

# English without Frontiers

Teaching English as a Foreign Language  
to Adult Learners with Intellectual  
Disabilities or Learning Difficulties

## Teacher's Guide



**Methods, Activities, Materials**

# English without Frontiers

Teaching English as a Foreign Language  
to Adult Learners with Intellectual Disabilities  
or Learning Difficulties

Methods, Activities, Materials

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# English without Frontiers

## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 Overview

*English without Frontiers* is a curriculum (method, syllabus and materials) to teach English as a Foreign Language to adult learners with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties. The curriculum was developed by an international consortium as part of the *Barrier-Free Language Learning* project (see chapter 2).

In part I of this binder, you will find information about the theory, methods and materials of the curriculum, as well as a description of the project and the pilot tests.

In part II, you will find the actual curriculum: descriptions of activities for 10 units and the worksheets for these units.

On the accompanying DVD and CD-ROM you will find additional materials:

- The worksheets for 10 units, in PowerPoint format
- Flashcards for 9 units, in PowerPoint format
- A bilingual dictionary in Word-format
- Video clips of English speakers, for 10 units
- Interactive computer activities for 9 units.



### 1.2 Target group

All materials were specifically developed for, and tested with adult learners with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties in a number of pilot courses, as part of the *Barrier-Free Language Learning* project. The pilot courses were organised in Sweden, Estonia, Germany and Austria (see paragraph 4.3). The participants in these courses varied in many respects, both between the countries that participated in the project and within each of our countries. We tried to accommodate the sometimes very divergent needs and preferences of teachers and learners in the materials, as much as possible.

#### **Age: 17-56**

All participants in the pilot courses were adult learners. Their ages varied between 17 - 56 years of age. To make the course interesting for this considerable age range, we made sure that none of the materials could be considered childish, too young or too old, for any specific age-group. We included adult topics such as moving to a new house, working, going to a party, drinking beer. In the videos (see below) we used speakers of different ages; the main characters: Mike, Jill and Peter are in the middle range of our target group.

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### **Prior knowledge**

Many activities require the learners to use their prior knowledge of the world, to help them understand English words and phrases. The world referred to in the stories and activities resembles as much as possible the (often limited) world that our target group has personal experience with.

### **Beginners and 'false' beginners**

Some of the participants in our pilot courses had some or even many years of mainstream education, others had been enrolled in special education classes, and some had had little or no formal education. Some learners already knew some English or some other foreign language, for others this was their first encounter with a foreign language.

The curriculum was therefore developed to be appropriate for true beginners, but also for learners who already know some English because they have had some formal instruction, or because they have picked up some English informally, from television, songs, movies, etc. (so called 'false' beginners).



### **Motivation**

The participants in our pilot courses differed in their motivation to enrol in the course. Some wanted to learn (some) English for a job; others wanted to be able to communicate with people in other countries during holidays or exchange programmes. Some just wanted to learn some English, for fun.

We have included useful language for all of these groups, and have added many fun activities to keep all learners motivated.

### **Intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties**

Our primary target group were adult learners with intellectual disabilities. In some pilot tests, however, learners with learning difficulties participated successfully as well. Although adults with acquired brain damage did not participate in any of the pilot tests, teachers of this group expect that the materials will be useful for this group, too. So, although the curriculum was developed for adult learners with intellectual disabilities, the materials can probably be used effectively with learners of a wide range of (dis-)abilities.

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The main characteristic of our target group is that they learn more slowly and with more difficulty than the average adult learner. Most of them do not learn 'by exposure' only. In comparison to mainstream curricula, the *English without Frontiers* curriculum therefore uses very explicit instruction, very small steps, and frequent repetition.

A second characteristic of our target group is that they don't easily generalise what they've learned in one situation to a new situation. Therefore, we made the materials resemble real life, as much as possible. In particular: the personal lives of our target group.



### **Language problems**

Some of our learners are not fluent or proficient users of their native language: they have articulation problems, a limited vocabulary, problems understanding abstract or complicated language. Some may not be able to speak, at all. Many of them cannot read or write easily, or at all.

In all activities, we therefore use concrete, everyday language. All activities are demonstrated by the teacher. Most activities use multimedia stimuli: video, props, pictures, role play. Most activities include tips on how they can be adapted to meet the needs of non-speaking or non-reading participants.

With respect to the English vocabulary that is introduced, we have avoided ambiguous words and words with multiple meanings. In the context of the units, there is a 1-1 correspondence between the English word and its meaning. Teachers are advised to use a 1-1 correspondence between the English words and the translation in the national language, as much as possible.

### **Teachers**

During the pilot courses, the units were tested with a wide range of learners. The success of the course always depended on the teacher(s). With a target group as diverse and as varied as ours, a good, flexible and motivated teacher is indispensable and much more important than materials and worksheets. Even with a curriculum specifically developed for the target group, a good teacher is needed

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to bridge the gap between the materials and activities, and the needs and preferences of the learners.

For some learners in our target group, this gap is wider than for others. In the next chapters teachers will find information and tools to help them bridge this gap, and to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.



### 1.3 Objectives

The objective of the *English without Frontiers* curriculum is, of course, to teach learners with intellectual disabilities English as a foreign language. However, the needs of our target group differ in some respects from those of mainstream learners. As a consequence, our curriculum has a number of additional objectives.

Many of our target group are reluctant learners: they have had negative experiences with school, they have low self esteem with respect to learning, and they are afraid of failing (and therefore: of trying). Many of our target group have never learned a foreign language before, some are convinced that learning a foreign language is "for other people".

With the *English without Frontiers* curriculum we want to teach English, but we also want to change the low expectations and low self esteem of our participants into a feeling of pride in their own accomplishments. We want to change the participants' fear of failing, into the excitement of learning new things. We want our participants to experience first-hand the pleasure and the benefits, of learning a foreign language.

Success is the best motivator. In our case: success in learning English. In the *English without Frontiers* curriculum we use a modified communicative approach to teach English as a foreign language to our participants (see chapter 2). We focus on realistic English, as it is used for direct personal contacts: 1-1 conversations about everyday topics.

Participants learn:

- to guess and predict the meaning of highly redundant spoken English texts about everyday topics;
- to understand and respond (verbally or non-verbally) to a number of spoken everyday questions;

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- to use a number of frequent, everyday phrases in a 1-1 conversation;
- to recognize a number of written English words in context;
- to copy English words;
- to find words and their translations in a special 'easy' bilingual dictionary.

In terms of the Common European Framework for Languages, the curriculum aims at level A1:

The learner

- can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
- can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help." (Common European Framework for Languages, page 24, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp)).



### **1.4 Flexible & adaptable**

To meet the specific learning needs of our target groups, our methods are flexible and our materials adaptable. It is the task of the teacher to adapt the curriculum to meet the learning needs of a specific participant, a specific group of participants or a specific learning situation.

Choices that the teacher will have to make:

#### **1. What units to teach**

The curriculum is divided into 10 units. Although there is a continuing story line from unit 1-9, the teacher can choose which units to use. Unit 10 is an open unit that can be used to evaluate the progress that participants have made in the units that were taught. In addition to these 10 units, we have included an indicative framework for another 10 units. These have not been developed, but they follow the same structure as the first 10 units and can be made

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easily by the teacher, using the templates of the first 10 units (see paragraph 4.5).

### **2. What activities to include**

In each unit the teacher will find descriptions and materials for 10-12 different activities. Again, although there is a certain progression of activities within a unit, the teacher can decide to use only those activities that will meet the needs and preferences of a specific group of learners.

### **3. What vocabulary and sentences to teach**

All worksheets, the dictionary, the Flashcards and even the interactive computer activities can be adapted by the teacher. The teacher can delete words, can add words, and/or can replace words with words that have the specific interest of the participants. The teacher can adapt worksheets, can add or delete Flashcards, can make changes in the dictionary, and can add, delete, or modify the interactive computer activities.

To enable teachers to do this easily, all worksheets, Flashcards, the dictionary and the interactive activities are included as PowerPoint and Word-files on the accompanying CD-ROM. Instructions on how to modify the materials can be found in chapter 3.

### **4. How much time to spend on each activity and on each unit**

In the description of the activities, we have not included an indication of the time needed for each activity. This will very much depend on the needs and interests of the learners, the size of the group, the time that is available, etc.

