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BENEFITS OF PROJECT WORK IN ELT

(Diploma thesis)

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Declaration

I declare that I worked on my thesis on my own and that I used only the sources stated in the bibliography.

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Acknowledgements

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ABSTRACT

Project work is a progressive teaching method which meets requirements of modern educational systems. This thesis discusses the benefits of project work in English language teaching.

The Theoretical part is based on methodology books and publications on project work published mostly in English–speaking countries. It introduces history of foreign-language teaching methods, history of project work, characteristic features of learning in projects and of teaching projects. It deals with the benefits of project work including motivation, group work, cooperation or experiencing success and considers also possible problems of project work, i.e. noise, lack of time, monitoring, motivation problems, etc. A division of projects into three main categories is suggested: according to the main activity performed by students, according to length and age of learners. Each category is discussed in detail and provides examples of possible projects. The last chapter of the Theoretical part distinguishes the basic stages of a project: opening, topic orientation, research and data collection, preparation of data presentation, presentation and evaluation.

The Practical part is based on a project which was carried out with high-school students. It integrates English language with psychology. The choice of a school, topic, characteristics of the class as well as the realization of each lesson is described and analysed in detail. Evaluation by students and by teacher is also included.

The thesis focuses on the benefits of project work therefore the research hypothesis deals with the advantages of projects as well. It focuses especially on communication and using individual skills and talents in project work. The research method used was a questionnaire which was answered twice by the students: before and after the project. Their answers were processed and interpreted.

Finally, I summed up the content of the thesis and the results of the research in the Conclusion. In the Appendices section all important materials used during the project are included as well as photos of the final products as an illustration of the whole project.

INTRODUCTION

Project work belongs to those teaching methods which are repeatedly discussed in magazines and publications on modern teaching methodology. In a world that is changing very quickly teachers are looking for a method which would meet all important requirements of the education process. Many methods seem to fulfil only some aspects of modern education such as acquiring knowledge or memorizing facts. Though these methods cannot be rejected as completely useless a new method is needed which would support them and which could be tailored for the education of the 21st century.

In this thesis I want to analyse and evaluate the benefits of project work in English language teaching. Though this method is not new and many publications on project work from abroad were published in the 80´s, due to the political situation in our country before 1989 project work began its life in the Czech Republic later, at the beginning of the 90´s.

In the Theoretical Part I will work with the most significant features of project work as described in the methodology literature. As the title of the thesis suggests I will especially focus on the benefits of project work. I will also try to relate project work to the current educational reform which is going on in our country. However, I will mention the difficult aspects of projects as well. Each approach has its pros and cons and it is better to be well prepared for the cons. Also the other topics discussed in the Theoretical part (e.g. types of projects, stages of projects) are included as a theoretical preparation for the Practical part.

In the Practical part I will describe in detail my personal experience with project work. I will carry out an English project with high-school students. I want to give a complete description of the project itself and also to compare my experience with the theoretical knowledge I included in the first part of my thesis.

I will state a research hypothesis which will focus on the advantages of project work in accordance with the direction of my thesis and I will try to verify this hypothesis after realization of the project. I will use questionnaires to be answered by students reflecting their personal experience and opinion on benefits of project work in ELT. I will draw a conclusion if the results of the research enable me to do so.

I.   THEORETICAL PART

1   MAJOR FOREIGN-LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

1.1 Need of change: historical overview

Traditional methods of teaching were based on teaching classical languages such as Latin or Greek. At that time the learner´s training in memory and application of logical processes was emphasized. Later when teaching of modern languages came into focus as an access to philosophical and other intellectual literature of the time, teachers of modern languages wanted to justify their subject by making it equal to the teaching of classical languages. Therefore they adopted traditional methods, especially the grammar-translation method which was well-established in teaching classical languages (Rivers 1970: 9-11).

However, the demands and objectives of learning a foreign language have changed dramatically over the centuries. The aim of understanding difficult literature of a specific field such as theology or philosophy made way to the aim of understanding spoken language and being able to participate in everyday conversation. Therefore various approaches emerged during the 20th century which focused on teaching students to speak and communicate more effectively (Rivers 1970: 33).

The development of teaching methods often reflects the natural side-effect of changes in history of humankind. Whenever only one point of view prevails for a longer period of time, rebelling voices appear on the scene coming up with a new theory which often goes against the preceding one. This inner human need of change, need of improvement, though often rebellious, is a basic and important feature of our history. It keeps us going, makes us learn from our imperfections and failures and enriches our knowledge.

1.2 Grammar-Translation Method

This method is probably the oldest one. It is rooted in teaching classical languages and is still in use today. The focus is on reading authentic texts. Apart from linguistic aspects of the text also its literary and cultural value is emphasized. The greatest disadvantages of this method are monotonous writing or translation exercises and pieces of language which are not presented in real-life context. Students are supposed to memorize lists of vocabulary as well as grammatical rules. Their role is that of a passive participant who is receiving ready-made information. The development of speaking and listening skills is neglected. The advantages can be seen in introducing literature and culture of the foreign language to the students (Rivers 1970: 14-18).

In my opinion, this method can be seen as an opposite to the method of project work. It goes against the basic principles of project work such as creativity, cooperation or using real-life language.

1.3 Direct Method

Direct Method was a reaction to the over-use of the Grammar-Translation Method. Its main representative was Charles Berlitz. In this method no translation and mother tongue is allowed. It is partly based on the theory of L1 acquisition which says that children learn their mother tongue by simply listening to a great amount of it. Students should associate foreign words directly with their corresponding objects or phenomena in reality. Grammar was taught through examples and students were asked to generalize the rules for themselves. This approach was criticised because it is impossible to compare L2 acquisition to L1 acquisition. Other critics focused on the lack of systematic language practice which leads to students being confused when trying to produce more complex sentence structures (Rivers 1970: 18-22).

1.4 Audio-Lingual Method

Audio-Lingual Method was developed during WWII in the USA. At that time there was a great need for interpreters and people who would be able to

communicate with the allied armies. This method was designed for small classes of students. The basis was listening to the teacher, repeating and answering automatically to his questions in simulated dialogues. Language was set in a particular context which imitated the most probable situations soldiers were likely to encounter. It emphasized speaking and listening skills but neglected writing and reading. After the war this approach was developed and used in secondary education (Rivers 1970: 32-54).

Audio-Lingual Method was developed for practical reasons. This partly corresponds to the idea of project work where the language pre-taught by the teacher will be used in real-life conversation. In other words, students can practice and imitate situations they are going to face in the near future.

1.5 Silent Way

The method of Silent Way was a reaction to Audio-Lingual Method. It became prominent during the 60s and 70s. As the name suggests, the teacher should remain silent during the teaching and learning process. A very specific tool was introduced – the Cuisenaire rods. These rods of various colours and length were a visual aid which could represent whatever the teacher needed to show or explain; words, phonemes, people or objects, etc. The student himself was responsible for his learning and progress (Richards, Rogers 1991: 99-111).

Though this method is very specific in its demands both on the teacher and the student, we can see the shift of responsibility from the teacher to the student; an independent management of the learning is also one of the characteristics of project work today.

1.6 Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR was developed by James Asher during the 60s and 70s. This method took several ideas from L1 acquisition; it is based on a great amount of listening and comprehension. The basic rule is that the teacher´s imperatives are immediately followed by students´ performing the imperative (e.g. sit down, open the window, etc.). This approach is perceived as highly effective especially with beginners and young learners. It stresses the connection between memory and

motoric action. Students are not allowed to use their mother tongue, they should start speaking when they are ready (Richards, Rogers 1991: 87-99).

The integration of motoric activity makes TPR similar to project work. Both the project work and TPR use the approach of "learning by doing" (Hutchinson 1992: 11) though in different ways. Doing is perceived as the primary activity and learning as a natural consequence of doing.

1.7 Community Language Learning (CLL)

This model was developed by Charles Curran. He pointed out that many learners do not make their best progress because of fear. Therefore no anxiety or stress should be part of the atmosphere in the group. Students usually work in a circle. They use their mother tongue to express what they want to say, the teacher translates it into the target language and the student only repeats. Students should gradually move from the dependence on the teacher´s translation to an independent production of sentences without the stage of translation (Richards, Rogers 1991: 64-87).

Curran´s view of using mother tongue and only repeating the teacher´s translation is rather unusual. I think that his aim was to encourage students to fully express their opinions. Restricted language knowledge limits our way of speaking and after several unsuccessful attempts students can give up and prefer to be silent rather than to express their thoughts partly and inaccurately. This respect for students´ opinions and the effort to enable them to speak and work freely and without the feeling of being mocked is very similar to the ethical code supporting the method of project work.

1.8 Suggestopedia

Developed by a Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov, this method is based on a psychological research which says that students use only a minimal amount of their mental potential to learn. This is a consequence of their fears and psychological barriers which they had created during their learning experience. Lozanov tried to prepare his students for learning by making them relaxed. In his classes he used dim light and Baroque music as a background for the learning

process. He encouraged his students to act as childishly as possible and believed this would help them to learn and remember much more information than by using traditional methods (Richards, Rogers 1991: 142-154).

Suggestopedia as well as project work emphasizes relaxed atmosphere because stress and fear limit productive work and effective learning to a great extent.

1.9 Communicative Approach (CLT)

This broad view of foreign language teaching can be perceived as an umbrella term that covers various aspects of the approaches mentioned above. It came to prominence during the 80s and emphasises fluency rather than accuracy, lifelong learning rather than specific classroom tasks and partnership rather than traditional teacher-learner relationship. It does not prescribe any specific forms of teaching or types of activities. The only demand is that all four language skills are practiced in a communicative way and students should feel that the language they are learning is useful for them (Richards, Rogers 1991: 113-128).

It also prefers cooperation of pairs or groups to competition of individuals (Nunan 1988: 24). This approach shares a lot with the idea of project work where cooperation is one of the basic principles and values such as partnership or lifelong learning are supported. Projects are usually based on an active communication therefore CLT is closely connected to project work.

1.10 Natural Approach

This method was developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell in the 80s. It shares some features with TPR (advocating a "silent phase" which should be followed by a spontaneous oral production) as well as with Direct Method (teacher uses the target language communicatively from the very beginning). Communicative activities such as group work, dialogues or role-plays are used (Richards, Rogers 1991: 128-142).

The advantage of this method definitely lies within the use of communicative strategies such as group work or role-play. These are considered progressive nowadays. Frazier (1976: 181) says that "nothing could be more

injurious to the future of informal education than the notion that group experiences have little place in children´s schooling." Quite on the contrary, both pair work and group work are highly appreciated approaches in today´s education and are very often used in project work.

2 PROJECT WORK

2.1 Towards a definition

There are various definitions of project work. Legutke and Thomas (1993: 160) define project work as "a theme and task-centred mode of teaching and learning which results from a joint process of negotiation between all participants. It allows for a wide scope of self-determined action for both the individual and the small group of learners within a general framework of a plan which defines goals and procedures. Project learning realizes a dynamic balance between a process and a product orientation. Finally, it is experiential and holistic because it bridges dualism between body and mind, theory and practice." American theoretician of the first half of the 20th century W. H. Kilpatrick defines project work as "hearty purposeful act" (Kilpatrick in Knoll 2005: 4).

2.2 History of project work

I believe that in history many enlightened teachers used project work even though they did not call it that way. Legutke and Thomas (1993: 158) introduce project work as an American methodology beginning with the pedagogical personalities of John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick. I share the view of Michael Knoll (2005: 2) from University of Bayeruth, who found the origins of project work on the European continent.

Knoll (2005: 2-6) divides the history of project work into five stages:

- 1590-1765: The beginnings of project work at architectural schools in Europe.
- 1765-1880: The project as a regular teaching method and its transplantation to America.
- 1880-1915: Work on projects in manual training and in general public schools.
- 1915-1965: Redefinition of the project method and its transplantation back to Europe.

- 1965-today: Rediscovery of the project idea and the third wave of its international dissemination.

In 1577 an architectural academy in Rome was founded under the patronage of Pope Gregory XIII. The teachers gave their students specific assignments such as designing churches, monuments or palaces. There were deadlines and also a jury to be convinced about the project. These academic and fictional competitions imitated real-life architectural competitions. They were called "progetti" and enabled the students to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice.

By the end of the 18th century projects became a part of the engineering education. At this stage the method was transplanted into the United States. Students were asked to design their own machines and construct them according to their own design. In the second half of the 19th century Prof. Robinson of Mechanical Engineering at the Illinois Industrial University at Urbana declared for the first time that using project method does not only contribute to the development of practical and professional skills of his students but also to their development as democratic citizens because they experience the equality of men and dignity of labour in practice (Knoll 2005: 2-3).

In 1910 Rufus W. Stimson popularized the project method through so called "home project plan". Children were taught theoretical knowledge at school (e.g. about planting and growing vegetables) and their project was to grow vegetables at home. Thousands of Stimson´s pamphlets describing his theory were distributed among teachers of academic subjects. Stimson significantly contributed to the popularization of project work. It was perceived as a means of progressive education (Knoll 2005: 4).

In 1916 an American philosopher of education John Dewey (1859-1952) wrote an essay "Democracy and Education" where he stressed the role of experience and problem solving. Dewey (1940: 6) says that "the school must represent present life – life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in his home, in the neighbourhood or on the playground." Dewey´s ideas were developed by William Heard Kilpatrick (1871-1965) in his essay "The Project Method" in 1918. Their contribution is seen as the beginning of the modern use of project work. Though forgotten for a few decades, project work flourishes again

since the 60s in Western countries (Knoll 2005: 6) and it has been explored and used in post-communistic countries since the 90s as well.

2.3 Characteristics of project learning

Tom Hutchinson (1992), a great promoter of project work, emphasizes four aspects of learning in projects:

- **Hard work**

    "Each project is a result of a lot of hard work. The authors of the projects have found information about their topic, (...) and put all the parts together to form a coherent presentation. Project work is not a soft option."

- **Creative**

    Projects are creative in two aspects: content and language. The teacher shall see each project as a "unique piece of communication".

- **Personal**

    The aspect of creativity makes the project very personal. The teacher should not forget that his students invested a lot of themselves into their work.

- **Adaptable**

    Project work can be used with all ages at every level of language. The choice of activities is not limited and each topic can be adapted for the specific purposes of a particular group of learners.

(Hutchinson 1992: 10)

Michael Legutke and Howard Thomas describe the characteristics of project work with respect to modern educational systems that demand from the teachers to integrate traditional subjects as much as possible. They point out that:

- Themes and tasks for projects derive from real-life demands rather than from prescribed curricular items which are often presented as isolated pieces of scientific knowledge (Frey in Legutke, Thomas 1993: 158).

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- Good idea does not make a good project. The learning process takes place only when the learners get involved with the topic, carry out experiments, various activities and discussions and reflect their work at the end.
- Project learning involves detailed planning, determining problem areas, sub-tasks and hypotheses, predicting the outcomes, however, its direction and concrete steps of realization can change during the process as a reaction to new circumstances or changing interests of the learners.
- Project learning is investigative in its nature.
- It is learner-centred. Students can choose the topic and also discover their strengths and talents for specific tasks.
- There is a balance between the process and product. Students are motivated to create a product which has its own value.
- Project work is cross-curricular method. It combines traditional subjects together depending on the specific project task.
- Students work as democratic partners in their groups, the teacher being rather their guide than a source of all answers.

