

SCIENCE ACROSS THE BALKANS -

'An Expanding Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching' which took place on 21-25 May, 2001, 'Dom na uchitelya', Plovdiv, Bulgaria. This was a language and content focused workshop co-organised by the British Council, Bulgaria, FACT Bulgaria, the Wright Science Foundation, Science Across Europe and part funded by ELTeCS.

The aims of the workshop were:

- 1) to expand Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching to other countries in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe
- 2) to consolidate the Science Across Europe project in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. This involves participant countries becoming involved in or taking further part in Science Across Europe projects and sharing materials, ideas and local solutions to local problems.

The achievements of the workshop were:

- 1) The 30 teachers gathered committed themselves to contributing to the FACT Teachers' Journal and networking using Internet discussion lists, email and websites. FACT Bulgaria became FACT International and discussions are under way for the main website to be hosted by the British Council through ELTeCS with links to all member countries. Additionally, the FACT Journal will now be published x 1000 and distributed among the 12 participant countries.
- 2) Colleagues from 12 countries committed to joining Science Across Europe:



Hungary - Bosnia - Ukraine - Greece - Lithuania - Montenegro - Serbia - Poland - Rumania - Slovakia - Macedonia - Estonia

- 3) Ideas, theories and techniques were shared and discussed in the sphere of teaching content through the medium of English.



One of the activities teachers were involved in was a chemistry workshop in cosmetics. The 'WOW' cosmetics company exhibits its line of hair gel, shampoo, and bath salts which had the combined national symbolism of the countries of the participants, Greece, Bulgaria and which won it first prize in the group.

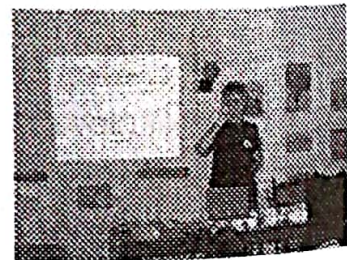
- 4) Science Across the Balkans II was discussed and will take place in Bratislava, Slovakia in June 2002.

Specialist input came from:

John Clegg, UK

Lida Schoen, Holland

Nigel Heslop, UK



Many thanks to the teachers and students who contributed so creatively to make this happen.

This includes students from the English Language School in Plovdiv, The Spanish Language School, Sofia, The National Aprilov School in Gabrovo and the American College in Sofia.

Iliana from ELS Plovdiv presents the school work of her classmates involved in a study of acid rain.

Martin and Maria from the US College in Sofia show us their functioning model of the brain during their presentation of a survey on the relationship between drinking water and memory.

Sofia Spanish School students - Svetoslava, Bogdan, Lydia, Lyubomir and Radka present a survey of the environmental problems in the capital city through the medium of English, their THIRD foreign language.



The National Aprilov School, Gabrovo

The week started with a lesson in Chemistry in English with first year preparatory English students at the English language school, Plovdiv. The students did extremely well with the topic, the language and the 9 adults in the classroom, of which Mr Richard Stagg, the British Ambassador to Bulgaria was one.

It's difficult to put into words the significance of the event for language teaching and subject teaching in this region and prospectively Europe as a whole. There is now a network in place for 30 colleagues to communicate using various instruments (Journal, Web lists and email) on an aspect of teaching which has until now been largely underdeveloped in most countries of Europe. Roy Cross on behalf of the British Council and ELTeCS agreed to help host the new FACT International website which will accommodate materials and information from all of the participant countries at the Science Across the Balkans Workshop.

One clear conclusion from the workshop is that we are all involved in teaching content in some form. There is a misconception about content and lan-

guage teaching and learning among many EFL teachers that it is the domain of subject specialists who work in the foreign language. Content and language teaching and, I feel, language teaching works best where subject teachers and language teachers collaborate across the curriculum on issues of language learning and subject learning. There was a suggestion that Science Across the Balkans II should look at writing materials which are appropriate for both language lessons and content lessons. In this way both areas of learning could come together in one quality materials package.

Further to the above aims and achievements, I would like to invite all colleagues who are interested in this exciting initiative to join the two discussion groups in this area:

the English Across the Curriculum Special Interest Group (EAC SIG) – which is part of IATEFL Bulgaria at <http://eaesig.listbot.com> and the Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching Discussion Group at <http://factbg.listbot.com>

Here, you simply need to write your email address, send it, and answer some short questions about yourself to join the group. The main difference between the two groups is that FACT deals with any language which is used as a medium for content teaching whereas EAC deals only with the English language. There is some overlap but the distinction is clear.

As John Clegg concluded in our co-presentation with Lyubov Dombeva, Mariana Yankova and Lida Schoen of the results of the workshop at IATEFL East yesterday here in Plovdiv,

'If it is not in your school now, it soon will be'.

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