It is also difficult to say, how much time is needed for each unit. This will depend on the time that is spent on each activity, but also on the duration of each lesson (the time that the teacher and the participants are together) and the size and the interests of the group. In the pilot tests, teachers spent an average of 2 lessons of 100 minutes on each unit. But again, this is a decision the teacher will have to make, on the basis of the needs, abilities and wishes of the learners, and the educational setting.

The teacher can make these choices beforehand, when preparing the course or a specific lesson. The better the teacher knows the learners, the easier it will be to make these decisions, beforehand. In the actual interaction with the participants, at each moment and with each participant, the teacher will have to find a balance between following the interests and associations of the learners, and following the prepared activities and worksheets.

### **1.5 First language**

Most of the materials and activities in this course are language independent. During the international project (see chapter 4), the materials were tested with adult learners who have German,

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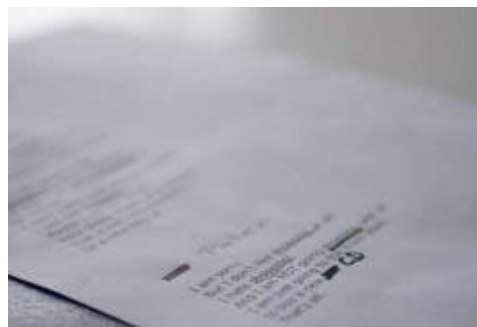
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Swedish, Finnish or Estonian as their first language.

Because of the special needs of our target group, we recommend that all participants in a group share the same first language (or: a language), and that the teacher is fluent in this language.

The teachers can then use this language (L1) for instruction and to communicate with the participants.

In some worksheets and in the dictionary, L1 translations are used. For the 4 languages of the project (Swedish, German, Estonian, Dutch) these translations can be downloaded from the website: [www.englishwithoutfrontiers.eu](http://www.englishwithoutfrontiers.eu). Teachers from other languages will have to make their own translations.



**1.6 Educational setting** During the international project (see chapter 4), the materials were tested in formal and non-formal educational settings: a school setting in a rehabilitation centre (Astangu, EE), in adult education settings in Haparanda (SE), Ulm (DE) and Vienna (AT), and in a special workshop of one day (6 hours), for people with intellectual disabilities (Ulm).

The teachers who taught the *English without Frontiers* courses all had experience teaching the target group; all were experienced teachers of English.

Groups varied in size from 4 to 10 persons, varying in age from 17 – 56. Most groups were taught by one teacher and an assistant teacher or volunteer. Some groups were taught by two teachers.

Courses varied from 1 half day, to 10 lessons of 100 minutes. None of the teachers was able to (or even tried) to cover all 10 units in that time. The time needed per unit varied; on average, 2 sessions of 100 minutes were needed for each unit.

For more information about the educational settings and the pilot tests, see chapter 3.

### 1.7 Accessibility

#### **Communication disabilities**

Non-speaking persons will be able to participate successfully, in most activities; we have included suggestions on how activities can be adapted to meet their needs. For learners who use alternative

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communication aids, we recommend that the teacher (temporarily) adds English words or phrases to the device of the participant.

### **Reading disabilities**

Although many of the activities use written text (on the flipchart, the worksheets, the dictionary), reading and writing are not required for successful participation in most activities. In some instances, another participant or an assistant may be needed to help a learner who cannot read or write, to complete a worksheet. For many activities, we have included suggestions on how the activity can be adapted for non-readers, or non-writers.

### **Motor disabilities**

Learners with motor problems can participate successfully in most activities. Activities that ask for specific motor responses (e.g. charades, Simon Says) may be less appropriate and will have to be adapted to meet the physical abilities of a specific learner or group of learners.

### **Hearing disabilities**

Learners with a hearing loss can participate successfully in most activities – if attention is paid to room acoustics, visibility of the teacher and the speakers, and to the sound level of the video. We do not think that the curriculum is appropriate for Deaf learners.

### **Visual disabilities**

Learners with visual problems can participate successfully in most activities – if attention is paid to lighting in the classroom and to the readability of worksheets and computer screens. Blind users may be able to participate, but we have not tested the materials with them and we have made no special accommodations to meet their needs.

### **Intellectual or learning disabilities**

Last but not least: the curriculum does not have a minimum entrance level with respect to learning or intellectual abilities. During the pilot courses, the materials were tested with learners of a wide range of intellectual disabilities. As we said in paragraph 1.4: the success of the course will depend on the skills, the flexibility and the motivation of the teacher. In the next chapters, teachers will find the background information, as well as practical tips and tools that will help them to use and adapt the curriculum successfully, for a wide range of learners.

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### **2.1. Basic pedagogical principles**

Our target group, adult learners with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties, share a number of characteristics that we have taken into account in the development of the activities and the production of the materials.

#### **Not one size, and not easy to measure**

The first and foremost characteristic of our target group is that the group is very diverse: one size will never fit all. As was mentioned in chapter 1, the participants in our pilot studies varied in age, in their first language, in educational background, in intellectual abilities, in language abilities, in their previous knowledge of English, and in their motivation to learn English.

In addition, the intellectual disabilities of the target group do not have a single cause and their learning profiles vary considerably. The learning potential of our target group is not easy to predict or easy to measure. As a consequence, there is no easy way to group prospective participants on the basis of abilities, learning needs, or learning potential. Past results (school records, IQ scores) may not be good predictors of the learning outcome of the course, for a particular participant.

Our solution to this problem was to make the curriculum as flexible and as adaptable as possible. Teachers can select the units and activities that they want to use and can adapt worksheets, Flashcards and other materials to meet the specific needs and/or interests of the participants.

Groups should be small. They will be easier to teach if the group is – as far as possible - homogeneous with respect to the severity of the intellectual disabilities. In groups of mixed abilities, assistant teachers or volunteers will be needed to give all participants the personal attention that they need.



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### **Language skills**

A second characteristic of our target group is that they may be limited in their first language skills. Frequent language problems in our target group are:

- a limited vocabulary;
- problems with understanding complex and/or long sentences;
- problems with understanding abstract language;
- problems with speaking;
- problems with reading;
- problems with writing.

The texts and topics that are used in the units were selected to be within the language abilities of most participants; they refer to situations and actions that most of them should be able to recognize and identify with.

But again, it is up to the teacher to take the (potential) language problems of the participants into account, in the direct communication with the participants and when adapting worksheets or materials.

The language of communication and the language of instruction should be the mother tongue of the participants. All spoken language, whether in the mother tongue or in English, should be supported whenever possible by body language, demonstrations, objects and props, pictures and photographs, and written language (e.g. words written on a flipchart or whiteboard).

Our target group may not be aware of what language is, or how people use language. They may have no or limited grammatical awareness (word order, sentence structure, etc.), even in their native language. They may not be familiar with grammatical concepts (noun, verb, sentence, past tense, article, etc.). Therefore, the English included in the curriculum, is 'ready to use English'. Our focus is on the pragmatics of English: how to introduce yourself, how to use 'thank you' and 'please', how to order in a restaurant. We did *not* include grammar lessons or grammar explanations. The curriculum introduces the participants to 'ready made' everyday English, and encourages them to practice and use these words and phrases in realistic, everyday contexts.

It is very frustrating for our target group to learn the meaning of an English word, only to find out that the word can have a different meaning, in another context. To avoid this, we have not included ambiguous words or words with multiple meanings in the curriculum (within the context of the units). Teachers are advised to use 1-1

L1 translations for all English words and phrases, as much as possible.

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### **Prior knowledge of the world**

Our target group may be limited in general prior knowledge of the world. The world they do know about is individual, and usually limited to their own life, environment, and interests. The materials we developed take this into account. The topics of the units are adult topics that are concrete, recognizable and easy to identify with.

### **Attention and motivation**

Our target group may not have very good memories of 'school learning', and may be convinced they cannot learn new things. They may have short, or even very short attention spans. They may not be able to keep long-term goals in mind, or be motivated by long-term goals.

It has therefore been our goal to make the materials highly motivating in and of themselves, with easy successes and (almost) no risk of failing. The units are divided into small chunks, with a lot of variation. In a lesson, the teacher can alternate group activities with individual or teamwork, learning activities with games, written work with songs.