(Legutke, Thomas 1993: 158-160)

2.4 Characteristics of project teaching

Jeremy Harmer (1991: 200-205) distinguishes six general roles of a teacher: controller, assessor, organiser, prompter, participant and teacher as a resource. The teacher has to change his roles due to many factors that arise in the class. I will look at the roles from the point of usefulness for project work.

Teacher as an assessor should use especially "gentle correction" (Harmer 1991:201) during projects. He corrects mistakes that occur in students´ performance but does not insist on an immediate repetition of a correct version in order not to destroy the atmosphere of the creative work. Even more important than gentle correction is providing the students with feedback, i.e. how well they performed the task.

During the project work students organize a lot of their own learning. However, it is still the teacher who should provide good organisation of the

project and be sure that students know what to do. Otherwise a lot of time and energy is wasted. It may happen, especially during long-term projects that students will get stuck at a certain point not knowing what to do next. In such case, the teacher acts as a prompter who makes suggestions how to proceed.

Project work allows the teacher to be a participant as well. He can participate in various sub-tasks, e.g. role-plays or other communicative tasks, but he is also a natural participant of the whole project. The final role which comes into question during project work is "the teacher as a walking resource centre" (Harmer 1991:204). When an intensive group work takes place, he can walk around and provide linguistic or other kind of help.

The role of a controller as defined by Harmer is not compatible with projects. The teacher acts as a controller only when he is totally in charge of the class and decides what, when and how the students will say. This is not possible during project work where smaller groups of students work on their own.

Project work definitely presents new demands on the teacher and his teaching style. He should not feel discouraged by initial difficulties but accept that "he was no more likely to have been born a complete teacher than were all-American football player, the concert musician or the great statesman born to their respective roles. (...) Virtually all performers have achieved great heights only through study and practice" (Lancaster 1974: 339).

3 BENEFITS OF PROJECT WORK IN ELT

3.1 Motivation

"Most language teachers will agree that the motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language." (McDonough 1981:149)

Psychology distinguishes between two types of motivation. It is motivation from without and motivation from within. In the learning process both types are usually involved and combined. Still, motivation from without often prevails (Ur 1997: 276). In the course of everyday education it is easy to lose the aim of the learning process. The circle of learning and testing is never-ending. Teachers feel they do not have time enough to explain the aims and objectives of each lesson to their students. And students lack time to think about the objectives as well. They are happy to manage homework and learning for the next school day. No wonder their motivation lies without: bad mark is still seen as the worst outcome. Students often learn to avoid bad marks because of their parents and teachers. Emphasizing learning for life then sounds as an empty cliché.

Project work is often seen as a method which naturally increases the motivation of students. According to Fried-Booth (1990: 5) "recent approaches to language learning and teaching (particularly those broadly termed 'humanistic') stress the importance of cooperation among learners as a motivating factor. Such approaches (e.g. Community Language Learning) focus not only on interpersonal relationships but also on the involvement and development of the individual. (...) It is this sense of personal involvement that gives the impetus to project work. For the students, the motivation comes from within not from without. The project is theirs."

Tom Hutchinson (1992: 11) adds: "If I could give only one piece of advice to teachers it would be this: Get your learners to enjoy learning English. Positive motivation is the key to successful language learning, and project work is particularly useful as a means of generating this positive motivation." He also answers the question: *But why is project work so motivating?* Hutchinson (1992: 11) emphasizes three factors:

- Project work is personal. The students are writing about themselves, their relatives, friends, experience and wishes.
- Project work is an active process. The students are learning by doing.
- Project work enables the students to experience success. All students can contribute to a production of a valuable product.

Hutchinson´s respect for his students´ projects and products is a motivating factor as well. Be it only a simple project for young learners or beginners describing their ideal day, Hutchinson would never attempt to diminish the effort that his students put into their work. Quite on the contrary, he respects and highly appreciates everything his students produced. I am sure that this approach must encourage them to work diligently. It inherently increases the positive motivation in the class because students know that their work is taken seriously and will be appreciated.

3.2 Learning in the here and now

"A foreign language can often seem remote and unreal thing. If learners are going to become real language users, they must learn that English is not only used for talking about things British and American, but can be used to talk about their own world." (Hutchinson 1992: 12)

How many times did we ask ourselves as students: *What do I learn this for? When will I use these words?* "Often, there is a gap between the language the students are taught and the language they in fact require. It is this gap that project work can help to bridge." (Fried-Booth 1990:5)

The phrase "learning in the here and now" used by Legutke and Thomas (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 215) aptly names one of the basic features of project work which is also one of the greatest benefits of this method. Project work is a task-based methodology of teaching and the learners move through various stages of the project in order to complete the task. Whatever they learn or prepare they will use very soon. During the project the students should naturally keep in mind the goal of the project and relate their learning to this final goal. Their learning includes new language as well as developing interpersonal skills. Students know that they will have to write letters or e-mails, make telephone calls, talk to people, ask questions, be polite, etc. and that everything will happen in English. When

they prepare for these tasks in the classroom they can ask the teacher to help them with their language preparation. The basic difference (compared to traditional teaching of language skills) is that students want to learn and know these specific phrases because they know they will have to use them correctly in order to complete their task.

Often one part of a project is realized outside the classroom. This may include interviews with native speakers or tourists, visits to various institutions where English is spoken, etc. Teachers usually tend to consider this phase the highlight event where the "learning in the here and now" takes place. Legutke and Thomas (1993: 215-217) argue that "learning in the here and now" manifests itself cyclically in all types of projects, including those carried out solely in the classroom. Students have to activate the relevant language knowledge and combine it with other skills, they have to be selective and decide which piece of collected information is interesting and should be used in the final product and which can be omitted. All of this is done in a creative way and makes the learning process "in the here and now" authentic. Diana Fried-Booth (1990: 3) speaks about four types of authenticity in every project work. It is:

- Authenticity of language input
- Authenticity of task
- Authenticity of event
- Authenticity of learner experience

3.3 Group work and cooperation

Some projects can be carried out individually but usually projects are realized through group work. According to Petty (1996: 175) group work is attractive and enjoyable for students but at the same time it has a great didactic potential.

Group work "contributes to a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class" (Ur 1997: 232). This sounds simply but I think that promoting cooperation is an important issue to be discussed and applied at our schools. Frazier´s (1976: 174) view is that "in the past, when the group was the base for most teaching, there may have been less need to be concerned about organizing group experiences for children. Now, however, with the learner more often on his own,

we recognize that the values of group experiences must be newly understood and assessed."

In traditional lessons the spirit of competition and individualism is prevailing. Today the ability to cooperate and to help is becoming an important and essential part of education. Ur (1997: 279) points out that competition can be motivating and helpful as well. However, a competition of groups is more relaxed and enjoyable than a competition of individuals; for some students such experience might be highly stressful.

For the interpersonal and social skills to be trained successfully, psychology puts emphasis on the emotional climate of the class which is connected with group dynamics. "By emotional climate is meant the complex nature of the learning atmosphere in the classroom, which is created by the teacher and the pupils and through which the teaching/learning operates. The question of emotional climate is closely related to that of group cohesion. This term refers to the forces (apart from the timetable!) that bind a group together and give it a unity, a dynamic, which is different from the sum of the characteristics of the individuals which comprise it. As a general rule, group cohesion is increased by successful performance of group tasks, easy communication and eye contact between the members, competition with other groups and lessened by repeated failure, disrupted channels of communication, competition within the group." (McDonough 1981: 84-85)

It is also scientifically proved that cooperation contributes to the development of self-confidence in an incomparable higher degree than individual effort (Kasíková in Koťa 1995: 113).

One of the characteristics of project work is that various skills are needed. Students can adopt specific roles which enable them to show what they are good at. Someone is good at writing and he can adopt the role of secretary. Others are good at operating computers, taking photos, speaking to people, playing musical instrument, drawing sketches, etc. (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 219-230). This division of roles naturally stimulates cooperation because students realize they need each other.

Everyone can share his abilities and knowledge without the fear that he cannot contribute to the work of the whole group. In this sense, project work is a very good way to show that there is always something why a person should be

respected and appreciated even though his performance at school may be average or low.

3.4 Learner´s autonomy and experiencing success

Project work is not only supporting group work but it is successful in developing personal skills of the individual learner as well; this includes development of self-recognition, responsibility and positive attitude to lifelong learning.

Project work very well supports the theory of Howard Gardner about Multiple Intelligences. Gardner (Gardner in Kovaliková 1995: 61-68) claims that each of us has at least seven types of intelligence. Each type is developing independently and one or two types are prevailing in our brain. It is important that the teacher gives his students the possibility to choose how to learn and proceed at school (Kovaliková 1995: 62). Project work offers this choice. Students work on the same topic but they can choose their role and decide how to work and learn. Each student can recognize his strong and weaker skills. Skills such as playing a musical instrument probably have been part of the student´s self-recognition and self-confidence before the start of the project. But I am sure that many skills are not so obvious and the student does not have to be aware of the fact that he has some talent for it. Thus he can discover that he is good at listening to other people. Though he does not have many new ideas himself, he can practically develop those suggested by his classmates. Someone will find out that he likes organizing things, making phone calls and asking for information and someone will find out that he absolutely hates organizing things and prefers to help with preparing other activities such as designing posters, booklets, taking photos, etc.

All these discoveries are very important for the development of the learner´s sense of identity and can significantly contribute to his better decision about his job and profession in the future.

Another quality developed by project work is responsibility. "...students become responsible for their own learning. They select and devise the project, with the teacher acting as a co-ordinator and 'facilitator' or consultant" (Fried-Booth 1990: 7). A positive personal experience with the learning process should be also the base for student´s natural desire to learn for the rest of his life.

Legutke and Thomas (1993: 270-271) mention several qualities of project work which contribute to the development the learner´s autonomy and his ability to learn without the constant help of his teacher:

- Students are involved in the decision-making during the project
- They learn and apply basic rules of management process
- Their direct experience with the learning process and their freedom to influence this process provides them with a better understanding of themselves and the significance of lifelong learning

However, everything what has been said so far about personal development presumes that all students will be enthusiastic and active in the project work. This does not have to be the case and probably will not be the case as no student comes to school as tabula rasa but quite on the contrary equipped with many problems, fears and expectations arising from his life outside the school. A sensitive teacher is then needed who can help the student to find his role and make him feel successful. Project work is dealing with tasks connected with real life and students should therefore gain a strong belief that they are able to cope successfully with the requirements of the project and will be able to cope with the demands of the real life as well. For this reason I think it is sensible to follow advice of Tom Hutchinson who suggests that teachers should start with simple projects and gradually continue to try long-term and more difficult projects (Hutchinson 1992:18). It is not only the learner who learns during the project but also the teacher who has to learn to appreciate the project work and manage possible difficulties in order to enable the students to experience success, not failure in the project work.

3.5 Process and product

Project work is a process-product balanced approach (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 158). The learning process focuses on a specific task, understanding the complexity of the task and dividing it into areas of sub-tasks which have to be gradually completed. These sub-tasks are connected as they arise from the nature of the whole task. The connection is based on practical needs and logical rules; it is not made up in an artificial way by the teacher (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 202).

It is usually at the very beginning of the project when also the nature of the final product is decided. This can be anything from posters, books, booklets, radio-programmes, video-clips, to dramatization of a piece of text, theatre performance, etc. The idea is that this product should serve as a tangible result of the work of the students. It is primarily useful for them to see and evaluate what they managed during the project. It is also a welcomed result to be displayed at school and used by other students, teachers or admired by parents (Haines 1989: 2; Legutke, Thomas 1993: 204-206).

Students decide with the teacher what kind of end product is appropriate for the task and keep it in mind during the whole process. In fact, they collect, store, choose all information and data for this final product (Haines 1989: 2).

According to Legutke and Thomas (1993: 206-210) there are many positive aspects of the end product.

- The end product is personal and individual. All types of end products were preceded by discussions, choices and personal involvement. The product reflects the individuality of the author.

- It serves as a means of self-evaluation. If the product is created by a group of learners, the first correction is made within the group. Sometimes final correction by the teacher is not necessary.

- Every end product is highly creative piece of work. Not only in the graphic aspect of the product, but also in the language aspect; students are playing with the language, they are using it in a creative way.

- Students keep the audience in their mind. They know that their product will serve for communicative purposes. They have to prepare an appropriate presentation using appropriate language. This includes choice of words, phrases, stylistic devices, etc.

3.6 Cross-curricular approach

In the two following chapters I will briefly touch the topic of Czech curricular reform which takes place in our country right now. In this chapter, I will relate the cross-curricular aspect of projects to the new reform and its demands. However, this brief outline does not want to provide an exhaustive analysis of the mutual relation of project work and Czech educational reform.

"Most modern school curricula require all subjects to encourage initiative, independence, imagination, self-discipline, co-operation, and the development of useful research skills. (...) Cross-curricular approaches are encouraged" (Hutchinson 1992: 14).

Czech teachers now face two basic challenges. To implement all demands set in so called FEP (Frame Educational Programmes) into their SEP (School Educational Programmes) and to prepare their students well for higher levels of education. The system is changing in progress and there are many incompatible parts at the moment (focus on skills and abilities in FEP and focus on knowledge in entrance exams for high schools and universities, new maturita exams, etc.). These contrasting demands cause many discussions and teachers justifiably feel under pressure; no wonder they sometimes prefer to teach all information needed to pass the entrance exams successfully and argue that they have no time to use cross-curricular activities in their lessons.

On the other hand, there are many teachers who welcome the change and embrace all advantages as well as difficulties which follow the reform.

What exactly means a cross-curricular approach in language teaching? According to Hutchinson (1992: 14) "...this means that students should have the opportunity to use the knowledge they gain in other subjects in the English class. Project work clearly encourages this." Švecová (2003: vi) adds that one of the benefits of cross-curricular activities is to "help learners to see relationship between the school curriculum and their real-life experiences."

The possibility to combine various subjects in project work is enormous. Very often history is used in many projects (e.g. history of my town as a part of more complex project), geography, biology (projects on endangered animals) as well as social science subjects such as psychology, politics, sociology, environmental issues, etc. My second major is Civics and I believe that I will have many possibilities to execute interdisciplinary projects during my teaching career.

3.7 Project work and key competences

Czech curricular reform has introduced the term "competence" as a sum of knowledge, abilities, skills, values and attitudes important for personal development. The purpose and aim of our education is to equip all learners with

these key competences. FEP has introduced six key competences for elementary education which, with some changes, are valid for secondary education too. These competences are an obligatory outcome of the educational process; they must be developed in all subjects taught at school and are in detail defined in the FEP for elementary education. I will briefly explore the relation between project work and the required competences of the learner. Definitions written in italics are taken from the FEP for elementary education.

3.7.1 Competence to learn

A competence to plan, organize and manage one´s own learning and willingness to continue in lifelong learning. It includes collecting and sorting out information, the ability to carry out independent observations and experiments, knowing the purpose of the learning process. Project work clearly supports all objectives of this competence. Students have to work independently or in small groups, they have to find and critically judge various kinds of information and the interconnectedness of the project with real life should make them aware of the fact that learning is an essential and necessary skill that has to be acquired in order to live a happy and successful life.

