

Language Cafés

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Language Cafés - Developing conversational language skills in school

The Language Café project is a tutoring and socio-cultural programme for international exchange students at Lund University and pupils at Fågelskolan in Lund, Sweden. The pupils are from grade 8 and 9 (aged 14-15) of the Swedish compulsory school. Students and pupils meet in the school cafeteria, in a relaxed atmosphere, to discuss and talk about topics such as everyday life, culture, traditions and spare time activities in their different countries.

The Language Café Project is carried out in collaboration with the International Desk at the University of Lund. The project is regarded as an Extra Curricular Activity and the international students receive an official certificate from the university and Fågelskolan, confirming their participation. This document can later be included in their cv:s.

Aims

- pupils have the opportunity of practising the foreign language they learn talking to native speakers
- pupils get inspired, motivated and acquire self-confidence
- pupils learn to use strategies to overcome language barriers and develop their communication skills
- both pupils and students gain from the mutual exchange of knowledge
- pupils and students widen their perspectives on the world and develop understanding of different codes and cultures
- students get the chance to learn about everyday life and traditions in Sweden

Method

- small groups of pupils chat with international students in a relaxed atmosphere
- the cafés are arranged 6 times each term
- we serve coffee and homemade Swedish pastry baked by our pupils
- in the 8th grade (aged 14) the pupils speak English with students from all over the world
- in the 9th grade (aged 15) the conversation is in French, German and Spanish, the languages taught at our school
- we prepare and follow up during language lessons

Text

Fågelskolan is a secondary school in Lund, Sweden. Our project involves our pupils and international students from different parts of the world who study at the University of Lund. The project was initiated to create interesting and motivating opportunities to achieve the goals for foreign language studies.



These goals include increasing the students' ability of communicating, developing conversational skills and learn how to express their own ideas in a foreign language. The Language Café project provides us an opportunity to meet the pupils at an individual level. The pupils get the chance to speak at a level which they find comfortable and also around topics they find interesting.

We have worked with the Language Café project since 2002 and found it very rewarding. We have a high level of goal achievement in foreign languages at our school. Our thesis is that the Language Cafés have contributed to develop our pupils' well working conversational skills.

The Language Café project received the Swedish Label Language Award in 2004.

References

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