point to the pen." Let them fulfil your instruction. Do the same with the rest of the words. Stick on the wall the pictures of the things they can't find in the classroom so that they can point to them. Then you can do the same practice again but ask children to fulfil your commands individually.

3) Aim: to practice listening and using new vocabulary

Instructions: Give each child a picture of one thing and then ask: 'Who has got a pen? Come here!' Let the children who have pen come to you and show their pictures to the class. Then let them all repeat the word 'pen' after you. Do the same with the rest of the words. If you see children need some more practice and there is time enough, you can repeat this activity once more.

Commentary on lessons 1 and 2

Commentary on stage 1

Children usually do not like the part of the lesson when new vocabulary is presented, because they just sit at their desks and repeat. They are usually bored. That is why I try to make it more interesting by using pictures. When it is possible, it is good to make the pictures funny. (For example, when I prepared a picture

of sun I drew eyes, nose and mouth on it.) Children like the pictures and their concentration is better.

Commentary on stage 2

This kind of practicing listening is very effective because all children fulfil the commands at once so you can do lots of practice in a short time. It saves time in the classroom. But there is a danger. Sometimes I could see that some of the weaker students "copied" their colleagues. They didn't understand the instruction but they fulfilled it because they did it after the ones who understood.

The other possibility is to call up only one child at time. Then you can see if she or he understands or if she or he needs help. It is more time-consuming but sometimes it is necessary.

Commentary on stage 3

Children liked this game because they were not only asked to say something but they had the pictures in their hands. They all wanted to come to the blackboard and to show the picture to the others. They all concentrated on the game and it means that they concentrated on the new vocabulary too.

Lesson 3

new vocabulary: Red, yellow, orange.

aims: The aim of the lesson is to practice vocabulary from the last lesson and to teach children colours in connection with things which are typical for each colour.

objectives: By the end of the lesson children should be able to name the colour when they see it. They should also be able to say what is on the picture and what colour it is (e.g. yellow sun)

materials: Yellow, orange and red flowers cut out of coloured papers (one for each child), pictures of coloured things from previous lesson.

Stages

1) **Aim:** to present new vocabulary.

Instructions: Show children one picture and say: 'This is a yellow sun.' Let them repeat it. Do the same with the rest of the colours and pictures. Then show children the pictures again and ask them: 'What is this?' Let them answer.

2) **Aim:** to practice listening and pronouncing new words.

Instructions: Give children coloured flowers (each child 1 flower). Then ask: 'Who has got a yellow flower? Come here.' Let them come to you and say: 'A yellow flower.' Repeat the activity one or two more times.

3) **Aim:** to practice listening to new words

Instructions: Ask children to stand up and give them the instruction: 'Touch something yellow'. They can move around the classroom and must touch something yellow. Watch for who is the first and let her or him choose the next colour.

Commentary on lesson 3

Commentary on stage 2

This idea originally comes from book Story world I+II (teachers book) by D. Vale, S. Mullaney and P. Murphy. They used it for presenting words 'mother, father and baby'. I have changed it for practicing colours. Generally it worked and it was enjoyable for children. But some of them just played with the flower and did not concentrate on the colour. They came to me because their neighbours told them to go and not because they understood my direction to say the colour of their flower.

Next time I would ask children to think about the colour of their flower first, and then I would **point out** that they must listen to me carefully to hear the colour they have.

Commentary on stage 3

This game appeared to be very effective for practicing new vocabulary. A small disadvantage of this game is that children are very noisy when playing it. It can be problem because it can interrupt the classes which have lessons next to your class. But I found it to be possitive too. I listened to what they shouted and I heard them shout the colour they were asked to touch. For example: 'yellow, yellow, yellow'. And they shouted it till they found the colour. It means they did even more practice than they were asked. The aim of the game was only to train listening but they trained speaking too.

At the beginning it was a problem for some of the children to understand the colour, but by the end of the lesson most of them understood everything.

Lesson 4

New vocabulary: Blue, green, brown, black.

