

Haake, Rebecca. 2009. *Alternative Education and ELT: The SchülerInnen Schule*. MA Thesis, University of Vienna.

Abstract

This diploma thesis is concerned with progressive education and its application in the English lessons at the Viennese alternative school SchülerInnen Schule. The first part of this paper compares progressive to traditional education, presents a number of renowned educational reformists as well as alternative schools which influenced the methodology of the SchülerInnen Schule and depicts the pedagogical convictions of the school. The second part of the thesis deals with three different approaches to foreign language teaching. The first approach is Open Learning, the preferred teaching method of the English teacher at the SchülerInnen Schule. The second and third approach are Learner Autonomy and Task-based Learning, the latest trends in SLA research. The third part of this paper treats the question in how far, first of all, the fundamental principles of progressive education and, second, aspects of the three before mentioned approaches to foreign language teaching are mirrored in the English lessons at the SchülerInnen Schule. The result of research shows that in Austria it is quite a challenge to teach at an alternative school. For the teachers of the SchülerInnen Schule, and especially for the English teacher, it often is problematic to act according to their ideological convictions and at the same time live up to the exigencies of parents as well as the Austrian school curriculum. Moreover, a second conclusion which can be drawn from observations is that it is beneficial for English teachers, if they are able to introduce the best of various different approaches to foreign language learning in their own teaching.