

The Set of Tips & Guidelines for teaching English in 50 + groups



Best for 50+

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Table of Contents

Part one – Core Curriculum Comparison.....	4
Part two – Comparison of the socio-economic situation in Poland, Estonia and Romania.....	10
Part three – The Set of Tips and Guidelines.....	13
Part four – the results of the pilot testing.....	16
Part one – The questionnaire for teachers.....	16
Part two – The questionnaire for students.....	19
Part five – C1 training.....	22



Dear Teacher,

At first, we would like to thank you for your interest in the outcome of the Erasmus + project “Sharing best practices in teaching English for 50 +”.

This booklet covers two years of work of the project team – 3 language schools:

- Studium Języków Obcych Modern Languages Center from Poland (the coordinator)
- Asociația Bridge Language Study House from Romania
- Teadmine ja Tarkus OÜ / Tallinn Language Centre from Estonia

During the project meetings and in the period between we created the Set of Tips and Guidelines for teachers who want to teach English in 50+ groups. The creation of such a set was the major aim of this project.

Before we were ready to create this Set of Tips and Guidelines, we shared our experience and compared the background of our students and schools – the core curricula and socio-economic situation of elderly people in the three countries (Poland, Estonia, Romania). The teachers had several opportunities to peer-watch English classes in each partner organization, they could take part in special workshops and, last but not least, they conducted pilot testing classes using the Set of Tips and Guidelines.

Each stage of our work is reflected in this booklet.

The first part concentrates on the comparison of the core curricula in each partner country – we decided to compare curricula for A2 level.

The second part shows the comparison of the situation of 50 + people in each country.

Next is the Set of Tips and Guidelines, the last part deals with the result of pilot testing among teachers and students.



Part one – Core Curriculum Comparison

Participating Language Schools:

- Modern Languages Center Spółka z o. o. Spółka Jawna (Łódź, Poland)
- Bridge Language Study House (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
- Teadmine ja Tarkus OÜ / Tallinn Language Centre (Tallinn, Estonia)

All the three language schools teach General English and English for Special Purposes – e.g. Business English, Cambridge Exams preparation courses, etc. All the three schools also have groups for Young Learners. However, only the school in Poland has special groups for 50+ students.

In all the three schools the group sizes are approximately the same: 8-12 people in one group; in-company groups may have a different number of participants.

For their English courses, all the three schools use text books and supplementary materials published in the UK.

In addition to the main text book, in all the participating schools teachers and students have access to corresponding workbooks, i-Tools (interactive activities), class audio CD-s, DVD-s, and various supplementary materials / reference materials.

The number of academic hours required to master a level varies from 120 academic hours (1 academic hour = 45 minutes) in Romania to 160 academic hours in Estonia (in Poland students need to accomplish a 140 academic hours). The most common course format in all the three schools is 2×90-minute lessons per week.

Furthermore, students in all the participating schools get homework – most commonly exercises in the workbook to reinforce the material covered during the f-2-f classes.

In all the participating schools students' progress is frequently measured by tests.

Testing is most often done in Romania where the A2 level course is divided into 3 modules: A2.1, A2.2 and A2.3. One module lasts for 6 weeks with two lessons per week. During the 3rd week of each module (after 6 lessons) students receive a *mid-course test* which checks their knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar they have studied so far.



At the end of each module students take a *final test* which checks their listening, reading and writing skills as well as their knowledge of all the vocabulary and grammar studied in the entire module. Their speaking skills are evaluated continuously throughout the module. Students have to obtain a minimum of 60% on the final test in order to be able to continue with the next module.

In Poland students get End-of-File tests for every file, Progress Tests for every 6 Files, Entry and End-of-course test.

In Estonia students get Mid-Term and End-of-Term tests (in December and May) which check their listening, reading and writing skills as well as their knowledge of all the vocabulary and grammar studied during the term. Their speaking skills are evaluated continuously throughout the term. Students have to obtain a minimum of 50% on the final test in order to be able to continue with the next module.

In all the three language schools courses are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, levels A1 to C2).

Internally, slightly different level names are used within the schools, e.g. a strong A2 level course may be labelled as A2.2 (Estonia), A2.3 (Romania) or A2+ (Poland).