To keep the participants motivated and interested across lessons, the curriculum is built around videos of Mike, Jill and Peter. Mike, Jill and Peter are speakers of English. Each unit starts with a video of Mike, Jill or Peter talking to the participants about the unit's theme. These video stories have a very simple and predictable set-up: 'talking heads', only one head at a time, and nothing to distract the viewers from the speaker. The 'actors' or 'speakers' are filmed close-up and they speak directly into the camera. The stories are monologues in easy English, about the families, friends and hobbies of Mike, Jill and Peter.

The speakers on the video are members of the Inc.Theatre ensemble – part of Spare Tyre Theatre Company, in London ([www.sparetyretheatrecompany.co.uk](http://www.sparetyretheatrecompany.co.uk)). Inc.Theatre is an innovative ensemble of artist with learning disabilities. Inc.Theatre are role models speaking to their own community and challenging social prejudice. By choosing speakers from the target group, we tried to make the materials more realistic and motivating for the learners, and to make it easier for them to identify with the speakers.

These video stories have two objectives: firstly, the videos introduce the learners to 'easy' English, spoken by native speakers. Secondly the video stories provide the participants with a continuing story line – almost a 'soap' – about three persons that they can identify with. The teacher can use the participants' curiosity about Mike, Jill and Peter as an effective motivator for many activities: what do you think Mike wants for his birthday? Why is Jill laughing?

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The keyword for the videos is predictability: the set-up is predictable, the speakers are predictable, the content of the stories is predictable. This predictability will help the learners focus on the content: what are the speakers saying? What do these English words, sentences mean? The predictability will also provide the learners with experiences of success: they *can* understand English! Maybe not the first time, maybe not the second time, but if the video is played again and again, they *will* be able to recognize words and sentences, they *will* understand what Mike, Jill and Peter are saying!

In the pilot courses, most participants identified readily with Mike, Jill and Peter. They were looking forward to the next episode, to find out what happened. They were curious about each new 'story' and often wanted to know much more, than is provided in the stories. When Peter and Jill talk about their band 'The Fantastics', participants wanted to hear their music. When Mike talked about his new apartment, they wanted to know how things worked out for him (also see paragraph 3.3).



### **Learning and memory**

Because of their intellectual disabilities, our target group learns more slowly and needs more repetition. The participants may find it hard to link new knowledge and skills to what they already know and can do. They may find it hard to generalize: they may be able to remember and use what they have learned in the exact situation and context where the learning took place, but they may find it difficult to use what they have learned, in a different setting or context.

Finally, our participants may have limitations in working memory: they may be able to repeat and memorize one or two words or a short phrase, but longer sentences may be too demanding.

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To deal with these learning and memory problems, words and phrases are presented in small steps, with repeated demonstrations and frequent repetition. All activities are highly motivating and personal, all have direct links to the lives and interests of the participants.

In addition, we have developed tools that teachers can use for explicit rehearsal of vocabulary and phrases: the Flashcards, the dictionary, and the interactive computer activities (see chapter 3).

Nevertheless, some of our learners may find it very hard to remember words and phrases from one lesson to the next. For successful and enjoyable participation in the lessons, it will of course help if the participants remember words and phrases from previous lessons. It is, however, not a requirement. Learners *can* participate successfully and with pleasure, even if they don't remember all or any of the words and phrases from earlier lessons. In the *English without Frontiers* curriculum, participants cannot 'fail' a unit, or a course. At the end of the course, some participants may be able to say or understand only a few words or phrases, others may be confident enough to start a conversation in English. Both will have completed the course, successfully (also see 2.4: Assessment).

### 2.2. EFL methods

For our target group, a communicative approach to teaching English as a foreign language seemed most appropriate.

#### **Communicative approach**

The communicative approach can be described as *"a set of principles about teaching, including recommendations about method and syllabus where the focus is on meaningful communication not structure, use not usage. In this approach, students are given tasks to accomplish using language, instead of studying the language. The syllabus is based primarily on functional development (asking permission, asking directions, etc.), not structural development (past tense, conditionals, etc.). In essence, a functional syllabus replaces a structural syllabus. There is also less emphasis on error correction as fluency and communication become more important than accuracy. As well, authentic and meaningful language input becomes more important. The class becomes more student-centered as students accomplish their tasks with other students, while the teacher plays more of an observer role."*

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/communicativeapproach.htm>

Although the communicative approach often uses 'immersion' strategies, for our target group teachers should use the first language of the learners for communication and instruction. We

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do advise teachers, however, to use English for social routines e.g. to welcome the participants (How are you, today), to praise them (well done, good, brilliant!), to thank them, etc. English can also be used for communication during breaks (the teacher can, for instance, organize 'an English tea-party' during a break) and in all role play activities. During role play, participants can practise their English skills in 'life-like' situations, without the stress and demands of real life communication in a foreign language (also see 2.4).

More specific principles and methods that we selected – and adapted – for our target group are the Lexical approach and Total Physical Response.



### **Lexical Approach**

The Lexical Approach can be described as:

*"An approach to teaching languages that has a lot in common with the communicative approach, but that also examines how lexical phrases, prefabricated chunks of language, play an important role in producing fluent speech. The lexical approach was first coined by Michael Lewis. The fundamental principle of the lexical approach is "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar." What this means is that lexical phrases offer far more language generative power than grammatical structures. Accordingly, advocates of this kind of approach argue that lexis should move to the center of language syllabuses. Justification for this theory comes from statistical analysis of language which shows that we do indeed speak in chunks and collocations."*

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/lexicalapproach.htm>

In our curriculum, we do not teach – or even discuss – English grammar. Instead, we teach the participants to understand, repeat, and produce ready-made English 'chunks'. The focus is on the one hand on useful social routines (thank you, my name's .. , how are you? etc.), and on the other hand on 'slot phrases':

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standard phrases that participants can use to communicate different intentions, by replacing only 1 word. E.g.: I like .... , I love ..., I am VERY ..... (happy, tired, etc.).

Because we want to teach 'ready-made' English, we teach the participants colloquial English: "I'm" instead of "I am", "I've got" instead of "I have got", "My name's ...", instead of "My name is ..." etc.

For more information about the lexical approach, see

[http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/lexical\\_approach1.shtml](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/lexical_approach1.shtml)

### **Total Physical Response (TPR)**

Our target group learns best 'by doing'. Therefore, we have included many activities that were copied from, inspired by the TPR (Total Physical Response) method.

*TPR is "a teaching technique whereby a learner (usually young learner) responds to language input with body motions. This could be, for example, acting out a chant. This technique was devised by James Asher who noted that children listen and respond with gestures before they speak. One benefit is that TPR allows for low anxiety learning since students don't have the stress of producing language."*

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/glossary/totalphysicalresponsetpr.htm>

TPR activities and games that we have included are:

- Point to the ...
- Show me a ....
- Simon Says
- Pantomime
- Charades.

For more information about TPR, see <http://www.tpr-world.com/>

### **2.3. EFL techniques**

We have found the following EFL techniques to be especially useful for our target group:

#### **Total communication**

Total communication means that the speaker will use all communication codes that the communication partner may need: speech, body language, gestures, signs, written text, pictures, objects, etc. Usually, the speaker will use a combination of codes: speech and gestures, speech and written text, pictures and objects. The teacher can use total communication techniques in his/her communication with the participants; participants can learn to use total communication techniques to express themselves in English. Gestures and body language may help them find and say English words; it will help the communication partner understand (or enable him/her to guess more successfully) what the participant wants to communicate.

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### **Affective feedback**

Affective feedback is when the teacher (or anybody) displays signs about how interested he/she is in trying to understand the participant. These signs come in the form of gestures, facial expressions, and intonations. Positive affective feedback will encourage the learner to continue even if it is clear that the listener cannot fully understand. Negative affective feedback on the other hand will usually stop the learner from speaking.

### **Listening for the gist**

Listening for the gist is a technique that in many ways is the receptive equivalent of Total communication. When you 'listen for the gist', you do not try to understand what someone is saying (or: what someone has written) by focusing on details: pronunciation, words, or phrases. Instead, you use a top-down strategy: you use the situation, language context, intonation, body language, gestures and any other clues, to help you guess what the other person is trying to communicate. It is a technique that the teacher can use when trying to understand a participant, but it is also a very useful technique for the participants to learn. When a teacher 'listens for the gist', she/he will not focus on mistakes that the participant makes, for instance, in the pronunciation or in grammar. Instead, the teacher focuses on the content of the communication: what is the participant trying to communicate?

