

eGuide on Oral  
Communication



Erasmus + Project: Let's Enjoy Dialoguing

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This eGuide on oral communication has been created for the Erasmus KA2 Project: “Let’s Enjoy Dialoguing” (LED).

Five schools are in the project: IES de Infiesto, Infiesto, Asturias, Spain, I.C. Montemurro, Gravina in Puglia, Italy, Gimnazjum im. Wladyslawa Stanislawy Reymonta, Lodz, Poland, Liceul Ortodox Episcop Roman Ciorogariu, Oradea, Romania, Pajurio Stanislovo Birziskio Gimnazija, Pajurio, Lithuania.

This work reflects the result of their study. All the opinions expressed here are the participants’ opinions.

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# Chapter one:

*Which is the current Methodology used at the moment?*

Students in most European countries start school at the age of three and from this moment English language plays its part in the process of their learning. Students who attend kinder garden begin even earlier. But the amount of time devoted to learn this language does not seem to be enough and many students enter the Secondary Education with a poor level of English, neither fluent nor accurate at all.

So...

- *Why does this happen?*
- *Where is the problem?*
- *Is it a lack of interest?*
- *Do the students need more hours of English?*
- *Is the number of teachers insufficient?*
- *Are teachers using the wrong methods?*
- *Is the problem a combination of all these factors?*

Five schools from different parts of Europe considered why, in a world like ours, where communication is becoming easier everyday due to the New Technologies, how can we, teachers, talk about lack of fluency or lack of accuracy in students of English as a Second Language?

In this way “LED” is born. A European Project among five schools: IES de Infiesto, Infiesto, Asturias, Spain, I.C. Montemurro, Gravina in Puglia, Italy, Gimnazjum im. Wladyslawa Stanislawy Reymonta, Lodz, Poland, Liceul Ortodox Episcop Roman Ciorogariu, Oradea, Romania, Pajurio Stanislovo Birziskio Gimnazija, Pajurio, Lithuania, willing to study the problem, analyze the factors and tell the rest of the world why!

## First step: How do we know?

The initial premise for the project is to do a survey at school about some aspects related to English and communication. The same survey was done in all the schools in the Project



### Let's Enjoy Dialoguing Intitial Survey 2016

Name.....Group.....

- **1/Do you like studying English as a Foreign Language?**
- **2/Do you study English at least twice a week?**
- **3/Do you consider yourself fluent enough in English?**
- **4/Do you find speaking English a useful tool?**
- **5/Would you like to improve your fluency?**
- **6/Do you ever do activities in English like watching movies or listening to music?**
- **7/Do you plan to continue your studies on English in the future?**

**Thank you for your collaboration!**

The result of the survey was the following: Among 100 students asked:

Questions:	Italy	Lituania	Poland	Romania	Spain
Do you like studying English as a Foreign Language?	80%	85%	90%	90%	80%
Do you study English at least twice a week?	60%	90%	80%	80%	60%
Do you consider yourself fluent enough in English?	50%	60%	60%	60%	40%
Do you find speaking English a useful tool?	60%	60%	70%	70%	60%
Would you like to improve your fluency?	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Do you ever do activities in English like watching movies or listening to music?	85%	60%	90%	70%	70%
Do you plan to continue your studies of English in the future?	90%	90%	85%	85%	80%

## Second step: What happens in...?

The next step of the was to contrast how is English as a Second Language taught in the different schools in the Project, that is, what is the current methodology these European schools have so far?

This is the result of our study:

### Lithuania:

In Lithuania students learn two foreign languages. The first language is usually English. They choose the second language according to what school has to offer. In our school it is either German or Russian. They have three lessons a week.

Students start learning English in the second form. In the tenth form they take a test to determine their level and in the 12<sup>th</sup> form they generally take the exam. It is obligatory if they want to study at University. The exam consists of four parts: speaking, listening, reading and writing. All the parts are of equal importance. So, speaking comprises 25 % of the exam.



We have noticed that those students, who watch English films, listen to music or play computer games, speak better.

In the lessons students cover all topics of life. Textbooks contain many speaking activities.

\*Each unit usually starts with lead-in tasks in which students have to answer questions or express their opinion, describe a picture or explain something.

\*Then we cover some grammar material. At the end of this students again have some speaking activities, e.g. a role-play a situation.

\*Students have oral tasks in Speaking and Listening section of the textbook. Every unit contains a Speak out activity on different issues, e.g. on the phone, Preferences, Describing people, etc. Here students learn the most common expressions and structures.

While doing vocabulary tasks students also have oral activities, they usually have to answer questions, work in pairs asking and answering questions, making short dialogues or talking about a certain subject.

\*In the Reading section we have fewer oral tasks. Students have to answer questions, compare or describe something.

On the whole, almost all sections contain speaking: Grammar and speaking, Speaking and listening, Reading and speaking.

At the end of the unit we have Oral sets on all topics covered in the unit. They role-play situations, mingle (Find someone who...), describe and compare photos.

In senior classes while preparing for the exam, students prepare individual talks (3-4min.) on different topics, participate in class debates and make role-plays.

To sum up, our textbooks provide quite a lot of oral activities, teachers also think of extra speaking tasks.

