



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE
IN
PLANNING AND DELIEVERING
LANGUAGE LEARNING TO
DISADVANTAGED AND SOCIALLY MARGINALISED
GROUPS

FOR
EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS, SOCIAL CARE AGENCIES
AND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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VIVACE

Good Practice Guidelines

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1. Good Practice Guidelines Guidelines – a general introduction

These guidelines are for educational providers, organisations, charities, voluntary bodies, national and regional agencies and any other groups working to improve the living experience of marginalised, disadvantaged and excluded young people and adults.

The guidance in this section results from the experience of two project teams, ALLEGRO and VIVACE, each with core members in common, working over a six-year period with a variety of learners and in a variety of contexts to bring language learning to groups of people who had never before had the opportunity to learn a foreign language. This was the single common feature that all groups shared. The reasons for this previous lack of opportunity varied greatly – some learners lived in deprived inner cities where aspiration is low and achievement even lower; others suffered from physical or mental health problems; some had learning or physical disabilities; yet others lived in difficult family or personal circumstances; some were in prison; others faced particular social circumstances which meant their lives were impoverished by family breakdown or separation.

In the **VIVACE/ALLEGRO database** you can see specific examples of the groups included in our project work and find out more about the activities they took part in.

We have set out these guidelines in a user-friendly and straightforward way to support providers – both those in education and those in social or health care - and the front-line



staff who work most closely with clients, in our case language teachers and staff working on a day-to-day basis with excluded and disadvantaged groups.

The guidance is based around a series of questions which have been asked many times by those we have worked with. You will find examples to illustrate the guidance and also a list of top tips on how to get the best out of collaborative working.

This first section of the guidelines is for anyone interested in the work of VIVACE/ALLEGRO, you will also find guidance which relates more specifically to educational providers, social care providers and language teachers. The guidelines have been organised in this way for ease of access on the website but if you are considering work such as this, you may find it helpful to read the complete set of guidelines in one downloadable document.



2. VIVACE FAQs

What is VIVACE?

VIVACE is a EU-funded project which aims to bring the experience of language learning to groups and individuals who have been excluded from such opportunities for reasons of disadvantage, whether social, economic, physical, mental or, indeed, geographical. It builds on the work of a previous project, ALLEGRO.

What is the VIVACE definition of 'disadvantage'? What expertise does VIVACE have to offer in this area?

VIVACE has no rigid definition of disadvantage. Partners in the VIVACE and ALLEGRO projects have worked with the socially marginalised or excluded, with prisoners, with people suffering severe brain injuries, adults with learning difficulties, people with physical disabilities, with mental health problems, with recovering alcoholics and with groups of people who have never had the experience of language learning because of their socio-economic background or their geographical location. Our main aim has been to demonstrate the enriching and empowering impact of a language learning experience for all these different groups of people, whatever their circumstances.

Why teach languages to marginalised groups?

This is explored in depth throughout this website and you will find many compelling examples of the advantages of language learning for everyone regardless of age, prior educational achievement, intellectual capability or limited life experience. Yet we can sum up our arguments quite simply.

Language learning:

- expands horizons
- builds confidence and self-esteem
- enhances communication and social skills
- fosters respect and understanding of other cultures.

For all groups and individuals, without exception, the experience of communicating in another language, at whatever level, has led to a noticeable increase in self-esteem and confidence on the part of the learners themselves. Even learners with communication difficulties or speech impairments have derived real benefits for their own self-awareness as a result of taking part in a VIVACE language learning session.

We have also seen that the VIVACE experience can contribute towards a more positive attitude towards education and learning in general, with some learners more willing to re-enter formal education or try to learn other new skills as a result.

Social care agencies have repeatedly told us that they are always looking to broaden the range of activities provided for their clients. Language learning can be provided as an activity on its own, or in combination with other activities, such as sport, food preparation, singing and dancing, to make a valuable and distinctive addition to the range.

How do you persuade people to take part?

Participants in VIVACE and ALLEGRO initiatives have all been volunteers whether they are learners, teachers, facilitators or support staff. They have taken part willingly in the activities, albeit at times with some initial scepticism, among both learners and others, about the accessibility and value of language learning. These reservations have almost always been dispelled.

Which language(s) should we teach?

In many cases the language learnt (or experienced) has been decided by negotiation between teacher, the "host" organisation and, at times, the learners themselves. The same has been true in many cases for the approaches used, with all sides bringing expertise and experience to the planning.



German in Slovenia

English. Many VIVACE groups found that it was interesting to learn the languages of their closest neighbours or a language with similar roots to their own. At other times groups had strong personal or social reasons for choosing a particular language.

