

## **Case Study 1 - Friday Games Nights**

I believe Friday Games Night is a great example of a creative response to the needs of a community that supports newcomer integration, in the context of budget restrictions. It was accessible, inclusive and flexible (different group sizes could be accommodated), and it also created an opportunity for staff members to informally assess settlement needs. Most of all, I would say, it facilitated the development of social networks that can support newcomers' integration.

All the key elements of the project that was just presented to us could be transferred to a LINC context, especially if a public recreational facility is used. Depending on one's teaching context, a Games Activity/Day or Event can be organized as a class or a school event. It can take place on the school premises or it can be organized as a field trip to a park or a community centre, which would increase the benefits of the activity; it would create opportunities for community connections and would familiarize participants with recreational opportunities in the area.

From a language perspective, this would be a perfect example of an activity that is learner-centred and task-based, which are fundamental principles guiding all LINC planning, instruction and assessment. This community-related task is a communicative real-world task in which learners use language to interact meaningfully for a specific purpose. Also, it can be tailored to the students' abilities and learning styles through choice of games and student responsibilities (for example, Ss with lower levels of language proficiency could be asked to set up the games area, while others could give game instructions, and so on). Actually, giving students responsibilities does more than just allowing them to practice their language skills. It gives them a sense of accomplishment and contributes to the development of a sense of belonging, which, according to research, is crucial to newcomers' integration and successful settlement.

Also, the sense of belonging seems to correlate with better health, both physical and mental.

In order to ensure the success of the event and get the most out of it, pre and post teaching activities need to be carefully planned and they should address all the 5 components of the CLB model of communicative language ability. For those not working in LINC, CLB stands for Canadian Language Benchmarks; it's basically a document which sets the national standard for planning and instruction in adult ESL programs. The teachers can start with a task analysis to determine the language requirements for successful completion and a needs assessment, to see what knowledge and skills the students are missing. Depending on the level, the grammatical and textual knowledge component, for example, could be addressed by teaching games-related vocabulary and sequence markers. Functional and sociolinguistic knowledge might include the language of greetings and introductions(if it's a whole school event), giving/following instructions and cultural tips for polite interactions. To ensure effective communication, which relates to the strategic component, students could learn or review how to ask for repetition and clarification. Higher level classes could also research and present on favourite Canadian games or even on the impact of social and physical activities on newcomers' well-being (LINC 8).

The event could also be advertised with student involvement; some classes could create flyers, for example, which involves a lot of language learning. Students who use Twitter accounts could tweet during the event. If the school has a website, post activities might include writing an article about the event, with the best one to be posted.

In conclusion, I would say that the benefits of such an activity are multiple and outweigh the possible challenges.

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