

Preventing ESL in Secondary Education



SUMMARY

This project is about ESL and basic skills. The EU want ESL should be down on 10% in 2020, and we are far from that goal in the EU. Research shows that lack of basic skills is the main reason for ESL. If a student does not have the basic skills, she will meet many defeats in the classroom, which will cause absence and in the long run lead to ESL. We know that many schools take initiatives to prevent absence, but we believe that new generations of pupils need new methods of teaching. We believe that what is going on in the classroom is, what motivates students, they must meet victories not defeats.

Since ESL is a European problem it is natural for the four partners to try and develop methods of teaching, which will enhance basic skills and thus minimize ESL. Based on our Comenius project about immigration we know that especially immigrants and children of immigrants and some native speakers are in lack of basic skills especially in Math, National Language and Foreign Languages. Our goal is to enhance these basic skills in this group, which will lead to better marks, higher motivation and thus to less ESL.

**ERASMUS PROJECT NUMBER
2016-1-DK0-KA21-022293_3**

Our goal is to minimize ESL with 50% and to improve the marks by one grade.

We are four secondary schools, who have worked together earlier with good results, and who all have at least 10% of students with immigrant background. We are all very experienced in international cooperation. We have cooperated in a Comenius project: Immigration – a European Challenge. In the involved schools we have in different ways worked with ESL mostly with administrative initiatives, and now it is time to take the initiatives into the classroom, because administration seldom leads to more motivation. To get more motivation we need to find new methods of teaching. With our international experiences we think that European cooperation will give a much stronger solution to problems. Creativity will grove through new inspiration.

We therefore have developed a project focused on the eight European key competences:

- Communication in the mother tongue
- Communication in foreign languages
- Mathematical competence and basic competence in science and technology
- Digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

There will be three Learning/Teaching/Training Activities, where we will have focus on one of the first three key competences + two of the other key competences. In January 2017 in Denmark-Sweden we will focus on Math + digital competence + learning to learn. In April 2017 in Milan we will focus on Foreign Languages + sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. And finally in Bilbao in January 2018 we will focus on Mother Tongue + cultural awareness + social and civic competences.

Every activity will have the following structure:

- Lecture about the school system
- Strategies and structure of the hosting school
- Working conditions (Contract) for the teachers)
- Discussion on these frames: The curriculum for the subject of the activity, problems of the subject, lectures by experts in the subject , normal classroom teaching (supervision), and focus on the target group.
- Workshop about the observations
- Workshops about ESL (what does the host school do to minimize ESL)
- Lectures by experts in ESL
- What do you do in the subject to prevent ESL?
- Classroom teaching (supervision) again focused on the target group
- Interviews with the students from the target group about the lessons
- Planning of new teaching methods, which must be used at least for two months. This will

be the main contents of the activities.

- Guest teaching by the visiting teachers
- Evaluation of the activity

After every activity the teachers involved in the project try the developed method in their teaching for at least two months. The method will be evaluated by teachers and students, and after that all other teachers will be informed about the method, the evaluation and the result, so that they also can try the new methods. As you will see from our time schedule, evaluations will take place regularly to ensure a high quality in every activity and between the activities. The dissemination among the teachers not involved directly in the project will be ensured through meetings with all other teachers teaching the subjects and through information for the whole staff.

We expect to enhance the quality of basic skills, because we believe that what is happening in the classroom is the most important for the motivation of our students, and new generations ask for new methods of teaching.

We expect that the project will have positive effects also in the long run in our schools.

School staff will realize, that focus on basic skills of the target group will lead to classes with more equal conditions, higher motivation and less ESL.

If the project is a success the dissemination to other schools in the regions, in the countries and in the EU will also have an impact on good quality of education.

<http://preventing-esl.eu/>

DENMARK**HELINGØR
GYMNASIUM**

Helsingør Gymnasium is a general secondary school (high school) with 750 students and a staff of 80 teachers. The students are spread in 28 classes and three departments: Science, social studies and language. The students come from very different social classes from the very rich families living along the coast to the poorer families living in the area Vapnagaard, which is neighbor to the school. Most of our students are ethnic Danes, but we have a growing number of students from other ethnic groups. This is about 10 % of the students, which are characterized by building their own groups and isolate themselves from the ethnic Danes - and also the other way around.

The educational focus points of the school are basic skills and internationalization. Right now we have partnerships with schools in Israel, USA and about 7 partner schools in Europe. We have participated in several Comenius projects during the last 10 years, and we have a broad and very vivid exchange program with our partner schools.



Helsingoer Gymnasium has had ESL as a focus point for about two years. We established a system of contact teachers, whose job is to talk to students with academic and social problems. These teachers have a close contact to the students jeopardized by ESL.

We also have established homework cafés supervised by teachers for students who have problems with delivering written assignments or just to understand their homework.

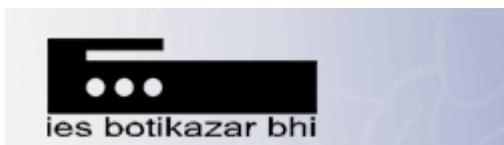
Students with lack of basic skills should come to our homework café, but the problem is that they almost never do. Either they are too proud or they work too much to have the time for that kind of extra activity. We therefore have to find other methods to help these students. That is the reason why we participate in this project.