However, it should be noted that in many countries we worked in, there was a marked preference for English as this is seen, especially by disadvantaged groups, as a language of status and also one which leads to greater opportunity in the job market. For us this was an issue in that we were committed to teaching a range of languages; for providers working outside such constraints, it will not be a problem, although you may wish to consider encouraging groups to think about the advantages of learning languages other than



Spanish in UK

3. GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS

What's in it for our institution and our staff?

Involvement in work of this kind helps build links with local, regional and national agencies, services and organisations such as health and social services, the prison service, local authorities, national support groups and charities

It also contributes greatly to the promotion of language learning locally and in your region, helping to raise awareness of the importance of learning foreign languages at all levels, influencing decision-makers and raising the profile of your own institution.

It adds an extra dimension to the work of your teachers of foreign languages, offering them new experiences in challenging but rewarding settings. If you work in a research-led institution it can also bring opportunities for reflection, development and research among teachers involved.

The Voice of Experience 1

A university teacher from Nottingham, UK, volunteered to work with learners in prison. She was teaching adult prisoners, many with long histories of crime. This was the first time she had been into a prison. As you might expect, the experience had a strong impact upon her, although her words, from someone who normally teaches undergraduates might surprise you:

"The experience reminded me of how rewarding it can be to work with motivated adults in reciprocal respect and collaboration"

The prison education officer commented that the respect and warmth that existed between the teacher and the prisoners was remarkable.

Where should we begin?

In VIVACE/ALLEGRO we followed a model of collaborative working with agencies in the fields of health and social care, providers of outreach education, the church, government services and charitable organisations which proved effective and which we recommend to those thinking of engaging in this type of demanding but highly rewarding work.

Working in collaboration with organisations which provide services to disadvantaged groups is a complicated and time-consuming process, requiring patience and determination on both sides. It has, however, proved to be a successful and developmental model which has led to real learning experiences for all concerned.

Take a look at our **Ten Steps to Collaborative Working** with such organisations which we have put together from our experience.



You've said a lot about new methods and approaches to language learning, just what do you mean?

Working with new kinds of learners requires flexible or new approaches to teaching and how activities are organised. These may include:

- short 'tasters'
- activities which combine languages with other interests (e.g. cookery, singing, dance)
- strong links between language learning and cultural activities
- groups in which the role of the teacher has been developed in different or new ways (e.g. study circles, team teaching, learning alongside participants, supporting nursery nurses to deliver languages)
- using techniques borrowed from colleagues in the collaborating organisation (e.g. adapting methods used with blind learners to deliver language learning)



Spanish with sport



Italian with cooking

Our teachers have never worked with groups like this before – how do we prepare them?

Teachers from all sectors and backgrounds have worked successfully on ALLEGRO and VIVACE projects. In most cases they were qualified and experienced teachers of languages, but we have also used students training to teach languages; in certain situations we have supported non-experts to deliver language learning experiences. In Slovenia, for example, prison officers (who did not necessarily speak the target language) became facilitators of study circles, and in the UK nursery nurses (with relatively low levels of foreign language capability themselves) were trained to carry out simple language learning activities with pre-school, inner-city children

The key to sound preparation of teachers is in working in advance with the service provider to identify the challenges which are likely to arise when working with particular groups and in particular settings and allowing adequate time in advance to prepare the

teachers concerned. If you are working with teachers on fractional contracts this preparation time may need to be paid.

Understanding the client group

This is an obvious and essential requirement and you will need to find out all you can about the background, behaviour and needs of your potential learners from those who work with them on a daily basis. Every group will have its own issues and its own challenges – working with a physically impaired group is very different from working with those with psychological problems or with prisoners. Language learning for the elderly and infirm will need totally different techniques from working with young people. This is a rich area to explore both in terms of language teaching and also from a broader educational perspective. We consistently found that the teachers working on our projects felt that their own development both as teachers and human beings was what they valued most from being part of the VIVACE experience.

Safety

Working with vulnerable groups can mean risks for both clients and teachers alike and the safety of both must be taken into account.

In some countries you will need to ensure that teachers have police and criminal record checks before teaching children or vulnerable adults can begin. Make sure that you allow enough time for this to be done in advance of the start date.

You may find that you run groups in areas of severe social deprivation with unsafe streets. Teachers may need to be taken in taxis to venues and to be accompanied at times. If so, this will need to be factored into costs.

Where participants have physical, psychological or learning difficulties, carers may well need to be present during activities. You will need to ensure that teachers have visited groups in advance to familiarise themselves with the classroom situation.