### **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is when the teacher modifies his/her language to match the language level of the learners. The objective for the teacher is to speak slightly above the learners' level, so that they can learn and grow. Scaffolding is an example of Lev Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development: the gap between a learner's current or actual development level determined by independent problem-solving, and the learner's emerging or potential level of development. By 'scaffolding', the teacher provides the learner with the language ('scaffolds') that the learner needs to bridge this gap.

Scaffolding can be used with respect to articulation (speaks more slowly than usual, enunciate very clearly), vocabulary (use words that the learners know, or that they can guess from the context), sentence structures (short sentences, predictable sentence structures), and content (when introducing new information: use more basic, more predictable language; when introducing new language: use well-known or highly predictable content).

### **Modeling**

In modeling, the teacher shows the participants the correct way of doing or saying something. The teacher is the 'model', that the participants then try to copy. Modeling can be done explicitly, or implicitly.

Explicit modeling is when the teacher clearly says a word or phrase (or acts out a certain behavior) and asks the participants to repeat the word or phrase after him/her. Explicit modeling can be used, for instance, when learning the vocabulary on the flash cards. The teacher can show a flash card to the participants, say the word, and ask the participants to repeat – one by one or as a group. Repetition with the whole group (all together now!) is also called choral chanting. Or: the teacher can point at items (or pictures) in the classroom, say the word, and ask the participants to repeat. The teacher can start by modeling words or phrases slowly. The activity can be made more challenging by picking up the speed, by varying the speed (slow, slow, quick, slow, etc.) and/or by including 'mistakes' that the participants should try to spot.

Implicit modeling is when the teacher 'listens for the gist' of what a participant is trying to communicate and then models the correct English way of saying this. "Yes, this is a house!".

### **Repeated exposure**

Generally speaking, our target group does not learn by means of incidental learning. They will have to be confronted with words and phrases many times over, and in different communicative contexts (also see: communicative drilling). In each unit, a small number of words and phrases is introduced. These same words and phrases are then used in the video clips, in games, activities and worksheets. Because teachers are free to select the units that they want to teach, it was not possible to systematically repeat words and phrases from earlier units in later units. The teacher can do this him/herself, using the flash-cards. All games and worksheets can be modified by the teacher, to add vocabulary from earlier units that needs to be repeated.

### **Communicative drilling**

Drilling means: repeating a word or structure over and over again, until a response becomes automatic. Because of the memory problems many of our participants have, they may need more and more intensive drilling than 'mainstream' learners. Drilling, however, can be boring and frustrating. The objective of communicative drilling is that participants enjoy the drilling activities because they are functional and exciting. In communicative drilling, learners are so busy communicating or playing a game, that they do not even notice that they are drilling (J. Pearson, 1998; [http://www.matefl.org/mqxbroot/page\\_10672.html](http://www.matefl.org/mqxbroot/page_10672.html)).

In each unit, the teacher will find many different activities and games that can be used to drill the same (limited) vocabulary and structures. The Flashcards, the video, and the interactive computer activities can also be used for drilling. In all instances,

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teachers should make sure that drilling activities are communicative and fun.

### **Social routines**

Social routines are very predictable standard social dialogues: when one person says: "thank you", the other says: "You're welcome". When one person says "Good morning", the other will say: "Good morning to you, too."

Social routines are the lubricants in social interaction: they reduce friction and support interaction. Many learners in our target group may not be familiar with social routines, even in their mother tongue. By modeling, discussing, and explicitly drilling English social routines, the teacher can help the participants interact more successfully, both in English and in their mother tongue. Because social routines are highly frequent, predictable and standard, they can provide the participants with quick *and* real success experiences, both in the classroom and in real life.

Whenever possible, the teacher should model and reinforce social phrases such as "Thank you" and "You're welcome", "Well done", "I'm sorry", and "How are you today?". Teachers can model social routines explicitly in their interactions with the participants and in role play they can model them implicitly throughout the day.

We have included several social routines in the video clips and in the worksheets, but what routines teachers should model, and what language and phrases they should use, will also depend on the age and abilities of the learners.

### **Personalization**

In this context, personalization means: making the learning materials personal or individual. In our target group, learners may have very specific interests. One learner may be very interested in football and may know many football players by name, others may be interested in flags, in cars, in animals or numbers. Although the teacher should try to cover the topics and language in the curriculum, s/he can use these special interests to motivate the learners. A participant interested in football should be enabled to learn English football words, a participant interested in numbers should be encouraged to learn the English words for numbers.

The teacher can personalize the lessons beforehand, by selecting units, activities and language that will interest the group, and/or specific learners. All worksheets, Flashcards, the dictionary and even the interactive computer activities can be adapted by the teacher, to include the topics and language that (specific) learners are interested in. Participants can also personalize their own materials: the dictionary and most worksheets have open slots for participants to enter their personal words or phrases.

### 2.4. Activities

In part II of this guide, the teacher will find descriptions of activities that use the principles, methods and techniques described in previous paragraphs. Detailed descriptions of the activities can be found on the activity sheets. This paragraph gives some background information and general tips.

Some activities use video, others music. Some are games, others involve reading and writing. The logo in the right hand corner of the page and the name of each activity will give you an indication of what an activity is about.

For many activities, under the heading 'Variations', teachers will find suggestions how they can adapt the activity to meet the needs of specific participants. In some instances, we have added stars (\*) to the activities. One star activities (\*) are for beginners, three star activities (\*\*\*) are for more advanced learners.



#### What do you remember?

Each unit begins and ends with a 'What do you remember?' activity: a group discussion of the previous lesson (at the start), or the current lesson (at the end of the unit). The objective is to help the participants (re-)activate prior knowledge as well as recently acquired knowledge. The teacher can ask questions about the content of the stories, to help the participants link the topic of the unit to their personal lives. To recycle the vocabulary of the current and/or previous units, we have included Flashcards. The Flashcards show the picture on one side, the English word on the other side. The Flashcards can be used to rehearse the vocabulary, or in game format (Kim's game, memory, mix and match, etc.). At the end of each lesson, participants can select a 'personal' word that they want to remember, from the Flashcards.

Teachers (and learners!) can adapt and make their own Flashcards. If you have a digital photo camera, you can ask participants to make photos of people and objects that are important to them. You can use these photos to make personal Flashcards. For more information about the Flashcards and how to adapt these, see paragraph 4.2.

We have also included interactive computer activities to help the learners learn and remember vocabulary. There are two kinds of activities: the 'Talking Dictionary', and Multiple Choice test.

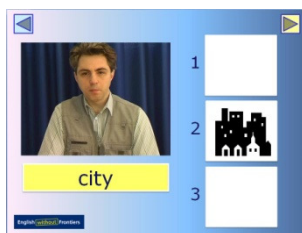
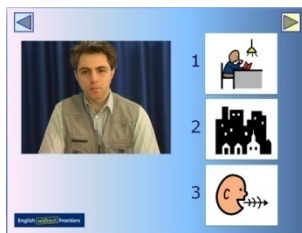


In the "Talking Dictionary" you will see a picture of an object or action and a photo of a face. The participants can try to name the picture. When you click on the photo, you will see and hear a native English speaker say the word. You can play the video as often as is necessary.

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In the Multiple Choice tests, you will see a photo of a face and 3 pictures. If you click on the face, you will see and hear a native English speaker name one of the pictures. The participants decide what the correct picture is. If you click on the correct picture, the other pictures disappear, and the written word appears under the video window. To reinforce the connection between spoken word, written word and meaning (picture), you can play the video again by clicking on the video-window.

You can use the Multiple Choice activities individually or as a group activity. Participants can respond verbally: "city" is the correct answer, or they can say or write down the number of the correct picture. When you click on the arrow, you will go to the next screen, with the next item.

All interactive computer activities can be modified by the teacher, because they were made in PowerPoint. The teacher can remove items, change the order, and/or add his/her own items. If teachers have a video camera, they can record the participants and use these video clips in the exercises. For more information about the interactive computer activities and how to adapt these, see paragraph 4.4. Without PowerPoint, a teacher can still use the Talking Dictionary and the Multiple Choice activities, but s/he will not be able to make any changes in the activities.



### Watch the video

The participants watch short video clips of native English speakers. For the pilot courses, we used video clips of volunteers associated with Leeds Metropolitan University. For the final materials, we co-operated with the inc.Theatre ensemble in London, a theatre group of artists with learning disabilities. Some of the speakers on the DVD have learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities, others are trainers of the ensemble (also see page 11).