3.7.2 Competence to solve problems

The definition includes the following terms: *the learner perceives and comprehends various problem situations at school and outside the school, he is able to find and work with information and plan the solution of a problem, he can verify the results of his solutions and takes responsibility for his decisions.* Project work is sometimes called problem-solving method (Valenta 1993: 5). The task set by the teacher and his students usually presents a complex problem to be solved. If the stimulus for carrying out a project comes from the students it is clear that they are able to see problems around them and show willingness to solve them; e.g. projects dealing with various social issues: creating a tourist guide for disabled tourists in the project carried out by Diana Fried-Booth (1990: 66-69). Even if the topic of a project is introduced by the teacher, students will have to solve many partial problems to complete the task (Valenta 1993:5).

3.7.3 Competence to communicate

The learner *is able to express his thoughts and opinions in logical sequence, can listen to other people, engage himself productively in a discussion, can defend his opinions, understands various types of texts including visuals and gestures, he can work with information technologies and use them for effective communication. He uses this competence to create good relationships and establish quality cooperation.* Project work mainly consists of working in small groups where the members have to discuss matters connected both with the process and the product of the project. They have to be able to present their opinions as well as respect the opinion of the majority. Project work also includes a final presentation where more formal communicative skills have to be performed.

3.7.4 Social and personal competence

This competence covers many aspects of personal development of the learner. Among others it explicitly emphasizes group work. *The learner effectively cooperates in a group, participates on setting rules for team work, asks for help or can help others. He participates on creating a friendly atmosphere in the team and respects other members of the group. He creates a positive self-recognition which supports his self-confidence and personal development.* In the project work students feel respected and their work is appreciated by their teacher. They learn to respect and appreciate their friends for qualities which sometimes cannot be revealed in traditional classes but can naturally open up during the project. Finally, students can also gain respect for themselves as they can find a role which meets their talents.

3.7.5 Civic competence

The learner respects opinions of other people, he appreciates their inner values, he refuses repression and rude behaviour, he is aware of his legal rights and duties. He respects and protects our traditions, cultural and historical heritage and understands the basic environmental issues. This competence is closely connected with the subject of Civics. To support the development of civic competence in language learning many projects based on students´ knowledge

from Civics can be carried out. These may for example include our integration into the EU (e.g. exploring the possibilities to study or work), various intercultural and multicultural projects focusing on developing tolerance and appreciation of our own culture or foreign traditions.

3.7.6 Competence to work

The learner uses effectively and safely various materials and tools, keeps set rules, can adapt to changed or completely new working conditions. He can see the results of his working activity not only in the context of quality, practicality and economy, but also in the context of protection of his own health and the health of others, protection of the environment as well as cultural and social values. He understands the basic activities which are necessary for realization of business plan and he develops his business thinking. This competence can be easily developed in practical subjects dealing with manual and working activities but it is more difficult to employ it in the syllabus of so called "humanistic" subjects such as foreign language teaching or Civics. The solution may be in using project work. Project work does not only develop cognitive and affective skills but also psycho-motoric skills such as working with tools and machines, operating computers, dancing, etc. If the objective of the project is some kind of operation with money (selling products, raising money, using money for specific purposes) students develop their business thinking as well.

4   POSSIBLE PROBLEMS OF PROJECT WORK

Every teacher wants to minimize possible problems and sources of stress in his work. It is obvious that if a certain approach brings him more wrinkles than smiles, sooner or later he will drop it in favour of some other approach which seems to be not so demanding. As Legutke and Thomas (1993: 203) say there is still not enough relevant data for a greater research which would make all aspects of project work clear and accessible and which would enable a detailed teaching of project work at teaching faculties.

Tom Hutchinson (1992:16-17) discusses some of the possible problems with project work.

4.1   Noise

Many teachers expect the project work to be a very noisy activity. Hutchinson argues that what the teachers are mostly afraid of is not the amount of noise but the lack of their control over the noise. He suggests that this is also part of the learning process. Students are responsible for their work and therefore they are also responsible for their learning environment. Teacher should teach them to work quietly and sensibly and students should accept it as their own responsibility.

4.2   Time

"When choosing to do project work you are making a philosophical choice in favour of the *quality* of the learning experience over the *quantity*. It is unfortunate that language teaching has tended to put most emphasis on quantity, i.e. as much practice as possible of each language item. And yet there is little evidence that quantity is really the crucial factor. If it were, all of our students would leave school speaking English extremely well." (Hutchinson 1992:16)

If there really is lack of time, Hutchinson suggests assigning little projects to be done individually at home. According to Hutchinson students gladly spend a

lot of time doing their project at home. In my opinion, the teacher should give them a longer period of time to carry out the project because many students are engaged in various activities outside school.

4.3 Use of the mother tongue

Teachers are afraid that when they leave their students to work on their own they will immediately switch from English to Czech. Especially in the group work when the teacher cannot control all at once. Hutchinson agrees that most of the students will spend a lot of time speaking in their mother tongue. He suggests taking it positively. Students are working on a product which will be in English therefore using the mother tongue is only a means to use English at last. Sometimes the use of mother tongue is necessary and desirable (e.g. making interviews with people in mother tongue and writing about the results in English) and can lead to a realistic translation work done by the students.

4.4 Mixed ability class

Not all students are on the same level in English. Are they going to be lost during the project unable to cope? Hutchinson argues that in traditional lessons very often the brighter students "steal" the teacher´s attention and time for themselves because they are self-confident, more active and faster in answering teacher´s questions. In project work these students can work independently, occasionally asking the teacher to supervise or help; meanwhile the teacher can devote his time to those who need it most, to slower or less confident students.

4.5 Monitoring

Fried-Booth (1990: 39-45) includes also monitoring. Especially with longer projects the teacher needs a reliable feedback in terms of language learning. He has to find out if any learning is actually taking place. Fried-Booth suggests using weekly reviews - a kind of questionnaires including questions such as:

- *What new vocabulary have you learnt this week?*

- *Which of these new words can you use with confidence?*
- *Which of these words do you feel unsure about?*
- *What can you say/do this week that you couldn´t say/do last week?*

4.6 Personality and motivation problems

During the long-term projects the initial motivation can decrease and personal problems between the students can occur. Fried-Booth (1990: 39-45) suggests various solutions:

- Discussion: the teacher should intervene and talk with students about the possible roots of problems and how to solve them.
- Doing something different: this may range from one day off the project to a longer period of time not working on the project.
- Inviting other staff and students: they can listen to interim results; this often helps as new stimulus for next work and motivation for the project.
- Winding up the project: if things turn out extremely badly, it is possible to end the project without achieving the final goal; the teacher should nevertheless try to end it on a positive note and focus on all items that had been learnt.

5 TYPES OF PROJECTS

I will introduce three basic categories. The first is based on the main activity which is executed by students during the project. The second divides projects according to their length and the third category focuses on the age of the learners. I will enlist concrete ideas for projects which are appropriate for the particular category.

5.1 According to the main activity

Legutke and Thomas (1993: 160-166) distinguish three basic types of projects which can be used in foreign language teaching. These are:

5.1.1 Encounter projects

These projects always involve an encounter with native speakers. The most important part of it is face-to-face communication between students and native speakers.

There are two main types. The first type takes place in L1 environment. Such project would be realized here in the Czech Republic. Examples include:

- Students making interviews on bus or railway stations with English speaking tourists coming to their town.
- Students find a target language community and invite their representatives to their classroom. This can be easily done in bigger, multicultural cities (e.g. finding an English speaking business man, artist, teacher who works and lives in our town and is willing to share his life story with us).

The second type is carried out in L2 environment (usually a part of an intensive language course in English speaking country). Such projects may involve visits, excursions and trips to places where students are exposed to communicative use of the target language. Many of the books about theory and practice of project work focus on this type of projects.

5.1.2 Text projects

These projects also include encounters. However, they are not direct face-to-face encounters with people but with various texts written by native speakers. There is a wide range of choice: literature, news media, audio-visual programmes, text-books, magazines. These texts provide authentic language input. Examples include:

- Learners organize their own learning on the basis of a great variety of texts (magazines, newspapers, children´s books, songs, films, poems, textbooks, etc.)
- Project is based on analysis and work with literary texts and feature films (e.g. dramatization of Little Red Ridinghood, novel and film The Great Gatsby, etc.)

5.1.3 Class correspondence projects

Class correspondence projects are part of international exchange programmes. Most of the communication is carried out through correspondence which can include (apart from classical letters) also video and audio recordings, photos or collages. Students from both schools are encouraged to use as many creative activities as possible to mediate their culture and their everyday life to their partners abroad (e.g. sending a selection of one week junk mail delivered by post).

Simon Haines (1989: 1) divides projects into four main categories:

5.1.4 Information and research projects

These projects are based on working with collected information and data. Though it is important that the students look up much of the information the teacher should provide them with some basic reference materials.

5.1.5 Survey projects

In these projects students plan and execute an investigation (e.g. the extent to which people of their town speak English). The planning as well as the processing of data and final evaluation takes place in the classroom.

5.1.6 Production projects

The aim is to produce a special final product (e.g. newspapers, radio-programme, guide, etc.).

5.1.7 Performance and organisational projects

As the name suggests, the students either prepare an event or the final product is presented in a form of performance. Examples include organising a British evening, putting on a Talent Show or playing theatre.

5.2 According to length

5.2.1 Bridging strategies

Diana Fried-Booth (1990: 13-15) suggests that teachers should start with easy, short-term projects which she calls "bridging strategies". These communicative activities should be introduced in classes without previous experience with project work. Through bridging strategies the students should gradually learn to take responsibility for their learning process. The time spent on such activities may differ according to the intentions of a teacher and interest of the students. Some may last only one lesson (e.g. Newspaper front page) whereas others need a survey to be done and therefore more time to be spent on the project (e.g. Staff portrait gallery). Other activities suggested by Booth (1990: 16-27) include:

- How do you make an English apple tart?
- Pocket-money survey
- Tourist broadsheets

5.2.2 Medium-length projects

Based on Haines´ examples (Haines 1989: 15-39) these projects last approximately between 4 to 18 hours. It is the teacher´s choice if the project will be done intensively (i.e. in all successive classes of English) or e.g. only one lesson per week will be devoted to the project (Haines 1989: 6).

Most of the projects mentioned in this chapter belong (or can belong) to this group. I will not include a list of examples as it would be an unnecessary

repetition. Teachers should also keep in mind that the timing of most projects can be adapted and changed for each group of learners and needs of the teacher.

5.2.3 Long-term projects

Long-term project is the highest level of project work that can be achieved. It should be carried out with classes that are already used to project activities. These projects are often based on an extensive preparation of the teacher. The acceptance of the project by students is necessary and crucial (Booth 1990: 72). Long-term projects are not only demanding in terms of preparation but also for various problems which might occur during the work (e.g. motivation or personal problems mentioned in the respective chapter). A good example is a project suggested by Booth (1990: 71-73) which is called "Hospital and spastic unit" lasting over 12 weeks. The objective of this project is to involve students into the community of a hospital through volunteer work. They will keep diaries on their experience in the hospital as well as on their language development. The personal commitment to the task has to be very high as it will take a lot of time to complete the task which takes place mostly outside the classroom.

However, I am convinced that the pedagogical and ethical aspects of such projects are immense because they support and develop very important values and attitudes in practice.

5.3 According to the age of learners

I will mention a short characteristic of projects for young learners, teenagers and adults and provide this description with several examples of executed projects. I hope that this overview can help in a quick orientation and further inspiration about various possibilities which project work might offer.

5.3.1 Young learners and language beginners

The first group consists mainly of young learners, i.e. learners between six and twelve years of age. I decided to include the category of language beginners as well because projects for young learners usually consist of simple use of language. This may be appropriate and motivating for older students of language

too. However, I presume that teenagers or adults who begin with a new foreign language will use these simple projects only at the very beginning of their learning and will proceed to more complex projects as soon as their language abilities allow it.

These projects typically include areas related to the learner himself, his family and his closest surroundings. Ur (1997: 288) points out three sources that support motivation of children to learn: pictures, stories and games. Hutchinson (1992: 19) suggests that each learner sets up his Project Book and sticks and writes his projects into this book. Examples and suggestions for concrete projects:

- My Ideal Day
- Our Town
- My Family
- My House
- My Timetable
- Letter to a Penfriend
- My Favourite Pop Group

For a detailed description of these projects see *Introduction to Project Work* (1992) by Tom Hutchinson.

5.3.2 Teenagers

Teenagers change constantly both in the physical and psychical aspect. They are very sensitive and take everything personally, therefore teachers should be especially careful not to offend anyone or make him feel ashamed. This may be more difficult than it seems to be. Ur (1997: 290) adds that teenagers are perhaps "the most daunting challenge" for inexperienced teachers. It may be difficult to motivate and manage a class of teenagers.

Ur (1997: 290) suggests that teachers should study books on developmental psychology. The abstract thinking of teenagers is developing and they are able to think and talk about issues of social or global importance. At the beginning of the teenage age many of the projects mentioned in the previous part can still be used. Projects for the end of this age period can be used with adults too.

All the following examples can be found in *Introduction to Project Work* (1992) by Tom Hutchinson except for the last project "Staff Portrait Gallery" which is described in *Project Work* by Diana Fried Booth (1990: 21-23).

- The Earth
- My Horror Family
- Animals in Danger
- Pollution
- Our Language
- Your Restaurant
- Staff Portrait Gallery

5.3.3 Adults

With adults very complex projects can be carried out. The teacher can expect that he deals with mature personalities who think about reasons and interconnections of problems. He can also expect that adults are interested in the improvement of their world and are interested in helping others, being involved in charity and voluntary work.

Projects prepared for adult learners are based on cooperation, discussion, negotiation and sharing opinions. The communicative teaching approach can be fully developed with these speakers. The projects usually benefit from life experience of the students and very often also from the multicultural aspect of the class. For details of the following projects consult Booth (1990: 61-73).

- Third World Display
- Good Wheelchair Guide
- Primary School Teaching
- Hospital and Spastic Unit

6   STAGES OF A PROJECT

Each project is unique because each learner or group of learners is different. Projects can be changed and adapted for specific purposes. However, each project should go through certain stages and development.

6.1 Opening

This first stage suggested by Legutke and Thomas (1993: 171) should include the following aims:

- To develop positive group dynamics
- To introduce learners to communicative approach
- To introduce textual data for research activities

Opening stage includes also restricted language input by the teacher who teaches especially those language items which the students need for completion of the task.

Diana Fried-Booth (1990: 9-10) includes three main areas of the opening stage. These are:

- Stimulus: this is the initial discussion about idea of the project, it mainly includes the skills of speaking and listening
- Definition of the project objective: the results of further negotiations, defining e.g. the final product of the project. The skills practised most are speaking, listening, note-taking.
- Practice of language skills: especially the language students will need for the project. May involve any of the language skills.

6.2 Topic orientation

The governing principle of this stage is called "output before input" and can be executed e.g. through invitation of a guest speaker who can tell more about the topic and thus increase the learners´ motivation, very popular is also the method of creating a collage which allows students to present their impressionistic view of the topic (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 172-173).

6.3 Research and data collection

This is often the longest stage of a project. It involves preparation for the research and its execution. The aims of this stage include:

- Defining the nature and extent of project tasks
- Learning how to carry out research, means of investigation and recording, how to research textual data
- Completing the target task

(Legutke, Thomas 1993: 174)

Fried-Booth (1990: 10) divides this stage into two parts:

- Design of written materials: including preparation of questionnaires, maps, tables, etc. At this stage, reading and writing will be practised most.
- Group activities: the execution of the research itself. Students can work individually, in pairs or in groups, outside or inside the classroom.

