

LU

DIPLOMDARBS

RĪGA

2010

**UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY
TEACHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**GAME IN THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TO
REDUCE PUPILS' STRESS
SPĒLE ANGLŪ VALODAS STUNDĀS PAMATSKOLĀ SKOLĒNU
STRESA MAZINĀŠANAI
DIPLOMA PAPER**

**AUTHOR: JEĻENA MASKALOVA
TEACHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

ID.No. SkAn 000064

ADVISER: Mg. Ed. Sc., assistant E. Latkovska

RIGA

2010

**LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTES
PEDAGOĢIJAS UN PSIHOLOĢIJAS FAKULTĀTES
SKOLOTĀJU IZGLĪTĪBAS NODAĻAS**

**ANĢĻU VALODAS SKOLOTĀJS
PROFESIONĀLĀS AUGSTĀKĀS IZGLĪTĪBAS BAKALaura
JEĻENA MASKALOVA
SkAn000064**

**SPĒLE ANĢĻU VALODAS STUNDĀS PAMATSKOLĀ SKOLĒNU
STRESA MAZINĀŠANAI
DIPLOMDARBS**

**ZINĀTNISKAIS VADĪTAJS:
Mg. Ed. Sc., asistente EVIJA LATKOVSKA**

**RĪGA
2010**

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any source.

.....

Jeļena Maskaļova

....., 2010

ABSTRACT

Every day many pupils experience situations at schools which cause stress, for example learning a great amount of new information, writing tests, etc. This can be one of the reasons for low marks. If these situations appear on everyday basis, they might cause adolescents' anxiety and depression, so it is fundamental that teachers know what the symptoms of stress are and what can be done to help an adolescent reduce the stress. The author of the Diploma Paper studied the literature related to adolescents' stress, its causes and symptoms and the ways of reducing adolescents' stress. Games and game-like activities were considered, by the author of the DP as the most suitable way to reduce pupils' stress at the lessons of English in primary school, thus the aim of the DP was to find out whether the usage of games and game-like activities reduces pupils' stress and anxiety caused by the fast development of life as well as the learning process.

In order to understand and realise the causes of pupils' stress and its amount and also find games and game-like activities which could help in pupils' stress reduction, the case study in Rigas Y Secondary School was performed. 14 pupils of 8th grade participated in the case study. Firstly, the special stress scale for defining level of stress in pupils who attend primary school was modified. Secondly, the questionnaire for teachers in order to investigate how often they use games and if they find game-like activities useful in reducing adolescents' stress was designed. Then eleven games were chosen and adopted to local conditions in order to be used at the lessons of English. Next, games were used at the lessons of English within 1,5 months to reduce pupils' stress level during the case study.

After the first data was collected and analysed, the author of the DP concluded that pupils in primary school experience quite high stress level and girls are exposed to it at much greater scale. The data received from teachers' questionnaire provides evidence that even though teachers realise the value of the game in teaching/learning process less than half of questioned teachers use games at their lessons as often as 2 - 3 times per week. The data received from the modified stress scale given to the pupils at the end of the case study showed some stress reduction, especially among the girls.

The data received from the research testifies that in order to help pupils reduce their stress level a great amount of work should be done at schools and in families. Teachers along can not affect all stress created consequences in pupils' lives – they are able mainly to reduce pupils' stress directly connected to the teaching/learning process. One of the ways to reduce pupils' stress during the teaching/learning process, which can be used by teachers, is games and game-like activities and that is proved by the research results of DP.

ANOTĀCIJA

Ik dienu skolās daudz skolēnu piedzīvo situācijas, kuras rada stresu, piemēram, jaunās informācijas iegaumēšana, kontroldarbu rakstīšana un t.t., kas var būt viens no iemesliem sliktām sekmēm. Ja tādas situācijas ir katru dienu, tad rezultātā tās var būt bērnu depresijas un nemiera cēlonis, tāpēc ir svarīgi, lai skolotāji zinātu stresa simptomus un to, kā skolotājs var palīdzēt skolēniem mazināt stresu. Šajā diplomdarbā autore izpētīja literatūru par skolēnu stresu, tā iemesliem un simptomiem, kā arī pētīja un analizēja stresa novēršanas veidus. Par piemērotāko veidu stresa novēršanai angļu valodas stundās pamatskolā autore uzskata spēles un spēlēm līdzīgas aktivitātes, tāpēc diplomdarba mērķis bija izpētīt vai spēļu un izmantošana samazina skolēnu stresu un nemieru, kuru cēlonis ir mācību process un ātrais dzīves ritms.

Lai noteiktu skolēnu stresa līmeni un iespējamus stresa iemeslus, kā arī atrastu spēles un spēlēm līdzīgas aktivitātes, ar kuru palīdzību varētu mazināt skolēnu stresa līmeni, tika veikts atsevišķa gadījuma pētījums Rīgas Y vidusskolā, kurā piedalījās četrpadsmit 8.klases skolēni. Vispirms atbilstoši skolas kontekstam tika adaptēta speciāla stresa līmeņa noteikšanas anketa, ar kuras palīdzību tika konstatēts pamatskolas skolēnu stresa līmenis. Tika izveidota anketa arī angļu valodas skolotājiem ar nolūku noskaidrot, vai viņi uzskata, ka spēles ir svarīgs komponents bērnu stresa novēršanai un cik bieži viņi izmanto spēles savās stundās. Bija izvēlētas un piemērotas vietējiem apstākļiem 11 spēles, lai tiktu izmantotas angļu valodas mācību stundās. Šīs spēles tika izmantotās 1,5 mēnešu pētījuma laikā ar mērķi samazināt skolēnu stresa līmeni.

Pēc pirmās skolēnu anketas datu apstrādāšanas un analīzes diplomdarba autore secināja, ka pamatskolas skolēni izjūt diezgan augstu stresa līmeni un ka vairāk stresa izraisītājiem pakļaujas meitenes. Skolotāju anketu analīze liecināja par to, ka, neskatoties uz to, ka skolotāji saprot spēļu nozīmi mācīšanās procesā, tikai neliela daļa no aptaujātiem izmanto spēles angļu valodas stundās 2 - 3 reizes nedēļā. Rezultāti, iegūtie no speciālas stresa līmeņa noteikšanas anketas pētījuma nobeigumā liecina, ka stresa līmenis ir samazinājies, īpaši meiteņu starpā.

Iegūtie pētījuma dati liecina, ka, lai palīdzētu mazināt vispārējo skolēnu stresa līmeni, ir jāveic liels darbs gan skolā, gan ģimenē, jo skolotāji vien nevar ietekmēt visu stresa cēloņu radītās sekas skolēnu dzīvē – viņu spēkos galvenokārt ir iespēja mazināt skolēnu stresu, kas tieši saistīts ar mācību procesu. Viens no līdzekļiem skolēnu stresa mazināšanai mācību procesā, ko var izmantot skolotāji, ir spēles un spēlēm līdzīgas aktivitātes, ko pierāda konkrētā diplomdarba pētījuma rezultāti.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	7
1.Pupils' stress and anxiety	10
1.1The causes and signs of pupils' stress and anxiety	11
1.2 The ways of reducing pupils' stress and anxiety	13
2.Games and game-like activities as a way of reducing pupils' stress	17
2.1The definition of game	17
2.2The value of game	18
3.Case study in primary school	21
3.1The data received from the stress scale at the beginning of the case study	22
3.2The data received from teachers' questionnaires	24
3.3The games and game-like activities used at the lessons of English in primary school during the case study	26
3.3.1Code-control games used at the lessons of English during the case study	27
3.3.2Communication games used at the lessons of English during the case study	31
3.4 The data received from the stress scale at the end of the case study	34
Conclusion	39
Theses	41
Bibliography	43
Appendices	

INTRODUCTION

Development of any modern country and promotion of cultural relations spread to all spheres of humane life. This development influences nowadays lives of people. Previously people lived a less intense life. In recent decades, however, the pace of life has changed. It has accelerated dramatically and most of people experience their days as an emergency situation, which requires continuous action and no rest. This relates to children and adolescents as well as to adults. On the contrary to adults, children and adolescents often do not know how to cope with their stress. They do not know the techniques which can help them to lower the stress level and do not know where to search help. The great amount of adolescents' time is spent in schools where they learn new things, meet old and new friends and experience stress and anxiety. The author of the Diploma Paper thinks that it should be natural for teachers to help the pupils cope with stress and anxiety caused not only by the learning process, but also with stress and anxiety experienced outside school. Unfortunately, there are situations when teachers prefer not to notice pupils' high stress level and some times even make it higher. It could happen, for example, when teacher believes that punishment and pressure could help students learn well. According to research, "facilitating anxiety keeps learners alert to learning and eager to participate as they grow in the use of language and knowledge of content." However, "Debilitating anxiety creates excessive worry and self-doubt and results in reduced participation and avoidance of language use." (Sierra 2003). The reasons might not just come from the teachers but also from the whole education system. However, adolescents are expected to learn many things and be successful in their studies of exact sciences and the humanities.

In the author's opinion the fast development of modern life causes the necessity to learn foreign languages. The author of the Diploma Paper considers English language as a particular language which is helpful in international communication for a number of reasons. Firstly, modern English is the dominant international language in communications, science, business, entertainment, diplomacy and etc. Secondly, English is one of five most used and spoken second or foreign languages in the EU (besides German, French, Spanish and Russian). Finally, according to a multiple research, English either as a mother tongue or as a second language is spoken by 51% of EU citizens. The situation is analysed in *Europeans and their Languages* (2006).

The communication in any language requires knowledge of wide vocabulary which is piled up during several years; children and adolescents are expected to memorize numerous grammatical structures, vocabulary items, pronunciation nuances and etc. Apart from that, school

programme obliges teachers to teach many different school subjects. As a result, learners are required to learn great amount of new information. That is why children and adolescents lose their interest in learning. The students do not ask questions, make errors and do not communicate with teachers. They feel tired, stressed, anxious and mentally overstrained. Teachers search for new teaching methods, which would let children and adolescents effectively and qualitatively, and mainly with a great interest, learn foreign languages. Taking into consideration the fact that interest is the best stimulus during learning process, in the Diploma Paper author's opinion it is necessary to concentrate on every possibility to reduce stress and anxiety of the learner during the learning and teaching process. One of the ways how it could be done is using games and game-like activities. In the Diploma Paper the value of game as a part of teaching process in primary school at the lessons of English is researched.

The Aim of the Diploma Paper: to find out whether the usage of games and game-like activities reduces pupils' stress and anxiety caused by the fast development of life as well as the learning process.

