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# HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS



Generalitat de Catalunya  
Departament d'Ensenyament  
Centre de Formació d'Adults Catalònia



Erasmus+



# CREATIVE METHODOLOGY



Erasmus+

LANGUAGE  
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# CONTENT

- 「1.」 Creative methodology and creativity
- 「2.」 The main features of creative methodology
- 「3.」 Advantages and disadvantages
- 「4.」 Teaching adults creatively – our outcomes and findings
- 「5.」 Motivation
- 「6.」 FOCUS ON SPEAKING
  - 「1.」 Dialogue – 7-6-5-4-3-2-1
  - 「2.」 Alphabet dialogues
  - 「3.」 Repetition - dialogues
  - 「4.」 Couples
  - 「5.」 Striped dialogues
  - 「6.」 Correspondence
  - 「7.」 Description of pictures
  - 「8.」 Discussion - Brainstorming
  - 「9.」 What would you do...
  - 「10.」 30 second debate
  - 「11.」 Speed dating – job interview

## 「7.」 FOCUS ON WRITING

- 「1.」 Instant writing
- 「2.」 Essay in steps
- 「3.」 Use the word
- 「4.」 Shouting game
- 「5.」 Text adaptations
- 「6.」 Consecutive writing
- 「7.」 Conditional practice
- 「8.」 Rewriting story
- 「9.」 Message in the bottle
- 「10.」 My place / My eye
- 「11.」 Four - step story

# 1. CREATIVE METHODOLOGY AND CREATIVITY

Are you creative?

What is creativity?

Creativity – is an essential and important component of the 21. century approach to teaching. The world, education and the methods we use have been changing and if we want to succeed we will have to change the way we teach as it might not be appropriate in the future.

Creativity and creative thinking is one of the key to success. Creative pedagogy involves both creative teaching and creative learning, so if we want to create creative environment and apply this approach we have to start with ourselves and become more creative teachers. Erasmus plus provided us with the opportunity to experience and implement creative methodology in our school and share our findings and knowledge we gained during mobilities within the project LOGS with our partners. Our teachers took part in mobilities within KA1 Erasmus plus program and were trained to use creative activities and methodology to motivate our students and enhanced language

Are your students creative?

Can you develop creativity in your classroom?

teaching especially to adults learners.

Creativity is the skill of bringing about something new and valuable into existence.

**Our aim was not to discover something completely new but to look at things from a fresher, different angle of perspective and to produce, renewed, different alternatives.** The main idea is that we can use traditional methods but we have to alter them in order to create creative environment and thus make teaching and learning more enjoyable and motivating.

The main attributes associated with creative teachers:

- flexibility
- being open to new ideas
- being imaginative



## 2. THE MAIN FEATURES OF CREATIVE METHODOLOGY

*The main features of creative methodology : (Dörnyei, Zoltan (2001) Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press.)*

### **Challenge:**

tasks in which learners solve problems, discover something, overcome obstacles, or find information

### **Interesting content:**

topics that students already find interesting and that they would want to read about outside of class, such as stories we find about sports and entertainment personalities we find on YouTube and the internet

### **The personal element:**

activities that make connections to the learners' lives and concerns

### **The novelty element:**

aspects of an activity that are new or different or totally unexpected

### **The intriguing element:**

tasks that concern problematic, controversial, contradictory material stimulate curiosity

### **Individual choice:**

they look for tasks which give students a personal choice. For example students can choose their own topics to write about in an essay or choose their own topics and group members in a discussion activity.

### **Tasks that encourage risk taking:**

they don't want their students to be so worried about making mistakes that they feel reluctant to take part in activities. Reward them for effort and not only for success.

### **Tasks that encourage original thought:**

activities that require an original response. So instead of comprehension questions after a reading passage that test recall, they seek to use tasks that encourage a personal and individual response to the what the student has read.