If you are offering language learning in a secure environment, a prison for example, you will need to be well prepared by the institution so that you can brief teachers on all possible eventualities. Prisons especially have unexpected situations which mean that teaching can be cancelled at very short notice. Teachers will need to be aware of this and will still need to be paid even if a session is aborted.

Practical considerations

Teachers will need to feel sure that you have taken all practical considerations into account. They should not have to worry about the suitability of the teaching room for a specific group - size, lighting, seating, equipment, etc. All these issues should be negotiated with the centre management before the event / session.

Teachers should be made aware of the overall aim of the course or teaching activity and how much they should expect to achieve. These groups are likely to be very different from any they have taught before and progress is likely to be slow. The idea that a little is a lot for many of these learners should be underlined.

It's all very well to offer languages for a short time, but how do you sustain activity such as this to provide a real opportunity for marginalised groups?

The great majority of the groups we worked with were very enthusiastic about what we offered and wanted our activities with them to continue. We were limited in this by the aims and budget of our projects and there are clearly often financial difficulties for both organisations involved in funding long-term development. But there have been some moves in this direction, which may give others the impetus to drive forward similar initiatives. The more that education providers can show that language learning has a positive and demonstrable impact on a wide variety of learners from many different backgrounds, the more likely it is that languages will find a place in the day-to-day priorities of our own institutions and in those of social care providers.

The Voice of Experience 2

Teaching adults with learning disabilities – an example of sustainability

Clients at *Schottener Reha* (in Schotten, Germany and an ALLEGRO project partner) were adults with mental disabilities / disorders of varying degrees. Their experience with formal education had been largely negative and had resulted in great fear of "school-type" learning. Their self-esteem and self-worth were generally very low; they were convinced that learning a foreign language was "for other people".

Staff at *Schottener Reha* are experts in working with disabled people, teaching them social and life skills, using occupational and other forms of therapy. They are highly committed to their challenging daily work, which had never included teaching languages

When our work with *Schottener Reha* began, a young Spanish intern (participating in a "Voluntary Year of Social Service") had come to work at the institution for several months and the Director had links with similar organisations in Spain, so Spanish was chosen as the language to be studied, although staff in the institution were very uncertain whether or not this was an appropriate activity for their clients.

What started as a fairly low-key activity with a small group quickly became an important feature of life at *Schottener Reha*. (A full account of the work can be found on the ALLEGRO website.) Both clients and staff alike (who with the help of the intern were learning alongside the clients) enjoyed the lively activities which were carefully planned to be well within the capability of the clients both from a linguistic and practical point of view.

Slow, often limited, but nonetheless striking progress was made by some of the learners, not just in Spanish but also in their attitudes to their own capability and their own literacy in their mother tongue, German. One client, for example, asked to learn to read and write in German as a direct result of learning some Spanish.

What started as a short language learning experience continued for the full period of the ALLEGRO project and beyond. In subsequent years members of the *Schottener Reha* Spanish Group visited Spain, opening a door to the wider world and another culture that they had never imagined possible.

The impact on all involved in VIVACE and ALLEGRO has been unexpectedly marked. Learners have gained in confidence and gained a wider view of the outside world. Teachers have found inspiration in teaching new groups in new ways. Most importantly perhaps, the message of the value of language learning has been spread widely among organisations in the field of social provision and into the community at large.

4. Ten Steps Guide to Collaborative Working for Educational Providers

1. **Find out** who you could work with in your area. This will take time and you need to research both public and private provision. There will be colleagues within your own organisation, inside and outside your own department, who will have useful contacts. This works well as it means that you begin to raise the profile of language learning in your own institution, too. Depending on the kind of groups you wish to work with you are likely to find health providers, social care providers, charities, religious groups, other educational organisations who support and care for the disadvantaged.
2. **Make initial contact** with the external organisation and then find out who is the best person to speak to regarding language learning. The more senior the person you get to meet, the more chance you may have of success. Support from an agency's senior management was the key factor in the success of many of our sub-projects. And if you have pre-existing personal or professional contacts with an organisation this will help you to find a way in.
3. **Find out how the organisation works**, what languages capability exists within the organisation (a languages audit is often a revealing exercise for any organisation) and what opportunities there are for language learning.
4. **Take time to understand the culture** of the other organisation – it may be very different from the world of education. We occasionally found, for example, that an apparently more casual attitude to time-keeping and appointments than we were used to existed in some organisations. This could be frustrating but trying to keep to rigid time frames with certain client groups would probably not have been a successful tactic for these particular organisations. So there was often a good reason for what seemed to us, from the perspective of our own professional culture, to be unacceptable.
5. **Be flexible** and keep an open mind about how you might fit in to existing structures and activities. Don't try to impose a model that works within your own setting. The professionals in agencies have the best idea of the kinds of approaches and activities their clients respond to.
6. **Be prepared to find**, as we did that, the majority of organisations providing for excluded groups welcome the offer of language teaching, although some have had to be persuaded of its value to their clients.
7. **Your skills in negotiation** will be very important, especially when it comes to which languages you'd like to offer. We wished to teach as wide a range of languages as possible, including some of those less widely spoken and taught. Here we encountered a barrier, in that in most countries providers wanted to us to teach almost exclusively English. In England we faced the same situation with Spanish. There is an equality issue involved in this choice. People who are