The Objectives of the Diploma Paper:

- To study the literature about the causes of pupils' stress and anxiety; to study the literature about the ways of reducing children's and adolescents' stress and anxiety.
- To find and modify stress scale according to the pupils' age, in order to collect the data about the amount of their stress level caused by the fast development of life.
- To design a questionnaire for teachers in order to find out their opinion on whether games and game-like activities produce any benefits at the lessons of English and analyse how often games and game-like activities are employed by teachers at the lessons of English in primary school.
- To choose (according to the teachers' questionnaire collected data and the authors practical experience) and use games and game-like activities at the lessons of English in primary school in order to reduce adolescents' stress and anxiety level.
- To distribute and collect modified stress scale in order to obtain the data about pupils' stress level after games and game-like activities were used at the lessons of English in primary school.

The research questions of the Diploma Paper:

- What causes the adolescents' (8th grade) stress and anxiety.
- What the ways of reducing adolescents' stress at the lessons of English in primary school are.
- What the role of game and game-like activities in reduction of stress and anxiety level at the lessons of English in primary school is.

The hypothesis: if teachers understand the causes of pupils' stress and anxiety, the appropriate games and game-like activities can be selected and used at the lessons of English in primary school, thus reducing adolescents' stress level.

The research method of the Diploma Paper: case study.

The data collection methods: a modified stress scale for learners in order to find out presence and level of their stress and anxiety; a questionnaire for teachers in order to find out if games and game-like activities are used at the lessons of English in primary school to reduce children's and adolescents' stress and anxiety.

Research sample: Rigas Y Secondary School, adolescent learners (8th grade), five girls and nine boys.

The outline of the chapters:

- In the first chapter of the Diploma Paper, the causes of children's and adolescents' stress and anxiety and the way of reducing children's and adolescents' stress and anxiety are looked at.
- In the second chapter of the Diploma Paper, the conception of game and game-like activities is described as well as game and game-like activities as a way of reducing children's and adolescents' stress and anxiety level are analysed.
- The third chapter of the Diploma Paper deals with the case study of the research.

1. PUPILS' STRESS AND ANXIETY

From birth to puberty children have to face a myriad of stressful situations. However, the intensity of stress in children and adolescents appears to have increased dramatically in the past years. Professional people who work with children and adolescents who are in distress report that youngsters today have fewer sources of parental support, and often get less of their parents' time, approval and love (Brenner 1984, in De Witt and Booyesen 1995). Parents, who ignore children because of not having time, as well as parents who over stimulate children by exposing them to too many so-called stimulating activities, cause stress in the children (De Witt and Booyesen 1995: 144). The author of the DP agrees to the fact that parents often cause children feel stressed due to the high expectations. Since the very young age it is often required from children to perform very well in every task or activity. For this reason children and adolescents start feeling stressed and anxious. Except that, from the first step the young child does towards learning a new skill such as reading or playing the violin, the child is exposed to stress that accompanies the normal process of the human development.

Furthermore, the author of the DP thinks that stress is a contemporary theme in the uncertain, hurried and competitive world people live in today. Children and adolescents experience relatively as much stress in their life worlds as adults do. In fact, adolescents find it more difficult to handle stress since they do not have effective defence mechanisms, adaptation methods or problem-solving skills at their disposal to successfully cope with a stressful situation (De Witt and Booyesen 1995: 144). The author of the DP holds a similar opinion. In particular, it was witnessed (by the author of DP) that the stressful situations cause different, often unpleasant reaction in children and adolescents. The younger children start showing their emotions, for example crying, yelling, etc. The adolescents show anger and aggression.

Despite the facts mentioned above, a certain degree of stress is, of course, natural and even necessary for a healthy lifestyle. Experiencing some amount of stress children feel more motivated to learn and develop new skills, to achieve new goals, and to strive for a more successful life.

Furthermore, everyone experiences feelings of anxiety from time to time. Anxiety can be described as a sense of uneasiness, nervousness, worry, fear, or dread of what is about to happen or what might happen. While fear is the emotion one feels in the presence of threat, anxiety is a sense of anticipated danger, trouble, or threat. It is completely normal to worry when things get hectic and complicated. But if worries become overwhelming, people may feel that the life is losing its sense because there are no positive emotions. If a person spends an excessive amount of time feeling worried or nervous, or has difficulty sleeping because of the anxiety, the attention

should be paid to the thoughts and feelings. They may be symptoms of an anxiety problem or disorder (D'Arcy Lyness 2007). The author of the DP came to the same conclusion based on the practical experience in school during English lessons. The anxiety has a negative impact on learners. The adolescents experiencing anxiety are not able to perform successfully during the lessons. The learners feel too nervous to answer teacher's questions and perform poorly during the tests. For this reason, teachers should be able to recognise the signs of pupils' stress and anxiety and try to understand the causes.

1.1 THE CAUSES AND SIGNS OF PUPILS' STRESS AND ANXIETY

To adults children and adolescents can seem completely carefree - they hang out with friends, play their games and seem to be skating blissfully through their days. However, if one could get inside the adolescents' heads, one might find their lives are less than idyllic. The physical, intellectual, emotional and social changes that primary school learners are experiencing, rival those of babies and toddlers. Not only can this time of life be confusing (imagine how it would feel if the foot size changed three times in six months), it can cause some very real stress for adolescents.

Although the types of things that lead to stress for adolescents may be unique, the reactions are often much the same as adults' reactions. Situations such as trying out for a sports team or taking an important test can elicit a wide range of responses in adolescents. While some may experience total calm, others become agitated and edgy. Still others may have a "fight or flight" response when faced with having to do something uncomfortable. The adrenaline rush associated with the anxiety may cause the adolescents to either lash out at others or run away from the situation. The author of the DP studied the related literature (De Witt and Booyesen 1995, D'Arcy Lyness 2007) and concluded that the following signs are the most essential to the nature of chronic stress (chronic stress is the term for on-going stress, often caused by more serious situations, such as parents' divorce or bullying) experienced by adolescents:

- upset stomach, diarrhoea or indigestion;
- headache, backache;
- insomnia;
- eating too much or too little;
- hostile, angry or irritable reactions;
- avoiding other people;
- crying;
- frustration with things that would otherwise only bother them slightly (Leon 2008).

The concept of stress occurs in various forms:

- first, it refers to external pressure, or a stressor which causes discomfort;
- a weight or force which causes change and adaptation;
- an emotional condition of discomfort:
- lastly, a form of physical reaction to a stressful situation (De Witt and Booyesen 1995:144).

Traditionally, stress has been defined in terms of its source (e.g., internal and external) (Marion 2003:23). Internal sources of stress include hunger; pain; sensitivity to noise, temperature change, and crowding (social density); fatigue; and over- or under-stimulation from one's immediate physical environment. External stressors include separation from family, change in family composition, exposure to arguing and interpersonal conflict, exposure to violence, experiencing the aggression of others (bullying), loss of important personal property or a pet, exposure to excessive expectations for accomplishment, "hurrying," and disorganization in one's daily life events (Jewett and Peterson 2002). Although the research literature tends to focus on the impact of single-variable stressors on adolescents' development, in real-life situations, learners experience stress from multiple sources. Researchers note that multiple stressors interact with one another and can have cumulative effects (Brophy 1998). In addition, experts have observed that children's and adolescents' physical responses to stress are also different from adult responses. The adolescents' responses may be more intense and involve the whole body (Goldberger and Breznitz 1982:134). The author of the DP came to the conclusion that stress is linked to the individual's observation of certain demands, external pressures, events or circumstances which are posing a threat to the individual and are causing discomfort. According to De Witt and Booyesen (1995) these sources of stress are called stressors. Stressors are usually connected to external factors but can also be the result of inner attitudes and thoughts; for example, "I must achieve", "I am not good enough" and "I must be accepted". The author of the DP studied the related literature (Marion 2003, Jewett and Peterson 2002, Goldberger and Breznitz 1982) and concluded that the sources of stress are endless. Any disturbance which impedes a person's functioning at any level, and which creates a situation that one would rather avoid, can be regarded as a stressor. In the DP author's opinion it is important for teachers not only to realise that the learners experience stress, but also try to lower adolescents' stress level even if the cause of stress is not connected to the learning process.

As well as stress, adolescents' anxiety may be caused by a mental condition, a physical condition, or from a combination of these. The teacher's initial task is to try and see if the learners' anxiety is caused by a learning process or other factors of adolescents' life. The author of the DP performed research of the related literature (Chakraburty 2007 and Stein and Walker

2005) concluded that there are several common external factors which can cause the adolescents' anxiety:

- stress from school;
- stress in a personal relationship such as friendship;
- stress from an emotional trauma such as the death of a family member or a friend.

According to the DP author's practical experience the quality of adolescents' lives depends on their feelings. Anxiety often makes a negative impact on the students' school performance and attendance, as well as the ability to socialize with peers and develop and maintain relationships. Parents and teachers may not be aware of the warning signs of the adolescents' anxiety, or extreme shyness may not be considered as a problem which needs adults' attention. Nevertheless, there are signs for teachers and parents to watch for in order to identify adolescents' anxiety. Stein and Walker (2005) point out following signs of adolescents' anxiety:

- Hesitance, passivity, and discomfort in the spotlight;
- Avoidance or refusal to initiate conversations, perform in front of others, invite friends to get together, telephone others for homework or other information;
- Avoiding eye contact;
- Speaking very softly or mumbling;
- Minimal interaction and conversation with peers;
- Appearing isolated or on the fringes of the group;
- Sitting alone in the library or cafeteria, or hanging back from a group in team meetings;
- Overly concerned with negative evaluation, humiliation, or embarrassment;
- Difficulty with public speaking, reading aloud, or being called on in class.

The author of the DP observed the students of primary school at the lessons of English and came to the conclusion that there are adolescents who suffer from anxiety. The pupils' performance was negatively affected by anxiety which resulted in poor answers, nervousness and refusal to give an answer. For this reason, the author of the DP thinks that teachers should possess the information about possible ways of stress reduction.

1.2 THE WAYS OF REDUCING PUPILS' STRESS AND ANXIETY

Summarizing the conducted research of the related literature (Chakraburttu 2007 and Stein and Walker 2005) the author of the DP concluded that adolescents need help in learning to manage and function with the stress and anxiety they feel. It is important that adolescents understand what they are feeling, that students are taught the word "stress" by letting them know

that they may feel "butterflies in the stomach," or that their heart may pound. Adolescents should know that it is all right to feel angry, alone, scared, or lonely. The author of the DP thinks that parents and teachers are responsible for teaching adolescents names or words for the feelings and appropriate ways to express them, showing more interest in the adolescents' experience than in the behaviour that results. In the case of adolescents, adults should help them learn to solve their problems themselves and come up with management (coping or intervention) strategies.