The schools in Poland and Estonia both use Pre-Intermediate course materials for their A2 level English courses:

English File Pre-Intermediate 3rd Ed by OUP / classified by the publisher as CEFR level A2-B1 (used by the Polish school).

Headway Pre-Intermediate 4th Ed by OUP / classified by the publisher as CEFR level A2-B1 (used by the Estonian school).

The Romanian school, however, uses Elementary-level course materials for their A2 English courses:

Cutting Edge Elementary 3rd Ed by Pearson / classified by the publisher as CEFR level A1-A2.



Erasmus+

Sharing Best Practices in Teaching English for 50+

GENERAL AIMS OF TEACHING

Poland A2+	Estonia A.2.2.	Romania A.2.3.
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<p>More active participation in conversation given some assistance and with certain limitations, e.g: initiate, maintain and close simple, restricted face-to-face conversation; understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; make him/herself understood and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations, provided the other person helps if necessary; communicate successfully on basic themes if he/she can ask for help.</p> <p>Student can deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words; interact with reasonable ease in structured situations, given some help, but participation in open discussion is fairly restricted; plus significantly more ability to sustain monologues, for example: express how he/she feels in simple terms; give an extended description of everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience; describe past activities and personal experiences; describe habits and routines; describe plans and arrangements; explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something; give short, basic descriptions of events and activities; describe pets and</p>	<p>Can discuss basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment, etc.</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information</p> <p>Can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need</p>	<p>Students are beginning to be able to function in social situations.</p> <p>They can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</p> <p>Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.</p>
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possessions; use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.		
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SKILLS TO BE MASTERED

	Poland A2+	Estonia A.2.2.	Romania A.2.3.
Listening	Can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment).	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority	Can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family info, shopping, local geography, employment). Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
Reading	Read very short, simple texts. Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as ads, menus and timetables; can understand short simple personal letters.	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type.	Can read very short, simple texts. Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as ads,, menus & timetables; can understand short simple personal letters.
Speaking	Communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar



	information on familiar topics and activities. Use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms family & other people, living conditions, educational background and present or most recent job.		topics and activities. Can handle very short social exchanges, even though can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going. Can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms his/her family & other people, living conditions, educational background and present or most recent job.
Writing	Can write short, simple notes and messages, and a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like <i>and, but & because</i> .
Grammar	Present Perfect, Superlatives, Quantifiers, Expressing the future, Use of the infinitive with to, Modal Verbs, First & Second Conditional	Students should be familiar with (but not have mastered) the following: Basic Tenses: Present Simple & Present Cont; Present Cont. for Future; Future with <i>will & going to</i> Present Perfect; <i>ever & never</i> ; Past Simple Quantifiers Verb Patterns Basic modals <i>Can/ Could; Have to;</i>	Present Simple & Present Cont; Present Cont. for Future; Future with <i>will & going to</i> Present Perfect; <i>ever & never</i> ; Past Simple <i>Would like to & want to</i> for future wishes Adjectives; comparatives & superlatives Adverbial phrases of time, place & frequency Countable &



		<i>Should</i> Passives First & Second Conditional	uncountable nouns Question words Modals – <i>Can/ Could; Have to; Should</i>
Vocabulary	housework, shopping, time expressions, describing town & city, health & body, modifiers, animals, phobias & words related to fear, biographies.	food & eating out; clothes; shopping & services; describing someone & describing personality; places in town & directions; transport & travelling; making suggestions & offers; weather and seasons; time expressions	Countries & nationalities; jobs; everyday objects, family members, food & eating out; Clothes; shopping & services; describing someone & describing personality; places in town; transport & travelling; making suggestions & offers; weather and seasons; animals & natural features; numbers; celebrations & parties; school & university subjects; technology/ways of communication



Part two – Comparison of the socio-economic situation in Poland, Estonia and Romania

Demographic situation in the three partner countries

In all the three partner countries the society is ageing, which is not surprising, since this is the tendency at European level as well. Based on the findings of the partner institutions the main causes of the ageing society are, on the one hand, low fertility level, and on the other hand, longer life expectancy. As a result, there is an imbalance between the number of younger and elderly people, and the situation will become even worse within the next decades. The general life expectancy slightly differs in the partner countries: whereas in Poland the average life expectancy is 77.9 years and in Estonia 77.5 years, in Romania it is lower – 75.2 years.