### **The fantasy element:**

activities that engage the learners' fantasy and that invite the learners to use their imagination for creating make-believe stories, identifying with fictional characters or acting out

### 3. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

#### **The main advantages :**

- the activities and techniques are adaptable to a variety of learners and situations
- easy to use
- by giving learners creative exercises, we force them to think creatively,
- they become self - confident.  
students are more motivated, inspired or challenged – creativity promotes
- active learning
- creative work in the language classroom can lead to genuine communication and co-operation. Creative tasks enrich classroom
- fun both for teachers and students – if we step out of our routine, we 'll find lessons more enjoyable

#### **Possible disadvantages or difficulties:**

- noisy and busy environment
- students might be more distracted
- introverts might not like such activities
- the same activities must be altered according to the needs and requirements of learners

#### **What results can be expected?**

- when learners use the language to do the creative task, they use it as a tool - in its original function.
- switch from teacher – centred to student – centred learning
- motivation leads to interest , students are involved
- freedom of expression -communication is more open, learners have the opportunity to express themselves, they stop worrying about grammar, accuracy, they focus on fluency
- reduced stress
- showing their emotions in a creative manner, learners build up their confidence
- improves focus and attention

## 4. TEACHING ADULTS CREATIVELY – OUR OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

*As adults represent a special group of learners we tried to choose several activities using creativity and find the best ways to enhance their learning. We tested whether these activities suit adults needs and whether learners are more active.*

### **Our outcomes and findings:**

- adults like fun and teaching through playing
- creative tasks make learners feel free and allow them to get engaged such activities create positive atmosphere and provide space for unique ideas
- when planning a lesson, remember to incorporate learners' interests into lessons (you have to know your students if you want to prepare suitable activities)
- people are curious, it is natural so why not to take advantage of this and thus motivate learners
- working in groups or pairs is a crucial thing - connections among learners help create a supportive classroom environment and cooperation.
- if students work in pairs, they have more opportunities to speak, get to know each other and develop mutual understanding.

Teaching languages creatively is much more challenging than traditional methods, but it's worth it. Creative teachers bring more to class than just a knowledge of teaching. In this handbook we have chosen several activities that we would like to provide you with.



## 5. MOTIVATION

*Is one of the key factors of creative methodology. We offer you some ideas that you might find inspiring.*

### **Reflecting on effort**

Expecting constant effort may be unrealistic. Discuss when effort is most necessary and encourage students to use it in short, targeted bursts. For example, *We're going to try and memorize something, so I need five minutes of hard effort. Can you do that?*

### **Acknowledging feelings**

Acknowledging that students have lives and difficulties outside the classroom helps break down any resentment towards being in the class. Allow students to rate their feelings at the beginning of class on a scale of 1-10, e.g. from 1 = rubbish to 10 = totally cool and discuss scores if they wish.

### **Student-centred decision**

Encourage students to participate in classroom decision-making. Ask *How many questions do you think we need to practise? Or Do you want a break now or in ten minutes?* Invite them to decide which materials are most useful for the class and to explain why.

### **Self-esteem warmers**

Build self-esteem with warmer activities. For example, invite everyone to give a compliment to the person next to them. Ask them to walk around the classroom and give a compliment to as many classmates as possible. Alternatively, show images of self-confident people and ask students to imagine themselves in the bodies of those people. Tell them to sit like them, copy their expression, say what they are thinking, etc.

### **Sharing experiences**

Let students write and pass to you */anonymously/* a slip of paper with a fact about themselves that they want to share. */e.g. I went to Disneyland last year./* Write the facts on the board and invite the class to find the people they apply to by asking questions */Did you go to Disneyland recently?/*

## Experience questionnaires

Focus on future needs or expectations. Try including questions that allow students to refer to past experiences. This will help avoid triggers that weaken motivation. Questions you could include are: *What was your favourite activity in your last English class? Which learning activities did you hate doing?*

## Word/s of the day

Start lesson with a word of the day that has a topical relevance. For example, you could write on the board *performance* on the day of their school concert, or the word *soaking* on a wet day. Ask student to guess why you've chosen it.

## Emotion drills

Drill words and phrases in a way that communicates their meaning. Have students say *noisy* loudly, *hungry* weakly or *crazy* in a silly way. Then have students say the words in an opposite way, saying *crazy* in a sensible tone...