excluded from society at large often see learning English, in particular, as one route to being included in it and a language which will open the door to further opportunity.

8. **Agree aims** and find ways achieve them – and don't be over-ambitious. Small is beautiful when it comes to this type of work. A short language learning experience – even just a few hours – can have enormous impact.

9. **Find ways to overcome practical problems.** Many marginalised learners will not attend regularly or you may be faced with sudden disruption to activities (prison lock-outs, for example). Some may be very reluctant to participate actively even if they attend a session – you need to be flexible and overcome these problems. Again the professionals within the agencies will be able to forewarn and advise you here. Close collaboration with them is essential.

10. **Develop together** community-based, easy-to-access activities, tailored to the needs and interests of the learners



Slovenian Study Circle Classroom session

5. Guidelines for Social Care Providers

What experience does VIVACE have of working with social care organisations?

Since 2002 partners in the VIVACE project and its predecessor, ALLEGRO, have worked with a wide range of different social care organisations and bodies in ten EU member states to bring the experience of learning another language to their clients. As a result the VIVACE project has a wealth of expertise to offer social care organisations who are interested in including language learning in the range of activities provided for those persons in their care.

Examples of organisations VIVACE and ALLEGRO have worked with include:

EU Project Partner	Social Care Provider	Client Group	Language
AT	Am Augarten Crisis Centre	Young men at risk	English, Hungarian
CZ	Domino Centre, České Budějovice	People with mental illness	English
DE	Schottener Reha	Adults with learning disabilities	Spanish
DK	Lokalcenter Vestervang	Senior citizens with physical disabilities	Swedish
ES	Red Cross	Moroccan and Maltese immigrants living in difficult circumstances	German
FR	Raisons de Plus	People with mental health issues	Spanish
HU	House of Tomorrow	Adults with physical disabilities	English
RO	Bethany Foundation	People living in poverty	Italian
SI	Sonček – Slovenian Association of Societies for Cerebral Palsy	People with cerebral palsy	German
UK	Cotmanhay Cobras Fun Club	Families living in difficult economic and social situations	Spanish

What other benefits are there for our clients?

- The VIVACE and ALLEGRO experience shows that there are many benefits for the learners. Learning a language means making connections with the real world; it helps to overcome feelings of isolation and marginalisation and this is a powerful boost to morale for many learners who suffer from low self-esteem.
- For some clients inclusion in VIVACE or ALLEGRO has helped them to look outside the narrow confines of their own world and their own concerns, which often overwhelm them, through contact with teachers from other countries and learning something about cultures and ways of life very different from their own.
- The process of language learning also assists in the development of other skills, especially those of communication, social interaction and concentration. These are transferable to many other contexts outside the language learning classroom setting and support learners in their day-to-day lives.
- In some instances, for example when working with learners recovering from brain injuries, the VIVACE language learning experience has helped to reactivate previous knowledge and skills, including kinaesthetic and motor skills.
- In general, the VIVACE and ALLEGRO experience supports personal growth, independence and responsibility on the part of the learners both in relation to their language learning and in their personal lives.

And what about the benefits for our staff and for us as an organisation?

Staff will acquire new professional skills: the exchange of practice with professionals from another field, a new way of seeing and relating to their clients. In many VIVACE initiatives staff have learnt the language alongside the clients, sharing the new experience with them.

In some organisations VIVACE has helped to support and develop existing international links and to forge contacts between learners and staff through e-mail, skype, visits and correspondence, thus helping to raise the international profile of the agency concerned.

You will forge new links with educational providers which may lead to collaboration in other initiatives

Some of the people we care for have enough difficulty communicating in their own language – how much of a foreign language can they realistically learn?

This was a common concern among both organisations and the learners themselves. One client at a day centre in Nottingham, UK for people with learning disabilities, before a taster session in French said:

“I am 34 years old and can’t even speak English properly, how can I learn French?”