6.4 Preparation of data presentation

After the research students are asked to work with the information they had gathered and process the data in order to create the final product or presentation. Sometimes students are losing interest to proceed with their project as they perceived the research an exciting experience and do not want to start working in the classroom again. Therefore at this stage the teacher has to remotivate the students toward completion of the end product (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 178).

Fried-Booth (1990: 10) distinguishes two basic tasks of this stage:

- Collating information: speaking and discussions are most important parts of this stage as students have to present and explain the collected data to other members of the group.
- Organization of materials: creating the end product. Though many skills are practised naturally during this phase, the prevailing skill is writing.

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6.5 Presentation

The final presentation differs with respect to the project, product and the audience. Mostly it involves presenting information to live audience using the appropriate media, directing the event of the presentation and interacting with the audience (Legutke, Thomas 1993:179).

Presentations can be aimed at other groups of the same class or at external audience (e.g. other classes at school, parents or audience outside school). The presentation is oral but presenters use a wide range of visual materials as an aid and support for their oral performance. Fried-Booth (1990: 10) adds that the main skill practised will be of course speaking.

Though the time devoted to the presentation is short in comparison to time devoted to other stages, this stage is very important for the students because it is another experience which will be useful for their future life. Very often each group has only a limited time to perform their presentation but their preparation was much longer and conducted for these several minutes of presentation. It is a good exercise not only in speaking the language but also in rhetoric, overcoming stress and stage fright and finally experiencing the success and recognition of other classmates.

6.6 Evaluation

The final stage of each project is the evaluation. Students can either evaluate their performance or the project as such which is a useful feedback for the teacher. Usually a whole-class discussion is held at the end of the project and often a written evaluation is issued either in a form of a questionnaires or a report written by students (Haines 1989: 8-10).

Fried-Booth (1990: 40-44) suggests regular weekly reviews during the project.

The final and full evaluation should include these points:

- Topic understanding
- Group and teacher interaction
- Procedural organization
- Input materials

- Language gains and deficits
- Examples of learner work
- Possible by-products, e.g. changes in learners´ intercultural awareness

(Legutke, Thomas 1993: 180)

Evaluation should always take place at the end of each project. It allows both the students and the teacher to once again think over the benefits of the project work. The teacher can also critically evaluate his teaching work and take lessons for his next professional development.

II. PRACTICAL PART

7 EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

7.1 Choice of a school

I decided to carry out the project with high-school students because teaching at secondary schools is my major qualification. I prepared a short description of the project and presented it to Mgr. Hana Richterová, the headmaster of an 8-year secondary school in Šlapanice u Brna where I wanted to realize the project. Together with one teacher of English we decided which grade would benefit most of the suggested project and the final decision was the seventh class, septima. We also discussed the possible number of lessons I can spend with the students and we agreed on five successive English lessons which was the planned timing of the project.

7.2 Characteristics of the project

The project integrates the English language with selected topics from Civics (from the field of psychology).

The project is designed for five English lessons. It is a full, medium-length project which according to Haines (1989:1) can be classified as a combination of *Information and research project* and *Production project* because students will work with collected data and they will produce a photo-story as a part of the final poster. The photo-story will be based on the topic of the project, however, students will have freedom to adapt it creatively.

The project includes all main stages. The opening stage (Legutke, Thomas 1993:171) includes restricted language input by the teacher, in case of this project it was primarily a vocabulary input; it also includes a stimulus phase in the form of discussion and communicative activities. The opening lasted one lesson. I gave the students a short questionnaire as a basis of my research hypothesis (Appendix No. 2).

The next part of a typical project is research and data collection (Fried-Booth 1990: 10). This was planned for two lessons when the groups discussed their collected materials and created their photo-story.

The third part consisted of a preparation of the data presentation (Legutke, Thomas 1993:178); it lasted one lesson and students had to organize their materials on their final poster.

Last two stages of presentation and evaluation were planned for one lesson as well. Each group had 5-7 minutes for their presentation. The rest of the lesson (approx. 20 minutes) was devoted to a final evaluation of the project and filling in a second questionnaire of my research hypothesis (Appendix No. 3).

7.3 Choice of a topic

I had in mind two basic things. First, I am going to work with students who are approximately 18 years old. Second, in one year they are going to pass their entrance exams to universities and also their maturita exam. Though it is not possible to predict confidently that a particular project will be successful in a particular class (Haines 1989: 5) I tried to come up with a topic which would allow students to talk about themselves or what is closest to them thus making it easier to get involved in the project (Haycraft 1986: 7). I knew from my teaching practice in Civics that teenagers are interested in self-knowledge based on psychology. They like to discover new things about themselves and learn from psychological techniques. The choice of the topic is also based on the fact that students see stress as a major factor in the challenge of passing the examinations (Mechanic 1978: 118). In his research with university students Mechanic (1978: 119) found out that "many students believed that if they could defend and maintain their anxiety at some comfortable level, they would be adequate in their performance." Students further stated that the major factor in reducing anxiety is working on examination preparation, i.e. effective learning (Mechanic 1978: 119). I decided to connect all these aspects together. The final outcome was the project "Train Your Brain". The title suggests that students will train the brain partly through the activities of the project and partly through learning new tips and advice given by other groups.

In one sentence the project can be described as "how to lead a healthy life, overcome stress and study effectively".

Students will work in three groups. Each group will work on one of the following topics: stress and relaxation, healthy lifestyle or effective learning.

I believed that students would find these topics interesting and personal because:

- they often experience stress at school
- at their school they have to work very hard
- a few notes and new ideas about how to learn more effectively might help them a lot in their near future
- no subjects at school usually have time to deal with relaxation or meditation techniques and a healthy lifestyle in general

7.4 Final product

The final product will be a poster which will be presented in the last lesson. Because I wanted to emphasize to my students that the final product has its own value (Legutke, Thomas 1993: 158) I pointed out that the poster should be designed as practical help and advice for other students of their class and school. My students were encouraged to make it attractive so that they would like to read it themselves.

I wanted to include motoric skills into the project (apart from necessary writing, drawing, cutting, etc.). Therefore I chose an activity which can be easily modified and creatively adapted by students – a photo-story connected to the topic (Philips 2003: 88-90). The photo-story combines two main aspects: to integrate "expressive movement" (Frazier 1976: 184) and drama elements into the project and to use the activity as a support of group cooperation and dynamics because "renewed interest in movement education is a good example that some activities are group centred by their very nature" (Frazier 1976: 184). Students will receive only basic instructions about creating the photo-story (it should comply with the requirement of practicality of the final product); in other respects their creativity is not limited.

The photo-story together with the information and texts chosen and prepared by students will make the final poster.

7.5 Characteristics of the class

There are 28 students in septima. Their age varies from 17 to 19 years. They have known each other for seven years and generally have very good relationships. For the purposes of their language classes they are divided into two groups that do not change over the years. Both groups are approximately on the same intermediate level. They use the same books and have the same teacher. I did not know the students personally before the project. Their English teacher perceives one group (in my project referred to as Class A) to be more active, communicative and easily motivated whereas the second group (Class B) appears to him to be a little more passive and slower. I had the opportunity to carry out the project with both groups independently.

The atmosphere of the class is friendly and active. Students are lively, sometimes noisy. They are used to working hard at school. At the back of the classroom there is a big notice board with many photos from their collective events and experience. This strengthens the feeling that after being seven years together they are close to each other.

As far as projects at school are concerned students have carried out some projects, however, it was generally in their lower grades. According to their English teacher they should be used to working in groups without a constant control.

7.6 Research hypothesis

In my research I want to prove a hypothesis that in project work students can use their talents, skills and different intelligences more than in traditional lessons and that project work improves communicative skills and interpersonal communication among the participants. Personal communication increases positive climate of the group/class and consequently influences also the efficiency of the co-operative work.

The communication during projects also requires from the participants expressing their opinions, advocating their ideas and listening to others at the same time. In project work students can test their communicative abilities, their ability to persuade others, to explain their idea and support it by good arguments.

Small groups of classmates create social units where rules of the communication and interaction are the same as rules in real life communication (e.g. colleagues at work). The hypothesis assumes that project work enables students to express their ideas and explain their attitudes in a natural and authentic way.

I will use a questionnaire with evaluation scales (0 - 10) as a research method. Students will answer the same five questions twice; before the beginning of the project (Appendix No. 2) and after the project (Appendix No. 3). Questions are written in Czech to avoid possible misunderstandings. Their English version is as follows:

- I think that I communicate sufficiently with my classmates in English lessons.
- In English lessons I have an opportunity and I feel like expressing my opinion and attitudes to issues that I am interested in.
- In a usual English lesson I learn about my classmates information not connected with the lesson (e.g. their mood, how they feel today).
- I often experience satisfaction that I can use my skills in English lessons.
- Frequently the teacher deals with a theme that is topical and useful for me.

The second questionnaire is related to the experience with the project therefore all questions in Questionnaire 2 begin with "During the project".

8 REALIZATION OF THE PROJECT "TRAIN YOUR BRAIN"

8.1 Objectives of the project

The objectives of the project include cognitive skills (knowledge of new facts, vocabulary and language), affective skills (taking stands, expressing opinions, personalization of the topic) and motoric skills (cutting, drawing, writing acting, taking photos) as well as required skills of several key competences (e.g. competence to communicate, to learn, to work). During the project students should acquire or deepen the following skills:

Students:

- can look up information on a certain topic on their own
- can read authentic English texts on a specific topic
- can work with information: rewrite or simplify texts, make notes
- work and cooperate in their group
- express their thoughts, ideas and opinions
- listen to each other
- respect opinions of others
- take the responsibility for a successful completion of the task
- work independently without their teacher´s control
- learn and understand specific vocabulary connected to their topic
- are able to use language appropriate for the purpose (e.g. explaining a problem, giving advice, agreeing/disagreeing, making suggestions)
- discuss all organizational matters mainly in English
- design an attractive poster showing the results of their work
- create a product that can be used by other students at school
- can write a short script
- can operate a digital camera and computer
- creatively grasp a general task of making a photo-story
- use their drama talent, gestures, expressions to make their photos

- sort out important and unimportant outcomes of their work
- are involved in the decision-making of the group
- present their work to the audience
- use appropriate language during the oral presentation
- evaluate their own progress

8.2 Lesson one: Introduction to the project

Objectives

introduction to the project, motivation activities, extension of specific vocabulary, groupings, defining the final product

Vocabulary and phrases

stress, be/feel stressed, stressful, stressor, suffer from stress, to avoid sth, to cope with sth, physical, mental, to relax, relaxation, meditation, learning styles: verbal, visual, active/kinesthetic, frequent headaches, lack of time, key words, be involved in sth, to cause sth

Materials

handout "Train Your Brain" (Appendix No. 1), Questionnaire 1 (Appendix No. 2), blank poster to show the size, samples of projects done, cards with project topics

Classroom interaction

 pair work, group work, whole class discussions

Lesson plan

Introduction (5 min)
- introducing myself
- introducing our project + final product
- write a timetable of the project on the blackboard
- show samples of projects
- name tags (important for the teacher not for the students)
- space for first discussion: questions, suggestions, objections or ideas

Hypothesis (5 min)

explain the aim of the questionnaire, instructions

Lead-in activities

- working on the handout "Train Your Brain"

- the whole class gets familiarized with all three topics of the project

1. <u>Stress and relaxation</u> (8 min)

Students answer ten questions about their experience with stress. Discussion in pairs: *What causes stress to students? What causes stress to you? Write down a list of stressors.*

<u>Feedback:</u>

teacher asks one member of the pair to read their list and writes all items on the blackboard under the heading "STRESSORS" Other pairs will add only items which have not been mentioned yet. Short discussion about the results.

2. <u>Healthy lifestyle</u> (5 min)

Students should label their "cake of joy" with at least four factors that bring joy and happiness to their life. Discussion in pairs: *Which of them is the most important factor for you and why?*

<u>Feedback</u>

Teacher draws a big circle ("the cake of joy") on the blackboard. Each student will write into it the most important joy factor of his partner. Teacher will ask a few students to explain why this particular factor is the most important for their friend. Class discussion: *What is a healthy lifestyle? To do things we like? To do healthy things? What do you include to your healthy lifestyle?*

3. <u>Effective learning</u> (7 min)

<u>Imagination types</u> (not included in the handout)

This exercise is taken from lectures on psychology. The teacher draws a big face on the blackboard with three lines beginning in one eye of the face. One line is pointing up, one is horizontal and the last one is pointing down. Teacher asks all students to draw a similar face on a piece of paper. Each student has to ask his partner one question which should recall an image or a memory (e.g. *What colour was the T-shirt you were wearing yesterday? What did you have for dinner*

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yesterday? Where did you learn to ski?) They should observe their partner´s eyes very carefully when he recalls the situation. They should note down the direction of their partner´s eyes before he finds the answer. The teacher then reveals the solution. Those who looked upwards should have a visual type of imagination and they belong to the visual learning style. Those who looked directly to the side belong to the verbal (auditory) learning style. The last group who looked down belongs to the active/kinesthetic learning type.

Students should now read the definition of their learning style in the handout and say if the test was true.

Feedback

Teacher asks students if the eye-test was correct. Questions: *Do you agree with the results of the test? Do you think this is really your learning style?*

Dividing into groups

Teacher asks students to divide into three groups they usually work in. Each group chooses a piece of paper with their project topic written on it.

Group work on the project topic (15 min)

Each group receives two sample materials that are connected to their topic for inspiration. They have the rest of the lesson to brainstorm all ideas which relate to their topic. They can discuss what type of information is each of them going to look up during the weekend.

Ending of the lesson

 - homework: look up information that relates to your topic and you are interested in it

- bring new materials to the next lesson

Realization of the lesson

There were only nine people in Class A and twelve people in Class B. My supervising teacher introduced me at the beginning of each lesson. During the first five minutes I explained the basics of the project in Czech. I wanted everybody to understand well. Then I switched to English and students as well. Their teacher

requires speaking in English during his lessons so they are used to discussing things in English.

A very lively discussion on their stress at school opened up naturally during the first exercise. They stated various things as their stressors: school in general, tests that are not announced in advance, more than one test during one day, particular teachers, presentations in front of the class, family problems, their future job. They were willing to share their problems with me; it was a very nice and motivating beginning of the project for me.

The joy factors that appeared on the blackboard included: sun, holiday, sex, friends, hobbies, coffee, ice-cream, chocolate, music, cinema, live concerts and many others.

Students were eager to find out their learning style and after reading the definition in the handout most of them said that the test was correct.

Generally, Class A was more active during the speaking activities than Class B. In Class A one girl has many American friends and in class B one boy lived one year in the United States. Both students speak exceptionally well. I noticed that only very few students had difficulties answering my questions nevertheless the positive point was they did not give up and tried hard to express their opinions.

I was thinking a lot about how to divide my students into groups as it is a very important factor for the next development of the project. My disadvantage was that I did not know them personally in advance. My supervising teacher told me that there were no problematic relationships in the class or things I should be extra careful about. Therefore I decided to simply ask students to divide themselves into three groups. I expected that students would form groups they usually work in.