The future demographic tendencies are not optimistic in the three partner countries either. Based on EUROSTAT, by 2030 people over 50 years of age account for 42.12% of the population in Poland, and from 2026 to 2040, the number of people aged 80 or more will increase from 1.7 million to 3.4 million. In Estonia the 65+ age group will form around 30% of the population by 2060. In Romania around 29.7% of the population will be over 65 years of age (National Statistics Institute) by 2060.

The situation of 50+ age group in the labour market

The three partner institutions carried out some research whether 50+ people might be excluded from the labour market, and what disadvantages they might experience in the work place. The findings reveal that Poland is the country with one of the lowest employment rates of 50+ people in the EU, the rate being 32.9% in 2017. In Poland women are in a more difficult situation than men, and the positions where age is not a hindrance are mostly at the senior management level (but these are occupied mostly by men).



50+ people are considered to be vulnerable in the labour market in Estonia as well.. The employment rate of older persons, i.e. 50–74-year-olds, reached 59.1% in the 3rd quarter of 2018, and the labour market participation rate of older persons in Estonia was 61.3%. At the same time, the overall employment rate in Estonia was 68.2% and the labour force participation rate was 72%.

In Romania, 42.8% of the people aged 55-64 were employed in 2018. In Romania younger people aged 15-24 were having a much worse situation in the labour market (in 2018) than middle-aged people and senior citizens, since the employment rate was only 22.3% among the youth.

In conclusion we can say, that the 50+ people face difficulties in the labour market, however, in some countries, e.g. Romania, this age group is actually more active and not so disadvantaged as younger people.

The most important problems that 50+ people face when it comes to the labour market disadvantages: health problems, lack of the required skills (e.g. foreign language skills, ICT skills), low level of education (8 classes or less).

50+ people and education

In the partner countries the *education level* of 50+ people slightly differs:

In Romania 52.5% of the 55-74 year-olds have a middle level of education, 39.1% low level of education, and only 8.4% have high education level. That is mainly because university studies became more popular in the 90's and in the past people did not have as many continuous learning opportunities as today. In the past years and currently there have been/are several non-formal learning opportunities for 50+ people in Romania, like structural grants, local or regional funds, EU funds, e.g. Caritas Federation Romania, SVP, EEA Grants, etc. However, there is still a lot of improvement to be done in Romania regarding continuous education in general and regarding the education level of the 50+ age group in particular.



In Poland in 2016, 45.1% of people aged 18-69 declared participation in broadly understood education, including 30.7% (approximately 8.3 million people) in non-formal education (self-education), which was the most popular form of learning. Education in the school system (formal education) covered about 3 million people. The 50+ people accounted for 42% of the total number of learners, but within the 60-69 age group it was only 7.4% (compared to 30% of the 35-39 age group). 40-50% of the 50+ people who participate in formal and informal learning are people with higher education.

Estonia has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in Europe, since 90% of the 25-64 year-olds completed upper secondary education (based on OECD). In addition, tertiary education attainment rates have been stable across several generations, ranging from 35% among 55-64 year-olds to 40% among 25-34 year-olds.

Regarding the *topics* that 50+ people are most interested in when it comes to education, in the three partner countries these were discovered to be: learning opportunities in work-related topics (eg. within on-the-job trainings); technology-related education programs; recreational programs and other educational programs including language learning.

In the partner institutions the following most common *reasons for learning a foreign language* by 50+ people were identified: family (e.g. close family members have moved abroad or have partners who speak a different language), socialising with others, for their personal growth and work.



Part three – The Set of Tips and Guidelines

The set is created as a list of tips that are direct answers to difficulties that teachers of 50+ groups meet in their day to day work (based on the results of the questionnaires conducted in December 2018 among students and teachers).

Difficulties in teaching English for 50 + (60+) students:

- Limited access to materials in English in the real world (e.g. YouTube, Netflix, podcasts, etc.).
- Reluctance to adapt to contemporary teaching techniques.
- Reluctance to adapt to new learning environments.
- Need for more encouragement to counter lower confidence in language abilities.
- Fewer opportunities to practise English outside the classroom.
- Greater dependence on encouragement as motivator.
- Slower assimilation of new materials (e.g. new grammar points and lexical units).