Aims: The aim of the lesson is to practice colours from the last lesson and to teach children 4 more colours in connection with things which are typical for each colour.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson children should be able to name the colour when they see it and to say what is on the picture and what colour it is (e.g. green tree)

Aids: Pictures of things from previous lesson, papers with contours of 7 flowers (one paper for each child); children will need coloured pencils.

Stages

1) Aim: to practice vocabulary from last lesson.

Instructions: Show children the pictures of red, orange and yellow things and let them say what is on the pictures, e.g. "yellow sun".

2) Aim: to present new vocabulary.

Instructions: Show children one picture with new colour and say: "This is a green tree." Let them repeat it. Do the same with the rest of the colours and pictures.

3) **Aim:** to practice listening to new words.

Instructions: Give each child a paper with contours of flowers. Give them instruction: "This colour is blue" and let them colour it blue. Do the same with the rest of the flowers.

4) **Aim:** to practice listening to new words

Instructions: Ask children to stand up and give them instruction: 'Touch something blue'. They can move on the classroom and must touch something blue. Look who is the first and let her or him choose the next colour.

Commentary on lesson 4

Commentary on stage 1

When repeating and practicing vocabulary from last lesson it is good to use the same pictures which were used the lesson before. It helps children to remember the words when they see the same pictures.

But this kind of repetition is not very funny for children and it should be only short otherwise children become bored. If you want the repetition to be longer, it is better to play some of the games you played the lesson before.

Commentary on stage 3

Children like drawing and colouring. The advantage of colouring is that children do something and that their hands are occupied. They take an active part in the lesson and they like it very much. But there is also an disadvantage of colouring pictures: it is time-consuming. The pictures I prepared for children were very big (A4 papers). That was why it took children a long time to colour them. Next time I would probably do the exercise again,

but I would prepare smaller pictures. It would probably make the colouring shorter.

Commentary on stage 4

This game appeared to be very effective for practicing new vocabulary. A small disadvantage of this game is that children are very noisy when playing it. It can be problem because it can interrupt the classes which have lessons next to your class. But I found it to be positive too. I listened to what they shouted and I found them to shout the colour they were asked to touch. For example: 'green, green, green'. And they shouted it till they found the colour. It means they did even more practice than they were asked. The aim of the game was only to train listening but they trained speaking too.

At the beginning children had some problems understanding the colour. They mixed up mainly 'black' with 'blue' and 'brown', but by the end of the lesson most of them understood everything. And lots of children even learned the whole sentence "Touch something..."

General commentary on the topic COLOURS

Children liked the topic and they also liked the activities we did. They learned fourteen new words and two phrases in four lessons which I think is good.

The aim of the lessons was to teach children seven colours and names of the things which represent each colour. Another aim was to teach them the structure 'This is a blue pen.' When we finished the topic, most of the children were able to say what colours different things are. They were also able to touch a thing of a particular colour. It means we managed to fulfil the aims and objectives which were given.

But there is one small thing I would change next time. It is the

decision which vocabulary to teach in which lesson. I taught them words "yellow, orange and red" in one lesson and "blue, green, brown and black" in the other lesson. But as I found out later, children mixed up the three colours beginning with **B**: blue, brown and black. That is why next time I would probably change it. I would teach them "yellow, blue and red" in one lesson and "green, brown, black and orange" in the other lesson so that they do not learn the three colours beginning with **B** in one lesson.

Using games

One of the most successful way of practising new vocabulary and phrases with small children is to play games. It is their natural way of learning new things. They spend most of the time playing games in their everyday life and they really love them. It is good to use this fact for teaching them foreign languages. Another reason is that games give children situations where they have a motivation for using a foreign language. Dorota Polivkova (1963) supports the idea that "Games make a natural situation... and they are a real language practice, which makes pupils produce natural and independent language" (Dorota Polivkova 1963:8)

I have tried some other ways of practicing too. For example asking questions, asking children to translate Czech words into English, showing pictures and asking for English words or just repeating after me. But none of these methods were as successful and effective as playing games. In the rest of the methods I have never managed to involve all children at the same time. There were always some children who were bored and did not pay attention. But when we started to play a game they all started to take an active part. They also learned the new vocabulary or phrase more quickly because they themselves felt the necessity to learn it so that they could participate in the game successfully. Playing games was really very motivating for them.