One member of each group drew the topic of the project on a piece of paper. Students went through the materials I gave them and started brainstorming ideas about their topic. Their English was on a very good level and they worked independently very well.

Shortly before the ending of the lesson I again drew attention to the project timetable written in English on the blackboard and reminded students to look up new information during the weekend and bring it to the next lesson.

Evaluation of the lesson

My idea was to introduce all three topics to the class so that they have general knowledge about the whole project. Students were particularly interested in the discussion about their stress and they enjoyed their first group discussion. Some groups continued with the work for two or three minutes during their break to set their weekend responsibilities clearly.

I was monitoring the groups and their language. I wanted to find out what kind of activities and what kind of correction would be most useful and appropriate for their language improvement. They used appropriate phrases (e.g. I think, in my opinion, I don´t agree with you, etc.) without hesitation or problems. On the other hand, some students made simple mistakes e.g. she have this topic, etc. I think this was a consequence of not concentrating on the language structures but on expressing their opinion.

8.3 Lesson two: Processing information

Objectives

students discuss new materials, they name basic journalistic strategies for creating headlines, create a draft of the poster and plan the script of their photo-story

Materials

handout with headlines and questions to discuss (Appendix No. 4), various resource books on stress, memory, learning and healthy lifestyle (included in *Bibliography*), reference grammar book by Dušková (2000), electronic dictionary Lexicon (Lingea: 2002)

Classroom interaction

pair work, group work

Lesson plan

Introduction (3 min)

- name tags and research hypothesis for those who were missing last lesson

- ask students about the research they did at home

Organizing the photo-story (5 min)

- how many photos (6-8 enough)
- note the name of one person in each group who brings a digital camera next lesson
- explain that we have to copy the photos to my computer at the end of the next lesson or they have to send them to me by e-mail (give deadlines)

Lead-in activity (7 min)

- distribute the handout with five real newspaper headlines and three questions
- give two or three minutes to read the headlines and discuss the questions in pairs
- ask students to formulate several strategies of writing headlines
- write their suggestions on the blackboard + add yours (names of famous people, using slang, using unusual words, abbreviations and shortened words, jokes with words- puns, giving advice or warning, omission of articles, parts of verbs)
- encourage students to come up with attractive headlines on their poster

Group work (30 min)

- remind students that they have two tasks today: to decide what to put on their poster (their research materials) and to plan their photo-story in detail (the photo-story has to be connected to their topic, it should support the practical function of the final product, otherwise students are not limited and they can choose how to complete the task)
- show them books and dictionary they can use and consult
- create a small self-access centre

Ending of the lesson

- remind students to bring cameras next time and everything they need for their photo-story

Realization of the lesson

Groups changed in both classes because some people were missing and others came back to school. New students naturally joined the groups (girls usually joined girl groups, boys went to boy groups).

I asked what materials they looked up during the weekend. There were quite a few people who did not bring anything to the lesson from Class A. That surprised me as their class seemed to be more enthusiastic about the project during the first lesson. In Class B only one student did not bring his materials and even new students looked up some texts and were prepared for the lesson.

We discussed together the organization of their photo-story. All groups agreed that they want to take photos in the next lesson. There was no problem with bringing the cameras to class. One group decided that they would take more photos, print them in colour and bring them to the class.

Students were very good at guessing journalistic strategies and correctly stated most of them.

I reminded them about their two tasks for the rest of the lesson (approx 30 min) and pointed out that I would like to see their notes and plans at the end of the lesson.

I spent most of the lesson monitoring their work, spending a few minutes with each group. Some students used the books I had brought. With Class A this lesson took place in their home class, where no dictionary or grammar book is available, therefore I had brought a dictionary on my laptop and a Czech-English grammar book. With Class B the lesson took place in the language classroom where many books can be used.

Students rarely switched to Czech only to explain things they found too difficult to express in English.

At the end of the lesson each group had a plan for both the poster and the story, though sometimes not complete or illegible for me. I saw from the results that Class A was working a bit chaotically compared to Class B.

Evaluation of the lesson

All six groups more or less completed their tasks. They worked sensibly and effectively. They naturally adopted various roles. Usually one person was making notes or drawing basic layout of the poster as well as drawing the script of the photo-story. Some students showed great talent for imaginative tasks and they were bursting with ideas about the photo-story. More silent students adopted the role of a linguistic consultant and looked up new vocabulary in dictionaries or consulted grammar books. Everyone was working on a part of the task for the whole group. I have not noticed anyone who did not participate or who showed absolute indifference to the topic.

The experience of my role as a facilitator (Haines, 1989:4) was new for me. I was used to more traditional roles in my limited teaching practice. I was monitoring students´ language as well as their progress with the task, however, sometimes I felt it was better to stay back and let them work without the presence of the teacher. I did not correct mistakes during their speaking in any written form because I thought a written correction would spoil the atmosphere of avid work.

8.4 Lesson three: The photo-story

Objectives

students practise the language they will use in this lesson (language of instructions, modal verbs, polite requests in English), they operate their cameras and take photos, they operate a computer

Materials

handout "Modals and meaning"(Appendix No. 5), one extra camera, laptop, cards with new vocabulary for a speaking activity "Just a Minute"

Vocabulary and phrases

language of instructions: modal verbs (should, can/could, would, must, mustn´t, needn´t); polite requests (Would you mind...?, Can/could you...?, Would you be so kind...?, Is it O.K. if I...?); vocabulary of movement: stand, sit, go, step, turn, lean, lift, put up, put down, lower, etc.

Classroom interaction

individual work, group work

Lesson plan

Introduction (3 min)

- ask students if every group has a camera
- explain the objectives of this lesson
- tell them what phrases they will probably need during this lesson (modals, polite requests, instructions)

Lead-in activity (5-7 min)

- working on the handout "Modals and meaning"
- ask students to work individually, explain briefly the exercises
- set the time limit (4 min)
- whole class check: ask a few students to read their answers
- discussing the answers
- encourage students to use appropriate phrases during their work

Taking photos in groups (approx. 30 min)

- tell students they can work at school or in the school garden
- ask them to work as silently as possible
- ask them to use English
- ask them to come back to class 5 minutes before the bell rings

Ending of the lesson (5 min)

- each group selects their final photos and copies them to my laptop
- tell students to bring the texts and materials they want to put on their poster to the next lesson (papers, scissors, glues, markers, etc. will be provided by the teacher)

Realization of the lesson

All groups brought their cameras. One group brought a camera with flat batteries so I lent them mine. Students were looking forward to taking their photos, in Class A they already started during the break so I had to calm them down for a while because I wanted to practise several useful phrases with them.

The handout "Modals and meaning" is taken from a student´s book *Countdown to First Certificate* (1999: 99). Students concentrated on their individual work and worked very hard. Both classes showed a very good knowledge of modal verbs and of phrases expressing polite requests. We checked the answers together.

The main part of the lesson was the photo-taking. In Class B all three groups stayed at school and after approximately fifteen minutes they all moved back to the classroom where they took the rest of their photos. Quite on the contrary, in Class A all three groups stayed outside most of the time or they were moving around the school.

Students showed a very good knowledge of operating computers. All groups copied their photos to my laptop using many useful shortcuts. One group decided to modify their photos in a special computer programme, so they sent me an e-mail with the photos later.

Class B finished their work approximately six minutes before the ending of the lesson. I had prepared one speaking activity in reserve which was based on a British radio programme "Just a Minute". Students made groups of three members. They got a few cards with one new word on each card (e.g. stressor, relaxation, bio food, learning styles, etc.). One person chose a card and had to talk for one minute about the topic. If he hesitated for a longer period of time or if he deviated from the topic, another member of the group started talking on the same topic. One person checked time. The person who was speaking at the end of one minute was the winner. Then a new round began with a new speaker at the beginning. This speaking exercise is taken from Simon Haines (1989:80). I also wanted to play an excerpt from "Just a Minute" on BBC, however, there was no access to the Internet in the class.

Evaluation of the lesson

It was a good idea to revise the meanings of modals and several polite requests at the beginning of the lesson because many students really used it during the photo-taking. They knew the phrases already but I am sure that without a quick revision they would have used only the easiest of them (e.g. can you, could you, etc.) but they used modals also in other functions than in polite requests, e.g. imperatives (you should, you mustn´t). My supervising teacher was with me in both lessons so we were both monitoring the students´ language and work.

Because of the nature of the task I was afraid that students would be noisy and other teachers would complain. It was not a problem in the end (partly because there were two teachers to monitor and help and partly because some groups were taking photos in the school garden).

I think students enjoyed this part of the project most. They did not do anything like this before. They were working on the task, speaking English but also having fun. They had to use language of instructions when preparing each photo. They had to communicate about concrete objects in the shot, about position of their body, their facial expressions, etc. They used sentences such as: *Turn your face to me!, Please, look at me!, Could you put your hands up?, The wall in the background is ugly. Let´s take it somewhere else!*. Students used English in a specific task that was real and was going on right in the lesson. It was new for them, refreshing and I think they enjoyed English a lot during the task.

Students divided their roles naturally. The photographer was usually the person whose camera it was. In one group, a girl who did not want to act in the story was taking the photos. In some groups only one or two people were the actors. It was nice to see that they are not shy and not afraid to make funny faces for the camera.

I did not limit them in terms of the content of the story. The only limitation was that it had to be relevant to their topic. Students grasped the task creatively indeed. Some groups prepared a story about healthy food, others made funny photos describing their teachers as their nightmares, one group created a slogan with letters made from their bodies. All photos express personal feelings of students, their opinions and sense of humour.

I used an extra speaking activity with Class B whereas I had to rush Class A to finish their photos in time. This shows that each class is absolutely different and that teacher cannot predict all aspects of project work.

What I want to point out is the atmosphere of the school. Students were not afraid to go to the headmaster and asked her deputy director if they could take a photo of him. He was not only willing to help but he even acted in the photo as students had asked him. The school caretaker also helped students and acted in one photo-story. I very much appreciated this helpful approach. I think that it reflects the basic strategy of the school that they are here to help their students. That gives the whole educational process a great pedagogical value.

8.5 Lesson four: Creating the final poster

Objectives

students create the final product of the project using their photos, texts and other materials

Materials

posters, colour papers, scissors, glues, markers, white-out, developed photos, dictionaries, grammar books

Classroom interaction

whole class discussion, group work

Lesson plan

Lead-in discussion (3-5 min)

- questions for the class:
- *Why are we preparing this poster?* (to show the results of our work, to prepare a practical material that can be used by other students of the class/school)
- *What can we include/use in the poster?* (photos, pictures, cartoons, ...)
- *What should we keep in mind?* (layout, attractive design, clear arrangement, headlines, our audience)

Creating the poster (approx. 40 min)
- distribute the developed photos
- create a self-access corner with scissors, glues, colour papers, etc.
- students are working in groups , teacher is monitoring their work

Ending of the lesson
- ensure that each group finds a place where to store the poster (otherwise store them in the teacher´s room)

Realization of the lesson

As usual it was easy to initiate an active whole class discussion as both classes enjoy speaking and sharing opinions with their classmates and their teacher.

Both groups completed the task and managed to create the poster. Several students went to a special room at school which is accessible to students. In this room there are technical devices such as a computer, printer, Xerox machine or a cutter. Students can copy or print their materials here for a charge and use other machines for free.

All groups in both classes prepared their texts at home and brought them printed to the lesson. In most cases they prepared too many materials and had to cut and shorten them. They had to decide which texts can be omitted. Mostly they tried to use all materials to show their work done at home. One group in Class A had prepared a whole bunch of pictures cut out from magazines. I asked them if they did not mind doing so much work at home but the girls answered that they loved cutting pictures and that it was a relaxation for them.

Evaluation of the lesson

Class A was more active in speaking than Class B at this stage of the project. Students kept talking about the poster and also about things that naturally arose from their work and were not connected to the project. They kept laughing and enjoying themselves. However, their work was not suffering from this. Groups in Class B spoke actively at the beginning of the lesson and then

continued to work almost without talking. The reason might have been that the lesson took place on Friday noon and students were tired.

8.6 Lesson five: Presentations and final evaluation

Objectives

time management: students have to prepare their presentation to cover the time limit of 5 – 8 minutes. Students present their final posters using appropriate language and gestures and they listen to other presentations. They answer a second questionnaire of the hypothesis and evaluate the project individually in writing

Materials

Questionnaire 2 (Appendix No.3), Project Review (Appendix No. 6), Positive thinking (Appendix No. 7)

Vocabulary and phrases

language of presenting: first, second, this part of project deals with, as you can see, let´s have a look at, I will tell you more about, this table/graph/story describes, etc.

Classroom interaction

group work, individual evaluation

Lesson plan

Introduction (3 min)

- presentation requirements: each member of the groups has to speak during the presentation, you should not read the texts – use your own words, make it attractive and practical, time limit: 5-8 min (all these aspects will be assessed)
- assure students that they do not have to be nervous, encourage them to show the results of their hard work

Planning the presentation (5 min)

- students have five minutes to organize and plan their presentation

Presentations (15 – 25 min)

- each group has 5 -8 minutes
- their English teacher makes notes, he will mark their overall participation in the project
- after the presentations I will briefly appraise each presentation (point out what was unique, creative, well done, well prepared)

Questionnaire and Project Review (10-15 min)

- students answer the same five questions of the questionnaire as at the beginning (with respect to their experience with the project)
- students answer open questions of the Project Review and evaluate the whole project

Ending of the lesson (2 min)

- thank students for their participation and active work
- sum up what they learnt and managed during the project
- distribute a good-bye present: leaflet on positive thinking

Realization of the lesson

In the very first lesson my supervising teacher told students that their participation and work on the project would be assessed at the end of the project in points (all tests and work in English is assessed in points). I reminded students about the requirements for their presentations (see Lesson plan) and gave them five minutes for preparation. Students worked intensively, they planned the sequencing of the presentation, two groups managed a mock presentation.

I assured them that there was no need to be nervous and that I appreciated all the work they did. I tried to explain that a presentation is an opportunity to show how much they invested into the project.

All groups completed their task successfully, they covered the time limit and managed to describe all aspects of their poster including the photo-story. I did not make notes on their language mistakes (their teacher did this). I only noted down what I liked most about their presentation (use of specific vocabulary as e.g.

blood pressure, feeble muscles, pressure on joints, low-fat; organizing the presentation – e.g. one group chose one person as a moderator; original ideas for the photo-story (using their bodies to make a headline "Hey, learn!", each letter being at the same time the first letter of a paragraph on the poster, great computer work with the photos, good actors, etc.).

After this short evaluation I gave them a questionnaire and a Project Review which was adapted from Diana Fried–Booth (1990: 40) together with instructions how to answer both tasks.

At the end of the lesson I thanked my students for exceptional cooperation, I pointed out that they acquired and developed many skills (see 8.1 Objectives of the Project) and gave them a leaflet on positive thinking as another tip for happy and successful life.

Together with students we decided that their projects would decorate their language classroom.

Evaluation of the lesson

Though I pointed out that students did not have to be nervous, some of them were nervous and it affected their final performance. However, all groups were rewarded with big applause and they experienced success and immediate appreciation of their work.

In terms of time management all of them planned their presentations well.

I decided to focus on the positive side of their presentations and made at least one positive note about each performance.