## Italy

Students do English for three hours per week. The text books follow the traditional four skill: listening reading, writing and speaking. It takes them from the absolute beginner level to the pre-intermediate level following the Common European Framework

Student's textbook include a workbook and an extra book of supplementary material (such as songs and games) so that it is easier for them to work. It also embraces new technological development creating a digital component.



Each unit starts with a story that prepares the students to what to come in the unit.

They have:

*\*A warm up activity introducing different topics*

*\*A reading comprehension activity referring to topics about ordinary life. The dialogues have a listening activity, a video where the students virtually loose themselves in the situation and exercises like:*

Answering questions

Correcting sentences

Circling the right word

True or false

Putting the names of the characters in the right sentences.

*\*There are other two listening activities focusing on some relevant parts of the dialogue and on ordinary life*

*\*Oral activity like:*

Acting dialogues of the unit

A dialogue with a partner about his/her life referring to the topic of the unit

A writing activity:

Answering questions

Completing charts

Short descriptions

All the units include grammar and exercises to help the students to consolidate the rules.

The percentage of the activities is:

Grammar 15%

Reading 12%

Writing 18%

Listening 18%

Speaking 12%

Class work, tasks 25%

The percentage given to speaking activities is also insufficient in Italy and the language used in students' lessons is mainly English even if sometimes Italian is spoken when communication becomes uneasy to understand for pupils



## Poland

The basic aim of language education at the stage of secondary school (gimnazjum) should be developing the ability to communicate in a foreign language. In fact the teacher concentrates on developing procedures for teaching four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing as preparing students to exams (egzamin y gimnazjalne) becomes the most relevant purpose.



In this case students' participation is reduced to doing more grammar-based exercises, listening tasks, copying contents from the board and responding with short answers. It results in passive learning process instead of active learning one.

Students start learning English in primary schools. Nevertheless, their spoken English

is often really poor. Teachers try to create good conditions – communicative situations in the classes, but the truth is that classroom communication is not realistic, natural one.

The percentage of the activities is:

Grammar 20%

Listening 15%

Reading 15%

Speaking 15%

Writing 15%

Class work, tasks 20%

## Romania:

At the Secondary School students have 2 hours of English per week. But it is possible to have one more English hour per week as elective subject, part of the school-based curriculum, comprised by the Curricular Area Language and Communication, to be developed by the English class teacher.

The students have a text book and a workbook which follow the curriculum established by the Government. Anyway the teacher chooses the text book because there are more alternative text books available.



The text books follow the four skills which are considered important for learning a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four communication skills have equal standing in the curriculum that is 25% of the final mark.

All the lessons in the book have a similar structure:

A warm up activity to introduce the topic of the unit.

A reading comprehension activity which includes a text on the topic of the unit and some exercises of the type:

Answer the question

True or false

Find a synonym in the text

Find an antonym in the text

One or two exercises of listening, normally some questions to answer or a multiple choice exercise, based on an audio. Some text books have a *listen and repeat* activity for each unit which point out some useful phrases.

A speaking activity of the type:

A dialogue to practise with your partner

A sheet to complete with your partner's answers

A photograph to describe

Some questions to discuss with a partner

A writing activity, normally following some steps given:

Some questions to answer

Some connectors or links to use

Writing for specific purpose

Apart from sections dedicated to skills, the textbook also contains sections for grammar, vocabulary, projects and portfolios. It also includes appendices at the end of the book which provides extra material for the units.

Teachers try to increase pupils' exposure to foreign languages by making sure that the target language is used during language lessons both by teachers and pupils.

Creating opportunities to improve student motivation and enable greater exposure to target languages can be challenging for some schools in Romania, but cross-border collaboration projects as well as pupil and teacher exchanges are certainly helpful practices.

## Spain:

At the Secondary School students have four hours of English per week.



The students have a text book and a workbook which follow the curriculum established by the Government.

The text books in Spain follow the four skills which are considered important for learning a foreign language: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

All the lessons in the book have a similar structure:

\*A warm up activity to introduce the topic of the unit: sports, health, food etc.

\*A reading comprehension activity which includes a text on the topic of the unit and some exercises of the type:

*Answer the question*

*True or false*

*Find a synonym in the text*

*Find an antonym in the text*

\*Two exercises of listening, normally some questions to answer or a multiple choice exercise, based on an audio.

\*A speaking activity of the type:

*A dialogue to practise with your partner*

*A sheet to complete with your partner's answers*

*A photograph to describe*

\*A writing activity, normally following some steps given:

*Some questions to answer*

*Part of the writing*

*Some connectors or links to use*

\*All the units have also a part of grammar. Grammar is essential for the learning of a language because to write or to speak you need correction, vocabulary and structures to use.

All these activities have a percentage of the final mark of the students

Grammar 20%

Reading 15%

Writing 15%

Listening 10%

Speaking 10%

Class work, tasks etc 30%

As you may see, the percentage given to speaking activities is clearly insufficient. The language of the lessons is English but it alternates with Spanish if necessary

### Third Step: Conclusion:

So the conclusions reached after these analyses are:

The Methodology used in the different European schools is always based on the four skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The text book is used as a base and it always follows the curriculum marked by the Government.

The number of lessons per week varies, from two to four.

The percentage of students with a good fluency level also varies.

All the school insist on the necessity of improving the oral competence and that is why our project is needed.

Let's find all together how!

We  
  
Dialoguing