Before a video-clip is played, the teacher prepares the participants for the specific topic of the unit. Together with the participants s/he makes a provisional list of vocabulary in the first language of the participants and/or in English. The teacher explains to the participants that they should watch the video, but that they will of course not be able to understand all the words, or any of the words. The teacher may ask the participants to listen for a specific word, or may give each participant a word to listen for. The video can be played a number of times. Then the teacher helps the participants to reconstruct the meaning of the story by asking leading questions, by asking the participants to guess what a word or sentence means, by stimulating the participants to use their expectations and prior knowledge. The main objective of the video clips is to provide the participants with appropriate models of English, in multimedia format. At the same time, the stories provide the context for the lessons and

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coherence between lessons, while the characters (Mike, Jill and Peter) add emotion and purpose.

Three kinds of video clips are included:

1. Video clips of Mike, Jill and Peter telling the learners about their personal lives. Each clip is 2-3 minutes long.
2. Video clips 1-5: short clips of different speakers (male and female), addressing the learners with short, very predictable English phrases or questions. The participants can respond to these clips non-verbally or verbally. Verbal responses can be in the first language of the participant, it can be a simple yes or no, or the participant can repeat (part of) the question. Each unit has 5 easy video clips (1-5); each clip is 30 – 90 seconds long.
3. Video clips 6-10: slightly longer clips that are slightly less predictable. These clips require a verbal response from the participants; participants can respond in L1 or in English.

The specific objectives of watching the video clips will depend on the participants:

Listening:

- Listening and getting used to English pronunciation;
- Recognizing a few words and/or phrases;
- Understanding a few words and/or phrases;
- Understanding the gist of a story.

Speaking

- Repeating a few words and/or phrases;
- Using a few words and/or phrases to respond to a question;
- Role play and spontaneous communication, modeled after the stories on the video.

Reading

- Matching heard words to written words;
- Matching heard sentences to written sentences;
- Putting written sentences in the order of the spoken text.

Writing

- Writing down heard words and/or sentences.



### **Now it's your turn**

Under this heading the teacher will find a number of different activities that are intended to get the participants to use English in an active and productive way.

Included are activities that are inspired by the TPR-methodology: Total Physical Response (see paragraph 2.2). Participants can demonstrate their understanding of English words or phrases by means of a physical response (pointing, showing, acting out), instead of by means of a verbal reaction.



### Role play

Role play activities are included to enable the participants to practise their newly learned skills and language, in (almost) real-life situations. Role play activities vary from simple dialogues ("Introduce yourself to your neighbour, in English"), to more elaborate dramatizations ("Let's pretend that we are in a restaurant; you are the waiter, you are the bartender, the others are customers who want to order").

To make the role play more convincing, you can use props: hats, menus, tea-sets, etc.

If possible: have someone record the role play on video, so that you can watch and discuss it afterwards, with the participants.



### Listen to the music

In each unit, the teacher will find one or two song-based activities. The songs can be used in a number of different ways, depending on the possibilities and interests of the participants, the size of the group, etc.:

- Relaxation: the teacher can use the songs as a moment of relaxation; the participants can just sit back and listen to the music, and discuss whether they like, or don't like the song.
- Recognition of words and/or phrases: the teacher can ask the participants to listen for specific words or phrases in the song.
- Repetition: the participants may be able to repeat or sing along with (part of) the song.
- Production: the participants may be able to sing (part of) the song, karaoke-style.

There are many more ways to use music and songs, to teach English. In section 2.7 we have included a number of websites where more information can be found.

For instance, see

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/chantsraps.htm>



### Play a game

In each unit, the teacher will find a number of games. Each of the games can be adapted (for instance: fewer words, more words, words that are specific requests of the participants). Each of the games can be played again and again, with the same content, or with different content.

Games included are:

- Bingo
- Simon Says ..
- Kim's game
- Charades
- Memory
- Quartets

- Dominoes
- Mix & Match



### **My dictionary**

In each unit, the teacher will find a Dictionary activity. In the materials, we have included an easy bilingual dictionary with pictures, the words of the units, a phonetic transcription of the pronunciation, and the translation in the first language of the participants.

The dictionary was produced in two different formats: a small-sized, ready-made printed dictionary for Germany, Austria, Sweden and Estonia, and an A4-sized 'print your own' dictionary for all other countries. The printed dictionary can be bought from the participating organizations.

The 'print your own' dictionary is included on the CD-ROM, in Word-format. The teacher can add the translations and phonetic transcriptions in the first language of the learners, and/or can add and replace words and pictures. For more information about the dictionary and how to adapt it, see paragraph 4.3.

The teacher can give each participant the entire dictionary at the start of the course or can hand out the pages for the unit s/he is teaching.

The goal of the dictionary activities is to teach the participants how they can use their dictionary to find the meaning and/or pronunciation of English words, and the translation of words into their first language.



### **Read & write**

In each unit we have included a number of 'Read & write' activities. The worksheets are included on the CD-ROM as PowerPoint files, so the teacher can adapt them to meet the needs and interests of the participants. Read & write activities can be done in class: individually, in teams, or as a group activity. Or they can be made as homework by the participants and discussed and corrected afterwards.

For more information about the worksheets and how to adapt them, see paragraph 4.1.

### **2.5. Assessment**

Assessment can have different goals:

- to measure the learners' starting point;
- to measure the learners' ending point: the learning outcome;
- to measure the effectiveness of (a specific aspect of) the curriculum and/or of the teacher.

For our target group, formal quantitative assessment procedures often cannot be used. Even if they *can* be used, the results may have limited validity. If written tests are used, it is difficult to know what is being measured: the reading/writing abilities of the

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learner? Experience with formal written tests? Luck? Or the English skills of the learner? In oral tests, nerves, articulation problems, hearing problems, a dislike for the teacher, and a host of other factors may affect the results.

Nevertheless: assessment is important. Teachers want it, and – if it is done well – participants want it too, because it will give them ‘hard proof’ of their achievements.

However, because of the flexible nature of the *English without Frontiers* curriculum and the heterogeneity of our target group, we have not been able to include formal tests in the curriculum. Instead, in unit 10 we have summarized informal assessment and evaluation procedures that teachers can use to monitor the progress of participants, and/or to measure learning outcomes. These evaluation procedures can be used at the conclusion of a lesson, a unit, or a course.

For a qualitative evaluation of the course, we have included two evaluation forms that participants can complete individually or as a group. The first form is for ‘non-readers’: participants can indicate what they did or did not like in the course by selecting the appropriate smiley face. The second form is for participants who can read or write, or who have someone to assist them when completing the form.

### **2.6. Media & equipment PC Symbols**

The symbols that are used in the worksheets, Flashcards and interactive computer activities are part of the Picture Communication Symbols system (PCS). PCS are published by Mayer-Johnson LLC (©1981–2006 All Rights Reserved Worldwide). The publisher, Mayer-Johnson LLC has granted us permission to use the symbols in this publication.

More information about PCS can be found on Mayer-Johnson’s website: <http://www.mayer-johnson.com/>

From this website, teachers can download a free trial version of Boardmaker. Boardmaker includes a database of 4500 PC Symbols that teachers can use to personalize the worksheets, Flashcards and/or interactive computer activities

(<http://www.mayer-johnson.com/ProductImages/125/content/index.html> )

### **Photos**

In addition to the PC symbols, photos are included in the materials. Some of these photos were made by Pragma for the *English without Frontiers* curriculum. Other photos are copyright-free photos that were downloaded from the internet. All photos were downloaded from: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

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Teachers and participants can add personal photos (made or downloaded by the teacher or the participants themselves) to many activities and worksheets.

(NB: When photos are downloaded from the internet, please respect the copyright of the owner(s).

### **Flashcards**

Small pictures of all Flashcards are included in part II of the Teacher's Guide, at the end of each unit. These are for reference only; the quality and size are not good enough for classroom use. On the CD-ROM, teachers will find PowerPoint files with all Flashcards. These files can be printed on a colour printer, using A4 paper (80 grams, or 120 grams paper). Each card can then be folded in the middle so that the word will be on one side of the card, and the picture on the other side. Cards can be laminated for regular use.