§2

Differences in Preparation for Lessons for 50+ Compared to Regular Groups

- Age needs to be considered (along with other personality traits).
- Consider the life circumstances for 50+ students when creating a stimulating classroom environment.
- Allow more time for explanations, transitions, and exercises.
- Listening exercises need to be scaffolded and repeated to a greater extent.
- Longer preparation phases for role-plays.
- Possibly require more drilling.
- They may need more examples of the target language and/or translation.



- Fewer rigorous assessments; more informal assessments.
- Consider phrasing feedback more diplomatically.
- Adapt lesson content to suit the interests and priorities of the students.
- Adjust your teaching approach to the age of your students. People from different age ranges have different educational needs (most of the 50+ students still work while 70+ students are mostly retired).

§3

The set of tips and guidelines for teachers

Difficulty 1. Limited access to materials in English online (e.g. YouTube, Netflix, podcasts, etc.)

Hints:

- Use focus groups with peers who know how to use the required technology.
- Use the technology in class (e.g. combined English and ICT lessons).
- Facilitate access to new technology (e.g. Help 50+ students to find online resources).
- Encourage them to ask for help from their family members.

Difficulty 2. Reluctance to adapt to contemporary teaching techniques and new learning environments.

Hint:

- Explain or elicit the rationale for the new techniques (e.g. Use a questionnaire).
- Demonstrate the old and the new technique back-to-back.
- Take regular feedback about techniques.
- Be prepared to adapt and employ older techniques occasionally.
- Be prepared to embrace an older conception of what a teacher should be, at first.

Difficulty 3. Greater dependence on encouragement as a motivator.



Hint:

- Keep feedback positive (citing good language use).
- Peer appraisal.
- Focus on what they can do rather than what they can't do.
- Minimise formal testing and encourage self-assessment.

Difficulty 4: Fewer opportunities to practice English outside the classroom.

Hint:

- Organise a field trip to somewhere outside the class (e.g. Shopping, tourist areas, role-play as foreigners).
- Encourage the student to consume more English-language media.
- More extensive homework assignments

Difficulty 5: Slower assimilation of new materials (e.g. New grammar points and lexical units).

Hint:

- More repetition and recycling of vocabulary and grammar points.
- Make the administrative staff aware of the needs of this particular target group and considering them when planning courses.
- Maintaining a variety of inputs and activities within a fixed routine.
- Make sure you always create opportunities in the class for students to use previously introduced structures/ vocabulary together with the new ones.



Part four – the results of the pilot testing

The pilot classes that were based on the project tool – The Set of Tips and Guidelines - were conducted in April 2019.

The evaluation was carried out among 50+ students and teachers who conducted the classes.

The evaluation report covers the results of both – the students' and teachers' questionnaires.

Part one – The questionnaire for teachers

The evaluation of the project outcome – The Set of Tips and Guidelines (SoT&G) was carried out in two stages.

At first, before the pilot classes, the teachers had to evaluate the tool per se by ranking the tips and hints they considered most applicable to their teaching style. The following instructions were given:

„This is the list of the difficulties (according to the project's research) that English teachers meet while working with 50+students. Please read them carefully and choose the top 3 that are most applicable to you and your teaching experience. Please mark with X" the difficulties you choose.”

The results are as follows:

Imprint:

5 teachers answered the questionnaire: 60% of them were female and 40% of them were male.

40% of respondents were from Estonia, 40 % from Romania and 20% from Poland.

The top 3 difficulties chosen by teachers are:

- Limited access to English materials online (e.g. YouTube, Netflix, podcasts, etc.) - 60%
- Reluctance to adapt to contemporary teaching techniques and new learning environments. - 60%
- Greater dependence on encouragement as a motivator. - 60%



In accordance with the teachers' opinion the following two difficulties were the least important:

- Slower assimilation of new materials (e.g. New grammar and lexical units). - 40%
- Fewer opportunities to practise English outside the classroom. - 20%

The next step was to choose the 2 top hints in each category (difficulty) they had chosen before.

Difficulty 1. Limited access to English materials online (e.g. YouTube, Netflix, podcasts, etc.)