By the end of the session, she was thrilled with what she’d been able to achieve and was determined to go home and show everyone (family, carers) what she’d learnt.

In VIVACE a little goes a very long way. Everyone can learn something of another language, even if it is only a few words or phrases, and will benefit from the experience. The VIVACE approach focuses on the needs and abilities of the learner and takes the learning at the learner’s pace.

How do we go about developing language learning as a service to our clients? We operate on a small fixed budget and are not equipped with sophisticated technology.

To introduce language learning to your organisation you need to be able to provide someone who speaks a foreign language, preferably a qualified teacher with experience of teaching beginners and a suitable, safe space for the teacher and the group to meet. You may also be interested in the **study circle model** which has been trialled through ALLEGRO and VIVACE. This is a self-organised approach where your staff and clients could work together towards simple language and cultural learning goals.

The VIVACE model is a low-cost one. It **does not require** specialist equipment or materials to provide a successful language learning experience. It **does require** a supportive organisational framework and a teacher who is willing to adopt innovative teaching approaches tailored to the needs and abilities of your clients.

We have a Spanish-speaking colleague who would be keen to conduct some Spanish lessons with some of our clients. What should we do to facilitate this?

Your responsibilities are to brief the teacher/trainer fully on the group s/he will be dealing with and what to expect of their characteristics and behaviours, such as short attention span, slow or abrupt communication style, low self-esteem, likely responses to a 'teaching' situation, among others.

Both you as a social care provider and your teacher/trainer should take time to familiarise yourselves with the Taste of VIVACE and the VIVACE and ALLEGRO database on this website for more information from real experience.

Your teacher/trainer should also study the Good Practice Guidelines for Educational Providers on this website for information, advice and suggestions for successful delivery of language learning to disadvantaged groups.

We have decided to introduce language learning to our range of activities. We have invested considerable energy and enthusiasm to get to this point and are anxious that our language learning classes really are a success. Are there any pitfalls we should avoid? Do you have any other advice to offer?

Learn from our experience! Our database provides details of 62 VIVACE and ALLEGRO language learning case studies (known as sub-projects).

Study the Good Practice Guidelines for Educational Providers for methodological and pedagogical advice. Your teacher should be prepared to be flexible and adaptable and to be ready to break the rules to meet your learners' needs.

Build on your learners' successes. Reward achievement and celebrate success with certificates and prizes, preferably in the context of an awards ceremony to which you might invite family, friends and carers.

Is there anything else we should do?

Yes! Spread the word through your own professional networks and in the media of the value of this exciting and rewarding opportunity to make a positive difference to your

clients' lives and their sense of well-being. The more you can do to help to get the message across, the greater the benefits will be for everyone.

6. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

If you are a teacher coming to this kind of work for the first time you will almost certainly feel unsure about how you will cope or react in certain situations. This was a common feeling among everyone who taught on the ALLEGRO and VIVACE projects. How will I react and speak to people with serious learning or physical disabilities? What's it like to go into a prison? How do I relate to recovering drug addicts? These types of fears are both normal and important – we must experience them in order to overcome them and to be open to learning from others.

In these guidelines we cannot answer every question – you will find your own answers depending on your own personality and attributes. What we can tell you is that in every case – and we have run around 150 learning groups of this kind – teachers who have taken part have told us how it has changed their attitudes, their teaching and, at times, their lives. We never had a teacher who withdrew from a project. So we believe that the experience is as important for teachers as it is for learners. Here are some of their words:

“As a teacher, I feel that I have greatly benefited from this experience of working with very mixed groups. I have learnt to be more innovative and organised. I have definitely gained in terms of confidence.”

‘I can use this resource [a programme of multi-national songs devised for a group of adults with learning disabilities] with the primary school children I normally work with. I never thought of combining music and languages before.’

“Working on this project has changed the way I think about language teaching and the way I respond to others. It has broadened my mind and has been an amazing educational and personal experience”

The guidance below is based on the experience of our teachers working with all kinds of learners in many different situations.

TEACHING SPECIFIC GROUPS

Teaching the socially marginalised

This group may include people who live in socially marginalised or economically deprived areas. They may live alone. They may come from broken or single families. They may be the victims of abuse. They may be addicts or alcoholics. They tend to be poor achievers with low expectations.

When teaching this type of group:

1. Be aware of the problems you may encounter when dealing with and teaching socially disadvantaged people. Learners may be withdrawn, introspective, verbally abusive, and apathetic. Knowing how to react effectively and turning a

potentially hostile situation into a motivational moment would set a precedent and possibly facilitate the learning process by establishing a cordial, or even friendly, tutor-learner relationship.

