



“We make learning special”

Content and Creativity in Primary ELT: Using Arts and Crafts, Games and Toys for Language Learning

Making toys, breaking toys, testing toys, improving toys, inventing toys – and playing with toys - provides an innovative and on-going source and resource of enjoyment, interest, motivation, value, self-esteem, learning – as well as the ideal context for the introduction and development of child-centred priority language – in English.

Against this backdrop, NILE has developed a highly innovative training programme which aims to demonstrate fun, friendly and fulfilling ways in which simple toy making, using recycled or low cost materials, can be developed and linked to various curriculum areas - as well as to rhymes, songs, movement and stories - and then to English as a medium/tool of communication, in English teaching situations in Europe.

The programme will incorporate various cutting edge methodologies in the field of teaching children. In this respect, teachers of children as well as young adolescents in both mainstream education and private language schools are particularly welcome.

Objectives

The overall objectives of this course are to explore and incorporate the making and using of toys/arts and crafts/science exploration into classroom practice, where a ‘language across the curriculum’ approach is encouraged at all times.

Content

This course will:

- provide hands on experience and practice in making and using toys, arts and crafts, science exploration as windows onto learning English in the children’s classroom;
- provide a hands-on experience of cutting edge *practical* methodology at both primary and early secondary levels;
- provide excellence of opportunity for the *sharing* of knowledge, skills and experience among teachers who attend;
- provide support and development in language which is specific to the teaching of curriculum content in English

Working in small groups, teachers will also be involved in the development of a set of materials that they can later integrate into their everyday classroom practice.

As additional unique features of this NILE programme, participants will also explore the development of a home-school ‘bridge’ so that learning can be brought into the home, and parents positively involved in the classroom.

Methodology

NILE courses are taught in a range of ways but the underlying principle is that all courses should be taught using methodology that course participants can adapt and emulate for themselves on returning to their classrooms. Sessions are built into each course to allow course participants to reflect on the way that they have been taught and review the suitability of the strategies and techniques for their own circumstances.

Preparation and follow-up

All course participants are issued with a pre-course questionnaire to be returned prior to the course. This is to ensure that the areas of most significance to participants within the general course area are covered. In addition, participants are sent an indicative reading list covering some of the topics to be dealt with on the course. Participants are also asked to bring along to the course information and materials relating to any project they are involved in or have recently completed, which could benefit from supportive critical comment during the course.

Towards the end of the course there is a “where next” session with the group as a whole, or with individuals. This session is used to review the concepts and practices dealt with on the course and to see how they will apply to the participants’ work place on their return. Open-ended follow-up consultation is available to all course participants after the course, via email/internet access.

Timetable

All courses are held between the hours of 9 am and 5.30 pm. The working day normally starts at 9.15 am and ends at 3.30 or 5.15pm. All courses last for a minimum of 25 hours per week.

In addition to the main course team, courses often have one or more visiting guest speakers. These are usually well known figures from the world of EFL/ESL who have published and lectured widely. Occasionally they are people who are well-versed in the changing face of Britain and the role of English in the world-wide community.

Since NILE’s courses are for serving teachers or teachers in training, these sessions with visiting speakers, along with the extra curricular programme, represent an ideal opportunity for course participants to mix socially and professionally with teachers from a wide variety of different countries and contexts.

All of NILE’s courses for teachers include a significant English language improvement element dealing with a variety of aspects of the English language.