## Word association

As a warmer or filler activity, have two students sit opposite each other, with the third acting as the referee. Student A thinks of a word, then B thinks of a word associated, and so on in turn. The referee decides whether the associations are strong enough.

## Reflect on motivation /future self-guide/

Ask students to work in groups and discuss why they are there in the classroom learning English. Write the reasons on the board in two categories. On the left put ideas connected with their current lives, and on the right those connected with their future lives. If some reasons could relate to both, ask students to clarify. Add the column headings *My life now* and *My future*. Then ask which reasons they think are more exciting or important.

## Adverts for English

Have students bring in printed adverts and ask them to identify what they are promising. For example, an advert for trainers may imply that their owners will gain sporting success. Then ask students what they would promise a buyer if they were selling English lessons to them. Have them create an advert for English lessons and vote for the most persuasive one.

## Identifying with students

Using yourself as a role model can be a good way of helping your students to identify with you and to believe that success is possible. Talk about what you were and weren't able to do in English at their age, focusing on things that they do better than you could.

## One sentence project

Find a YouTube video of the *One Sentence Project* showing young people reading sentences in the third person, such as *He was a very patient father*. Ask who the young people might have been talking about /themselves from a future viewpoint/. Then ask students to imagine what they would like others to say about them in the future. Then ask them to discuss how English can help them become that person.

## Thank you from the future

Ask students what they would prefer to be doing now rather than being in class. Now have them write a thank you letter from their future self to their present self, thanking them for their sacrifice. Have students read each other's letters.

## Opening conversation

At the start of the lesson, dedicate five minutes to conversation unrelated to the lesson. Remain seated to appear as an equal and join conversation students are already having. End the conversation with an invitation to join you in learning, such as *Shall we do some learning now?* Regain authority and students' confidence with an assertive *Good afternoon, class. Welcome to your English lesson.*

## Grouping by response

We can often see who is most motivated when we invite students to stand. Give those students who stand up first the instructions for the task you've planned and invite them to find two or three other students to perform the task with.

## Sharing expertise

Ask students to prepare a short presentation on something they know a lot about. They could demonstrate something, hold a question-and-answer session about their hobby or prepare some photos to share with the class.

# FOCUS SPEAKING ON



2017-1-SE01-KA204-034572



# 1. DIALOGUE – 7-6-5-4-3-2-1

*Students work in pairs – the task is to prepare and present a short dialogue consisting of 7 lines. Student A starts a dialogue with 7 words, student B must respond and prepare a sentence (or a question) containing 6 words, student A can continue with 5 words ..... They have to finish the dialogue with one word.*

## **Example:**

A: Your Majesty, welcome and help my country.

B: Certainly, I will do my best.

A: I wish people loved me.

B: Be honest and nice.

A: It is impossible.

B: How sad.

A: Why?

To make dialogue more interesting, prepare masks (faces of famous people – celebrities, politicians, sportsmen, singers...) Students present their dialogues with masks on their faces.



## 2. ALPHABET DIALOGUES

This is an activity which consists of 26 lines of dialogue. The first line starts with a given letter (say 'A'). The reply to that line must start with a 'B', and so on, until the whole alphabet has been covered (you can leave out the letters K, Q, X and Z unless you want to make it really challenging!). After 'Y' comes 'A'. Students that hesitate or use the wrong letter 'Die'. The next student continues the dialogue. One possibility is to give several “filler” or “hesitation” words or sounds in English that they could use:

A - Anyway,

B - But

C - Come think of

D - Doesn't that mean...?

E - Errr

F - Fine, but...

G - Good point

H - Hmm...

I - I'd say...

J - Just a minute

L - Let me see,

M - Mmm

O - Oh, but

P - Put another way...

R - Right

S - So

T - Talking about

U - Umm..

V - Very interesting

W - Well

Y - Yes

### Example:

Are you sure we haven't met before?

Barcelona, last year.

Come on, you really don't remember?

Do you think I should?

Eight months ago, Tartu, ICT conference.

Fine, but to be honest, I have never been there.

Great, now I look like an idiot.