It was very important to sum up all tasks of the project and remind students that they completed various exercises which required various skills and they managed them successfully. This took only about three minutes but it helped to raise the self-confidence of students and to end the project on a positive note.

9 EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT "TRAIN YOUR BRAIN"

9.1 Students´ evaluation

Students had the opportunity to express their opinions on the project in the last lesson using the Project Review form (Appendix No. 6). Each review is different and original, however, some answers were similar. I will summarize all answers, using also information I learnt in discussions during the project.

My first question was on new vocabulary learnt. The answers differed according to the topic (healthy lifestyle groups stated e.g. *joints, feeble muscles, overweight, healthy diet, low-fat, endorphins;* stress and relaxation groups included e.g. *nightmare, spouse, imprisonment, retirement, criminal offence, upright position, to stretch;* and effective learning groups stated e.g. *short-term/long-term memory, to revise, revision, rodent, liver, addicted, punish.*) Many students stated the vocabulary introduced in the first lesson (see Lesson plan of Lesson one). Several students stated that they learnt many new words but did not write concrete examples.

Second question was aimed at reading activities and working with authentic texts during the project. Mostly students wrote that they had read articles about their project topic either on the Internet (Wikipedia appeared as a source repeatedly), in newspaper or magazines (they translated the article for the project) or in English books (mostly provided by the teacher in the self-access centre).

Next question focused on writing during the project. As I have mentioned before, all students did a lot of writing at home because everyone prepared their texts at home and brought them printed to the lesson. This surprised me because my expectation was that students would prepare their notes at school and then write them on the poster by hand. However, students considered such notes insufficient and prepared longer texts at home. I encouraged students to read the texts of their friends and correct possible mistakes with a pencil.

Fourth question of the Project Review covered speaking during the project. Most students stated that they discussed the topic of the project but there were

also several different answers: *we spoke about how to be happy; we spoke about something absolutely different than the project but it was also helpful for us; about what causes stress to us.*

My fifth question wanted to find out how long students spent working on the project at home. Answers varied from 15 minutes to 3 hours (computer work with the photos). However, the most frequent answer was *not more than one hour, about one hour.*

Last question called "any comments" provided an open space for students to add their remarks on the project. Most of them wrote that they especially liked taking photos but they mentioned also things they did not like.

Students often used this question as a final evaluation of the whole project therefore I will cite several answers reflecting their opinions.

"I really liked the picture taking. It was really special."
"I liked the project because it was different than normal lessons it was fun – during taking photos. I am going to read all projects."
"I really loved making photos; before the presentation I was stressed but after that, it was OK."
"It was great to create the photo-story, to complete the poster and the communication in our group was also all right. Thank you for this possibility to have fun during an English lesson."
"I loved the positive, relaxed mood in the class during the whole week."
"I liked taking photos. And the freedom of creativity."
"I learnt to work with group of people I never worked with. Everybody has his own task to do and that is how it should be. Everybody was working and nobody slacking."
"I didn´t like that I had to work on the project at home if we wanted to make it look good."
"I didn´t like writing the articles."
"I don´t like that it will be marked."

9.2 Teacher´s evaluation

I will evaluate individual aspects of the project as suggested by Legutke and Thomas (1993: 80).

In terms of the topic the project set clear task for each group and students easily understood the theme they should work on. However, each task was also broad enough to give students the opportunity to choose a unique subject they liked and were interested in (e.g. lack of sleep, Feng-Shui, alcohol and memory, doing homework without stress, the PQRST method of learning, etc.).

A very important part of the project is the division of groups at the beginning. Students can be divided according to various aspects: age or interest (Harley 1973: 161-169), seating arrangements (Doff 1989: 145) or on the basis of friendship (Haines 1989: 7). I chose the last possibility and allowed students to form their own groups. This pattern worked well and newcomers automatically joined a group of their friends. My experience proved that working in groups is an activation factor which also supports an individual approach to students (Skalková in Hendrich 1988: 312). I could devote more time to slower or more silent students during my monitoring. The roles of the teacher change during the project. His contribution is probably most important at the beginning (to raise motivation and interest, to set clearly the basic development of the project) and at the end of the project (to evaluate the project and discuss its benefits with students), however, he has to be a step ahead during the project. Teacher must anticipate problems that might occur (from flat batteries in a student´s camera to personality or motivation problems), he has to have a few extra activities prepared (e.g. for groups that work faster than others) and he has to control that the learning is really taking place (e.g. through whole class discussions, monitoring, reviews, etc.).

As far as the input materials are concerned I provided each group with sample materials. My aim was to introduce something from the topic and it was up to students if they decided to use it or not. The majority of groups used at least some of the information I had given them. On the other hand, in each group several members looked up and worked with their own materials.

The language acquired during the project consisted mainly of new vocabulary and of revision and use of language structures that the students had learnt before (modals in polite requests and instructions, agreeing/disagreeing,

making suggestions and various functional phrases of natural interaction). Students feel they are using English language to communicate effectively and they do not realize that they are using phrases which had been learnt in isolated segments before (this may lead to an illusion that they are not learning English actively). Therefore a language correction must be a part of the project as well. I used oral correction only when the language mistakes caused misunderstanding or problems in effective communication. Students were encouraged to do a group correction of final texts. However, next time I would probably use some kind of written correction too; e.g. teacher uses cards with wrong sentences pronounced by students and students are asked to write the sentence on the same card in its correct form (Fried-Booth 1990: 42) so that students realize they are improving their English during the project.

The idea with the photo-story proved to be very successful. My aim was to integrate movement, drama activity and acting to the project which would otherwise be rather intellectual and boring processing of information. Students welcomed the opportunity to move, to act, to play, to create the scene, etc. I was happy that they managed this dynamic activity entirely in English.

The presentations were well prepared, the language used was appropriate to the age and language level of the students. Some students were nervous partly because of the natural stage fright and partly because they knew they would be assessed by their teacher. I followed Tom Hutchinson´s approach and assured students that I appreciated and respected their hard work and their personal contribution to the project. The project was ended on a very positive note.

My final evaluation concerns the atmosphere of the class as well as of the school. It proved many times during the project that the relationships in the class are very good, that students are willing to help each other and to share new experience together. Moreover, it also proved that the overall atmosphere of the school is friendly and secure. All employees including the caretaker, English teacher and deputy headmaster were willing to help students; they were ready to participate in the project (either on photos or as a volunteer for relaxation exercise during one presentation). A good climate of the school is a valuable support for project work.

9.3 Results of the research

In my research I used two questionnaires with the same questions (in Questionnaire 2 the questions refer to the project experience). Students were asked to answer all questions by ticking a number on the evaluation scale (0 – 10) where 0 is the minimum and 10 the maximum. I will process their answers and count the average number of points for each question. Finally I will compare the average numbers of Questionnaire 1 (situation before the project) and Questionnaire 2 (situation after the project) and draw a conclusion if possible. For the complete wording of the questions see chapter 7.6 Research hypothesis (in English) or Appendices No. 2, 3 (in Czech).

Questionnaire 1 (Appendix No. 2)

Number of respondents: 25 (10 female respondents, 15 male respondents)

Question	Minimum points marked (number of respondents)	Maximum points marked (number of respondents)	Average points
1. sufficient communicatiom with classmates	2 (1 respondent)	10 (2 respondents)	**6.32**
2. opportunity to express opinions, attitudes	2 (2 respondents)	10 (2 respondents)	**6.44**
3. getting information not connected with the lesson	3 (1 respondent)	9 (5 respondents)	**7.22**
4. satisfaction from using my skills	2 (2 respondents)	9 (2 respondents)	**5.84**
5. dealing with topical and practical theme	3 (1 respondent)	10 (2 respondents)	**7.24**

Questionnaire 2 (Appendix No. 3)

Number of respondents: 24 (9 female respondents, 15 male respondents)

Question	Minimum points marked (number of respondents)	Maximum points marked (number of respondents)	Average points
1. sufficient communication with classmates	7 (1 respondent)	10 (11 respondents)	**9.16**
2. opportunity to express opinions, attitudes	5 (2 respondents)	10 (5 respondents)	**8.20**
3. information not connected with the lesson	3 (3 respondents)	10 (1 respondent)	**6.54**
4. satisfaction from using my skills	3 (1 respondent)	10 (4 respondents)	**7.66**
5. dealing with topical and practical theme	3 (1 respondent)	10 (9 respondents)	**8.62**

Comparison

of average points scored in Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2 for each question

Question	Average points (Questionnaire 1)	Average points (Questionnaire 2)	Difference in points
1. sufficient communication with classmates	6.32	9.16	+ **2.84**
2. opportunity to express opinions, attitudes	6.44	8.20	+ **1.76**
3. getting information not connected with the lesson	7.22	6.54	- **0.68**
4. satisfaction from using my skills	5.84	7.66	+ **1.82**
5. dealing with topical and practical theme	7.24	8.62	+ **1.38**

The biggest difference was achieved in question no. 1. The average answer in Questionnaire 1 was 6.32 points whereas in Questionnaire 2 it was 9.16. This reflects the fact that project work is mostly based on communication, negotiation and argumentation. The amount of active speaking and using English language for a specific goal is incomparably higher during project work than in traditional lessons (assuming that the project is not completely based on individual work which might be the case sometimes). Students felt this aspect of project work as the most prominent. After the project 11 students of 24 (48% respondents) marked 10 points on the scale (the maximum possible) whereas before the project only

two students expressed by marking 10 points that the communication with their classmates during English lessons was sufficient.

As the second most distinct feature of project work students indicated question no. 4 which asked about satisfaction from using their skills in English lessons. After the project the average answer increased almost in two points on the scale (+1.82). It proves that project work meets multiple intelligences theory and offers students to use their skills, talents and their own way to learn and acquire new knowledge.

The third highest accumulation of points concerns question no. 2 where students evaluated their opportunity to express their opinions and attitudes in English lessons. The average answer before the project was 6.44 points whereas after the project the number rose to 8.2 points. This project was very much based on communication and expressing students´ personal opinions on stress in their life, their experience with learning and studying as well as discussing their attitude to facts connected with healthy lifestyle. Majority of students wanted to share their experience and express their opinions and attitudes which was a big advantage and it is arguable if such a quality can be expected at every group of learners.

The lowest rise in points was achieved in question no. 5 which asked if topics discussed in traditional English lessons and in the project were topical and useful for the learners. It is interesting that this question scored in Questionnaire 1 (before the project) the highest average answer (7.24 points) from all five questions. Though students evaluated the topic of the project as very useful for them in Questionnaire 2 (average answer rose in +1.38 points compared to Questionnaire 1), still the high answer in Questionnaire 1 shows that students were satisfied with the situation even before the project. That can reflect basically two optimistic facts: students consider learning English a useful process and their teacher successfully chooses topics and subjects that are interesting for them.

The only question that does not follow the pattern of increase in points after the project is question no. 3. This question concentrated on personal communication between students, however, according to the results I think it was not formulated clearly. The average answer in Questionnaire 1 was 7.22 points whereas in Questionnaire 2 it was only 6.54 points which means decrease in -0.68 points. The hypothesis assumed that in a relaxed, student-centred and student-

guided atmosphere of project work there would be an opportunity and time for talking in English which would not be necessarily connected to the project task. However, results of the research showed a reversed tendency. A possible interpretation might be the fact that working on a project is an intensive and hard task. Students communicate a lot but because they have to consult and come to a conclusion on many issues of the project so there might be no time left for personal communication; it is also arguable to which extent personal communication is welcomed during the project. On the other hand, specific climate of each group has to be taken into account. In the Project Review one respondent gave for a question *What have you spoken about during the project?* the following answer: *we spoke about something absolutely different than the project but it was also helpful for us.*

Classroom implications

On the basis of my experience with project work and on the basis of the research I am convinced that project work is a very useful method to be used in English lessons. For students project work provides a new and enjoyable experience with the learning process. They realized its benefits and appreciated the opportunities they had during the project.

Considering the relatively low increase in points in question no. 5 (interesting and practical topic) I would let students choose the topic of their project next time or provide only a broad theme which could be adapted individually. This would probably lead to an increased interest in the topic and to an increased responsibility for the final product and presentation.

In addition I would also insist on more consistent language correction during the project and I would introduce some kind of written self-correction to students not only for the sake of the language itself but also to remind students that working on projects is a serious learning.

The project "Train Your Brain" was realized in non-standard conditions because I did not know the students in advance. Introducing projects, choosing the right topic, dividing students to balanced groups that would work effectively and many other important aspects of project work are best done in classes where teacher works regularly and knows his students personally.

III. CONCLUSION

My thesis discusses the benefits of project work in English language teaching. All chapters of the Theoretical part are based on relevant methodology books and provide a theoretical background and preparation for the Practical Part.

In the **Theoretical part** I gave a brief outline of major foreign-language teaching methods in the history of language teaching and related their approach to project work which is considered a modern and effective teaching method suitable for the needs of the education of the 21st century. I also introduced the characteristics of learning in projects, teaching in projects and mentioned roles of the teacher during project work.

The main chapter of the Theoretical Part discusses the benefits of project work including motivation, learning in the here and now, group work and cooperation, learner´s autonomy and experiencing success, the balance of the process and the product and the cross-curricular aspect. The relation of project work and key competences which are introduced in the Czech educational reform as required results of the education process is also analysed and proves that project work can effectively support and develop all key competences.

The thesis marginally touches the challenges and possible problems of project work which the teacher should consider in advance. It provides a detailed division of various projects according to different aspects of project work and presents concise characteristics of each type with a few examples of possible projects. A chapter on the stages of a typical project concludes the Theoretical Part.

The Practical part is based on a project which I carried out with a class of high-school students. The project integrated the English language and psychology (as a part of Civics) and lasted five lessons. It is a project based on data collection and on producing a final poster which is designed as practical advice for other students. As a part of the poster students create their own photo-story which supports their topic and the idea of usefulness of the final product. The photo-story integrates drama activity to the project; it activates motoric skills of students and develops their drama talent.

I describe in detail each lesson of the project, its realization and evaluation. I carried out the same project twice with two different groups of learners. Both groups were on a similar language level, nevertheless I had the opportunity to compare their work and realize that a success of a project depends to a large extent on the climate of the class and on the group dynamics.

In each class students were divided into three groups and worked on one of the following topics: stress and relaxation, effective learning or healthy lifestyle. In the introductory lesson students discussed all three topics to get a complex idea of the project. The second lesson was based on group discussions over new materials and planning the script of the photo-story. The third lesson was completely devoted to taking pictures at school and around the school building. In the following lesson students got their developed photos, they brought pictures and texts and created their poster. The last fifth lesson was divided into two parts: students´ presentations and evaluation of the project.

From the language point of view this project focused on new vocabulary which was slightly different for each group. The language used in the lessons included phrases of agreeing/disagreeing, explaining one´s opinion, making suggestions and during taking photos it was language of instructions and using modals in polite requests.

The research hypothesis assumed that project work improves communication in the class, enables students to use their skills and talents and provides a topic which is interesting and practical for the students. A questionnaire was used as a research method. Students answered the same questions before and after the project. The biggest increase in points achieved the question on sufficient communication with classmates. As the second most prominent feature students perceived the opportunity to use their talents and skills (e.g. computer skills, drama talent, picture taking, translating texts, etc.). Students appreciated the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas as well as working on an interesting and useful topic.