Competitions

There are two different opinions on using competitions. The first one is presented by W.A. Scott and L.H. Ytreberg (1990) and it advises us: "Avoid organised competitions" (W.A. Scott and L.H. Ytreberg 1990:11) The second one is presented by Dorota Polivkova (1963) and it says that "During competition children have to be very quick... and it makes them think in the foreign language" (Dorota Polivkova 1963:7).

I agree more with the second opinion. I found that children love competitions and they want to play them. Once we played the game "Point to the..." They liked it but I could see that there was something missing. They fulfilled the commands but did not have any motivation for why they should do it. Then I tried to arrange it as a competition. The child who made a mistake was out of the game. And the game started to work better. Children had motivation. They did not want to drop out of the game. They wanted to win and it motivated them. The next lesson when I started to play the game again, children wanted to play it as a competition.

So, I think, it is not good to avoid the competitions. But the experts who are against using competitions have a good reason for it. It is presented by W.A. Scott and L.H. Ytreberg (1990) who say: "There is almost always a winner and a loser, or a winning team and a losing team" (W.A. Scott and L.H. Ytreberg 1990:11). This is true, of course. It is unpleasant to be a loser even for an adult, more for a child. And if one child is always a loser, she or he can lose motivation for learning English. But it is the teacher's job to avoid it. As the teacher is the person who organises and directs the game, she or he has the power to influence who the winner is and who the loser is. There are lots of possibilities for doing this:

- * She or he can organise the game as a group work or as a pair work. She or he can mix good pupils with the weak ones, and so she or he can give the weaker pupils chance to win.
- * She or he can play the game several times and give more

children a chance to win.

- * She or he can also finish the game earlier so that there are more winners and fewer losers.

- * She or he can give weaker pupils easier questions.

- * When there are some losers she or he should encourage them that next time they can win. I did it very often and I think it helped. I said for example: "This team is a winner and we should applaud them. But the the other group also worked very well and we should applaud them too." So they applauded each other and all children smiled and were happy. Every teacher has the power to do that and then he does not have to be afraid of using competitions.

Examples of the most succesful games

Below, the most successful and effective games, which I used during the lessons are described in detail. At the end of each game there is a commentary and there are suggested possible changes.

MIME AN ANIMAL

Skills: Speaking

Vocabulary and structures: Animals, structure 'This is a ...'

Aims: The aim of the game is to practise using phrase This is a... and names of animals.

Objectives: By the end of the game children should be able to name animals when they see other children mime them. They should also be able to say the sentence: "This is a ...".

Materials needed: None (but you can put pictures of the animals you want to practice on the board so that everybody can see them. It helps children to remember which animals they learned, but it is not necessary.)

Instructions: Mime an animal and let children guess which animal it is. Then ask the child who guesses it mimes another animal and let other ch. guess again. Do the same with other children.

Commentary on the game: Children liked this game and wanted to play it again and again. But there were several children who didn't remember the structure "This is a..." and that's why they didn't participate in the game. I had to call them up and show that I was ready to help them. I said the sentence and they repeated it after me. Then they added the name of the animal themselves. After it they stopped being afraid and started to participate in the game.

Point to the...

Skills: Listening

Vocabulary and structures: House, phrase 'Look at the...', 'Point to the...'

Aims: The aim of the game is to practise listening and fulfilling some easy commands ('look at the...', 'point to the...') and to practice understanding new vocabulary (door, window, desk, chair, house and bed).

Objectives: By the end of the game children should be able to fulfill commands 'Point to the...' and 'Look at the...'. They should also find the thing when they hear its name.

Materials needed: Real objects (door, window...) and pictures of the objects which are not in the classroom (bed...).

Instructions

Version 1: Give children instructions: 'Point to the window', 'Look at the door', etc. Let children fulfill them. At the beginning you can help them and point or look with them, but then let them do it without your help. When they are good at it, you can make it more difficult and to puzzle them a bit. Tell them the command you want them to fulfil but you yourself fulfill a different command, e.g. say them: 'Look at the door', but you yourself look at the window.

Version 2: Give children the same instructions but let only one child fulfill it and other children to control her or him. Give each child one instruction.