According to De Witt and Booysen (1995) intervention strategies attempt to prevent stress, as well as the detrimental effect it has on the individual, by means of a specific technique or sometimes even a set of techniques. Intervention, in respect of reaction to stress, takes place along with treatment of other problems secondary to the stress symptoms, for example behavioural problems. Assisting adolescents in understanding and using effective adaptation and coping strategies must be based on the adolescents' developmental level and understanding of the nature of the stress-inducing event. Teachers and parents can prevent and reduce stress for adolescents in many ways (Brophy 1998). There are some of them:

- Conversation (conferencing): the conversation should take place with as few distractions as possible. A calm atmosphere of acceptance must be created in which the adolescent can feel safe and can know that whatever is about to be said will be accepted by adult. The adult can put the adolescent's feelings into words, since the adolescent may be too confused to do it himself owing to the stress he is under. It is important to have the adolescent understand that adult is listening with attention. Helping an adolescent to express assumptions, questions and fears may equip him to deal with them. The adult should at all costs avoid doing the following: falling apart, making false promises, making judgements, subjecting the adolescent to an inquisition, or withdrawing himself from the adolescent emotionally (De Witt and Booysen 1995:152).
- Art therapy: in art therapy visual and graphic materials are applied to accomplish therapeutic ends. Because of the intrinsic attraction artistic expression holds for adolescents, it is well suited for use in intervention.
- Behavioural therapy: behavioural therapy has traditionally focused more on the treatment of specific symptoms, such as enuresis, phobic reactions, fits of rage, sleeping disturbances or other behavioural problems. There is a wide range of intervention techniques, including behaviour modification, conditioning, relaxation techniques, guided daydreaming, hypnosis, modelling on another person, codes of behaviour, and so on (De Witt and Booysen 1995:153).

- Family therapy: Family interaction and functioning are taken into account as the adolescent's primary shaping force. The goals of family therapy are to restore family functioning to a level at which the adolescent's needs for security, stability and safety are being met and to find constructive ways of dealing with the conditions changed by the crisis situation.
- Relaxation techniques: clinical research and empirical investigations have shown that learning relaxation techniques is an effective way of intervention in respect of reducing or even preventing of stress symptoms in the adolescent.
- Hypnosis: hypnosis usually involves a physical relaxation procedure as part of the process of inducing a trance. Suggestions of alternative evaluations of the stressor as well as alternative reactions are made to the adolescent under hypnosis. Some researchers refer to hypnosis as relaxation therapy (De Witt and Booyesen 1995:153).
- Play therapy: play therapy's goal is insight into and the interpretation of experiences. As the teenager plays, the adult can respond by putting the adolescent's feelings into words, by establishing an interpersonal relationship with him and by gradually leading him to structure his behaviour around a particular problem. Play therapy utilises the natural medium of play to build a relationship of trust between adolescent and adult, and then to explore and work through the cognitive and affective dimensions of the stressful event (De Witt and Booyesen 1995:153)

It is not necessary to be a therapist to help adolescents cope with stress. One key element in reducing stress is a stress-free environment. A stress-free environment is based on social support, having the ability to find hope by thinking through solutions, and being able to anticipate stress and learn ways to avoid it (DeBord 1996).

As well as stress anxiety can be a great obstacle in the adolescents' life. When faced with anxiety-producing situations, an adolescent can suffer from unpleasant symptoms. According to Stein and Walker (2005) these symptoms are:

- sweating
- racing heart
- stomach-ache
- dizziness
- crying
- tantrums
- freezing

Summarizing the conducted research of the related literature (Stein and Walker 2005) the author of the DP concluded that there is great number of tips for parents and teachers on how to help the adolescents to lower the anxiety level. For example teachers can do the following:

- Teachers should implement procedures to get socially anxious students more involved, such as calling on them in class (these students should be explained beforehand that the teacher's intention is to help them feel more comfortable in class, not more embarrassed; they should be coached, if necessary, to make sure the students know the answers).
- The students should be reminded that speaking up in class will get easier with practice.
- Teachers should not single out these students.
- Teachers should try to incorporate oral presentations into the curriculum to help all students develop confidence in public speaking.

The Author of the DP came to the conclusion that it is important to understand that some stress is normal in adolescents' life. Daily and life challenges can be expected. For example, most adolescents attending school will have to go through many transitions. Some stressors such as feeling peer pressure are predictable. Other stressors are not as easy to foresee. Disruptions in normal sequence of the adolescent's life cause problems with stress. Small amounts of stress, as experienced before a test or when meeting new people, are necessary to present challenges for greater learning. Simple stress experienced when learning a new skill or playing an exciting game raise a person's level of excitement or pressure above the normal level. The adults should take responsibility for teaching adolescents how to cope with stress using accessible ways for adolescents' understanding. Game is one of these ways. The advantages of the game as a way of reducing adolescents' stress are revealed in the next chapter.

2. GAMES AND GAME-LIKE ACTIVITIES AS A WAY OF REDUCING PUPILS' STRESS

According to the DP author's practical experience it is clear that primary school teacher knows how much pupils enjoy playing games. For pupils game-like activities make a link between home and school life which makes them feel safer in school environment, besides, games are lively and fun. Moreover, at school pupils can be taught by teachers to relax and learn new things at the same time by means of game. Through the game adolescents are given the opportunity to experience and practise the fundamental principles of cognitive development such as remembering, problem solving, and decision-making. The inclusion of game or game-like activity into the learning process can help pupils develop cognitive potentiality. As a result adolescents can become better pupils.

2.1 THE DEFINITION OF GAME

It is difficult to discuss games without analysing closely related concept of play. It has been said that understanding the atom bomb is child's play compared to understanding child's play (Morris and Stiehl 1998:3). According to Ginsburg (2007), when play has clearly defined goals and structured with rules it is entitled as a game. Morris and Stiehl (1998) point out that play represents an arena that people enter to lose themselves- paradoxically, however, people sometimes find themselves through play.

Summarizing the studies of the related literature (Morris and Stiehl 1998 and Ginsburg 2007) the author of the DP concluded that unlike play, games are usually structured and have more or less predictable outcomes. A game is a structured or semi-structured activity, usually undertaken for enjoyment and sometimes also used as an educational tool. Games are generally distinct from work, which is usually carried out for remuneration, and from art, which is more concerned with the expression of ideas. However, the distinction is not clear-cut, and many games are also considered to be work or art. Key components of games are goals, rules, challenge, and interactivity. Games generally involve mental or physical stimulation, and often both. Many games help develop practical skills, serve as a form of exercise, or otherwise perform an educational, stimulatory or psychological role. French sociologist Roger Caillois, in his book "Les jeux et les hommes" (Games and Men), defined a game as an activity that must have the following characteristics:

- fun: the activity is chosen for its light-hearted character;
- separate: it is circumscribed in time and place;

- non-productive: participation is not productive;
- governed by rules: the activity has rules that are different from everyday life;
- fictitious: it is accompanied by the awareness of a different reality (Caillois 1957).

Taking into consideration characteristics mentioned above the author of the DP concluded that participants play games with a certain goal in mind. They do not have the complete freedom to follow impulses. In games, players place limitations on the play world and turn play into a contest. The limitations include prescribed space and time boundaries, agreed upon rules, and clearly defined goals (Morris and Stiehl 1998:5). Taking into account the theoretical research of the related literature, the author of the DP proposed the following definition of the game: a game is a voluntary contest with agreed upon rules and clearly defined goals; where the goals are defined by the leader of the game (teacher) and rules are agreed upon the participants.

2.2 THE VALUE OF GAME

Most teachers and parents want to contribute to the quality of young people's life: development, achievements, and overall well-being. One way of accomplishing this is through games. There is not universal agreement, however, on the value of games. Historically, games were often derogated as trivial and unimportant (Morris and Stiehl 1998:5). The author of the DP concluded that in order to justify the inclusion of game in any school programme, the importance of game in the life of an adolescent must be reflected. The necessity of game in the life of the adolescent is seen in following: the pupil uses game to disguise genuine conflicts and difficulties, or he may use play and game to relax tension and anxiety. The fact of the great importance is that the adolescent discharges aggression and seeks to overcome traumatic anxieties through game; they act as a regulative mechanism (De Witt and Booysen 1995:122). From this it is seen by the author of the DP that adolescents' game is a way of lowering the anxiety and stress level, discovery and exploration, and also expression of the world around.

According to several researchers, the value of game lies in numerous aspects. Firstly, game leads to discovery, reasoning and order in adolescents' lives. Secondly, the cognitive development of the adolescents is fostered by many games. Thirdly, the spontaneous and highly enjoyable qualities of game provide energy and organise the adolescents' learning process. Next, when adolescents play together, constructive socialisation is promoted and empathy is developed. Then, game enhances adolescents' emotional development. It is an important aspect in students' handling anxiety and normal developmental conflicts. It also plays important role in the prevention of stress in the adolescents' lives. Game offers the adolescent the opportunity to be independent, to make his own decisions and thus to become self-reliant (De Witt and Booysen

1995:122). Finally, game develops adolescents' creative thinking. The author of the DP concluded that game has a considerable role in adolescents' physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Still, the most important feature of the game playing is that participants enjoy themselves more when they are playing than when they are not.

The basis of childhood and adolescence are formed by playing games. It is suggested that the value of a game lies in the purpose for which it is designed. The author of the DP thinks that game provides a minimum of risks and penalties for mistakes, thus playing games reduces the pressure and tension which are related to aspects of the learning process. Moreover, through the game adolescents learn to approach the world from different perspectives. Pupils discover that other people opinions are not necessarily wrong.

Summarizing the conducted research of the related literature the author of the DP concluded that games allow adolescents to develop their cognitive, social and other skills in a stress free environment. For example, according to the De Witt and Booysen (1995) the value of game for adolescents' social development is the following:

- It offers the adolescents the opportunity to try on a variety of roles and personalities.
- Adolescents learn co-operation.
- Students learn to lead and follow.
- Game helps adolescents to verbalise needs.
- Game reflects adolescents' culture and values.
- Game promotes adolescents knowledge of society's rules and of group responsibility.
- Adolescents learn to show respect for others' possessions and rights.
- Adolescents learn how to participate in a group.
- Game builds an awareness of the self as a member of a group.
- Game promotes adolescents' self-identification.
- Adolescents experience positive emotions.

The author of the DP concluded that game should be taken seriously education-wise. Game fulfils an important role in the adolescents' total development and should be done justice to in any educational programme.

Additionally, Brewster et.al. (2002) suggests the following list of games' advantages for language learning purposes:

- Variety is added to the range of learning situations.
- The pace of a lesson can be changed, thus maintaining pupils' motivation.
- More formal teaching can be 'lightened', thus renewing pupils' energy.

