

Case Study



Helping mixed ability classes learn English using Focus

School students

THE CHALLENGE

Zespół Szkół nr 49 is an upper secondary school located in Warsaw, Poland. There, Beata Furga and Anna Kot teach English to students aged 16-18. They both teach two classes, one including students that are considered more advanced. They have about 15-20 students per class. All students must take the Matura exam, which is a secondary school exit exam that must generally be passed in order to move on to higher education.

Beata and Anna want to help their students obtain English proficiency so they can pass their Matura exam. Their students have a wide range of English language skills and so finding course materials that cater to all their needs is one of their main goals.

THE SOLUTION

Beata Furga and Anna Kot began using Focus 5 years ago.

- Focus has 4 levels of learning for upper secondary students.
- They use Focus 2 in year 1 and Focus 3 in year 2.
- They spend between 3 and 5 hours per week using the Focus student books and assign homework every class from the Focus workbook.

They have found that consistently assigning and reviewing this homework has been one of the key success factors of using Focus in mixed ability classes.

Feedback from teachers:

- The course material makes it easy to accommodate students of all learning levels. One teacher said, *"It's not too difficult and it's not too easy."*
- The flexibility in the course makes it easy to provide lessons based on student need.
- The speaking sections of the course prepares students perfectly for the Matura exam and this preparation led to 100% of students passing their exam last year.



They find they are able to go through all lessons and exercises in the book with their higher level students and pick and choose lessons to accommodate students that need more help. This flexibility that Focus offers is a key success factor in assisting students with differing English language skills.

Further, they use regular tests from Focus, as well as other resources, that compliment the material. One such resource is Quizlet, which is comprised of quizzes based on Focus materials.

THE RESULT



Beata Furga and Anna Kot use Focus to help their mixed ability group of students become proficient in English. This English proficiency then prepares them for taking the Matura exam. Their long-term use of this course shows that they are confident that the materials and content facilitate their teaching goals. They have found many benefits of using Focus including:

- The clear and flexible course material makes it easy to accommodate students of all learning levels. One teacher said, "It's not too difficult and it's not too easy."
- The workbook compliments the student book wonderfully, which makes topic review much easier during class.
- The tasks are very useful, in fact one teacher stated, "it is perfect.", they believe that "the phrases are marvellous.", and " the writing sections are also very good."
- The way the course is structured and organized is easy to follow and the clear course structure allows for picking and choosing lessons.
- Consistency in assigning and checking homework, especially during class hours, has led to successful student learning and improved English proficiency.
- The students like the way the course is organized, find the vocabulary sections helpful, and are really engaged when involved with the reading texts.
- The speaking sections of the course prepares students perfectly for the Matura exam and this preparation led to 100% of students passing their exam the previous year.
- Both teachers believe that if the students attend class regularly, participate, go through the Focus exercises and homework in class and work on correcting mistakes, "they are really meant to be successful."



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