Commentary on the game: I tried both versions of the game. Each

of them had its advantages and disadvantages. In version 1 it was good that all children fulfilled the commands at once and it saved time. But I could see that some of the weaker students "copied" their colleagues. They didn't understand the instruction but they fulfilled it because they did it after the ones who understood. In the second version I called up only one child so I could see if she or he understood me or if she or he needed help. But it's much more time-consuming than the first version. Children liked the first version more than the second one. They wanted to be active and to do something. But when we played the second version of the game, they had to wait till other children fulfilled the command and they started to be bored.

Touch your nose

Skills: Listening and speaking

Vocabulary and structures: Eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hair.

Aims: The aim of the game is to practice listening to new vocabulary (parts of your face) and to fulfil commands.

Objectives: By the end of the game, children should be able to touch the part of the face when they hear its name and to give instruction: 'Touch your ...'.

Materials needed: None

Instructions: Ask children to make pairs. Give them instruction: 'Touch your friend's nose'. Let them fulfil the command. Then do the same with the rest of vocabulary (mouth, eyes, ears, hair). When you see that most of them are able to fulfil the commands easily, you can ask one child to give the instruction instead of you. Then ask other children to give the instructions.

Variant 2: If you think the children are too noisy, you can ask them to touch parts of their own faces but it is not so funny for them.

Commentary on the game: Children liked this game very much and it was great fun for them. They all wanted to give the instructions and it was a good motivation for them. I had told them that they can give the instructions only if they would fulfil the commands

properly. And as they all wanted to give the instructions, they all worked very well.

I have tried this game in two groups. In the first one it worked very well and the children were very good. In the second group they enjoyed it too much. They did not concentrate on the instructions but only on having fun with their friends, so I asked them to touch their own parts of face. It is good to try it and to decide which version is better for the concrete group of children.

Guessing game

Skills: Speaking and listening

Vocabulary and structures: Vocabulary belonging to one chosen topic, questions and statements belonging to the topic, e.g. Do you have...?, Do you like...?, Do you want...?, Is it a...? For illustration I chose topic Food and phrase 'Do you like...?'. But the game is very universal and it can be used for any other topic.

Aims: The aim of the game is to practice using a new phrase and new vocabulary and to ask questions.

Objectives: By the end of the game children should be able to understand new words, to use them in spoken language, and to ask a new question.

Materials needed: None (you can put pictures of the things you want to practice on the board so that everybody can see them. It helps children to remember which words they learned and which words they should use, but it is not necessary.)

Instructions: Ask 1 child to go to the blackboard and think of the food she or he likes. (The food they had learned.) Let other children ask her or him: 'Do you like ...?'. If it is the thing she or he thinks, he says yes and the child who guessed it can go to her or his position. If it is not the thing, ask another child to guess.

Commentary on the game: This is a very universal and very

effective game. I have used it for practicing these topics and phrases: Food + Do you like...?, Fruits and vegetable + Do you like...?, Drinks + Do you want...?, Animals + Is it a ...? etc. But there are lots of other possibilities. As children liked the game very much they all tried hard. At the beginning I had to help some of them remember the sentence, but by the end of the game almost all children were able to say it without any help.

I could also see that the game motivated children a lot. I tried to teach them the question and to practice it before the game. It seemed to be very difficult for some of them. It was probably because they did not like sitting at their desks and repeating the same sentence several times without any reason. But when we started to play the game they had motivation and all of them took an active part in it. They found the reason to repeat the question, so they repeated it without any bigger problems. It was an interesting experience and I found that it would probably be good to use this game for practicing different vocabulary. It is very effective for practicing asking questions.

Touch something blue

Skills: Listening and speaking

Vocabulary and structures: Colours, phrase 'Touch something...(blue)'.

Aims: The aim of the game is to practice listening to new vocabulary and fulfilling commands.

Objectives: By the end of the game children should be able to touch something of the particular colour when they hear the instruction.

Materials needed: None

Instructions: Ask children to stand up and give them instruction: 'Touch something blue'. They can move in the classroom and must touch something blue. Watch to see who is the first and let her or him choose the next colour.

