**Piloting: Food, Comfort and Culture**

In April - May 2012 the Scottish partners, WEA, piloted the materials ‘food, comfort and culture’ produced by Pitea Kommun in Sweden. This is an account of our piloting experience.

The first week started with six participants, four from Poland and a retired couple from Spain. None of the participants worked in the catering industry but had a great passion for cooking, particularly specialities from their own country. The lessons took place for three hours, one day a week, over a period of seven weeks. During those weeks the number of participants increased to eight (with two more Polish people joining); friends and family of the participants and other ESOL tutors sometimes attended classes too.

The tutor began by using the self-evaluating guide (removing two questions which were not relevant for this group – ‘mental health’ and ‘economy’) to assess the participants’ level of English and find out what they wanted to gain from these sessions. Their levels ranged from A1 to B1. All learners wanted to know how to talk about cooking, learn kitchen and food vocabulary and demonstrate some of their traditional dishes to the others.

The tutor took the learners into the kitchen to demonstrate how to make a simple traditional dish of Scottish pancakes, while teaching the relevant vocabulary. For the next part of the class, the learners went to a classroom and revised the key language and vocabulary used in the kitchen, using pre-prepared worksheets. Learners then reflected on the session using the learner evaluation forms. Finally, they discussed and agreed on who was going to cook the following week, what they were going to cook and wrote up a shopping list of the ingredients that would be needed.

Each week followed a similar procedure, with most of each session in the kitchen, then revision of the previous week’s session, reflection on the day’s session and making up a shopping list for the following week.

Tutor’s feedback

* This project was particularly successful for some of the learners who had left school at an early age and preferred a non-academic environment.
* Learners demonstrated when they couldn’t put into words what they wanted to say.
* All the utensils and ingredients could be found in the kitchen and seeing and physically using these objects helped the learning process.
* Key language was repeated and demonstrated at the same time - this helped retention.
* The grammar structure used was straightforward in English - the imperative.

Learners’ feedback

* We got to know each other and enjoyed the friendly atmosphere
* We learned to identify food products in the supermarket
* We preferred practising English in the kitchen than in the classroom
* Sharing our traditional food with others was rewarding