### 3. REPETITION - DIALOGUES

*When it comes to classroom speaking activities, give emphasis to real-life situation, authentic activities and meaningful tasks to promote communication. Many adults need also controlled speaking practice. They feel more confident if they can rely on some patterns, scripted dialogues and later they are able to experiment and create their own dialogues*

- 「1.」 Choose a short dialogue (can be something from a coursebook, after listening or reading comprehension) try to focus on meaningful tasks and dialogues. Or you can choose two dialogues, cut the sentences, mix them up and ask students to reorder them within a time limit.
- 「2.」 The main aim is to learn, memorise phrases used in a dialogue and to be able to use them in real – life situations.
- 「3.」 The dialogue shouldn't be too long. First, the learners have to read it and try to remember as much as possible. Then one of the learners can read his part, whereas the second one has to play his part without reading it, if he doesn't remember everything, he can improvise. Then they take turns. Finally, they both have to present the dialogue without reading.
- 「4.」 Another option is that they can learn the dialogues reading them and simulate various situations (they have to pretend they are 5 – year old children, or they are in the library and have to whisper or they are on the phone talking to their grandmother who is nearly deaf....) In fact through the repetition they gain confidence and can make their own dialogues, experiment with the language they know.

## 4. COUPLES

- Print out portraits of different men and women. (If you have a group of 20 students, prepare 12 – 13 photos of men and 12 – 13 photos of women.)
- Pair up your students and ask them to choose 2 portraits and create a couple.
- Set your students one or several tasks:
  1. Describe the characters of the two people.
  2. How did they get together? Write/say a story.
  3. Describe the house/the flat they live in.
  4. Tell us about their favourite song.
  5. Why does he love her? Why does she love him? Explain.
  6. Imagine a dialogue from their first date.
  7. Imagine a dialogue from their first argument.
  8. Explain the problems they may have in their relationship.
  9. Tell us about their plans for the future.
  10. Write his letter to her/write her letter to him.





## 5. STRIPED DIALOGUES

Give each student 6 (or more) stripes of paper. Ask them to write down at least two affirmative sentences, two negative sentences and two questions, two imperatives, one sentence per stripe. The instructions can vary if you want your students to practice specific grammar or vocabulary. Collect the stripes and shuffle them. Give the class 2 names, explain the relationship between the two people and the situation. Ask two students to start the role-play. Each time you clap your hands, one of the students in the pair picks a stripe from the pile and they try to integrate the sentence from the stripe into the running dialogue. Let the students continue for a few minutes. Then offer the students another situation and continue the activity with at least two more pairs of students.

## 6. SHOUTING GAME

Prepare natural pairs of words (e.g. summer/winter, coffee/tea, red wine/white wine, Manchester United/Manchester City, ...)

Make sure your students have enough space in the classroom. Say the first word (summer) and make a sign with your left hand, say the second word (winter) and make a sign with your right hand. The students form groups on your left/right side according to their preferences. Those who are not decided, stay in the middle. The aim of the two decided groups is to shout arguments in order to persuade the students in the middle to come to their group.

## 7. DESCRIPTION OF PICTURES

Choose real- life situations, bring your photos and display them using the projector or interactive whiteboard. Ask your students to guess and speculate about the photograph.

Who are these people? What are they doing? Where are they? Who took the photo? Why do you keep it?



Listen to students 'descriptions and then tell them your version. Point out that some of the information in your description is not correct. Their task is to listen and correct the wrong information.

## 8. DISCUSSION–BRAINSTORMING

Asking students to look at both sides and then come to a conclusion is perhaps the most common kind of essay question in exams. It can also be a good structure for presentations and more informal extended speaking activities. In addition, for debates and discussions students can try to brainstorm

both advantages and disadvantages in order to be able to pick a side, predict the other side's arguments and/ or prepare counterarguments. A lesson on advantages and disadvantages can also be a good way of getting students to look at things from other points of view.