Commentary on the game: This game appeared to be very effective

for practicing new vocabulary. A small disadvantage of this game is that children are very noisy when playing it. It can be problem because it can interrupt the classes which have lessons next to your class. But it appeared to be possitive too. I listened to what they shouted and I found them to shout the colour they were asked to touch. For example: 'green, green, green'. And they shouted it till they found the colour. It means they did even more practice than they were asked. The aim of the game was only to train listening but they trained speaking too.

At the beginning they had some problems understanding the colour. They mixed up mainly 'black' with 'blue' and 'brown', but by the end of the lesson most of them understood everything. They also tried to find the colour quickly because they wanted to choose the next colour. At first I wanted them just to say the colour and not the whole command. I expected it to be too difficult for them to learn the colours and the command too. But lots of children learned even the command. From this it is clear that if children are motivated they can learn even more than they are expected.

Drawing a monster

Skills: Listening and speaking

Vocabulary and structures: Parts of face, colours, big, small, instruction: "Draw ..."

Aims: The aim of the game is to practise understanding new vocabulary and names of colours

Objectives: By the end of the game children should be able to draw the part of the body they hear in a given colour and size

Materials needed: papers (one for each child), coloured pencils

Instructions: Ask children to take a paper and coloured pencils. Then tell them they will draw a monster. Give them information about the monster, e.g.: 'It has got one big red nose, three big green eyes, two small brown mouthes and six big violet ears.' Let children draw what you dictate. If they do not know numbers yet,

show them the number using your fingers.

Variant 2: When children are already able to understand you well, you can ask them to give the instructions themselves. Let one child give the instruction about one part of the face. It means the first child gives the instruction about the nose, the second one about the eyes, and so forth.

Variant 3: You can also ask children to draw their own monster without any instruction. It means that each monster is different. Then let children show their monsters to the rest of the class and talk about them. Let them say how many noses they have, what colour they are, if they are big or small, etc.

Commentary on the game: Children like drawing very much and it is good to use drawing for practicing foreign language. It is motivating for them because during the practicing they do something they like to do. All of the three variants were successful. It means that children enjoyed them and practised language at the same time. It is good to use variant number 1 at the beginning because the teacher is the one who takes the active part. It means that she or he gives children a model of how it can work. In variant 2 children take more active part in the game. They are asked to produce the language in a meaningful way, which is motivating for them. In variant 3 they use their own phantasy very much and then they use language in a meaningful way again.

Molecules

Skills: Listening and speaking

Vocabulary and structures: Numbers from 1 to 10

Aims: The aim of the game is to practice listening to numbers.

Objectives: By the end of the game children should understand the numbers they hear.

Materials needed: none

Instructions: Let children stand up and move in a given space. Explain to them that each of them is one atom and that atoms make molecules by coming close together. Then give them instruction:

"Make molecules of three atoms." They must make groups of three people who hold each other. There are probably one or two children left who can not make a group of three. You can either make them leave the game (variant 1) or you can give them one bad point and let them continue in the game (variant 2). Then ask the rest of the children (or all of them) to move separately again and continue the game by giving them different numbers. Later you can let children give the instruction themselves.

Commentary on the game: This game is very popular with children. They like it because they do not have to sit at their desks but they can move in the classroom. They all also take an active part in the game, which motivates them. I have tried both of the variants. Children like the first one very much because it is a real competition, but there is a problem. The children who are out of the game become bored and start to annoy. The second variant is also a kind of competition. When you finish the game you can count the number of bad points and the child who has got the least is a winner. It is also motivating for children because all of them still take an active part in the game so they are not bored. It means that from my personal experience I prefer the second variant, but it depends on the class and on the teacher which variant is more suitable.

Revision game (competition)

Skills: Speaking

Vocabulary and structures: All vocabulary

Aims: The aim of the game is to revise all vocabulary which was taught before

Objectives: By the end of the lesson children should be able to use all the vocabulary in spoken language quickly.

Materials needed: Pictures of all vocabulary you want to revise

Instructions: Divide the class into two teams. Give each child a number; each team has numbers 1, 2, 3... Ask the two children who have number one to begin. Show them a picture and let them say what is in the picture. The other members of the team can

help them quietly but the player whose turn it is must say the word aloud. Give one point to the team whose player answered first. Then continue with players number two.