2. Remember that anybody can learn a language, at a basic communicative level, even when potential learners do not master all skills in their native language.
3. Find out what issues, topics will motivate learners.
4. Activities should be varied, short and involve learners. Whichever the type of activity, it should be interactive.
5. Ideally, materials should be real, for example, actual food, clothes, accessories, as opposed to pictures, in order to enhance the relationship between the foreign language and the object. Similarly, actions and concepts should be enacted.
6. Learners in this group may respond well to competition and usually like to be rewarded in some way. A small prize, ideally related to the topic taught, is a good motivator.
7. Learners feel a great sense of achievement when they have managed to understand and respond to sentences or questions.

Many positive benefits have been recorded in working with learners in this group - improved self-confidence as learners realise that they can achieve at least basic communication in a different language; the acquisition of new skills (e.g. cooking); crossing the boundary of their own "restricted" world and gaining a knowledge of other ways of life and finding other ways of looking at the world.

At the Southgate Centre in Derby, UK, two young men with very low educational achievement, poor literacy and serious behavioural problems took part in a one-day VIVACE activity. Even working as a pair was unusual as they are normally taught in one-to-one situations. They learnt some Spanish and some Italian during the day. The teacher used carefully planned activities, aware that their concentration spans were very limited and that they would need to be quite active during sessions. She found out what their interests were - one was keen on high performance cars, for example - and built some of her activities around these. She also decided to cook tortilla as part of the Spanish session. Both boys enjoyed this and both managed to cook the tortilla under supervision. This was a real achievement - one of them had never even switched on a cooker before.

Teaching the Blind or Visually Impaired

People in this group will have attained various level of education during their lives but their blindness or partial sight loss has placed them in a disadvantaged position either socially or from the point of view of employment.

1. **Build activities** or courses **around objectives** identified by learners themselves
2. Conventional teaching materials, such as books or any other visual aids are clearly of little use with this group. **Audio material, podcasts, radio and TV for more advanced groups, are better suited to keep these learners motivated.** There are specialist language learning materials available from

another European initiative, the Listen and Touch project; see <http://www.elpforblind.eu>

3. **Activities will develop in response to feedback** from the group and agency staff and flexibility will be key in developing methods and resources
4. To provide further practice and support, **other staff working with blind groups on a regular basis could be encouraged to be "mentors" in a study circle** since they know their clients well and can put what has been taught/learnt into practice.

Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities

1. Preparation/motivation

- a) It is good to encourage people to join in activities voluntarily. If you're working in a residential setting or a day centre you may be able to hold taster sessions. It's important to show that your activities will be quite different from what some may have experienced in school – music, simple games.
- b) Let the staff know that your "teaching" will be quite different from what their own language learning at school had been like, that you'll be using new methods, raising their clients' self-esteem, and helping them to develop new skills and competences.

2. Methods

You will find that a number of different approaches can be valuable with these learners:

- a) Physical activities e.g. movement, dance, games
(useful for awareness raising of "difference" in language; introducing first words)
- b) Contextual activities e.g.
 - i) numbers: rolling dice; playing with balloons
 - ii) food: going to a restaurant; cooking together (preparing shopping list, buying ingredients)
 - iii) clothes: "fashion show" presenting different clothes; cutting clothes from a mail order catalogue and naming them

c) Arts

It can be really engaging for participants to produce their own learning materials e.g.

- i) making objects from papier-mâché and painting them (fruits and colours)
- ii) making simple card games (Memory)

d) Cognitive activities

Recognizing some key words in writing (using signs with words in very big letters; "painting" these words)

Memorizing sequences (e.g., months; days of the week)

Answering standard questions (e.g. age; birth date)

3. Developing access to new concepts and areas (which may be unknown or not used when communicating in the mother tongue)
 - a) social competences e.g. "polite" speech (please, thank you, would you..)
 - b) better grammar (again this can have a positive effect on the use of mother tongue) e.g. using correct articles using correct plurals
4. You will also need to be aware of and recognise limitations (depending on the severity of the disability)
 - a) lack of concentration, short attention spans
 - b) need for constant repetition
 - c) great problems with making cross references
 - d) only respond to "learning by doing"
5. But you must also be aware of and recognise opportunities for
 - a) teaching the basics of a language through new methods
 - b) enhancing and promoting the intellectual, social and emotional development of the participants
 - c) increasing self-confidence and self-value of participants
 - d) providing new insights (language awareness) and working methods for staff



Learners at Empatie in the Czech Republic doing a simple vocabulary building exercise using pictures

Teaching People with Brain Injuries

Members of this group will come from all types of educational and social backgrounds but circumstances - an accident, illness or stroke - mean that they often find themselves seriously disadvantaged in all aspects of everyday life.