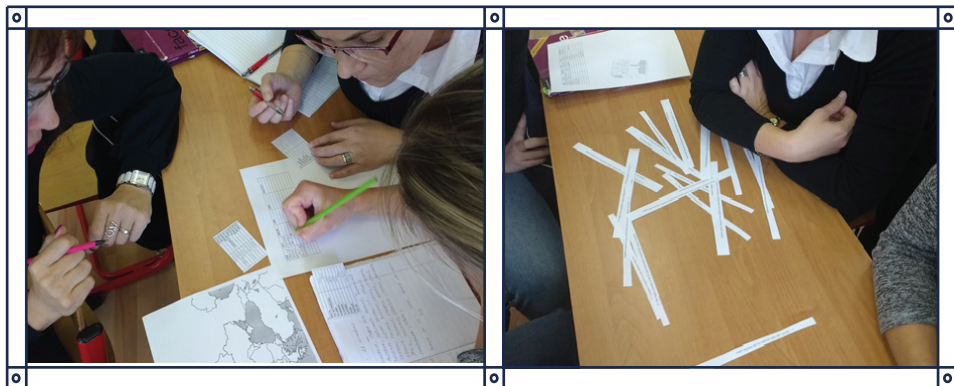
The activity we want to introduce" discussion about advantages and disadvantages" could be seen as a traditional method. However, we tried to alter and change it in order to make it more attractive and interesting for learners. The topic we have chosen was the EU – its advantages and disadvantages.

## THE AIM

*The aim was to increase awareness of the EU – its members, benefits, issues it has to deal with and to make people talk about things from different points of view ( we are not only Slovaks, Swedish, Estonians or Spanish – we are Europeans), to be able to express their opinion and give arguments.*

### The whole activity consisted of several tasks:

1. guess which country you represent
2. Label the blank map
3. Dictation - complete the chart with the year of the entry
4. Draw the map
5. What has changed?
6. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of being the member of the EU
7. Sort out given statements into 3 categories, positive, neutral (can't decide), negative (Except for worksheets, cards, maps, students could use their smartphones to back up their opinion or to find out some information)



## 9. WHAT WOULD YOU DO...

- Ask one student to leave the classroom for a few minutes. Ask the students in the classroom to suggest strange or funny situations. Agree on one of the suggested ideas. (e.g. The government gave every student in the country 2 years holiday.) The volunteer comes back to the classroom and asks every classmate:
- „What would you do if that happened? “
- After getting all the answers (grammatically correct), the asking student tries to guess the situation

## 10. 30 SECOND DEBATE

- Debates don't have to be formal and serious. You should choose an interesting or funny statement like: “Beer should be banned.” Students are divided into two groups (For versus Against, Pessimists versus Optimists....)
- Each learner – representative from each group should give a stand in 30 seconds per round.

# 11. SPEED DATING – JOB INTERVIEW

Describe speed dating – the purpose of speed dating is to find a suitable boyfriend or girlfriend. Tell your students they are going to do Speed Job Interview.

- Hand out job adverts – try to choose interesting, unusual jobs
- Focus on the information in a job advert – position, work experience, qualifications, qualities, salary..... Students should be familiar with all the adverts
- They can also discuss qualifications, experience, skills required, qualities necessary to get the job
- Students write 10 – 12 questions, brainstorm some questions
- Divide the class into two groups, interviewers and candidates. Interviewers ask questions they have prepared and write down notes about the candidates. Each interview should last three minutes. After each interview interviewee moves to the next interviewer.
- Interviewers compare all the candidates they were talking to and choose the best candidate for their position



# FOCUS

# WRITING ON



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# 1. INSTANT WRITING

When you ask a question, let students write the answer in their notebooks, walk around and read the answers, give suggestions. This makes them more focused and aware of syntax.

Hand out quarters of paper around the class and ask students to write their opinion about certain topic in a few sentences. For example – Is homework useful? Set time and then collect the papers. There are several ways to continue. You may simply read them to the class pointing out the mistakes or give papers to other students and ask them to correct those. Then they may guess who the author of the paper is, discuss their opinions or ask questions. Another approach is to mark papers with numbers so that they make pairs. Then students to at activity as described above, swap papers, correct them and discuss corrections and opinions in pairs. You may ask them to choose one which they like better and elaborate on that.