Teachers can print all Flashcards of a Unit, or only the cards with the vocabulary that s/he wants to teach. New Flashcards can be made easily, by 'copy' and 'paste' of the slides in PowerPoint (also see paragraph 4.2).

### **Worksheets**

Pictures of all worksheets have been included in part II of the Teacher's Guide. These pictures are for reference only. On the CD-ROM, teachers will find PowerPoint files with all worksheets. These worksheets can be printed on a colour printer, using A4 paper (80 grams, or 120 grams paper).

### **Dictionary**

The bilingual dictionary (English – German, English – Finnish, etc., also see paragraph 2.4) was produced in two formats: a printed format (for German, Finnish and Estonian), and a 'print your own' format for all other languages.

In the dictionary, words are organized per unit. For each unit, the main words were included. Within a unit, words are organized alphabetically. For some words, useful phrases have been added. All words are illustrated with a PCS picture. Each word has a phonetic transcription of the pronunciation, and the translation of the word or phrase (as it is used in the curriculum), in the mother tongue of the participants. For all units, blank pages have been included for participants to add their personal words. For quick reference, an alphabetical index is included at the back of the dictionary.

The 'print your own' dictionary is included on the CD-ROM, in Word format. Teachers can delete words, modify words, or add words. The 'print your own' dictionary is available in German, Finnish, Dutch and Estonian. Teachers can use the Word file to translate the dictionary into any other language.

The dictionary-pages can be stapled, included in a ring-binder, or stored in a presentation book with transparent pockets.

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### **Video**

Included in the curriculum is a DVD with video clips of English speakers. The video was recorded and edited using 'off the shelf' consumer products (also see paragraph 4.5). The DVD was edited with Adobe Encore DVD 2.0.

The DVD can be played on a (laptop) computer with a software DVD player, or on a regular (portable) DVD player. Videos can be viewed on a large size monitor or television, or they can be projected by means of a projector (beamer).

NB: When the DVD is played on a computer, please check that video and sound are in sync. Also: please check that the audio is loud enough for all participants to hear, and the video large and bright enough for all participants to see.

The DVD will open with a navigation screen that gives access to the navigation screens of the units. The various clips are indicated by thumb-prints of the speakers, as well as by numbers. In the first line, the video clips of the main speakers (Mike, Jill and Peter) are shown. These are the stories that are the central core of the units. In the second line are the easy clips of different speakers, in the bottom line are the more difficult clips (also see paragraph 2.3).

Clicking on a thumbprint will start the video; at the end of the video, you will be returned to the navigation screen. You can play the videos in any order, and as often as you like.

Teachers can make their personal video clips for many activities; for more information about this, see paragraph 4.5.

### **PowerPoint**

All worksheets and Flashcards are provided as PowerPoint files. The PowerPoint files can be printed or displayed as they are, or they can be modified by the teachers or the participants themselves.

PowerPoint files were made with Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 (Microsoft Office, <http://office.microsoft.com/en-gb/PowerPoint/FX100487761033.aspx>) and saved in the 97-2003 compatibility format. PowerPoint was also used for the interactive activities: the Talking Dictionary and the Multiple Choice activities. Although PowerPoint has only limited facilities for test construction, the advantage is that teachers can easily modify these activities themselves. For more information about this, see paragraph 4.4. The PowerPoint files can be used on Windows computers, but also on Macintosh computers.

### **Songs & audio-files**

In some units, songs or audio-files are used. Songs can be played on an mp3-player (with speakers) or on a computer. On the computer, you can use the Windows Media Player, iTunes, or

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another compatible media player.

For a free copy of the Windows Media Player, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/default.mspx>

For a free copy of iTunes (for Mac or Windows) go to:

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

Because of copyright regulations, the songs that are used in the units were not included on the CD-ROM.

Songs can be downloaded legally from sites like:

<http://www.emusic.com/> and

<http://www.iTunes.com>.

NB: when you download songs from the internet, please respect the copyrights of the owners.

The other audio files (e.g. sounds of musical instruments) can be found on the CD-ROM.

### **Computer and printer; photocopier**

To adapt the worksheets and Flashcards, teachers will need a Windows or Macintosh computer. To print the worksheets and Flashcards, a (colour) printer is needed. In part II of this guide, pictures of the worksheets and Flashcards are included. If no computer or printer is available, these can be multiplied on a photocopier. The quality of the copies, however, will be less than when the PowerPoint files are printed directly.

### **Flipchart or blackboard**

For most activities, the teacher will need a flipchart or blackboard.

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### 2.7. Websites with additional information and materials

#### PCS & Boardmaker:

- <http://www.mayer-johnson.com/ProductImages/125/content/index.html>

#### Line drawings for EFL teaching:

- <http://tell.fl.purdue.edu/JapanProj/FLClipart/>

#### Copyright free photographs:

- <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

#### Windows Media Player:

- <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/default.mspx>

#### iTunes:

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

#### Sounds, songs and raps:

- <http://www.songsforteaching.com/chantsraps.htm>
- <http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Cottage/3192/>
- <http://www.findsounds.com/>

#### Audio for ESL:

- Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab, <http://www.esl-lab.com/>
- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/download/audio/text/text.shtml>

#### Materials, lesson plans, worksheets:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/index.shtml>
- <http://bogglesworldesl.com/>

#### Suggestions for using Flashcards:

- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/resources/Flashcard.shtml>

#### Suggestions for using video:

- [http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/resources/video\\_young1.shtml](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/resources/video_young1.shtml)
- [http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/resources/video\\_young2.shtml](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/resources/video_young2.shtml)

#### On-line activities:

- <http://www.pdictionary.com/>

#### Make your own crossword-puzzles:

- <http://www.puzzle-maker.com/CW/>
- <http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/create.html>
- [http://www.teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/crossword/](http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/crossword/)

#### Print your own award or certificate:

- <http://www.123certificates.com/>

## 3. Barrier-Free Language Learning

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### 3.1 The project

*Barrier-Free Language Learning* was the name of a European project that was partially funded under the Socrates Programme, Lingua Action 2 (225713-CP-1-2005-1-SE-LINGUA-L2). It was a 2-year project that started in October 2005. The project had 3 distinct objectives:

- to demonstrate that adult learners with intellectual disabilities *can* and *want to* learn foreign languages;
- to develop and evaluate an experimental pilot course to teach English as a Foreign Language to adult learners with intellectual disabilities. The name of the pilot course is *English without Frontiers*;
- To use the results of the pilot course to outline a common framework and methodology for teaching foreign languages to adult learners with learning disabilities.

This Teacher's Guide is the result of this project. Part I explains our views and experiences with respect to the teaching of foreign languages in general, and English in particular to learners with intellectual disabilities. Part II of this guide contains the *English without Frontiers* curriculum: 10 units, activities and materials.

### 3.2 The consortium

Partners in the Barrier-Free Language Learning project were:

#### **Svefi Academy (SE),**

Svefi Academy is a Swedish, independent adult education centre, organized as a non-profit association. Svefi Academy contributes to raising the level of education, bridging knowledge gaps, broadening the interest in culture and increasing people's social commitment. Svefi Academy is located in Haparanda, in the North of Sweden.

The tasks of Svefi Academy included the co-ordination of the project; and pilot tests of various units of the English without Frontiers curriculum with adult learners at Svefi Academy (see 3.3). The transferability of the methods and materials into other languages was tested at Svefi Academy in Haparanda by using them for teaching of Finnish as a foreign language (see 3.4).

#### **Pragma - Equal Access (NL) [www.equalaccess.nl](http://www.equalaccess.nl)**

Pragma is a small research and consultancy company in the Netherlands, that is specialized in access to information for people with disabilities. Pragma has many years of experience in the development of guidelines for accessible texts, websites and learning materials for learners with disabilities, including learners with intellectual disabilities.

In the Barrier-Free Language Learning project, Liesbeth Pyfers of Pragma was the first author of the Teacher's Guide and responsible for the methodology, the materials, the video and the interactive computer activities.

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### **School of Languages Leeds Metropolitan University (UK)** **www.leedsmet.ac.uk**

Leeds Metropolitan University is a higher education corporation. It is one of the largest universities in the UK, with over 41.000 students. The academic programmes delivered range from University Certificate to PhD.

The Postgraduate Unit in the School of Languages specialises in materials development for English language teaching. The unit delivers an MA in Materials Development for Language Teachers and various short courses in materials development for teachers.