- ‘Hidden’ practise of specific language patterns, vocabulary and pronunciation can be provided.
- Listening skills, attention span and concentration are improved.
- Pupils’ participation is encouraged, thereby giving confidence to shy pupils.
- Pupil-pupil communication is increased, which provides fluency practise and reduces the domination of the class by the teacher.
- Any distance between teacher and pupils can be reduced by the use of more light-hearted and ‘fun’ activities.
- Areas of weakness and the need for further language work can be revealed.

Summing up the chapter, the author of the DP concluded that teachers might choose the advantages which are relevant to the needs of the particular pupils and design lesson plans according to these needs. Since there are many advantages of using games, that means games can be used at different stages of a lesson. Games can, for example, begin a lesson in a stimulating way, relieve tension before or after a test, or interrupt a more formal lesson when interest is decreasing. Since games are very important in adolescents’ development and learning, teachers who work with adolescents on daily basis should realise that and increase the usage of games and game-like activities at the lessons. The author of the DP suggests the list of possible games and game-like activities for the lessons of English in primary school in the following chapter.

3. CASE STUDY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The aim of the DP set by the author is to find out whether the usage of games and game-like activities reduces pupils' stress and anxiety caused by the learning process as well as by the fast development of modern life at the lessons of English in primary school. In order to reach the aim the author of the DP set up the following objectives:

- To study the literature about the causes of pupils' stress and anxiety; to study the literature about the ways of reducing pupils' stress and anxiety.
- To find and modify a stress scale according to the pupils' age (13 – 14 years old) in order to collect the data about the amount of their stress level caused by teaching/learning process and fast development of modern life.
- To design a questionnaire for teachers in order to find out their opinion on whether games and game-like activities produce any benefits at the lessons of English and analyse how often games and game-like activities are employed by teachers at the lessons of English in primary school.
- To choose (according to the teachers' questionnaire collected data and the DP author's practical experience) and use games and game-like activities at the lessons of English in primary school in order to reduce adolescents' stress and anxiety level.
- To give out and the modified stress scale in order to obtain the data about pupils' stress level after games and game-like activities were used at the lessons of English in primary school.

In order to analyse pupils' stress level in primary school at the beginning of the case study the author of the DP studied the related literature (Lowenstein 1997, Holmes and Rahe 1967, Cohen 1983) and elaborated a modified stress scale suitable for the 8th grade pupils' age (13 – 14 years old) (appendix 1). The modified stress scale allowed exploring adolescents' stress level by analyzing pupils' answers to the questions. The modified stress scale was not anonymous and that allowed comparing answers of each pupil before and after the case study. There were thirty questions in the stress scale. There were only two answers possible - "yes" or "no". The adolescents had to choose one answer which seemed more suitable. Every "yes" answer received one point. At the end all received points were summed up. Proceeding from the final sum of points, the bigger the score was the higher stress level the pupil was under. The same modified stress scale was offered to adolescents for filling in at the end of the case study in order to comprehend if pupils' stress level had changed after games and game-like activities were used at

the lessons of English in primary school. Also, the questionnaire about usage of games and game-like activities was designed for teachers of English in primary school (appendix 2).

Fourteen 13 - 14 year old pupils took part in the research. These adolescents learn English in one of Riga's primary schools. All adolescents are classmates and they are 8th grade pupils. During the stress scale analyses it turned out that it was possible to process all stress scales because all filling in instructions were observed by adolescents.

Thus, in order to determine pupils' stress level in primary school the answers of fourteen adolescents were analyzed - 9 (64%) boys and 5 (36%) girls.

The girls' answers are coded as number 1 and boys' answers are coded as number 2 in the **TABLE 1** (appendix 3).

3.1 THE DATA RECEIVED FROM THE STRESS SCALE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CASE STUDY

The mathematical statistical method was used for received data analyze. All the data had been calculated with the help of "Microsoft Excel 2003" computer programme.

Analysing the average stress level at the beginning of the research between boys and girls separately, it is clearly comprehended that stress level differs depending on the gender. Based on the DP authors' practical experience it is important to separate the data received from the girls and the data received from the boys. During practical experience the author of the DP noticed that the girls experience stress and anxiety more often during the lessons than the boys do. The majority of the girls show greater concern about the performance during the lesson, thus feeling more anxious than the boys. Therefore, girls' stress level is noticeably higher than boys' stress level (figure 2).

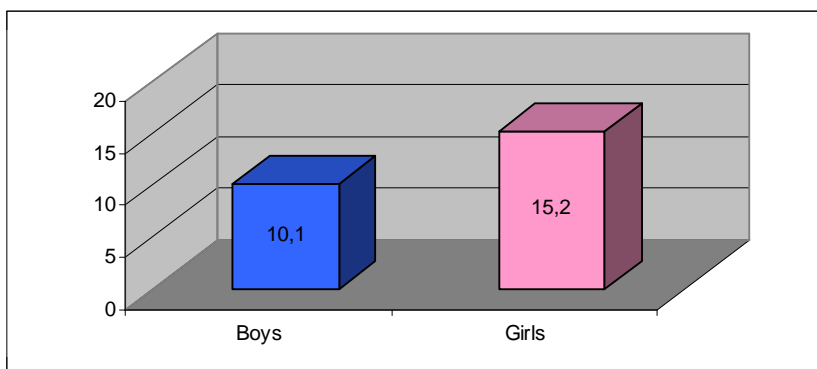


Figure 2. The Difference in Average Points of Stress Level among Girls and Boys.

According to the modified stress scale data, adolescents who score 1 - 8 points have low stress level (LSL) - the level of stress necessary for a healthy lifestyle of an adolescent. Those

whose score was 9 - 15 points have average stress level (ASL) - normal level of stress with which pupils' body and mind are able to cope independently. Finally, adolescents who have 16 - 30 points have high stress level (HSL) - the level of stress which can cause pupils' anxiety and depression. Usually adolescents who have high stress level (HSL) are not able to cope with it independently for a long period of time; the help of adult (parent or teacher) is required. It is clear that teachers are not able to have influence upon every stressor in adolescents' life but the author of the DP thinks it is important that teachers attempt to lower pupils' stress and anxiety connected to the learning process and classroom atmosphere. The adequate choice of games and game-like activities at the lessons of English in primary school can create stress free environment during the lessons, allowing pupils to develop language and social skills without risks and penalties for mistakes, thus reducing the pressure and tension related to aspects of the learning process. For example, pupils who feel anxious speaking in front of the class might feel more confident as a part of a team.

As the collected data had been divided by gender of the participants and analyzed separately, it is comprehended that there are no girls between those who participated in research with low level of stress (LSL). There are 2 or 40% of girls who experience average stress level (ASL). Finally, among the participants in research there are 3 or 60% of girls who endure high stress level and need an adult's assistance with coping it (figure 3).

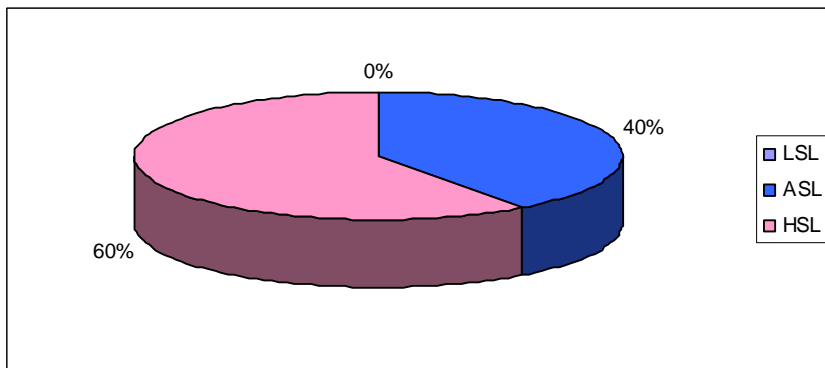


Figure 3. Stress Level among Girls' Participants in the Research.

The number of boys who participated in the research was almost twice higher than the number of girls. However, from the data collected it is perceived that there are no boys among the participants who experience high level of stress (HSL). There are 6 or 67% of boys who have average stress level (ASL). 3 or 33% of boys experience low stress level (LSL) and are able to cope with it independently (figure 4).

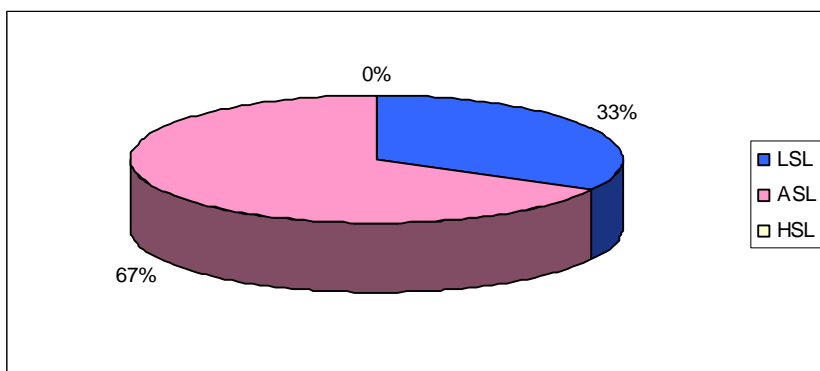


Figure 4. Stress Level among Boys, Participants in the Research.

Comparing the collected data between the genders it is obvious that girls' needs for help with coping stress are much higher than boys' needs. At the same age group there are 33% less girls who experience healthy low stress level (LSL). The average stress level (ASL) experienced by boys is on 27% higher than by girls of the same age. Finally, the percentage of girls under the high level of stress (HSL) is 60% comparing to 0% of boys experiencing the same stress level (figure 5).

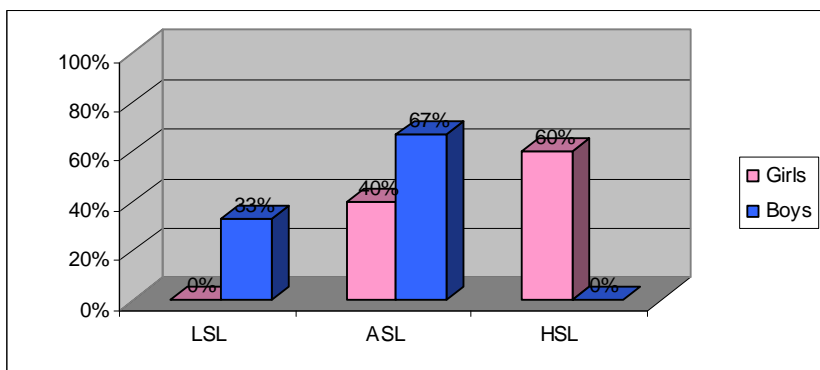


Figure 5. The Comparison of Stress Levels Experienced by Boys and Girls.