Commentary on the game: The game was very successful. All children were involved and as they could help each other, they all thought about the word, even when it was not their turn. They practised vocabulary and played a funny game at the same time. But this game also gave a lot of information to me. I could immediately see which children knew the vocabulary and which of them still had some problems. I could also see which vocabulary or which topic was easy and which one was difficult for the children. This information is very important for the teacher, so I think it is good to play this game several times during the year. The game also gives children a chance to repeat and practise all the vocabulary they have learned before.

APPENDIX

Song FIVE HAMMERS

1. Peter works with one hammer, one hammer, one hammer, ,
Peter works with one hammer, this fine day.
2. Peter works with two hammers, two hammers, two hammers,
Peter works with two hammers, this fine day.
3. Peter works with three hammers, three hammers, three hammers,
Peter works with three hammers, this fine day.
4. Peter works with four hammers, four hammers, four hammers,
Peter works with four hammers, this fine day.
5. Peter works with five hammers, five hammers, five hammers,
Peter works with five hammers, this fine day.
6. Peter goes to sleep now, sleep now, sleep now,
Peter goes to sleep now, this fine day.

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III. Conclusion

This Professional Project discusses some methods and possible ways of teaching English to young learners. It demonstrates different possibilities of using pictures, games and topic-based work for motivation of young learners and for bringing real life into the classroom. The practical part is based on experts' theories on teaching English to young learners, on opinions of some teachers with experience and on testing my own materials.

According to the methodological theories, in the practical part of the project I developed and tested three main methods of teaching English to young learners:

- a) topic-based work
- b) using games and competitions
- c) using pictures

These theories were tested in two first form classes of a Czech primary school during one school year and now it is possible to summarize the outcome of the practical testing.

This conclusion comes out of three sources:

- a) interviews with the learners and monitoring their spontaneous reactions during each activity or lesson
- b) the classroom teacher's evaluation
- c) the self-evaluation

Interviewing the learners and watching their spontaneous reactions

At the end of the lessons I usually asked children about their opinions on the activities we did. I also used the fact that children were very spontaneous during the activities and games. It was rather easy to find out if they liked the activity or if they were bored and if it was too easy or too difficult for them. From these I got lots of information which resulted in this

conclusion: children like playing games; mainly the ones during which they can move. The reason for this is the fact that they usually have to sit at their desks the whole day, so the moving games are a pleasant change for them. Children also like the games during which they can have something in their hands or they can do some activity, e.g., draw or touch something.

The classroom teacher's evaluation

I taught the classes myself during the whole year, so there was no teacher watching the class every lesson. But I asked a teacher to come several times to watch my lessons and the methods I used. She evaluated my project as a successful one. She appraised mainly the effective usage of pictures for presenting and practising new vocabulary, and she also estimated using games as a motivation for children to listen and speak in English.

The self-evaluation

For choosing which topics to cover in the whole year project I used experts' theories and opinions of the teachers with experience. From these sources I made a list of topics which I tested during one school year. From children's spontaneous reactions and from self evaluation I found that the topics were suitable according to children's age and interest. Most of the children liked the topics and the vocabulary which were chosen for each topic. And most of them were also able to remember and use almost all of the words and phrases. The topics-based work made the lessons more enjoyable for them and it also supported their concentration. The topics related the lessons to their interests and experiences.

During the lessons I also found using games as a very effective way of practicing new vocabulary and structures. One of the main reasons for this was the fact that the games gave children the real situations in which they themselves wanted to use the language. It was also very effective to organize some of the

games as competitions. The competitions gave children more motivation. As they all wanted to win, they tried very hard. Although some experts say that teachers should avoid competitions because there is always a loser, I found them to be very effective and useful. I can recommend competitions to all teachers who teach young learners. They are usually very effective for children's motivation. But the teachers should not forget to praise all the children at the end of the competition for their effort, even if they did not win.

For the outcome of the theoretical and practical experience of teaching English to young learners I would recommend topic-based work and using games and competitions as three very effective ways of teaching English to young learners.

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