In the Barrier-Free Language Learning project, Dr. Ivor Timmis of the School of Languages contributed to the Teacher's Guide, the methodology and the materials. The first teacher training course for the English without Frontiers curriculum was organized at Leeds Metropolitan University, in September 2007.

### **Ulm School of Adult Education (DE) www.vh-ulm.de**

The Ulmer Volkshochschule is an institution for further education and training for adults, with a special women's academy, a night school and a "culture studio" for children and adolescents. The Ulmer Volkshochschule has about 18.000 participants annually. A wide choice is offered in political, general and cultural education, language school, vocational training, health courses and special programmes for specific target groups, such as for learners with intellectual or physical disabilities, summer school for persons with disabilities, especially for adults with intellectual and/or learning disabilities. The Ulmer Volkshochschule organized a number of pilot courses to evaluate the methodology and materials developed in the project (see 3.3).

### **biv integrativ - Akademie für integrative Bildung (AT)** **www.biv-integrativ.at**

Biv Integrativ is an association that is specialized in the development, organization and accomplishment of training programmes for persons with intellectual disabilities and their assistants, in the whole of Austria.

Biv Integrativ organized a number of pilot courses to evaluate the methodology and materials at the Volkshochschule Meidling in Vienna (see 3.3).

### **Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (EE)** **www.astangu.ee**

Astangu Centre operates under the administration of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Estonia. The main function of the Centre is to provide social, pedagogical, vocational rehabilitation and physiotherapeutic services to persons with special needs.

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The main goal of the Centre is to contribute to the social coping of people with special needs and to support their transfer to the labour market. Astangu Centre is the only organisation providing multidisciplinary vocational rehabilitation in Estonia. Astangu Centre tested the methodology of materials with students at the centre (see 3.3).

### 3.3 The pilot tests

The pilot courses were organized at different stages during the development of the methodology and materials, in order to test their usability and effectiveness. Standardized questionnaires were used to evaluate the courses. In some instances independent observers collected quantitative and qualitative data. In this paragraph you will find short descriptions of these pilot courses. In the boxes you will find quotes from participants.

#### **Svefi Academy, Haparanda (SE)**

The pilot group at Svefi Academy had initially five participants, later four. The participants were between 43 to 56 years old. Two of them had both intellectual and learning disabilities, but two of them had only learning difficulties. Two participants had studied English before in school, but only one knew and was able to use quite a lot of words and sentences. Two participants studied English for the first time, but were able to recognise many words that they had heard and seen on TV-shows and films. There were six lessons of 2,5 hours with a half an hour break. Only one teacher was involved.

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*"This is fun!"*

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According to the evaluation questionnaire two learners didn't like the videos that much, two were happy with them but everybody enjoyed the worksheets and playing Bingo a lot. The topics were interesting too.

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*"Dear me, I understand what they are saying!"*

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50% thought the course was ok, 50% thought it was a little bit boring. In spite of this 'boring', all the learners enjoyed the lessons. In the beginning two participants didn't like working in the group but it got better. One learner wanted to take the DVD home. The Flashcards were very helpful when repeating the new words and completing the worksheets. Sometimes the symbols were not so easy to interpret on the Flashcards and worksheets. The teacher at Svefi is not acquainted with the TPR and found it difficult to see where and how it should be implemented in the activities.

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*"It is nice to follow Jill's and Mike's life! I wonder what is going to happen next!"*

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In general the feedback seems very encouraging, in spite of some negative thoughts.

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*"It was about time for him to move to his own flat!"  
(In a discussion about Mike's age)*

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### **Ulmer Volkshochschule Ulm (DE)**

Our first course was in May 2006 called »Easy English«. All together, we had three meetings of two hours each (120 minutes). We had six participants from 17 to 45 years, mainly women. The two teachers were Barbara Sautter and Nicole Dennis, both teachers of the Gustav-Werner-Schule, the school of intellectually disabled pupils in Ulm. In this first course, we used pilot video clips of Mike and Jill to see whether video clips are helpful and usable.

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*"It's not so difficult to speak English".*

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Our second course ran from October to December 2006. Now, we had ten meetings of 2 hours each (120 minutes). We had seven participants from 17 to 50 years. The teacher was Nicole Dennis, helped by an assistant (a trainee). Nicole tested a very early draft version of the Units 1 to 5.

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*"How does the video story continue?"*

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Our last course was in May 2007 (Friday evening and Saturday). All together, this course took seven hours. The two teachers were Barbara Sautter and Nicole Dennis (see above). Once more we had six participants (from 17 to 50 years) and we tested Unit 7.

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*"I understand more English words than I ever expected."*

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All our participants were persons with intellectual disabilities. Only a few of them were able to speak some English words (after the course they were almost native speakers! ;-), only few of them were able to read German words.

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*"When does the next course start?"*

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Part of every lesson was a teatime-break. Tea and English biscuits were served and the teachers asked questions about the current situation, in English. So the breaks were used as good opportunities to speak and listen to English in a casual way.

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*"Bingo!"*

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### **biv integrativ, Vienna (AT)**

Biv Academy tested the units from 1 to 5 and divided the participants into a beginner's course and an advanced course. Both groups had seven participants, two trainers and one assistant. Both groups had ten lessons of 100 minutes. The participants' abilities in reading and writing and also their prior knowledge of English varied fairly much. A couple of learners in the beginner's course found the course too difficult; there were a few "false beginners".

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*"I want to learn an English birthday song."*

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All participants completed questionnaires at the end of the course. According to the questionnaires everybody in both groups enjoyed the lessons very much. They liked the topics and enjoyed the videos. The evaluations also showed that the participants highly appreciated the *Read & write* activities, even though many of them could not fill in the worksheets themselves, because of their disability. Playing memory can be a good activity for those who are not able to do the worksheets.

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*"We want to hear a song of the "Fantastics"*

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There was very strong identification with the video characters in both groups. The learners were so interested in Mike and Jill that the teachers had to make up more stories about them.

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*"I want to know how the stories go on!"*

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### **Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Tallinn (EE)**

The pilot group at Astangu Centre had 12 participants in two six-member groups. All of them had intellectual disabilities and four of them learning disabilities but all of them were able to read and write. One participant had a partial hearing loss. The participants were between 17-44 of age. Four participants had quite good knowledge of English because they had studied it in school before. For seven participants it was the first time to study English but they knew some basic words. There were eight sessions of 40 minutes. One teacher was teaching in both groups.

The material was tested with the same groups in two different periods, one in the beginning of the studies and the other at the end of their one year course.

At the beginning everything was new for them and the result was that they became highly motivated to proceed with the studying of English.

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*"When is the next pilot course?"*

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# English without Frontiers

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When the second period of testing started they still remembered Mike and Jill and during the breaks they were imitating their way of speaking. Most of them liked the worksheets and they enjoyed finishing or repeating these at home. The most popular games were Bingo and Simon says.

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*"Are we going to play Bingo today?"*

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The topics were interesting, the only one drawing less attraction was Unit 4, My Hobbies.

Six participants didn't like working in the group and one participant was bored with the course.

The part of each lesson everybody enjoyed was listening to the songs and the favourite one was "Grandma's Feather Bed", especially the video-version with the Muppets.

All the teacher's instructions were clear and easy to follow. According to the questionnaires the teacher and the participants in both groups enjoyed the course.

Meeting again this year with some of the participants, their first question they asked was "How far is the program now? Are we going to use it this year again?"

### **3.4 Transfer of the methodology to other languages**

Parts of the "English without Frontiers" material were tested during a summer course in Finnish for beginners, which lasted for five days (June 25–28, 2007).

The test group consisted of five participants, ages 21 – 53. None of them had intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties. Their motive for participating in the course was their interest in the Finnish language; they were all beginners and had Swedish as their native language.

"English without Frontiers" was not the main material of this course and only the two first units were translated and tested. Videos were made in Finnish according to the talking heads model of EWF. The idea with the story of these two persons and every-day-life themes is very natural and can easily be adapted into different cultures and languages.

No major problems were found in translating the material into Finnish, even though the structure of Finnish differs from the Germanic languages; the Finnish language uses case forms instead of prepositions, for example. These forms need, of course, to be explained and compared with prepositions.