We strongly believe that what is going on in the classroom is the most important reason for students' motivation for coming to school and participating in the classroom. You cannot motivate students or anyone else with sensible reasons. Just think about when you last tried to persuade someone to quit smoking. Motivation comes from joy, success, relations and other irrational reasons.

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BASQUE COUNTRY (Spain)



IES BOTIKAZAR BHI-BILBAO

We are a public secondary school with approximately 650 students and 64 teachers. The strategy of Botikazar BHI is aimed at supporting the implementation of the internationalization of student and staff exchange and the introduction of the European dimension in our curriculum. We are a multilingual school; our school not only uses the two official languages on the region, namely Spanish and Basque, but English is taught very successfully as Content and Language Integrated Learning.



The diverse student population includes students in bachelor and vocational training programs. The aim is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to complete high school, to begin work on a post-secondary degree or to enter the world of work. IES Botikazar offers its students an excellent educational program in a unique organizational format.

The school is not officially located at disadvantaged area but there are many students coming from that type of areas as well, especially in those courses in which the main teaching language is Spanish. Among those students the ESL is higher than 20% and those students show a low

knowledge in national language (Basque and/or Spanish), foreign language (English) and mathematics. In those courses, the school has all kind of pupils with all kind of different social and ethnic background.



To prevent ESL we therefore need to find and develop pedagogical strategies and methods where the student is in the center of the learning process and where teaching and learning process is personalized.

As the school is located in a bilingual area (Basque and Spanish), we have different programs and innovative practices about national languages teaching methods.

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SWEDEN

O. Olympiaskolan

Helsingborgs stads skolor

Olympiaskolan is a public Upper Secondary School with general education departments in social science, languages and cultural history as well as in natural science. We also have special program profiles with, to some extent, vocational training.

We are situated in the center of Helsingborg and have students from lower middle class and middle class families with different origins - mainly from Sweden.

Photo: Freddy Billqvist



Olympiaskolan has 700 students and 65 employees including teachers, school administrations, guidance counselors and school health service.

Since 2014 Olympiaskolan is a training school for 35 teacher students and therefore well connected with the universities and colleges in the region.

We are and have been participants in several international projects and exchanges, for example Global school, Comenius projects and Erasmus+. Many of our teachers and students are involved in various international projects both inside and outside Europe.

Olympiaskolan's concept for a successful education: *goal attainment, participation, individual development and sustainability.*



To optimize the possibilities for every student to reach goal attainment, at least passing grades, the staff in Olympiaskolan use different methods, for instance mother tongue tuition, Swedish as a second language, homework help, refresher courses, special needs education, mentoring and interdisciplinary team collaboration.

Continuing professional development in subject-specific methodology and education have facilitated for the staff in Olympiaskolan to use various teaching methods.

We emphasize both pedagogical and didactic development in educational training. Intercultural studies, interdisciplinary projects and peer learning are commonly used at Olympiaskolan to ensure basic skills as well as advanced studies concerning the key competences for lifelong learning.



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ITALY



The “F. V. Pareto” public high school is situated on the north outskirts of Milan in a historic park.

The school currently has 800 students and 80 teachers. Since it was founded, more than 50 years ago, it has had an experimental curriculum with courses that have always been innovative and open to new didactic concepts. Nowadays our courses range from vocational education in the agricultural field to technical courses focused on business administration, international law for marketing and tourism, as well as the building sector to Liceo courses with social science options.

All our students learn English. In the marketing and tourism branches students also can learn French, German and Spanish. We prepare our students according to the European standard for grading an individual's language proficiency.

The student of Pareto-High School come from many of the surrounding areas: 35% from the district of Quartoggiaro e Comasina, neighborhoods populated mostly by lower classes and immigrants; 30% from the district of Affori; 35% from the bordering towns, populated by lower and middle class families. Most of the students are Italian but we also have many international students. Our international students comprise of 15% of our entire attendance. These students have migrated from parts of Asia, China, and South America.

Our school also caters to over 20 students with disabilities or special needs.

It has several facilities such as: gyms, chemistry labs, IT-rooms, multimedia labs, a big greenhouse with a plot of land, and a library.

We have a lot of experience in cooperation and exchange programs with European countries such as Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and France. We have a long history of being an active member of different international projects. Since 2004 IIS Pareto has been involved in several European projects, such as Comenius Projects, and has created a network of partner schools in Europe.

We are also involved in E-Twinning projects as well.

We are engaged since the school was founded on values that emphasize fighting against social and cultural disadvantages. The manifestation of these values may be seen in our projects, we have:

- Guidance counselors for foreign students
- Secondary-language Italian courses
- Peer education
- Short-term internship opportunities for 16 year-old students and above
- Extensive offerings of volunteer experiences
- A TEAM OF 20 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, WHOM HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER FOR OVER 10 YEARS WITH GOOD RESULTS.



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