Project work in English language teaching proved to be an effective method of teaching and learning which naturally integrates knowledge acquired in traditional subjects. Its valuable feature is using foreign language for a specific purpose. In order to communicate effectively students have to combine various structures of the language (questions, negative sentences, different tenses,

vocabulary, fixed expressions and phrases) which had been learnt earlier in isolated units. Using language for a specific purpose increases learners´ motivation to speak and to share their opinions and ideas. Project work offers to teach the use of language rather than to teach about the language which according to Fraser and O´Donnell (1969: 160) causes most of the dissatisfaction with the traditional teaching. On the other hand, it would be a rash statement to present project work as a miraculous solution to learn English in the best possible way. Even in project work the teacher needs to pre-teach some language structures using traditional exercises or drills but students know they are learning these structures to be able to complete a concrete task.

Project work puts increased demands on both the learners and the teacher. For a project to be successful both the teacher and his learners have to be prepared for a new style of working. However, this thesis proved that the benefits of project work clearly outweigh all possible problems.

RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová se zabývá přínosem projektové práce ve výuce anglického jazyka.

Teoretická část vychází z odborné, převážně anglosaské metodologické literatury. První kapitola krátce rekapituluje vývoj metod ve výuce cizích jazyků a ve vhodných případech porovnává principy těchto metod s projektovou výukou.

V druhé kapitole je nastíněna historie samotného projektového vyučování, která začíná v 16. století v Evropě a ve 20. století pak doznává velké proměny ve Spojených státech amerických. Tato kapitola se dále zabývá definicí projektové výuky a charakteristickými znaky projektové práce z pozice studentů i učitele. Projektová práce představuje pro studenty neobvyklý způsob učení, který vyžaduje dovednosti jako účinnou skupinovou spolupráci, zodpovědnost za výsledky své práce a schopnost pracovat bez stálé kontroly učitele. Naopak nabízí studentům pracovat na tématu, které není izolováno od skutečného života, možnost uplatnit své schopnosti a dovednosti, pracovat tvořivě a vložit do práce své osobní zkušenosti a přání. Také učitel se musí seznámit s požadavky, které na něho projektové vyučování klade. Odborná literatura rozlišuje několik různých rolí učitele, které se během projektu mění (na začátku učitel motivuje, iniciuje projekt, během projektu vystupuje především jako poradce a jazykový pomocník a na závěr přijímá roli toho, kdo ohodnotí výsledky společné práce).

Třetí a nejrozsáhlejší kapitola se zabývá přínosem projektového vyučování. Patří sem motivace, učení spojené se skutečným životem, skupinová práce a spolupráce, nezávislost studenta a možnost zažít úspěch, důraz na proces stejně jako na konečný produkt a schopnost projektu slučovat tradiční školní předměty. Poslední část této kapitoly se pak věnuje vztahu projektové výuky a klíčových kompetencí a dokazuje, že projektová metoda může úspěšně podporovat všechny klíčové kompetence vyžadované českou kurikulární reformou.

Čtvrtá kapitola přibližuje problémy, které při projektovém vyučování mohou nastat. Ať už jde o hluk, nedostatek času, mluvení v mateřštině, problém kontroly práce či problémy ve vztazích mezi studenty, odborná literatura překládá mnoho rad, jak se s těmito těžkostmi vyrovnat.

Pátá kapitola se zabývá různými typy projektů. Projekty jsou rozděleny do třech kategorií: podle hlavní činnosti, délky projektu a věku studentů. Každá kategorie se dále dělí a uvádí hlavní rysy jednotlivých typů projektů a konkrétní příklady pro každou kategorii.

Závěrečnou kapitolu teoretické části tvoří problematika jednotlivých etap projektu. Přestože každý projekt je jedinečný, měl by typický projekt projít těmito fázemi: úvod, orientace v tématu, výzkum a sběr dat, zpracování dat a příprava prezentace, prezentace a závěrečná evaluace.

Praktická část je založena na projektu provedeném se středoškolskými studenty. Tento projekt je spojením výuky anglického jazyka a psychologie (jako součást základů společenských věd). Jde o středně dlouhý projekt, který je založen na zpracování dat a vytvoření konečného produktu – plakátu, který je koncipován jako praktický rádce pro ostatní studenty. Součástí plakátu je i fotopříběh, který souvisí s tématem skupiny a podporuje praktický aspekt plakátu. Tento fotopříběh vymyslí i nafotí sami studenti.

Studenti pracují ve třech skupinkách. Každá skupina pracuje na jednom z následujících témat: stres a relaxace, životní styl nebo efektivní učení. Volba tématu souvisela s tím, že studenty 3. ročníku gymnázia čeká za rok maturita i přijímací zkoušky na vysoké školy. Vědecké studie uvádějí, že studenti považují stres a úzkost za největší překážku při úspěšném skládání zkoušek. Naopak faktorem, který podle nich nejvíce snižuje úzkost před zkouškou je dobrá příprava – tedy efektivní učení.

Praktická část podrobně popisuje každou vyučovací hodinu projektu, její realizaci i zhodnocení učitelem. Popisuje seznámení s tématem v první hodině, zpracování dat v hodině druhé, následné focení příběhu, výrobu plakátu i prezentace a zhodnocení projektu v poslední hodině.

Součástí této diplomové práce je i stanovení hypotézy, která se týká přínosu projektového vyučování v hodinách anglického jazyka. Tato hypotéza předpokládá, že projektové vyučování celkově zlepšuje komunikaci mezi účastníky projektu a to jak komunikaci, která se bezprostředně týká práce na projektu, tak i komunikaci interpersonální, která s projektem nesouvisí, ale je důležitá z hlediska klimatu a atmosféry ve třídě či skupině. S komunikací úzce souvisí i možnost a chuť vyjádřit svůj názor, postoj či nápad. Dále tato hypotéza předpokládá, že studenti budou moci uplatnit své znalosti, schopnosti a

dovednosti a to ve větším měřítku než v tradičních hodinách a že téma projektu budou vnímat jako zajímavé a prakticky využitelné.

Výzkumnou metodou byl dotazník, který studenti vyplnili před začátkem projektu a po jeho konci. Výsledky výzkumu potvrdily správnost hypotézy. Výjimkou byla otázka týkající se interpersonální komunikace. Studenti pociťovali, že v běžných hodinách se o svých spolužácích dozvědí více informací, které nesouvisejí s výukou než během projektu. Tento výsledek je možno interpretovat jako důsledek velkého pracovního vytížení při projektu, kdy studenti komunikují neustále, avšak převážně o problémech spojených s projektem. Cílem projektu však není primárně zlepšovat osobní komunikaci, ale především podporovat komunikaci na určité téma, získat nové informace i dovednosti.

Tato diplomová práce potvrdila, že projektové vyučování je přínosnou metodou, která má v edukačním procesu svoje nezastupitelné místo. Přestože klade zvýšené nároky jak na studenty tak na učitele, její přínos dalece předčí všechny dílčí potíže při realizaci projektu.

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APPENDICES

Appendix No. 1

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Project on stress, lifestyle and effective learning
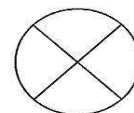
I. STRESS AND RELAXATION

Test: **Are you in stress?** Answer yes/no.

1. Do you get frequent headaches?
2. Do you have difficulty in getting to sleep?
3. Do you wake during the night?
4. Does your heart seem to race?
5. Do you get tired for no obvious reason?
6. Do you have difficulty in concentration at school?
7. Do you find it impossible to relax?
8. Do you fear the future?
9. Do you feel you have lack of time to do things that you have to do?
10. Do little things irritate you?

If you have answered YES more than three times, you are in a risk of experiencing more stress in the future. You should start thinking about stress and how to control it.

II. HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

YOUR CAKE OF JOY: Label the cake with at least four things that make you feel happy and bring joy to your life. These can include: hobbies, family, friends, music, sports, arts, etc.

III. EFFECTIVE LEARNING

LEARNING STYLES:
There are many tips for effective learning. For example, you can start with different learning styles. Which style is yours?

Visual: You learn best by "seeing" the concepts-- diagrams, flowcharts, time lines, films, and demonstrations. <u>Advice</u>: You should make clear notes and write down key words that you have to learn.

Verbal: You learn best from reading, hearing spoken words, participating in discussion and explaining things to others. <u>Advice</u>: Ask questions, learn together with your friends-you can talk about what you have to learn.

Active: You need to experience learning by "doing" or by getting personally involved. <u>Advice</u>: Think about how you can apply what you have learned in your life. Prepare learning games for others in the class.

Factual: You prefer information to be concrete, specific facts and data. You find it easiest to learn material presented step by step in a logical, ordered progression. <u>Advice</u>: Ask for examples, brainstorm specific examples with your classmates.

Theoretical: You are most comfortable with "big-picture" ideas, symbols, and concepts. You need to see the whole picture before details make sense to you. <u>Advice</u>: You need clear notes that have an organized structure. If your teacher jumps from one topic to another, rewrite your notes at home.

(Source: www.bucks.edu/~specpop/index.htm)

YOUR FINAL POSTER:
-can include any information connected to your topic (you can write a short - paragraph, practical tips for your classmates, FAQ, etc.)
-you can use Internet to look up information (write down your source), bring the materials to class
-can include pictures (cut out from magazines), drawings (you can draw maps, diagrams, caricatures, cartoons)
-will include a photo story connected to your topic
-should be a practical advice for your classmates

# Appendix No. 2

Projekt „Train Your Brain"   Věk: 17

Pohlaví: muž   (žena)

Na otázky odpovídejte tak, že podle svého aktuálního mínění označíte místo na číselné škále 0-10, přičemž číslice 0 je nejméně a mohla by odpovídat slovům „vůbec ne, nikdy" a číslice 10 je nejvíc, mohla by odpovídat slovům „ano, vždy, zcela dostatečně" apod.
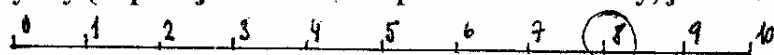
1. Myslím si, že v hodinách angličtiny dostatečně komunikuji se spolužáky.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 (6) 7 8 9 10
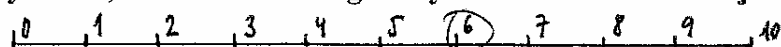
~2. V hodinách angličtiny mám možnost a chuť projevit svůj názor a postoj k problémům, které mě zajímají.

   0 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7 8 9 10

3. V běžné hodině se dozvím o svých spolužácích i informace, které se netýkají výuky (např. s jakou náladou přišli dnes do školy, jak se dnes cítí, apod.)

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (8) 9 10

4. V hodinách často zažívám pocit spokojenosti z toho, že můžu uplatnit své schopnosti.

   0 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
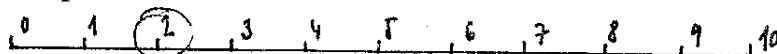
5. Je časté, že se učitel zabývá tématem, které je pro mě aktuální a prakticky užitečné.

   0 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 8 9 10

Appendix No. 3

A

Věk:

Pohlaví: muž   (žena)

Během projektu:

1. jsem měl(a) možnost dostatečně komunikovat se spolužáky.

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   (10)
```
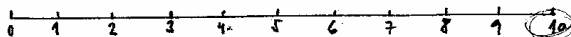
2. jsem měl(a) možnost a chuť projevit svůj názor a postoj k problémům, které mě zajímají.

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   (10)
```
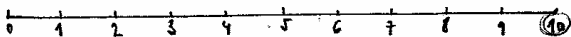
3. jsem se dozvěděl(a) o svých spolužácích i informace, které se netýkají výuky (např. s jakou náladou přišli dnes do školy, jak se dnes cítí, apod.)

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   (9)   10
```
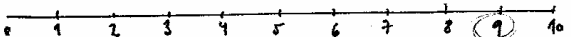
4. jsem zažil(a) pocit spokojenosti z toho, že můžu uplatnit své schopnosti.

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   (10)
```
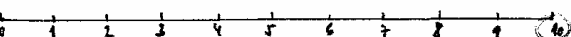
5. jsem se zabýval(a) tématem, které je pro mě prakticky využitelné.