3.2 THE DATA RECEIVED FROM TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Five teachers of English agreed to participate in the research. They teach English in the same Riga's secondary school. During the questionnaires' analyses it turned out that it was possible to process all questionnaires because all filling in instructions were observed by participants.

Based on the practical experience the author of the DP thinks that it is important to collect the data about the age of the participants. During the observation practice the author of the DP came to the conclusion that older teachers use games and game-like activities less often than younger teachers. It might depend on the level of teachers' tiredness; since younger teachers are

more energetic they might be able to prepare and use games and game-like activities more often. Therefore, the first question in the questionnaire was about age. One teacher answered that she was 20 - 30 years old which forms 20% of interrogated. Accordingly, two teachers affiliated with 30 - 40 age group and two with 40+ age group, which forms 40% and 40% (figure 6).

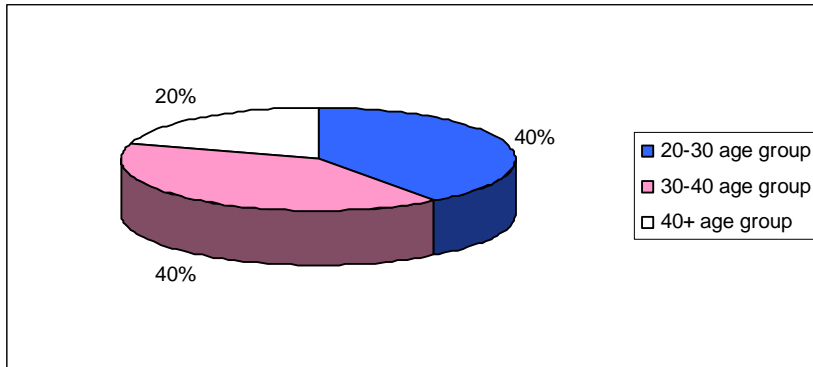


Figure 6. The Age of Teachers Participants in the Research.

The second question in the questionnaire was about how long the participants are working at school. Based on the DP author’s observations, young teachers, who just have started working at school, lack practical experience. Lesson plans prepared for the lessons are adequate theory-wise, but in reality pre-planned activities often take too much or too little time. For this reason, it is hard for a young teacher to predict how much time will be spent on one or another game or game-like activity; so it is easier to avoid such activities (figure 7).

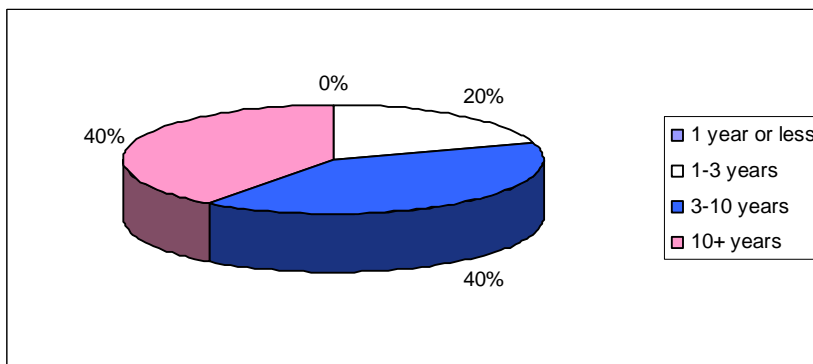


Figure 7. The Length of Time Which Teachers Are Working at School.

Therefore, according to the collected data one teacher works at school 1 - 3 years. Two teachers or 40% work at school 3 - 10 years and two teachers or 40% work at school 10 and more years. None of the questioned teachers works at school one year or less.

Referring to the data in question three (about the age group with which the teachers are working), one teacher is teaching 7 - 10 years old and 11 - 15 years old pupils. Another teacher, or also 20%, is working exclusively with 11 - 15 years old age group. The other three teachers or

60% of the participants teach all age groups. In the DP author's opinion it is naturally that the teachers who work with younger pupils will use games and game-like activities more often than the teachers who work with adolescents. Younger pupils need interruptions during the lessons because it is hard for them to be concentrated on something for a long period of time. The adolescents, on the contrary, need lessons interruptions in order to reduce the pressure and tension related to aspects of the learning process.

On the question about the value of using games and game-like activities at the lessons of English all teachers agreed that using games is valuable procedure in educational process and named the variety of reasons (games raise pupils' interest in the subject; learners remember new information better when get it from game-like activities; pupils learn to work in teams and support each other during the game; game-like activities reduce the tension among the teacher and the class; etc.). The author of the DP was contented with the received data because the answers on the fourth question showed that the teachers understand positive impact which is brought to the lessons of English by games.

However, even when the value of the game is clearly realized by all participants none of them had admitted using games almost at every lesson. Two of the teachers or 40% had revealed that they use games 1 time per week or less. The other three or 60% of the participants acknowledged using games 2 - 3 times per week. None of the teachers declared never using the games at the lessons of English.

Answering to the last question of the questionnaire (if using games at the lessons of English can reduce pupils' stress) teachers had chosen two out of three possible answers. Three teachers or 60% of the participants agreed that using games can help reduce pupils' stress. At the same time for two or 40% it was hard to say if using of games can help with reducing pupils' stress.

3.3 THE GAMES AND GAME-LIKE ACTIVITIES USED AT THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL DURING THE CASE STUDY

There are many different kinds of games, which can be used at the lessons of English. The author of the DP included games and game-like activities into the lessons of English which occurred in 8th form in Rigas' Y secondary school. There were three lessons per week and the author of the DP included games at least into two lessons per week. The case study took place from 01.10.2009 to 30.11.2009. The author of the DP conducted 21 lessons of English and

organised more than ten games and game-like activities. Some of the games were used more than one time but the author of the DP adopted them to the topic of the lesson.

During the case study the author of the DP classified games as code-control games (code-control games aim to practice new language items and develop accuracy) and communication games (communication games aim to develop fluency and communication between participants). The purpose of a code-control game is to score more points than other participants. The communication games require the pupils to use the knowledge of appropriate language, such as the vocabulary items, prepositions, asking questions, asking clarifications, explaining and etc.

After performing games and game-like activities at the lessons of English the author of the DP came to the conclusion that before choosing a game for a lesson the teacher should decide whether the pupils need to practise language using a code-control game, or whether the pupils are ready to use a communication game. Whatever the choice of game is, it must be thoroughly prepared. Any written or visual resources need to be made beforehand. In addition, it is wise to vary the choice of games so that there is not always a competitive element. For example communication games are focused on communication and are more likely to give every pupil a chance to speak in an unthreatening atmosphere.

In the following sub-sub-sections the author of the DP described games and game-like activities which were used at the lessons of English in primary school in order to practise pupils' language skills and create stress free atmosphere in the classroom that helps to lower pupils' stress and anxiety level.

3.3.1 CODE-CONTROL GAMES USED AT THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH DURING THE CASE STUDY

The code-control games are used to practise new language items such as new vocabulary items, grammar tenses, spelling, pronunciation, etc. The main aim of the code-control games is to develop accuracy.

The author of the DP reviewed theoretical basis of stress and anxiety given in the first chapter and theory of games and the positive impact in pupils' stress and anxiety reduction given in the second chapter. The variety of games and game-like activities suggested by the ESL teachers around the globe was analysed by the author of the DP and several code-control games were chosen and adopted to local conditions. Some of the games and game-like activities were tried out with different classes by the author of the DP during 2009 school years' spring semester. The most effective games for pupils' stress and anxiety reduction were selected by the author of the DP for the case study. Some of the suggested games were presented at the 7th

International Students' Research Conference as innovative tool in stress and anxiety reduction. The authors' suggestions received positive feedback from the participants of the conference including some academic staff of the University of Latvia. The following list contains these code-control games' description:

1. Word Search (appendix 4).

The word search activities were used by the author of the DP in order to teach correct spelling in unthreatening atmosphere. The word search activities can be adopted by the teacher to any topic which should be covered by school programme or the teacher can find ready to use word search activities in the Internet. Usually, the word search activities were given to the pupils during the practice or production stage of the lesson. After presentation of new vocabulary items the pupils were offered a word search activity. The pupils worked individually, searching for the new vocabulary items. If the activity was offered at the production stage of the lesson, the pupils were asked to use the vocabulary items in the sentences or situations of their own. The pupil who found the words correctly and used them in sentences faster than the others was the winner. This pupil gained the status of an expert and was allowed to help other pupils with the task or check their word search activities for correct spelling. This allowed the pupils to memorize the spelling of the new vocabulary items without feeling stressed or anxious.

2. Jump Pond (appendix 5).

Jump Pond is a board game which teaches vocabulary items and pronunciation. This game requires some resources such as board, playing cards and markers. The game can be offered to the pupils at the beginning of the lesson in order to revise the pronunciation of the vocabulary items learned at the previous lessons. The class is divided into several groups of 2 – 5 players in each. Each group receives the board and each player is given a different marker. All markers should be placed on the 'Start' square. The playing cards should be shuffled and put in a pile face down. Each playing card has one or two coloured squares. The squares are coloured into one of five possible colours. Each colour represents different topic. The teacher explains to the pupils what each colour means before the game starts. For example, purple is for fruits, green – for clothes, red – for sports, blue – for animals and orange – for furniture. Each player takes a turn and retrieves a playing card from the top of the pile. For example, the player has drawn an orange square. This means that the player should 'hop' to the next space along the path on the board that has a word that belongs to the furniture vocabulary set. The players should pronounce the word, on the space were they landed, correctly. If the player does not, he or she returns to the previous place. If the pupil draws a card with two coloured squares, the player should 'hop' forward two positions. The first player to 'hop' on the 'Finish' square wins the game. This game

lets the pupils not only to memorise correct pronunciation, but also provides a minimum of risks and penalties for mistakes.

3. Super Word Race (appendix 6).

Super Word Race is also a board game which is great for lessons on pronunciation and spelling. This game requires some resources such as board, playing cards, markers and a coin. The game can be offered to the pupils at the end of the lesson in order to revise the pronunciation and the spelling of the vocabulary items learned during the lesson. Instead of using several boards, the teacher can draw it on the black-board and offer the pupils magnets instead of markers. The class is divided into pairs. Each pair decides who is pronouncing the words and who is spelling the words. The players can switch the roles during the game. The markers or magnets are placed on 'Start'. The players take a turn by flipping a coin (heads mean that the marker moves one space, tails – the marker moves two spaces). When the marker lands on 'Pit Stop', the first player takes a card from the pile and pronounces the word, the second player writes the word on the black-board or spells it orally. If the word is pronounced and spelled correctly, the marker is moved forward. If there was a mistake, the marker is moved back. The first team to reach the 'Finish' is the winner. There are three sets of cards divided into three levels: blue means easy, red – medium and green – hard. The teacher can make a decision to play with one set of cards or mix the sets and tell the pupils that there are different levels. Another option is that the players can move forward one place for blue, two – for red, three – for green and backward for wrong answers in reverse order: three places for blue, two – for red and one – for green. This means the more difficult is the level chosen by the players, the fewer penalties they get for wrong answers.