- Use the technology in class (e.g. combined English and ICT lesson). - 100%
- Facilitate access to the new technology (e.g. Help them to find online resources). - 50%
- Encourage them to ask for help from their family members. - 50%
- Use focus groups with peers that know how to use the technology. - 25%

Difficulty 2. Reluctance to adapt to contemporary teaching techniques and new learning environments.

- Be prepared to adapt and employ older techniques occasionally. - 80%
- Be prepared to embrace an older conception of what a teacher should be, at first. - 60%
- Explain or elicit the rationale for the new techniques (e.g. Use a questionnaire)- 40%
- Demonstrate the old and the new technique back-to-back. - 40%
- Take a regular feedback about techniques. -20%

Difficulty 3. Greater dependence on encouragement as a motivator.

- Keep the feedback positive (citing good language use). - 100%
- Focus on what they can do rather than what they can't do. - 100%
- Peer appraisal.-20%
- Minimize formal testing and encourage self-assessment. - 20%



Difficulty 4: Fewer opportunities to practise English outside the classroom.

- Encourage the students to consume more English-language media. - 100%
- More extensive homework assignments. - 50%
- Organize a field trip to somewhere outside the class (e.g. Shopping, tourist areas, role-play as foreigners).- 0%

Difficulty 5: Slower assimilation of new materials (e.g. New grammar and lexical units).

- More repetition and recycling of vocabulary and grammar points.- 100%
- Maintaining a variety of inputs and activities within a fixed routine. - 67%
- Make the administrative staff aware of the needs of this particular target group and considering them when planning courses. - 33%

After the pilot class teachers had to evaluate the usefulness of the SoT&G.

For all the teachers conducting classes based on hints was easier. The Set of Tips and Guidelines was easy to understand for 50% of the respondents and for another 50% rather easy to understand.

Based on the teachers' previous choice the most useful hints were:

- encouragement as a great motivator,
- keep feedback positive,
- demonstrate the old and the new technique back-to-back
- help students use technology in their learning process
- explain or elicit rationale for the new techniques
- be prepared to adapt and employ older techniques occasionally.

None of the teachers listed the least useful hints. According to the results, all hints can be useful depending on the circumstance.

25% of respondents would like to add new hints to existing ones. The proposed hint is “listening in chunks, sometimes referring to the tape-script (when the task is too difficult to do)” as “listening comprehension seems to be the most challenging skill”.



According to the teachers, their students noticed the differences in conducting the class with and without using The Set of Tips and Guidelines. e.g.:

- Class less stressful, clearer material, better atmosphere.
- Use of technology (apps in particular) in class made learning more interesting/visual and gave tools for independent study.
- It was useful and interesting when the teacher explained the rationale behind some modern techniques.

Part two – The questionnaire for students

Students who evaluated the Set of Tips and Guidelines were the second target group. 25 respondents over age 50 answered the prepared questionnaire. 72% of the respondents were female and 28% were male, but female to male ratio varies depending on the country:

In Poland 100% of respondents were female, in Estonia 58% were female and 42% were male in Romania 60% were female and 40% were male.

The average age of students in Estonia was 56 years old, in Romania 56,6 years old. In Poland 62,5% of the respondents were 60+ and 37,5% were 50+.

In Estonia and Romania, 100% of the students noticed the difference in their teacher's typical teaching style and this presented during the pilot lesson. In Poland, 12,5% of respondents did not notice such a difference. The reason behind this is that the group from Poland is an exclusively 50+ group so the students are used to some techniques used by their teacher during the pilot lesson.

The differences spotted by the students are as follows:

Poland

- more understandable
- the style of teaching was adjusted to my abilities
- classes were interesting

Estonia

More time allowed for listening tasks.



Romania

“The teacher uses new technology during the lessons, good interactivity”

“Listening twice or three times; the teacher reading clearer the second time and writing on the flipchart rather than sharing slides”

“More interactive”

“it was more involving, we had more fun than before”

“new technology; interactive games”

Respondents with their own words tried to name some new techniques used by teachers during pilot test:

Poland

- listening step-by-step
- “the graphic” teaching method- drawings, tables, graphs
- grammar rules are easier to understand
- modern

Estonia

Language learning apps on the phone.