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   (10)
```

Appendix No. 4

The Sun
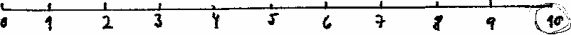
British tabloid

1) Harry´s home: right for princes to fight on front line?
2) Mum butchered in front of tot
3) Student bank accounts: don´t be taken in with a free ipod
4) Oscars: Irish Dream for unknown duo
5) Jolie to raise her baby in France

Questions: 1. What do these headlines refer to?
2. What would make you to read on?
3. What strategies do they use to attract your attention?

Appendix No. 5

MODALS AND MEANING

Match sentences 1-10 with their meanings a-g. More than one answer may be possible.

1. You should always try to do the homework the teacher sets.
2. I am amazed that you can speak six languages fluently.
3. I could meet you tomorrow afternoon if you´re free.
4. You must be at the airport two hours before take-off.
5. You may leave the room if you want to.
6. You must not stay out after 10.30 pm.
7. If you hurry, you might just catch the train.
8. You needn´t come to the party if you don´t want to.
9. I really think you ought to ring Oliver up and apologize.
10. It may rain this afternoon.

a   you know how to do it
b   it is possible
c   this is probably the right thing to do
d   it is not allowed/important not to do it
e   you have my permission to do it
f   you have got to/ are obliged to do it
g   it is not necessary for you to do it

Polite requests: complete the sentences with your ideas:

1. Would you mind if ....?

2. Can/could you ...., please?

3. Would you be so kind...?

4. Is it OK if I..?

Appendix No. 6

PROJECT REVIEW: Project „Train Your Brain", 5 lessons, septima

Name Tereza Háňová

1. What new vocabulary have you learnt during the project?

I was vocabulary connected with healthy food
that means wholemeal pastry or cabbage etc.

2. What have you read during the project?

I red first few articles on the internet

3. What have you written about?

I've written about healthy food and
how to respect your mind

4. What have you spoken about?

Something absolutely different,
but maybe also helpful.

5. How much time did you spend on the project at home? What homework have you done last week?

Unfortunately I spent about 2 hours
by inventing an article (because
my PC was out of order)

6. Any comments (e.g. what did you like most, how you felt during the presentation, was your presentation successful, did you like the cooperation in your group, did you work with people you usually don't work with, what can you use in practice, etc.) I feel quite enjoyed this
project. It was great to create
the photostory, to complete →

PROJECT REVIEW: Project „Train Your Brain", 5 lessons, septima

Name Pavla Kučerová

1. What new vocabulary have you learnt during the project?

I have learnt a lot - with our theme Healthy
lifestyle. I needed a lot of new words.

2. What have you read during the project?

mostly magazines about healthy lifestyle, and
some links and Wikipedia to get info also about
my theme

3. What have you written about?

About the importance of sleep and overall
wellbeing - things. Sleep was in my life for
sure.

4. What have you spoken about?

How to make yourself feel comfortable, how to
feel fine, how to relax - and eat healthy.

5. How much time did you spend on the project at home? What homework have you done last week?

Cutting pictures off magazines took a while (but it
was fun) and about an hour I worked on
poster for the poster.

6. Any comments (e.g. what did you like most, how you felt during the presentation, was your presentation successful, did you like the cooperation in your group, did you work with people you usually don't work with, what can you use in practice, etc.)

I really liked the picture taking. It was really
special.
I'll use some advice from our poster, for sure

Appendix No. 7

POSITIVE THINKING
(by Louise L. Hay)

- what you think today will be your real life tomorrow

- repeat positive thoughts as often as you can or need (in the trolleybus, on the way home, before sleeping, but in your lessons listen to your teacher:-)

- invent your own positive thoughts

- be happy with yourself and your life

Examples of positive thoughts:

- I am grateful that I have a healthy body. I love my life.
- My happy thinking creates my happy life.
- When I need help there are always people who offer help to me.
- My mistakes only prove that I am learning.
- I do something new every day.
- I enjoy time at school. I can use my talents and skills here.
- I manage all tasks easily and my work is appreciated.

Appendix No. 8 - Photo gallery

Processing information (Lesson 2)

Class A
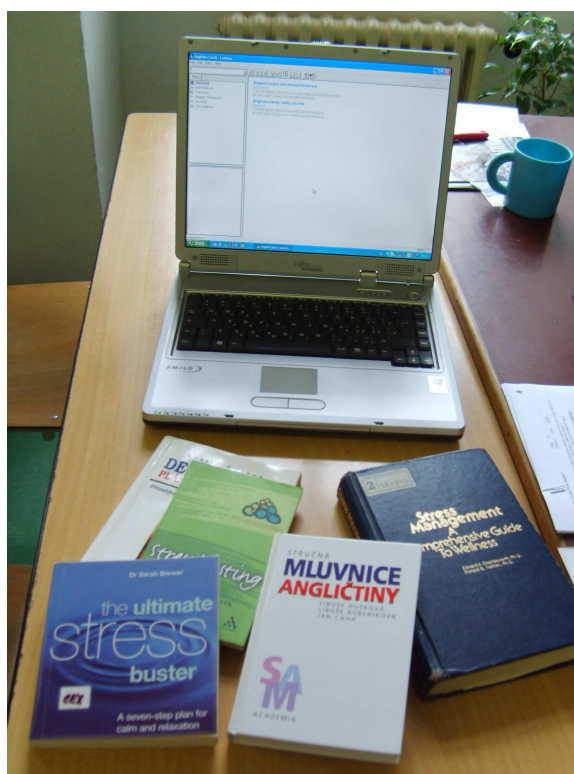
Self-access centre, Class A

Class B

Class B

Taking photos (Lesson 3)

Class A

Class A

Class B

Class B

Creating the final poster (Lesson 4)
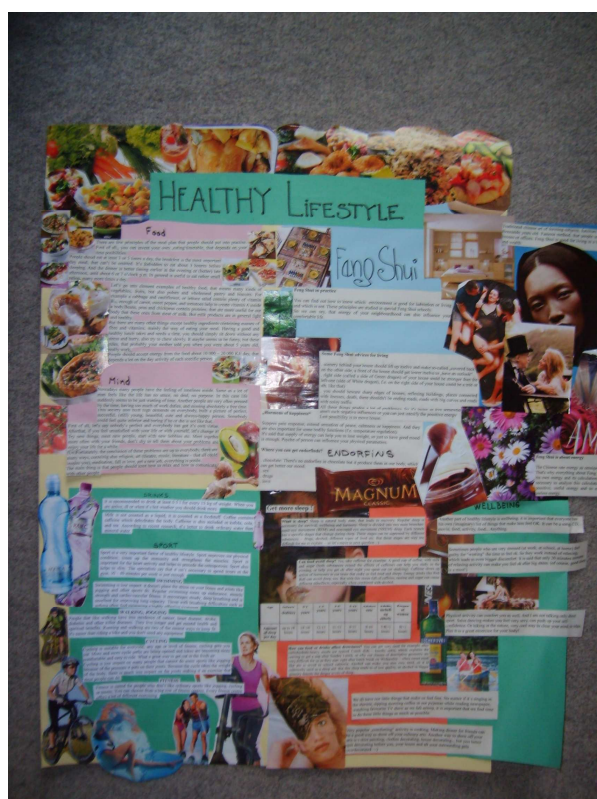

Class A

Class A

Presentations (Lesson 5)

Class B and their English teacher Mgr. David Horák
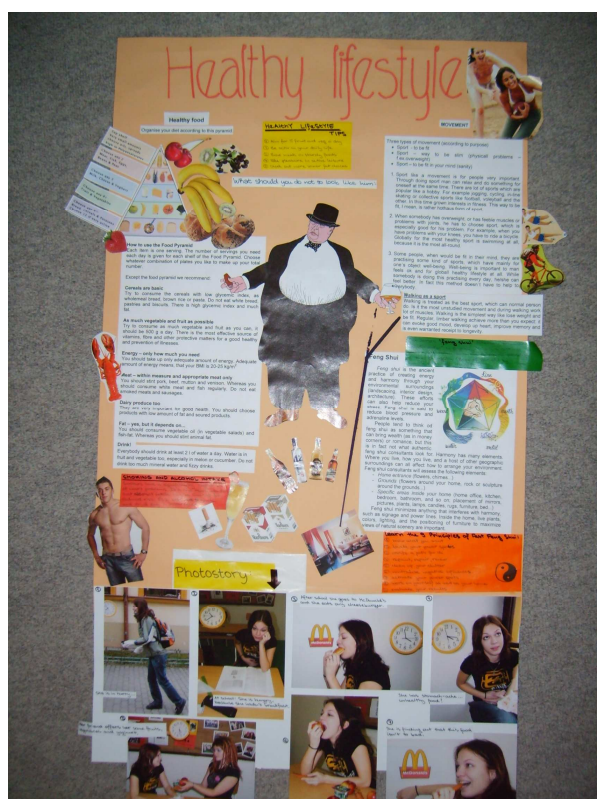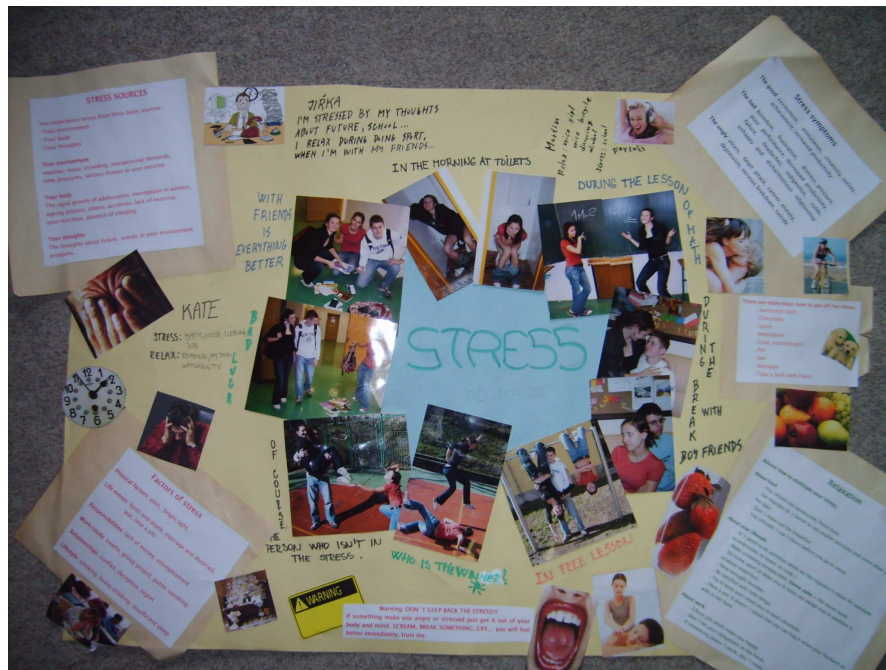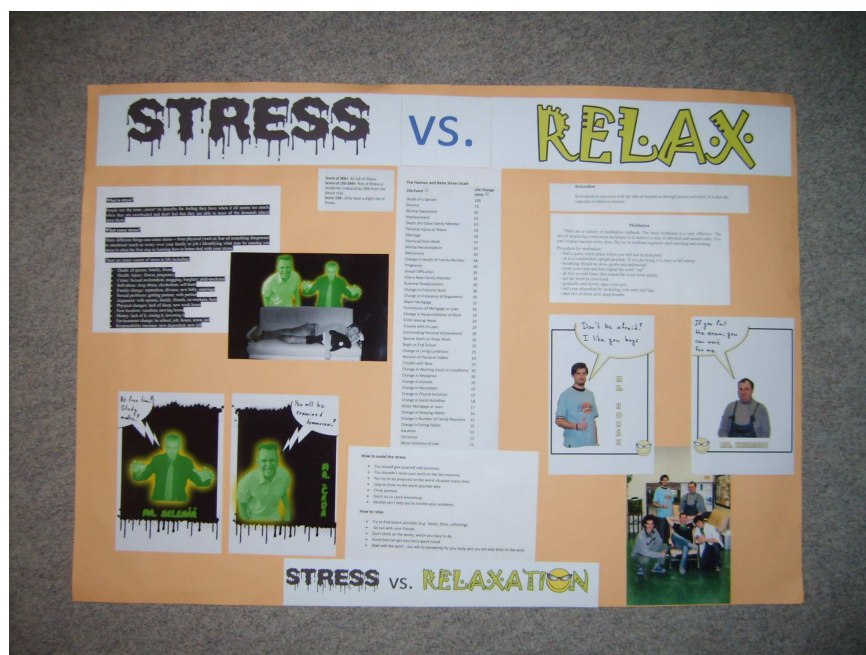

Class B

Final products

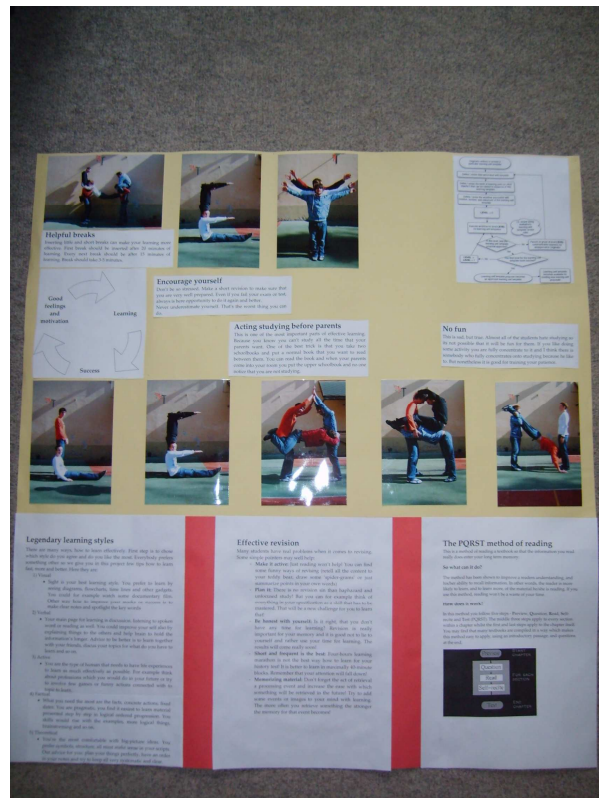

Class A, Healthy lifestyle

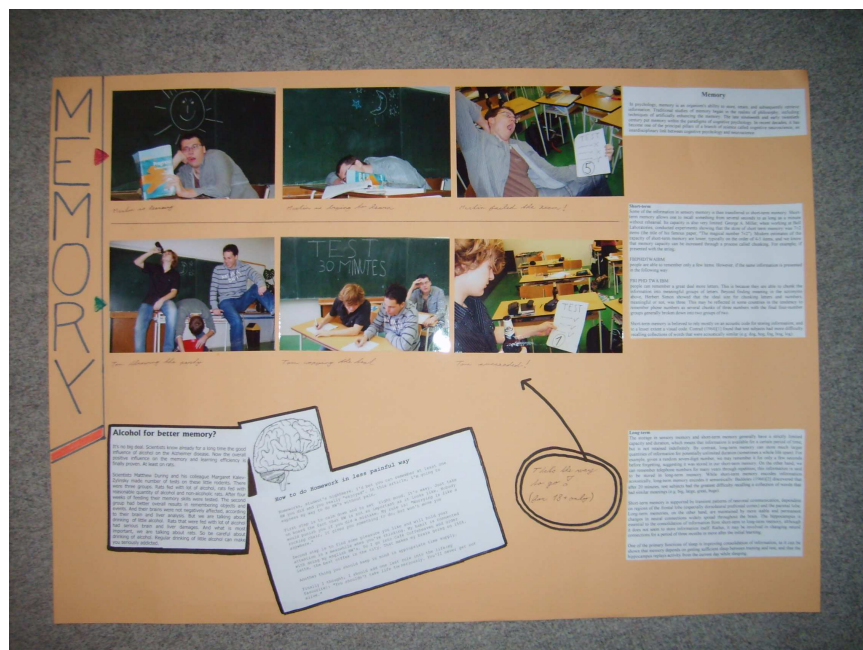Class B, Healthy lifestyle

Class A, Stress and relaxation
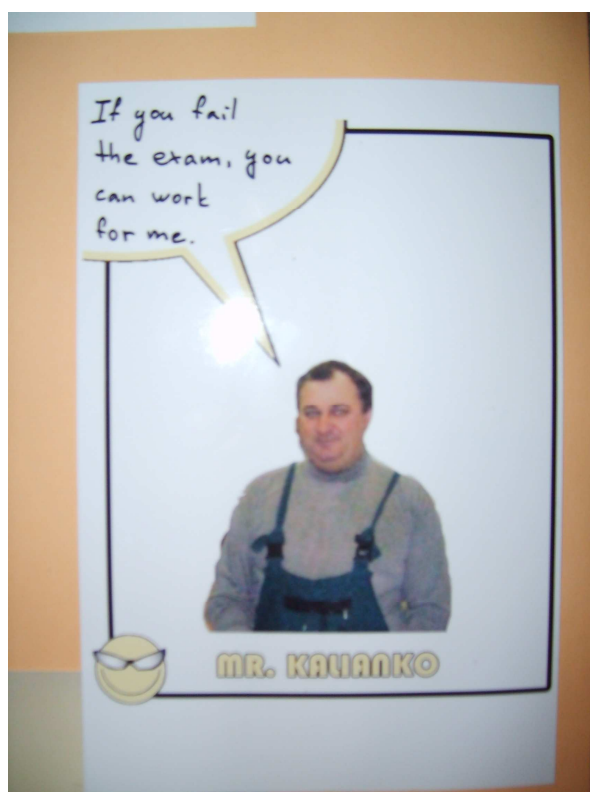

Class B, Stress and relaxation

Class A, Effective learning

Class B, Effective learning

Using computer skills

The caretaker as a participant

The deputy headmaster and Civics teacher as participants

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Terezie Lípová
Katedra:	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, FF UP
Vedoucí práce:	PhDr. Sabina Pazderová
Rok obhajoby:	2008

Název práce:	Přínos projektové práce ve výuce anglického jazyka
Název v angličtině:	Benefits of Project Work in ELT
Anotace práce:	Teoretická část vychází z odborné literatury a směřuje k části praktické, která popisuje a hodnotí provedený projekt.
Klíčová slova:	Projektové vyučování, projekt, skupinová práce, spolupráce, komunikativní výuka angličtiny, klíčové kompetence
Anotace v angličtině:	The Theoretical part is based on literature on project work. The Practical part focuses on an executed project, gives it full analysis and evaluation.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Project work, project, group work, cooperation, communicative language approach, key competences
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Materiály použité při realizaci projektu, fotografie
Rozsah práce:	83 stran + 17 stran příloh
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk