



European network for adult literacy and numeracy
Réseau européen pour l'alphabétisation des adultes

Εργαστήριο «αγγλικά τραγούδια» (English songs' Workshop)

UOM

I. General information

Field

Oral, reading, writing

Theme(s) addressed

Speaking, writing, artistic workshop

Pursued objectives

The aim of the workshop was for the trainee trainers to create the necessary conditions and presuppositions so that they themselves implement such practices, in order to guide their future adult learners in understanding, speaking and writing, through a trip to famous English songs and their historical background.

II. Description

Description of the main stage

The practice, which is presented in this paper, is concerned with the teaching of English as a Foreign Language through the study of English songs.

This workshop was held at a Second Chance School (SDE) within a framework of internal trainer training courses. Second Chance Schools, the Institute of Adult Continuing Education -offer internal training for instructors within the Schools' structures, which draw on the knowledge and experience of more experienced trainers.

The good practice, which is presented here, was used by an English language instructor (who has many years of experience working with adult learners) during an internal training course for new trainers in the School. The workshop had been previously facilitated by the instructor with a group of learners of the Second Chance School. This practitioner was familiar with: a) the needs of learners which instructors are required to meet, b) the difficulties usually encountered by educators in organizing and running such a workshop and c) the opportunities that such a workshop gives for an *interdisciplinary approach* to specific issues which are important in adult education.

The workshop "English Songs" was a good example of a cross-curricula approach in English language teaching which was free from traditional, stereotypical and sometimes boring adult practices. The workshop required the teacher trainers to develop an appropriate teaching environment which enabled them to implement practices, which would help guide their future adult learners in all four learning skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing).

During the first learning session the participants were asked to choose some English songs. Songs were selected because:

- They were easy to understand and well known
- The lyrics were clear
- They included vocabulary, grammar and syntax appropriate to the level of the Second Chance School adult learners

A variety of songs, such as pop, country, ethnic, rock ballads and ballads were chosen during this process. Through discussion participants identified those songs that they could use to lead study of other forms of art, such as dance, poetry, painting, etc. After further discussion the song "**Vincent**" by **Don McLean** was selected. The participants were asked to set specific objectives for studying the song. It was agreed that: a) the song had to be translated so that the students understood the meaning, b) to create language exercises based on the song, c) to get acquainted with the life and work of Vincent Van Gogh through the song, d) to visualize the song through the painter's work and, ultimately, e) to create a poster.

In the following sessions these objectives were achieved through a series of learning activities which included:

- The creation of a glossary
- Listening exercises
- Background research about the song using internet resources

This exposed participants to new ideas and they were particularly interested in the poem by **Ann Sexton "The starry night"**, which is inspired by the **Van Gogh's** painting. It was agreed by the participants that perhaps the study and interpretation of the painting could be interesting and inspirational for adult learners.

The participants were finally encouraged to produce a poster summarizing their new knowledge.

At the end of the workshop, trainers were invited to reflect upon the learning process and its benefits.

Remarks

Theoretical references:

- Self determination
- Citizenship
- Intercultural approach
- Actional approach
- Communicative approach
- Reflective practice
- Problem solving
- Development of critical thinking

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| III. Dissemination |
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Format

Website :

www.vangoghmuseum.nl,

www.vangoghgallery.com,

www.vggallery.com

Second Chance School of Naoussa

The above is a characteristic example of how such a workshop could function. The trainee trainers were encouraged to explore theory and put into practice contemporary teaching techniques of a subject – in this case of a foreign language. Relying on the instructor’s advice, they created their own teaching lesson plans, by developing and improving their teaching skills.

IV. Contact

Name of the organisation

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