Photos in the worksheets were, for obvious reasons, replaced by signs in Finnish and buildings that can be found in Finland. Pictures of for example a bank, a post office, a policeman, a

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wine bottle, a sofa, a hotel etc. were used since the objects are easy to recognize but also because the Finnish word is not very different from its English or Swedish equivalent. The choice of using words and pictures which are international helps the learners and reduces the impression of Finnish being a difficult language. One teacher was involved and tested the adapted material during two lessons (of 90 minutes each) during two days; not all the material in unit 2 was tested. The evaluation was carried out through discussion and the participants were able to give their comments directly after the lessons.

The video clips with the talking heads were very much appreciated by the participants; they listened very carefully and intensively when Henry and Johanna (as the Finnish main characters are called) presented themselves, even though they could not understand everything. And when listening to the short presentations of other players/persons they could understand quite well. At the end of the course, when listening to the longer presentations again, they were happy to be able to understand the contents. And furthermore, they could introduce themselves by the phrases that were used by Henry/Johanna. The participants appreciated the variety of exercises, it activated and challenged them to actually speak Finnish and use the few phrases they had learnt, even outside the classroom.

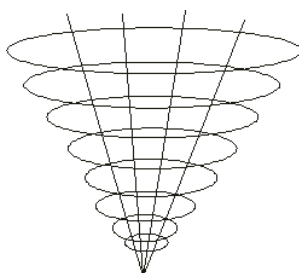
With the help of the method and the techniques which are used in "English without Frontiers" the teacher/trainer has a possibility to create his/her own material. This means mainly PowerPoint and Flashcards with pictures which refer to the culture and language to be taught.

### 3.5 Additional units

In the 24 months of the Barrier-Free Language Learning project, 10 Units were developed to teach English as a Foreign Language to adult learners with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties: 9 units with different topics, and unit 10 with suggestions for assessment activities.

Teachers who want to continue teaching English to the target group can easily use the *English without Frontiers* framework and templates to develop additional units.

Depending on the interests and abilities of the participants and the teacher, this can be done in two different ways.



#### **Spiral curriculum**

Teachers' can apply Jerome Bruner's idea of the spiral curriculum (see: <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/bruner.htm>)

to the *English without Frontiers* curriculum. In a spiral curriculum, teachers use the same topic or content at different levels of complexity. At each higher level, earlier learned information and

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language is recycled, and new information and language added. New elements are carefully integrated into the whole of what has gone before.

To develop additional units for *English without Frontiers*, teachers can recycle units 1-9, with new words, phrases and challenges added to each unit. Participants can watch the same videos of Mike and Jill, but with less help from the teacher. For instance, instead of responding to the video clips, they can use the clips as models to be used in role play. Teachers can ask more challenging questions, additional vocabulary can be introduced, in a greater variety of sentences.

### **New units, new topics**

Alternatively, teachers can 'recycle' the format of unit 1-9, with new content. That is: activities and worksheets from units 1-9 are used, but the topics, language and pictures are new.

Suggestions for new topics:

#### *11. Going to the zoo*

Animal names, animal sounds, animal characteristics (big, dangerous, etc.), animal movement (fly, walk, run, jump, crawl) and: my favorite animal is ... , I like ..., I don't like .... , etc.

See: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/lyrics/mcdonald.htm> for "Old MacDonald's had a farm", lyrics and mp3.

See: <http://www.kidsplanet.org/games/js/whoami.html> for animal sounds.

#### *12. What's the weather?*

It is raining / snowing today, tomorrow the sun will shine, it is warm, cold, wet, etc. Reading the weather forecast in the newspaper or on the internet. Listening to the weather report on television or on the radio. Starting a conversation about the weather.

See: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/lyrics/weather.htm> for a 'weather song', and sites about the weather.

#### *13. My favorite foods*

Food words & tastes (good, bad, salty, sweet, etc.). I like, I don't like. My favourite food is ....

A tasting contest: blindfolded participants guess what they are eating. An English tea party or dinner.

Reading recipes in English.

#### *14. "The Fantastics"*

More information about Mike and Jill's band "The Fantastics"; texts of English pop songs, language that is used in songs and in interviews of famous musicians. Vocabulary: soft – loud, fast – slow, words for musical instruments.

Participants can search the internet for information and pictures of

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their favorite band.

### *15. My job*

Job-related vocabulary: work, job, boss, money. Professions and their attributes. Daily routines: I start at 9 o'clock. We have coffee at 11 o'clock, etc.

### *16. My favorite soap*

Watch and discuss favorite English or American soap operas: The Bold and the Beautiful, Days of our Lives, Friends, etc. On the internet, most of these shows have their own website with photos, video, and background information. Recognize the actors and their relationships (friend, lover, husband, wife, daughter, etc.). Understand 'typical' phrases. Practise sentences like "I love you", "Will you marry me", "I want a divorce", etc. Write your own soap, act it out, and record it on video.

### *17. Visit our website!*

Typical English internet words that you need for surfing the internet. How to find pictures, people, information that the participants are interested in.

On the project's website [www.englishwithoutfrontiers.eu](http://www.englishwithoutfrontiers.eu), you will find pages with updates from Mike and Jill, that the participants can visit.

### *18. Let's mail!*

Common English words and phrases that are used in email and Instant Messaging (MSN). Emoticons. How to read and write email. How to chat in English.

### *19. The Special Olympics*

Sports, countries, flags. Winning and losing. Verbs: jumping, swimming, throw the ball, kick the ball, catch the ball.

On the website of the Special Olympics

<http://www.specialolympics.org> you will find stories and pictures of sports, athletes, etc.

### *20. The English way*

English proverbs and idioms: 'it's raining cats and dogs', 'fit as a fiddle', etc. (for many examples, see [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English\\_proverbs](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English_proverbs)). Discuss the meaning of the English proverb or idiom, translate literally into L1, compare with L1 proverbs or idioms that have the same meaning. Practise using the proverb/idiom, in the right context. Discuss and explain other examples (and/or stereotypes) of English culture: driving on the left hand side of the road, bowler hats, umbrellas, the 'full English breakfast'.

# English without Frontiers

## 4. DIY: Adapting & Making Materials

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### 4.1 Worksheets

All worksheets can be found on the CD-ROM.

You will find the worksheets in the folder for each unit. All worksheets are made in PowerPoint. Open the PowerPoint file and click on the worksheet that you want to adapt.

Pictures and words can be modified or added with the regular PowerPoint tools. If you want to replace PC symbols, see paragraph 2.6 for more information about PCS and where you can find more symbols.

If you want to make new worksheets: find a worksheet that is similar to the one that you want to make, select the slide in PowerPoint, and copy and paste it. You can then make any changes that you want.

Take care to always save the modified PowerPoint file under a new name.

### 4.2 Flashcards

Open the PowerPoint file with the Flashcards that you want to modify. Use copy and paste to make new cards (you can copy and paste one card, or several cards at a time).

If you want to replace PC symbols, see paragraph 2.6 for more information about PCS and where you can find more symbols. Because the cards are printed on A4 pages and will be folded, the words on the cards are printed upside-down. When folded, the words will be right-side up.

To help you keep track of cards, always add the number of the unit that the card belongs to.

Cards are best printed on a colour printer, folded, and laminated.

### 4.3 Dictionary

A Word-file with the dictionary can be found on the CD-ROM. You can make your own pages, or have participants do this themselves. You can use your own (or the participants') digital photos, you can download pictures from the internet, or you can use PC symbols or pictures from another symbol set that the participants are familiar with. For information where to find PC symbols, see paragraph 2.6.

When you translate the words into your own language, make sure that for each word or phrase, you use the translation that is appropriate in the context of that unit.

When you write the phonetic transcription of the pronunciation, try and find a balance between writing the exact pronunciation, and writing a word that the participants can read and pronounce.

### 4.4 Interactive activities

The interactive computer activities are made in PowerPoint.

In the Multiple Choice format, each item consists of two slides: the slide with the question, and the slide with the answer. You can re-order slides, remove slides or add slides, but you will always have to keep the sets of two slides, question and answer, together.

Audio and/or video can be added, using the regular PowerPoint tools. Video files can be .avi, mpeg or .wmv files.

# English without Frontiers

## 4. DIY: Adapting & Making Materials

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### **4.5 Video**

New video can be made with a digital camera or with an analogue camera. If an analogue camera is used, you will have to digitize it before you can edit it on the computer.

Digital video can be captured using standard consumer software. Easy to use and free is Windows MovieMaker. Video can be cut into clips and saved in the required format.

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