4. The Inca Empire (appendix 7).

The Inca Empire game-like activity was used by the author of the DP in order to teach grammar: Present Passive Voice and Past Passive Voice. The activity was used during the practice and production stages of the lesson. Firstly, the teacher makes short presentation of the Present Passive Voice and Past Passive Voice. Then, the teacher divides the pupils into pairs and lets each pair to choose one information card about Inca Empire. The pupils are given The Inca Empire worksheets. The worksheets can be given to each pupil or one per pair. The pupils read the task from the worksheets and start doing the activity. The pupils should memorize the information from the card they have chosen and share this information with other pairs. The pairs can share information in small groups moving from one group to another or each pair can come in front of the class and share the information with the rest of the pupils. The teacher should monitor the pupils and remind them that notes should be taken using Present or Past Passive Voice. After that, the pairs compare the notes with other pairs, simultaneously checking

if the information was written down correctly. Later, the teacher can give a list of questions about the Inca Empire and ask the pupils to answer them using Present or Past Passive Voice. The pupils can work in pairs or independently. The teacher decides if the pupils will give oral or written answers. This activity lets the pupils to learn grammar without stress and anxiety, because interesting facts about the Inca Empire rouse pupils' natural curiosity and unthreatening atmosphere is created in the classroom.

5. The Grapevine or Chinese Whispers (appendix 8).

This game-like activity is a stress free way to practice storytelling. The author of the DP used this activity to practise Past Tenses. The activity starts with a short presentation on the expression 'I heard it through the grapevine.' The teacher starts spreading a rumour about one of the pupils. The teacher says it loudly so that the rest of the class can overhear it. Then the teacher gets the pupil to spread the rumour to the next pupil and so on. After two or three minutes the pupils understand what they have to do during the task. The teacher divides the class into two teams and chooses the teams captains. The teacher gives Grapevine worksheets to the teams' captains and the worksheets are given to each team member. While the teams read the rules, the teacher pastes the eight stories about Dave on the blackboard. The team captains go up and read the stories. They have to communicate all of the essential information including the times to the next person. Once the captain has communicated the first rumour, he or she will go and read another rumour while the first person in the vine communicates the rumour to the second person. In that way, each vine will have several rumours going on at once. Once the rumour has made its way to the end of the vine, the last pupil has to spread the rumour to the teacher. If the last pupil communicates all of the information correctly, that grapevine gets one point. If some information is missing, the teacher will ask the pupil to find out that information. When the pupil comes back with the missing information then the grapevine gets one point. The teacher should have a copy of the rumours to compare with the pupils stories. The pupils should not be allowed to write anything because then they just start showing each other what was written and the whole thing becomes an exercise in reading. The team which collects more points and does it faster is the winner.

After using these code-control games at the lessons of English in primary school the author of the DP concluded that the teacher should use the opportunity to monitor the groups, noting the pupils' language use or difficulties. Moreover, the teacher should try not to over-correct the children if this is likely to spoil the flow of the game or dampen pupils' enthusiasm. In conclusion, the teacher should bear in mind that code-control games usually contain a competitive element and it may be wise to vary the choice of code-control games with communication games which are focused on co-operation. The most effective communication

games for pupils' stress and anxiety reduction were selected and described in the next sub-sub-section by the author of the DP.

3.3.2 COMMUNICATION GAMES USED AT THE LESSONS OF ENGLISH DURING THE CASE STUDY

Communication games and game-like activities are used to develop fluency and the ability to communicate between the participants. For this reason the communication games are focused on co-operation and are more likely to give every pupil a chance to have a turn to speak in an unthreatening atmosphere. Since the communication games tend to move away from a focus on accuracy to the development of fluency and more purposeful communication, the pupils are allowed to develop language and social skills without risks and penalties for mistakes; thus the pressure and tension related to aspects of the learning process are reduced. Communication games often rely on an information gap, where one pupil has information that the other pupil needs in order to complete the task. In communication games pupils are expected to draw upon any of the linguistic resources to achieve the aim.

The author of the DP reviewed theoretical basis of stress and anxiety given in the first chapter and theory of games and the positive impact in pupils' stress and anxiety reduction given in the second chapter, as a consequence the variety of games and game-like activities suggested by the ESL teachers around the globe was analysed by the author of the DP and several communication games were chosen and adopted to local conditions. The games and game-like activities were tried out with the pupils during 2009 school years' spring semester. The most effective games for pupils' stress and anxiety reduction were selected by the author for the case study of the DP. The following list contains these communication games' description:

1. Men with Hats Riddle (appendix 9).

This game-like activity is a great way to involve pupils in discussion, thus developing their speaking skills. The author of the DP planned a lesson based on this activity. First, the teacher should make sure that the pupils know the vocabulary, if there is a necessity, pre-teach it. Then, the teacher divides the pupils into teams of three or four and gives the handouts with mixed up sentences of the riddle. The pupils should organize the sentences in correct order. Then the groups can compare the riddles. The teacher makes corrections if necessary. When the text of the riddle is organised, the pupils try to solve it. The pupils work in groups and discuss different versions of the possible answers. The teacher should monitor the pupils and remind them to use target language (English) if necessary. Finally, groups present the answers one by one and discuss different versions with the class. This activity rouses pupils' natural curiosity and lets the

pupils express the opinions in unthreatening atmosphere, thus lowering the feeling of anxiety which often accompanies speaking in front of the audience.

2. Natural Wonders of the World (appendix 10).

This game-like activity not only develops pupils speaking skills but also gives the opportunity to learn about Natural Wonders of the World. The author of the DP used this activity when the topic of 'Natural Heritage' was suggested in the course book. The teacher divides the class into pairs. Each pair receives a handout which should be filled in with the information about Natural Wonders of the World. Then, each pair gets one or two fact cards with some information about one of the Wonders. The number of fact cards per pair depends on the number of the pupils in the class. The pairs should read the information and try to memorize it. Then, they explain the wonder to other pairs and find out the information about other World Wonders. When the handouts are filled in, the pairs share with the class facts which were unknown to them before the activity. After that is done, the teacher might offer some questions about the Natural Wonders of the World. It might be done in a written form or organized as a quiz.

3. Restaurant role-play (appendix 11).

This activity can be used at the lessons of English which are dedicated to the 'Food' or 'Eating Out' topics. The pupils are given the opportunity to try the roles of restaurant customers and waiters and develop their communication and speaking skill. Since the pupils are 'hiding' behind the roles, they do not feel stressed or anxious if any mistakes occur. The teacher divides the class into two groups, one group will be customers, another – waiters. The teacher gives to the pupils role-play prompts and worksheets for customers and waiters. The pupils should write down the information about restaurants, waiters and customers. Waiters receive prompts with restaurant's specials of the day and price. Customers receive prompts with the complaints which should be made to the waiters. The waiters also receive menus which will be given to the customers who visit the restaurant. The customers must go from restaurant to restaurant and order some food from the menu in each restaurant. During the visit to each restaurant customers should make a complaint. The waiters should meet customers in the restaurants, give the menus and take the orders. This activity lets the pupils communicate with each other in target language (English) in a stress free atmosphere, thus reducing the pressure and anxiety related to the learning process.

4. Proverb Communication Activity (appendix 12).

This activity can be used as a retelling activity where pupils communicate common English proverbs to each other. Every pupil is given a proverb to communicate to the class. Pupils are also asked to explain what the proverb means or to give an example. The author of the DP used fourteen proverbs which equals the number of pupils in the class. If the number of pupils is

bigger or smaller, the proverbs can be added to or removed from the activity. The teacher gives each pupil a proverb and asks to memorize it word for word. After the pupils have been given time to memorize the proverbs, the teacher takes the proverbs away. Then, the pupils are asked to think about the meaning of the proverb which was memorized and give an explanation for it. The teacher asks the pupils to work in small groups and exchange information on proverbs with other pupils. In small groups they discuss the meaning of the proverbs and try to prove some the explanations right or wrong. Next, the teacher offers cards with proverbs' explanations. The pupils choose the cards with explanations of their proverbs and check the answers with the class. When the pupils finish exchanging information, the teacher can offer a crossword puzzle or a quiz about proverbs which were discussed and learned during the lesson. It is important that the pupils know about the quiz beforehand. This helps to focus pupils' attention while doing the activity. The author of the DP asked the pupils to check quizzes themselves by exchanging the quizzes between each other. In other words, the quiz was used as a self assessment tool. Self assessment let the pupils feel less stressed while doing the activity, thus reducing the tension and anxiety.

5. People Alliteration (appendix 13).

This game-like activity was used by the author of the DP at the beginning of the lesson. The activity lets the teacher to release the tension at the beginning of the lesson and create stress free atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher gives the pupils handouts and explains that alliteration is when all the words start with the same sound. The pupils look at the example of alliteration given in the handout and try to think of their own alliterations using prompts from the handout. To sum up the activity the teacher can offer to choose the most unusual or the most interesting alliteration in the class and reward the winner with extra point which can be added to the mark at the end of the lesson. This activity lets the pupils revise the vocabulary knowledge without feeling anxious and stressed.

6. Super Words (appendix 14).

This is another great game-like activity to begin the lesson and simultaneously create unthreatening atmosphere in the classroom. The teacher can give the pupils handouts or conduct the activity giving the information orally. The pupils are asked to name three, four, five, six or seven-letter words which start or end with a particular letter. For example, the pupils are asked to name a six-letter word that ends in R. The teacher should warn the pupils that it is forbidden to repeat the words which were mentioned by other pupils. The pupils can be asked one by one or the pupil who named the word first can choose next pupil to name the word.

The author of the DP conducted a number of communication games as well as a number of code-control games and game-like activities. The author of the DP made a conclusion based on

practical experience that while conducting the code-control or communication games the teacher must ensure that very clear instructions are given to the pupils before and during the game. Sometimes it might be possible to give the instructions in the pupils' mother tongue, although this should be done when there are no other options left. Also, in order to keep positive impact which is brought to the lesson by games, these activities should be quickly organised. It is best if the class becomes familiar with a routine to minimize disruption when collecting the games, forming groups, moving furniture etc. If the game is played in groups, it is useful to choose a group leader. This pupil will be responsible for collecting resources, dividing them between pupils and putting resources away. However, the teacher should make sure that the role of group leader is given to different pupils so that every pupil can take a turn.