## 2. ESSAY IN STEPS

Most students struggle to cope with the essay in its full length. Therefore, it is useful to work on parts and point out its specific functions and issues, strategies and methods to deal with it. For example, writing an introduction to an essay should catch readers attention, narrow down the topic to express certain point of view, specify understanding of terms, set the course of the essay and eventually express writer's opinion. Most of the time, the introduction is no longer than 50 words and thus fairly easy to write and evaluate within a scope of one lesson. It also brings a great insight into purpose, planning and structure of an essay. Similarly body of the essay, individual paragraphs and conclusion can be practiced. This approach has been found beneficial for majority of students.

### 3. USE THE WORDS

This type of activity may be used as a creative task to practice whatever vocabulary. Teacher selects words that need to be practiced and students are supposed to use them in their writing. The task can be set as a list of words and students / pairs of students are asked to use as many as possible of those in limited time. It is up to each teacher how such tasks will be evaluated, the focus, however, should not only be on number of words used, but also quality of grammar and text. Another variation is cutting words on individual paper and putting them on a heap in the middle of tables. Students work in groups of four and take the words from the heap when as they need them for their story. Once the word is taken, they keep it and nobody else can use it. Here, words may be rated according to difficulty of their use and this way students collect premium points. For more advanced students variations of this activity can focus on linking words and adverbs for writing more complex texts.

### 4. CORRESPONDENCE

Pretend correspondence is another vital means of writing practice. It is surprising how much fun students can have practicing it. One simple example is writing a complaint of a certain type. Teacher may set tasks or students may invent their own situations. The finished complaint should meet criteria of written correspondence and teacher may decide to approve a finished piece or not. Then it is passed to another student / group who write/s a reply. The teacher may decide how many replies will follow, each side should make some concessions and finally they are supposed to come to a satisfying compromise. The role of the teacher is to coordinate the activity, check structure, formal compliance and grammar.



## 5. TEXT ADAPTATIONS

This type of activity offers numerous variations and it's upon teacher's creativity how creatively he or she approaches it. To start with there is a simple activity where students are asked to adapt a text so that it fits certain criteria. For example, change the text so that it describes your relative; takes place in your city; takes place in a different season of the year etc. The other approach is to ask students to add several sentences to the text in a way those would fit so well it would be hard to distinguish which part is original and which was added. Other students then try to find out.

## 6. CONSECUTIVE WRITING

This is a fairly common activity. Again, it is teacher's creativity that can play a major role in involving students. The first, straightforward approach is passing the paper on to another student, who adds another sentence to it. More complex activities may include re-writing and adopting someone's text. In this case, it is important that sentences are not written one after another, but underneath, leaving a few lines gap so text can be modified in this space. An example of such activity is one, where small groups write a short anecdote. Once every group has finished, the groups take their writing for improvement to another group. These may be assigned roles like: adding environment, adding weather, adding adjectives, adding direct speech, adding detail etc. These then correct and enhance text in their specific way. They should not substantially enlarge volume of the text, rather than improve it in a specific way.

## 7. CONDITIONALS PRACTICE

An activity with a blank sheet of paper can easily be used to practise various types of conditionals. The task of teacher here is to set the beginning of first conditional sentence and further on just coordinating the activity. So the teachers sets initial phrase like: „If people had wings to fly ...“Now, students are supposed to complete the sentence in a creative way. They must make sure they use right form of conditional and write the sentence on top of the sheet. For example: „If people had wings to fly, they wouldn't walk anymore.“ Then, they pass paper to another student / pair of students, who write a conditional sentence starting with the ending of the previous one. For example:” If people didn't walk anymore, they wouldn't need shoes.“ Once written the sentence, they fold the paper in a way that only the last sentence is visible and again pass the paper to another student. This goes on until they come to the end of the sheet. Because students work in different pace, role of teacher here is coordinate papers exchange and eventually skip some students who need more time to write the sentence. When the activity ends, students unfold the papers and check if the sentences are grammatically correct. Finally, they read beginning of the first and ending of the last sentence. The outcome is sometimes unusual or funny. E.g.: „If people had wings to fly, English would be much easier to learn.“

## 8. REWRITING STORY

There are many ways to perform this activity, but the basic principle is this. Students read a text and then are asked to re-write it as accurately as possible. It may be a short text and students work on their own. It may be a long more complex text. Then teacher assigns parts of it to pairs or groups of students who consequently try to reconstruct it. In this activity students get very focused both on vocabulary and syntax of the text. It is amazing, how accurately they are sometimes able to re-write the text.