When working with people in this group you should:

1. be aware of what learners' disadvantage or disability is, what they are capable of doing and what their limitations are.
2. take time to become acquainted with the learners and their condition in order to establish a relationship of trust.
3. be sensitive towards the learners' needs and reach a consensus with reference to methodology, especially if the group is relatively large. Some people may be strong-willed and insist on one way of learning, which may not suit the rest.
4. be aware that many learners will have problems with their short memory and will require constant repetition of one word or simple structure; some will insist on seeing a word or structure written in order to visualise it and attempt to commit it to memory.
5. not be discouraged by the learners' forgetfulness. It is part of who they are.
6. be patient and allow plenty of time
7. look out for positive secondary outcomes, as in our example below

In the VIVACE group at Headway, a UK organisation which supports people suffering from serious head injury, a man learning simple Spanish remembered he had once spoken French with a degree of fluency, in spite of his declared bad short memory.

Teaching Pre-school Children

1. You don't need to be a fluent speaker or a 'specialist' teacher to introduce a foreign language into the early years' setting. You can achieve a lot with just a basic knowledge of the language and lots of enthusiasm and ideas.
2. Don't let the fear of making mistakes in the language put you off - even the most experienced teachers and native speakers make them!
3. Before you start, decide exactly what you want to teach the children, but keep it simple. Start off with just a few words and phrases that you want to introduce e.g. greetings or saying their names. Build up on these gradually as the children become familiar with them and your confidence grows.



Cotmanhay January 2009

4. Don't introduce too many new items of language at one time. Remember also to keep going back over words and phrases that you have already introduced and re-visiting previous activities
5. Children will learn more quickly and effectively with short, regular exposure to the language, rather than longer, infrequent sessions.
A little and often is the best way!
6. Find lots of different opportunities for the children to hear and use the language. Everyday routines and activities such as taking the register, meal and snack times, circle time all provide language-learning opportunities. Involve other staff in this, as much as possible. An adult speaking another language, even to a limited extent, provides a good role model for the children.
7. Include language-learning activities in your daily planning. 10 – 15 minutes spread over each day is ideal. Keep the activities short, varied and fun.
8. Build up a bank of 5 or 10 minute activity ideas so that you can draw on them at any time.
9. Introduce simple songs and rhymes in the foreign language. Their rhythm helps children remember the words in an enjoyable and effective way.
10. Use or adapt your current resources to practise the foreign language e.g. there are lots of educational games in most early years' settings which teach numbers, colours, names of animals etc.
11. Involve parents and carers in what you are doing. Let them know that their child is learning another language. Invite them in to watch and encourage them to take part. Send home information on what the children have learned and how parents can support this, e.g. through tapes of songs learned, examples of simple games and ideas for watching TV programmes together. Children whose parents are positive about language learning will make good progress in it themselves.
12. Most importantly, enjoy learning the language and have fun!

Working in secure settings

In the ALLEGRO project we worked in prisons in the UK and in Slovenia. Reports on these initiatives can be found on the ALLEGRO website. The teachers who worked in the UK prisons were university teachers working on both undergraduate provision and in continuing education. They had not worked in prisons before. They found the experience somewhat daunting at first but also very rewarding, with learners keen to progress and learn not only the language but also about the culture of the countries concerned (we taught Spanish, Dutch and French).

In these settings you will be well briefed by the prison authorities before the classes begin. The most frustrating thing that teachers found was the unpredictability of their classes, as there were often last minute changes to their timetables as a result of problems with the prisoners.

In Slovenia, we took a different approach with prison guards themselves trained as study group mentors. This was a particularly successful and sustainable approach and is reported in further detail in the Study Circles section.



Study Circle Recording Session



Trainee Study Circle Mentors outdoor session

7. Further Information

- **Languages for learners with special needs**

[The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education](http://www.european-agency.org) is an independent and self-governing organisation, established by our member countries to act as their platform for collaboration in the field of special needs education. <http://www.european-agency.org>

EU report *Special Educational Needs in Europe: The Teaching and Learning of Languages (2005)* http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc647_en.pdf

Young learners with special needs:
<http://www.hungryfingers.com/learning.html>

Language learning and inclusion: <http://hilarymccoll.co.uk/vi.html>

Special educational needs: research and good practice
<http://www.specialeducationalneeds.com/>

[Teaching primary languages in a special needs environment](#) – from the UK primary Languages website

- **Language learning for the blind and visually impaired**
<http://www.allvip.org/>