Romania

‘On the board the teacher designs the transcription of the videos/audio parts of the lesson; for what is important to emphasize the teacher underlines; we played Kahoot few times”

“we tried Kahoot, an online quiz”

“online games and videos were introduced in the lesson”

“whiteboard video; played Kahoot”

All students from each partner country would like more English classes to be conducted in this way.

Students also shared some comments and suggestions concerning the project and pilot lesson:



Poland

- useful but a bit stressful
- better atmosphere
- useful and relaxing way of teaching

Estonia

Very useful to pay extra attention to the needs of the 50+ age group. Helps these people to learn better.

Romania

“useful”



Part five – C1 training

The project's C1 training took place from 17th to 19th June 2019 in Łódź, Poland.

The meeting was attended by 16 English teachers from all partner countries – 4 from Estonia, 6 from Romania and 6 from Poland. The training was carried out by Magda Dworakowska, an English teacher who is a member of the project staff.

The training took place in accordance with the prepared agenda:

Monday 17th June

12:00 – 13:00 – Short introduction to the project, division into groups

The Director of Studium presented the history of the school. to the participants of the training. The project coordinator presented the main aims both of the training and the project to the participants. Later she introduced the trainer – Magda Dworakowska to the group.

The teachers drew the 3 English groups that they peer-watched later.

13:00 -14:00 – Live lesson with 50+ students (group 1)

The first group of 6 (60+) students were at A1 level and were observed by a group of 5 teachers.

15:00 – 16:30 – A workshop - “Brain friendly approach”

The materials are available here

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gPYOvdtCNOOMLUGCHOLx1kJ5Asddhafi/view?usp=sharing>

Aims:

- Brain-friendly check-list for lessons planning
- Using pictures for learning categories
- Short-term to long term memory
- Learning styles vs teaching styles



Participants worked in groups, discussed teaching approaches and shared experience from their teaching practice.

Tuesday 18th June

12:00 – 13:00 – Live lesson with 50+ students (group 2)

The second group of 9 (60+) students at A1+ level were observed by the group of 5 English teachers.

13:00 – 14:00 – Live lesson with 50+ students (group 3)

The third group of 5 (60+) students at A1+ level were observed by the group of 5 English teachers.

14:15 – 15:45 – Impressions, discussion & sharing experience

- Groups were quick, especially the last group
- Classes were rather natural – students were chatty and bubbly
- Students need more attention than groups of young adults
- “Older” groups have specific problems eg. forgetting the glasses makes it impossible for some people to fully participate in the lesson.
- Nice atmosphere and a lot of enthusiasm
- A lot of repetition – some teachers indicated that their students are sometimes offended by the repetition, they tend to be bad-tempered. As this lesson was free of charge students were more open to work and put more effort into the creation of the nice in-class atmosphere. Older students like to have an advantage over their peers by showing that they can get on with their English in social situations. Some teachers see the similarity in the approach between older groups and groups of children. But it has to be mentioned that not all senior citizens like this way of teaching.

Similarities between children and 50 (60+) groups.

- An element of competition between the students.
- Groups are talkative and social.
- They are eager to learn.



The experience of the teachers who worked with 50 (60+) groups before:

Elderly students are afraid of loneliness and isolation, they do not have a lot to do when they are retired, students do not like having homework to do, they are not always comfortable with certain types of exercises, they tend to prepare themselves well for the classes. Students' approach to study differs depending on the fact whether they are active on a labour market or not. The teaching style influences learning styles. Also teachers can learn a lot from their elderly students – it is a two-way process.

16:00 – 16: 45 – Introduction to the Set of Tips & Guidelines

The project coordinator presented the main aims of the project and the main stages of the creation of the Set of Tips & Guidelines.

The link to the set is

https://www.studium.com.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/The-set-of-tips-and-guidelines-_pilot.pdf

17:00 – 18:00 – Sharing experience from the pilot testing:

Estonian presentation is available here

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1k5khXjFNURx5oiaS0GRKvzYZx7LpFb_E

The two teachers who are the members of the project staff – Madalina from Romania and Katrin from Estonia shared and presented their experience from the pilot testing stage of the project. Magda prepared some exercises and the discussion focused on: vocabulary, grammar and listening comprehension. The teachers listed difficulties that they can meet in their day-to-day work with senior citizens: types of available activities, ways of adjusting activities to the needs of 60+ students, making activities more brain-friendly.

