

STUDENTS WITH MIGRANT BACKGROUND IN ENCOURAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract:

The paper presents an example of a project week, which was carried out in the first grade of elementary school. The aim of the project was integration of pupils with the migrant background in everyday school routine. When learning English, it is important that we are aware that English is the second foreign language to these children, while Slovene is the first foreign language. Therefore, students need a safe learning environment in which they can develop linguistic and social competences, as they do not experience them separately but connected. Language is a great tool for creating cross-curricular links that provide children a safe and encouraging learning environment and a holistic approach.

The project week was held in April, five hours of different subjects were included, twenty-eight pupils were included. A famous fairy-tale A very hungry caterpillar was the starting point of the project. During language lessons we read the story in Slovene and English, then the pupils »read« it again along picture books and arranged the story events into correct order. Pupils learned the vocabulary, they carried out a class research My favourite food and separated healthy and unhealthy food. During art classes students have created paintings using their imagination. In the gym they exercised using the vocabulary. With movement, they strengthened the vocabulary and named the figures in their mother tongue. Words in different languages were compared. At this stage, pupils with migrant background were actively involved, which strengthened their participation in the group. During science classes students learned about the development of the butterfly and how to observe nature. Working in different languages has enabled the involvement of every individual student, regardless of prior knowledge or language skills. After completing the project, we checked what the students learned. The feedback was very good. On the one hand, pupils acquired the appropriate knowledge, on the other hand there was open communication between them and teachers in different languages, which contributed to greater communication. As the project week was successfully completed it enabled teachers to research their own practice.

Keywords: students with migrant background, encouraging learning environment, cross-curricular teaching, foreign languages