[The ELLVIS](#) programme – a Comenius project for visually impaired children
[The European Language Portfolio for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#)
<http://www.elpforblind.eu>

- **Regular resources**

<http://www.linguanet-europa.org>

- **European Commission websites**

European Commission Languages Web Portal

<http://europa.eu.int/languages/>

European Commission: Education and Training

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

Lingo: 50 ways to motivate language learners

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/key/studies_en.html

- **Websites of other organisations**

European Association of Education for Adults

<http://www.eaea.org/>

European Prison Education Association

<http://www.epea.org/>

Reseau Europeen des Associations de Langues

www.real-association.eu

- **Other EU funded projects in similar areas:**

Taste the Language

<http://www.tastethelanguage.eu/>

The Language Café

<http://www.languagecafe.eu>

DEAFPORT

http://www.deafport.eu/what_is_elp.html

SIGNS2GO project

<http://www.acm.no/signs2go/info/>

- **Study circles**

The study circle method:

http://www.ruralfinance.org/servlet/BinaryDownloaderServlet?filename=1119479343759_The_Study_Circle_Method.pdf

A conference abstract:

<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/conference/d1-bm.htm>

Handbook for the organisation of a multicultural study circle:

http://www.infonet-ae.eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135

VIVACE is continuing the work started by the award winning **ALLEGRO** project, by raising awareness among agencies and organisations outside the field of language learning and teaching, convincing them of the benefits to their clients of becoming involved in learning a new language and providing them with innovative and accessible approaches to language learning and teaching.

VIVACE aims to increase confidence and self-esteem, improve social and communication skills and spread the message that "language learning is valuable for everyone" to as many social and community providers as possible.

The **VIVACE** Project has worked with many different groups. We have learned that disadvantage may be interpreted in a variety of ways in different cultures and may often be hidden. For example,

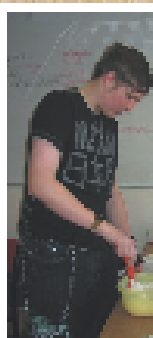
- Young people expelled from school or segregated from mainstream education and exposed to a variety of personal, family and social problems.
- People with brain injuries.
- Those with physical or learning disabilities.
- The unemployed living in deprived or isolated areas.
- Those suffering from drug addiction or in rehabilitation programmes.
- The deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

So far, Vivace has worked with:

- CRISIS CENTRE FOR YOUTH BOYS in Vienna – Am Augarten (Austria)
- ARPIDA CHILD CENTRE in České Budějovice (Czech Republic)
- SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, Vaja (Hungary)
- SUB-REGIONAL CHILDREN'S WELFARE SERVICES, Vaja (Hungary)
- HOLPNAP HÁZA – HOUSE OF TOMORROW, Budapest (Hungary)
- BETHANY FOUNDATION (Romania)
- SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY & BEPECAM -PUBLIC OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT Castilla La Mancha (Spain)
- COTMANHAY COBRAS FUN CLUB, Nottingham (UK)
- SURESTART Nottingham (UK)
- STRATFORD-UPON-COLLEGE (UK)
- SOUTHGATE YOUTH CENTRE, Derby City Education Authority (UK)
- HEADWAY, Nottingham (UK)
- RUSSELL YOUTH CENTRE, ST ANN'S, Nottingham (UK)

The impact on all involved in the **VIVACE** project has been unexpectedly marked. *"The Spanish dressing up lesson was brilliant ... we could get involved" "I would like to learn more Italian in the future"* (Jess, Stratford-upon-Avon College participant)

"After your session, we thought of organizing weeks for different countries ... With different activities, we think we'll be able to motivate the boys ..." (Stephanie, teacher at Southgate Youth Cte., Derby)



Mluvme všichni cizími jazyky! ¡Hablemos todos de idiomas!

Hei sa vorblim alla timbt! Let's **all** talk languages!

Vsi govornimo jezike! Sprecher wir Alle's sprachen!



VIVACE

Partners:

United Kingdom	Nottingham Trent University (leading partner) Association for Language Learning
Austria	FICE (Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives)
Czech Republic	University of South Bohemia
Hungary	Cambridge University Press ELT
Romania	EuroEd Foundation
Slovenia	Slovenian Institute of Adult Education
Spain	University of Castilla La Mancha

VIVACE has two main aims: to raise awareness of the benefits of language learning for disadvantaged groups and to provide language learning experiences for them.

For further information on the Vivace Project, please contact Ana Martínez-Davies at ana.martinez-davies@ntu.ac.uk or Linda Parker at ldp@el-languages.org.uk



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