Sharing ideas with teachers from various European schools

Erasmus+ gave us opportunities to meet and share ideas and teaching experience with teachers from different European countries like Poland, Germany, Spain, Bulgaria and Denmark. That was our group during a two-week course of Creative Methodology. One might think that experienced teachers are difficult to surprise with something completely new, but this course in ADC College, London, Harrow, was simply excellent. It was so Professional and so inspiring! The lecturers were encouaging us to share a lot of techniques and know-how from our home countries and our specific schools. We found out that there were many similarities, but even more differences worth thinking about and later implementing in our teaching methods back home.

Let me give you two very simple examples how we were different:

British schools, Slovak schools and maybe also Polish schools encourage competition. If we think critically about competition, it has a lot of positives, but what about some psychological aspects of competition impact on motivation of students? Danish students are assessed in a different way, I have learnt. They start getting marks when they are much older than our students in Slovakia. Danish teachers do not encourage competition as mucha s we do, they think more about less able students, those who do not do that well. They think about how such kids feel. Left out? Not good enough? Not praised enough? What if you play a game of two teams that have to get the right answer and also try to sit on a chair – only one chair – first? What if there are students who do not want to rush to their chairs because they are aware of the possibilty of either hurting someone physically or hurting them in another way.

Another example is about a very common task: essay writing. We English teachers do it very often. We show our students some good examples of various compositions, we give them rule show to write, guide them to use the right phrases, right linking devices, tell them how many paragraphs they should produce and even suggest ideas, we simply prepare them as much as we can. When I got back from London, I started giving my students tasks to write compositions with no criteria. No length, no structure. Do you find it strange? I have learnt, also from my Danish friends, that they try to encourage students to be more creative, so they give them a task to write and only after they have finished, they explain the common rules, in our case about essay writing. My students love it! Try, you will see....