## 9. MESSAGE IN THE BOTTLE

This activity is based on sending a postcard with some elementary information and return address to an unknown addressee somewhere in the world. This is an opportunity both to introduce your own culture and learn something about other cultures and places. It is also a chance to introduce students an “old fashioned” way of communication and have a conversation about the way we communicate today and in the past. Each student is asked to choose a place of his/her interest wherever in the world. Then they are asked to learn something about the place and report to other students. Consequently, they have to buy a postcard, write a text that should be inspiring enough for an unknown recipient to write back and send it. Only smaller part of the whole quantity is responded, but the rest are still somewhere there in the world and may be responded someday... That’s how the messages in the bottle work anyway. We practiced this activity and some students have received some nice responses from around the world though. Among the most surprising were personalized replies from Buckingham palace or from the other end of the world, Australia and New Zealand.





BUCKINGHAM PALACE

October 31<sup>st</sup> 2017

Dear Dominik.

The Queen wishes me to thank you for your card in which you told Her Majesty about yourself and your family.

Although it is not possible for The Queen to reply to you personally, I am enclosing an information leaflet which I hope you enjoy reading and I am to thank you, once again, for writing as you did.

Yours Sincerely  
Vanilla Gordon

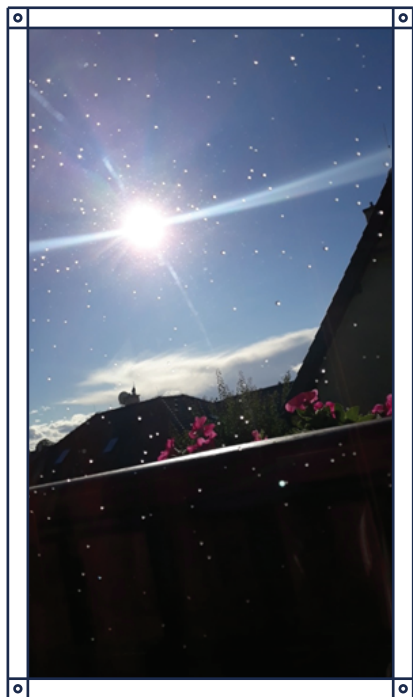
Lady-in-Waiting

Dominik

## 10. MY PLACE / MY EYE

This activity is meant to combine features of creative methodology with so-called mobile pedagogy. A smartphone is something everyone is familiar with nowadays. Ordinary people don't normally take part in photographic competitions so man embraces the opportunity and put a lot of effort into it. The topic is the place where people live, a place they like. They are supposed to capture places and moments that you don't find in calendars and tourist brochures. Rather, they should portray, so to say, backstage, backyard of the place where they live, through their private, personal perspective. With help of the teachers they then accompany pictures with texts and talk about them. The final stage can be an exhibition where students' works will be on display.

### Examples of students' work



*Just look how cute the raindrops look like on the window. I'm so in love. And those pink flowers, which my mum takes care of, are so lovely. It's sad thinking about them dying because winter is about to come.*



*I find dancing the most enjoyable activity in the world. I dance for almost 9 years, and every year I am getting mad about it more and more. That's why I decided to take a picture of the dance studio - Fearless Crew where I spend most of my time. This place is always full of energy, laughter and happiness..*

## 11. FOUR – STEP STORY

This activity develops both creativity and various language skills. Students work in groups of 4. Each of the students writes a sentence summing-up a real story from his or her life. The sentence may sound: “I experienced a really dangerous situation during my hike in mountains this summer.” Then the paper is passed to the next student. He or she writes 6-8 questions that should help find out more about circumstances of the event. The third person then invents and writes answers to those questions. The last, fourth person, writes a short story based on that, employing his language skills and imagination. As a result, the paper goes back to its originator. First students with help of the teacher check grammatical and stylistic qualities of the story. Then they discuss how close the story got to what really happened.