Wednesday 19th June

12:00 – 13:00 – Adjusting materials to the needs of 50+ students/ preparation of activities

The materials are available here

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pv9-ynFStLqaWjvP59uizHbzf09yNXT/view?usp=sharing>



Aims:

- hands-on practice,
- dealing with adjusting contemporary coursebooks to the needs of 50+ students

The main stress of the workshop was put on vocabulary, grammar and listening. Participants worked in groups, exchanged ideas, and discussed the aims. Before and after the training the participant had been asked to answer questionnaires. The results of the surveys conducted before and after the training are very similar to the results collected during the pilot test.

Most of the teachers have been teaching for more than 10 years, they did not have an opportunity to teach exclusively 50+ groups (78%) and now 100% of them are not teaching such a group.

55% of teachers answered that their students have reported age-related learning difficulties such as:

- limited time for studying
- some problems with listening comprehension and with speaking activities
- the lack of confidence

Teachers also noticed some barriers their 50+ students may experience:

- the lack of self-confidence,
- less everyday listening practice in English
- they need more revision of the material and more listening and speaking related activities
- elderly students are more reserved in comparison with younger groups
- a slower pace of teaching



According to the results of the questionnaire results, 50+ students learn English because: they have family members abroad, they would like to travel more and they need to improve their language skills for work.

67% of respondents answered that their teaching style differs depending on the age of their adult students. The differences are as follows:

- “Younger learners need more play based learning and a faster pace while senior participants need a more diluted form of teaching and learning based on experience. Also, some topics might be less interesting for them, so it is ideal to add or change some topics. Last but not least, some vocabulary related differences might exist that should be addressed (business, technology, etc), which might come natural for younger students but which shouldn't be taken for granted with senior participants. “
- “allow more time for listening activities”
- “I try to focus on different subjects, like less social media examples.”
- “A teacher must always adapt to the needs of the group members. There is no set means of adapting, only contingent responses.”
- “Different themes and contexts for introducing language. Slower rate of learning. Have to be prepared to spend longer on language points to ensure things have been understood and retained.”
- “With 50+ drill exercises are more often than with young ones, theoretical support / rules are often given not discovered, more time for consolidation is needed.”

67% of respondents had not participated in workshops and training devoted to teaching 50+ students before the C1 training

After the training teachers also answered a short questionnaire.

100% of participants enjoyed taking part in live lessons with 50+ students. They liked the atmosphere of the classes, students were very enthusiastic and eager to learn.

Also 100% of participants liked the workshop. They stated it was a good opportunity to share the experience, teachers enjoyed practical activities and group work. -”the perfect balance between individual study of the hands-out, peer-watch classes, hands-on practice, sharing thoughts and best practices, clarifications and personal examples and advice provided by the trainer and the participants.”

For 86% of teachers the Set of Tips and Guidelines is easy to understand, for 14% it is rather easy to understand.



The most useful hints are:

- “Different way of conducting the lessons, lesson preparation”
- “Re listening activities.”
- “All of them were pretty useful, particularly the hints on how to use new technologies in class.”
- “More repetitions of listening/instructions than for other participants is needed.”
- “Consider age, life circumstances, interests, specific problems when creating a stimulating classroom environment, facilitate access to new technology, explain the rationale for new techniques, encourage peer appraisal.”
- “Longer preparation phases for role-plays; more drilling; phrasing feedback more diplomatically.”
- “Those dealing with specific problems and providing solutions - this may help inexperienced teachers.”

The least useful hints were

- Not to expect senior trainees to be good at technology- this is such a widely known concern when teaching senior trainees that perhaps it could be skipped in future discussions.
- All hints are useful depending on the circumstances. fewer rigorous assessments; adapt lesson content to suit students' interests and priorities
- Asking the learner to get help from family members - this will prove a little bit of a lottery.

Participants added one new hint to existing ones “I often have to constantly remind and demonstrate students what they can do, that they have not forgotten everything as we move on to new structures. - Make sure you always create opportunities in the class for students to use previously introduced structures/ vocabulary together with the new ones.”

During the meeting partners decided to add this hint to the Set of Tips in “Difficulty number 5 - *slower assimilation of new materials (e.g. New grammar points and lexical units).*”