Although games and game-like activities are not able to lower the level of stress and anxiety in every aspect of pupils' life, their positive impact was witnessed by the author of the DP during the case study. The results are analyzed and interpreted in the next sub-chapter.

3.4 THE DATA RECEIVED FROM THE STRESS SCALE AT THE END OF THE CASE STUDY

In order to accomplish the case study the author worked with pupils of 8th grade for approximately 1,5 months. During that time games and game-like activities were used by the author of the DP at almost every lesson. The samples of games and game-like activities most appreciated by adolescents and effective for lowering pupils' stress and anxiety can be found in appendices (appendices 4 – 14). After completing the case study, the author of the DP offered pupils the modified stress scales to fill in, in order to analyze the difference in levels of pupils' stress before and after the case study.

Interpreting the average points of stress level, after completing the case study, among boys and girls separately; it is observed that stress level differs depending on the gender. The difference has decreased but girls' stress level still is higher than boys' stress level. In the DP authors opinion it is connected with the girls' greater concern about the performance during the lesson, thus girls' stress level is still higher than boys' stress level (figure 8).

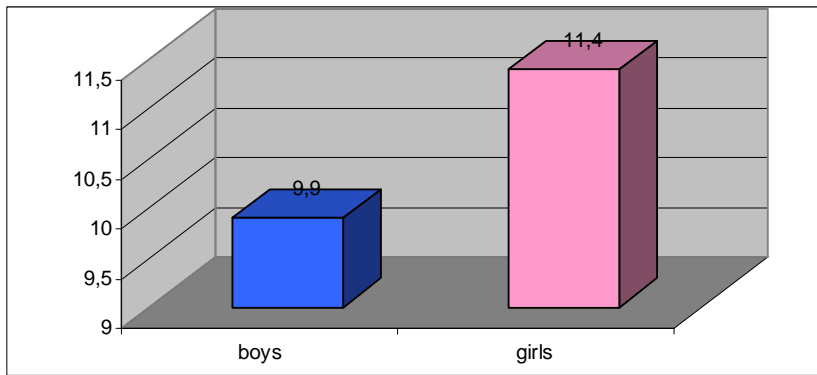


Figure 8. The Difference in Average Points of Stress Level among Boys and Girls.

From the interpretation of the data collected from the girls' participants, it is seen that the number of girls experiencing the healthy low level of stress (LSL) has increased from 0% to 20%. The number of girls experiencing the average stress level (ASL) had doubled to 80% comparing to previous results of 40%. Finally, the amount of girls under high level of stress (HSL) had dramatically decreased from 60% to 0%; in other words, 3 girls who were experiencing high stress level (HSL) at the beginning of the case study at the end of the process reduced their stress level to average (ASL). The author of the DP thinks that the girls who experience ASL are still at risk of HSL, therefore it would be meaningful to continue performance of games and game-like activities at the lessons of English in primary school in order to enhance the positive effect in stress reduction (figure 9).

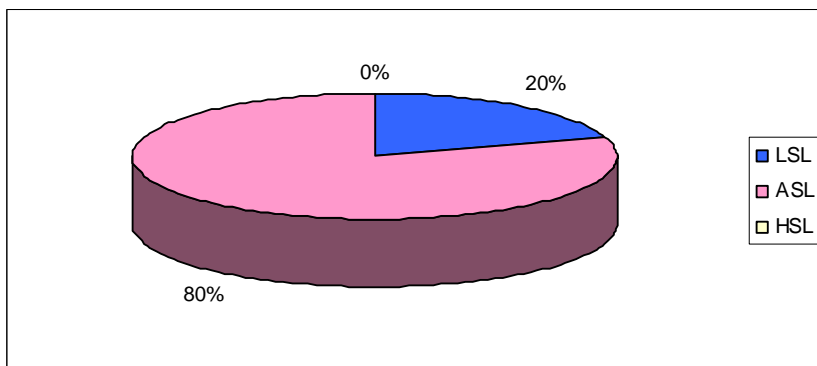


Figure 9. Stress Level among Girls' Participants in the Research.

Comparing the data collected from the boys participants there is no such a significant change in stress levels. The author of the DP thinks that the main cause for the insignificant change in stress levels among boys is the fact that none of the boys experienced HSL at the beginning of the case study. For this reason the change in the stress level at the end of the case study is not as dramatic as the change in the girls' stress level. However, from the data collected it is noted that the number of boys experiencing low stress level (LSL) had increased from 33%

to 44%; accordingly, the amount of boys under average stress level (ASL) had decreased from 67% to 56%. Thus, one boy who endured the average stress level (ASL) at the beginning of the case study lowered the level of stress (figure 10).

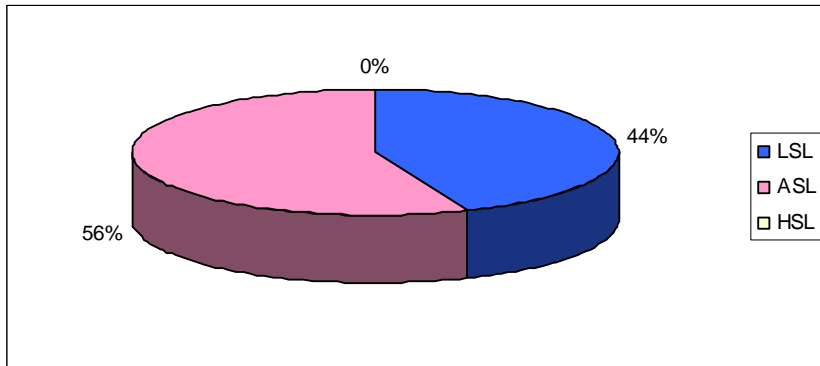


Figure 10. Stress Level among Boys' Participants in the Research.

Comparing the final data between the genders, collected from the stress scale answers at the end of the case study, it is still obvious that the girls experience higher stress level than the boys do. In contrast with the girls, boys' experience of the healthy low stress level (HSL) is by 24% higher at the end of the case study. At the same time, the average stress level (ASL) experienced by boys' participants is by 24% lower than the same stress level experienced by the girls of the same age (figure 11).

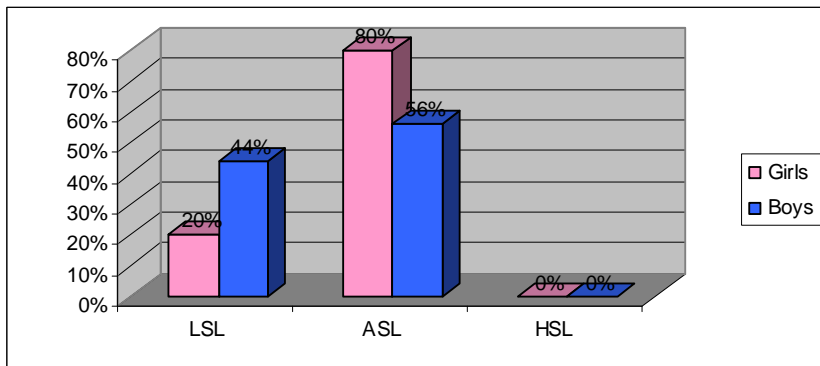


Figure 11. The Comparison of Stress Levels Experienced by Boys and Girls after Using Games at the Lessons of English.

As the data collected during the research reveals, pupils of both genders in primary school experience stress level which is higher than low stress level (LSL). Even though the stress level of boys and girls had lowered at the end of the case study, the number of pupils tending to experience high stress level (HSL) is still impressive, especially among the girls. There are some adolescents who experience low stress level (LSL) but if the situation is looked at on the whole,

all pupils in the mass (with or without considering their gender) experience average stress level (ASL).

Summarizing the third chapter the author of the DP concluded that the objectives set up in order to reach the aim of the DP were successfully fulfilled. The pupils of the eighth grade participated in games and game-like activities at the lessons of English during the case study. The author of the DP gathered the data from the modified stress scale filled in by the pupils and analyzed it. The data gathered at the beginning of the case study showed that the majority of pupils experience ASL and the ASL has tendency to increase. The author of the DP discovered that the girls experience higher stress level than the boys do.

The author of the DP designed the questionnaire for teachers in order to find out their opinion about the usage and value of games and game-like activities at the lessons of English. According to the data collected from the questionnaire, the teachers realise the importance of games and game-like activities in pupils' life and in teaching/learning process. However, the frequency of using games at the lessons of English in primary school is lower than was expected by the author of the DP. The significant index of low game use at the lessons of English is that 40% of the questioned teachers admitted using games one time per week or less (figure 12).

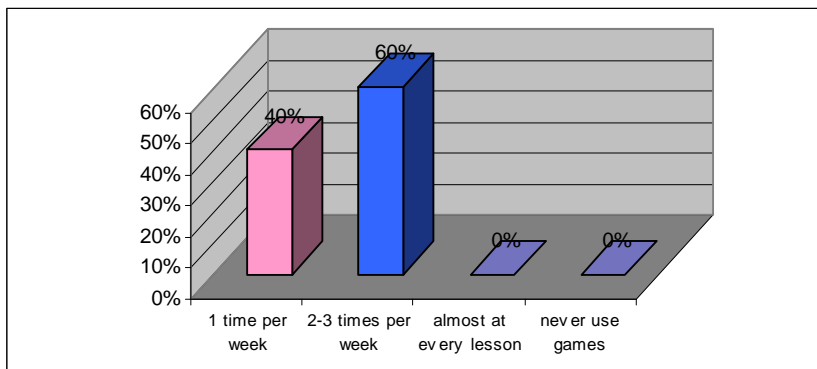


Figure 12. Frequency of Using Games at the Lessons of English in Primary School.

Further, the author of the DP studied the variety of games and game-like activities suggested by the ESL teachers around the globe. The games were analysed and adopted to local conditions by the author of the DP. The list of games and their descriptions were suggested by the author of the DP as well as the examples of games and game-like activities were provided in appendices.

Finally, the author of the DP gathered the data from modified stress scale filled in by pupils at the end of the case study and analysed it. The data showed that the level of stress among the pupils have decreased (figure 13).

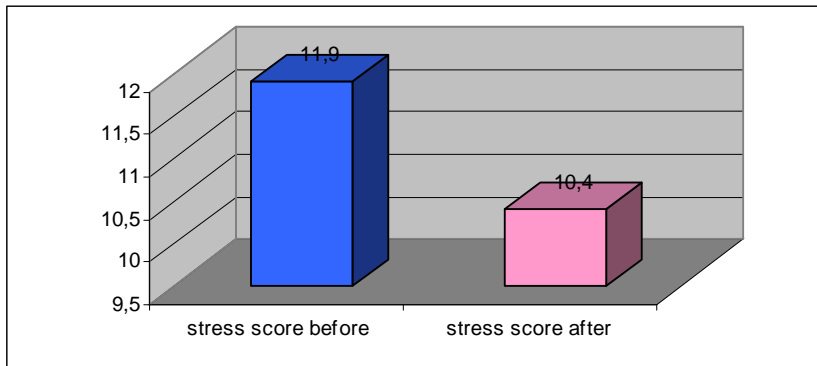


Figure 13. Pupils' Stress Level Before and After the Case Study.

The author of the DP concluded that games and game-like activities at the lessons of English have positive effect on lowering pupils' stress level connected to the teaching/learning process and therefore their usage should be continued in order to consolidate the positive effect in stress reduction.

CONCLUSION

Various researches on adolescents' stress come to common conclusion that stress has negative impact on different aspects of pupils' development. When adolescents' physical development is negatively affected by stress, the adolescents' resistance to disease can be lowered. Furthermore, pupils' cognitive development is affected by behavioural disorganization in reaction of stress. The maturation of the central nervous system apparently plays a part in this respect, since it contributes greatly to the adolescents' ability to organise behaviour (De Witt and Booysen 1995:145). Summarizing the conducted research of the related literature the Author of the DP came to the conclusion that the most common negative impact of stress on adolescents' emotional development is expressed through stress related feelings such as fear, rage and jealousy. In addition stress increases antisocial behaviour in pupils. It has a negative effect on the adolescents' ability to form relationships with parents and family members, the peer group and themselves. The adolescents' reaction to stress is complex and differs from one adolescent to another. In general, pupils' reaction is extreme in the sense that they either overreact or under react, thus a noticeable loss of interest in normal activities occurs. Every individual adolescent's experience of a specific stressor is unique and thus also the responses to the stress.

The DP author's practical experience showed that games and game-like activities influence many aspects of adolescents' development as well as stress does. The difference is that the influence of games has positive impact on pupils' development. There are many games which allow pupils repeat and practise different skills: develop adolescents' self-awareness, require active use of pupils' minds, provide challenges, etc. The author of the DP concluded that the value of games for pupils' cognitive and language development can be expressed in following: games teach the pupils to distinguish between reality and fantasy, encourage creative thinking and curiosity, create the opportunity for problem solving, develop memory, promote experimentation with variety of roles, the adolescents learn to use their own initiative, pupils acquire knowledge and integrate learning experiences, games build adolescents' communication skills, develop pupils' listening and verbal skills. Through games adolescents learn to express and understand their emotions. Moreover, games have the great value for adolescents' emotional development: games develop adolescents' self-confidence; pupils learn to look at things from different perspectives, games build adolescents' trust in others, reveal their personality, teach to take risks, and help to gain self-control. For social developments games offer pupil the opportunity to try a variety of roles and personalities, teach cooperation, teach to lead and follow, create base for the use of social language skills, help to verbalise pupils' needs in the target language (English), reflect adolescents' own culture and values, teach pupils social rules

and group responsibility, adolescents learn to show respect to others' rights and opinions, games teach pupils to work in groups, teach to express delight. There is no right or wrong ways to play games and that eliminates pupils' fear of failure, thus reducing level of stress and anxiety connected to the learning process.

According to the data collected from the teachers' questionnaire, 100% of participants in the research realise the importance of games and game-like activities in pupils' life. They also understand the value of game in teaching/learning process. However, the frequency of using games at the lessons of English in primary school is lower than was expected by the author of the DP. The significant index of low game use at the lessons of English is that 40% of the questioned teachers admitted using games one time per week or less.

In private conversations with the author of the DP teachers mentioned many reasons (such as lack of time, lack of enthusiasm or common busy schedule) as responsible for such low use of games. The data collected from the answers to the stress scale shows that average pupils' stress score without taking into consideration their gender did not significantly decrease at the end of the research.

From the collected data it is clear that the situation with stress level among pupils in primary school is not critical. The average stress score of participants is equal to average stress level (ASL) which is close to normal. However, the tendency of stress increasing is observed. The author of the DP was able to insignificantly decrease stress level among 14 pupils who participated in research. That is confirmed by the data collected from the stress scales' answers which were filled in at the end of the case study.

In addition, it has been noted by the author of the DP that teachers can help pupils to lower their stress level connected mostly to the learning process. Taking into consideration that learning process has significant role in adolescents' life the teachers should continue their work in lowering pupils' stress level. For this reason, in order to lower pupils' stress level further work should be done on that field. Many stressors which might not seem significant to adults surround adolescents in their everyday lives. The work of decreasing pupils' stress should be continued till the pupils become older and are able to cope with stress independently or are not afraid to ask for help. Teachers should include more games and game-like activities at their lessons in order to help reduce pupils' stress. In the author's of the DP opinion games and game-like activities should be used not only at the lessons of English but also at other school subjects which are included in school's programme. In conclusion, the author of the DP considers that the aim of the DP has been achieved and the hypothesis has been proved.

THESES

1. The intensity of stress in pupils appears to have increased dramatically in the past years due to fast development of modern life. Since the young age it is often required from adolescents to perform very well in every task or activity. For this reason pupils start feeling stressed and anxious. As a consequence the stressful situations cause different, often unpleasant reaction in adolescents, for example anger and aggression. Adolescents find it more difficult to handle stress and anxiety since they do not have effective adaptation methods or problem-solving skills to cope with a stressful situation.
2. The types of things that lead to stress for adolescents may be unique however researchers note that multiple stressors interact with one another and can have cumulative effects. The author of the DP concluded that there are several common external factors which can cause the adolescents' stress and anxiety: school, personal relationship such as friendship and emotional trauma such as the death of a family member or a friend.
3. Adults should help adolescents learn to solve the problems themselves and come up with management (coping or intervention) strategies. It is not necessary to be a therapist to help adolescents cope with stress. One key element in reducing stress is a stress-free environment. Teachers can create a stress-free environment at the lessons by using games and game-like activities.
4. Teachers can teach pupils relax and learn new things at the same time by means of game. Moreover, the inclusion of game or game-like activity into the teaching /learning process can help pupils develop cognitive potentiality. As a result adolescents can become better pupils.
5. The level of stress experienced by pupils differs depending on the gender - girls experience stress and anxiety more often during the lessons than boys do. Therefore, girls' stress level is noticeably higher than boys' stress level.
6. Even though teachers realize the value of games, the positive impact of games on pupils' stress and anxiety reduction, teachers do not frequently use games and game-like activities at lessons.
7. There are code-control games and communication games which can be used to practise new language items, develop accuracy, and develop fluency and communication between participants.
8. Even though the data analyses at the end of the case study proved that the level of pupils' stress has decreased after games and game-like activities were used at the lessons of English, the author of the DP concluded that After completing it would be meaningful to

continue performance of games and game-like activities at the lessons of English in primary school in order to enhance the positive effect in stress reduction among the pupils.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Brewster, J., Ellis, G. and Girard, D. (2002) *The Primary English Teacher's Guide*. UK: Pearson Education Limited.
2. Caillois, R. (1957), *Games and Men*. USA: Gallimard.
3. De Witt, M.W. and Booyesen, M. I. (1995) *Focusing on the Small Child: Insights from Psychology of Education*. Pretoria: Acacia.
4. Don Morris, G.S. and Stiehl, J. (1998) *Changing Kids' Games*. USA: Human Kinetics.
5. Forte, I. and Pangle M.A. (2001) *ESL Reading and Spelling: Games, Puzzles, and Inventive Exercises*. UK: Incentive Publications.
6. Goldberger, L. and Breznitz, S. (1982) *Handbook of Stress: Theoretical and Clinical Aspects*. USA: Free Press.
7. Hewitt, I.E. (1998) *Edutainment: How to Teach Language with Fun and Games*. UK: Delta Systems Co Inc.
8. Marrion, M. (2003) *Guidance of Young Children*. USA: Prentice Hall.
9. McCallum, G.P. (1980) *101 Word Games*. USA: Oxford University Press.
10. Ur, P. and Wright, A. (1992) *Five-Minute Activities: A Resource Book of Short Activities*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
11. Brophy, J. (1998). *Motivating students to learn*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Last looked at 12.07.2009.
<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eearchive/digests/2002jewett02.html>
12. Chakraborty, A. (2007), *Causes of Anxiety*. USA: MD Last looked at 12.11.2009. 12.
<http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/causes-anxiety>

13. Cohen, S. (1983), Perceived Stress Scale. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 385-396.
Last looked at 14.07.2009.
<http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~scohen/>
14. D'Arcy, L. (2007) *Anxiety Disorders*. USA. Last looked at 11.09.2009.
http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/anxiety.html#
15. DeBord, K. (1996). *Helping children cope with stress*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. Last looked at 15.11.2009.
http://www.newsforparents.org/expert_helping_children_cope_with_stress.html
16. Europeans and their Languages. (2006) Special Eurobarometer 243 survey requested by EC Directorate General for Education and Culture. Last looked at 23.10.2009.
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_243_en.pdf
17. Ginsburg, K. R. (2007), The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds. *Pediatrics*. 119. Last looked at 07.12.2009.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/119/1/182>
18. Holmes, T. and Rahe, R. (1967), The Social Readjustment Rating Scale. *J Psychosom*. 213–8. Last looked at 14.07.2009.
<http://www.healpastlives.com/future/cure/scale.htm>
19. Jewett, J. and Peterson, K. (2002) *Stress and Young Children*. Last looked at 18.05.2009.
<http://www.athealth.com/Consumer/disorders/childstress.html>
20. Leon, A. (2008) *Classroom Connection: Encouraging a Healthy Lifestyle*. Last looked at 08.08.2009.
<http://www.mohonasen.org/03parents/MSParent/stress.htm>
21. Lowenstein, T. (1997) Life Stress Scale. USA. Last looked at 14.07.2009.
<http://www.cliving.org/lifstrstst.htm>
22. Sierra, S. (2003) *How to reduce students' anxiety to learn English in Taiwan?* USA: Southern New Hampshire University. Last looked at 12.10.2009.

[it.snhu.edu/Su_Sierra/how to reduce student's anxiety.doc](http://it.snhu.edu/Su_Sierra/how%20to%20reduce%20student's%20anxiety.doc)

23. Stein, M. B. and Walker J. R. (2005) *Triumph Over Shyness*. Last looked at 12.11.2009.

<http://www.adaa.org/GettingHelp/FocusOn/children&Adolescents/sad.asp>