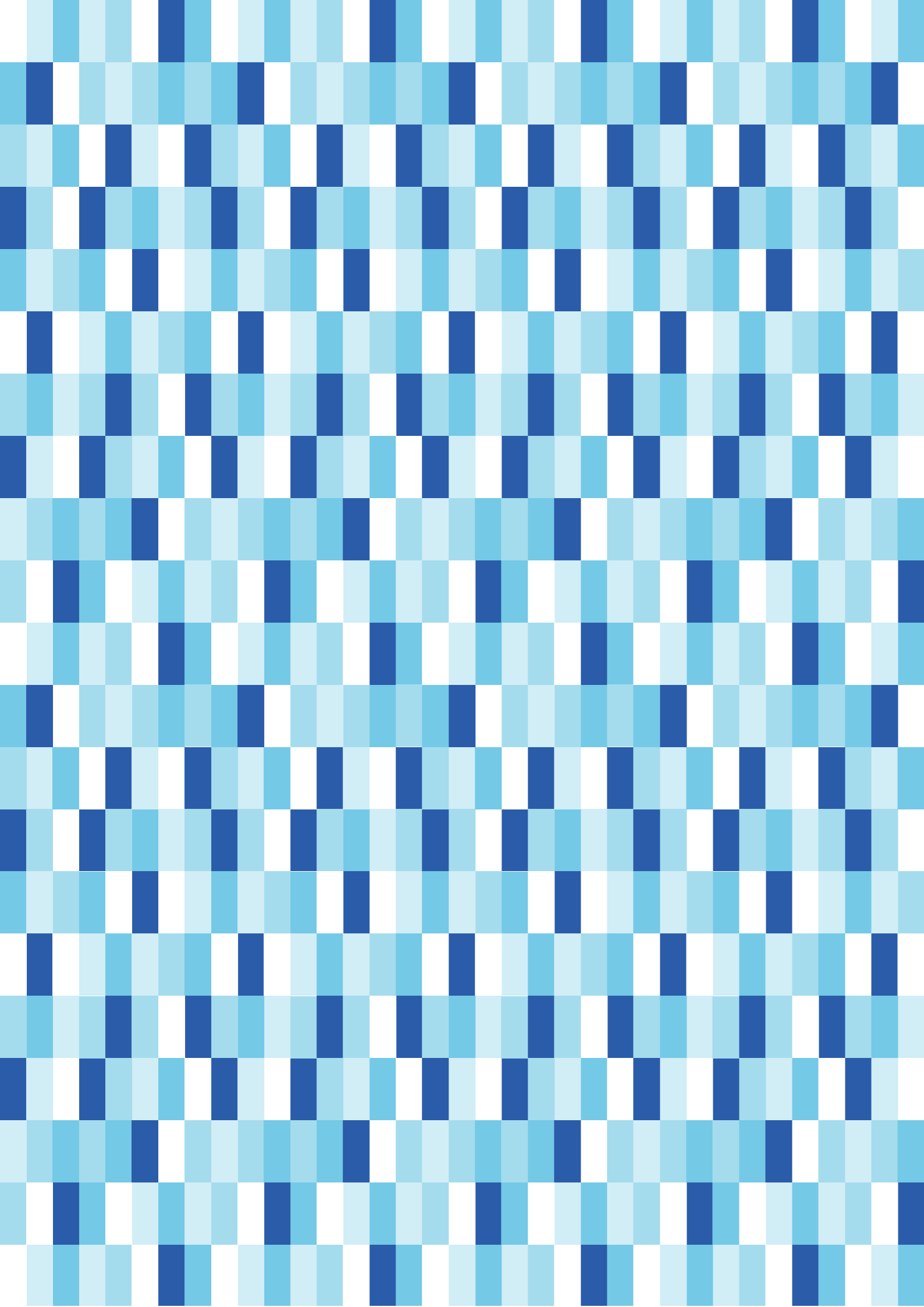




# Summers with English

From the experience of educators and volunteers  
in the Teaching English in Poland program



# Summers with English

From the experience of educators and volunteers  
in the Teaching English in Poland program

## Summers with English

Warsaw 2023  
ISBN 978-83-954635-2-5

Not for sale

Authors: Prof. Grażyna Czetwertyńska, Aleksandra Kujawska, Kristin Miller,  
Joanna Romanik, Barbara Skrok

Editor-in-chief: Anna Grabowska PhD  
Editing: Anna Grabowska PhD  
Editor Consultant: Małgorzata Janaszek-Bazanek

English Translation by Tymoteusz O'Neill  
Proofreading and Revision: Rafał Bazanek

Design, Type-setting & Illustrations: Paweł Kłudkiewicz

Photographs: The Kosciuszko Foundation – Fundacja Kościuszkowska Polska

Publisher & Program Organiser:  
The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland – Fundacja Kościuszkowska Polska  
ul. Kopernika 11/8, 00-359 Warszawa  
email: teip.pl@thekf.pl  
www.kfpoland.org

This publication has been possible thanks to the grant received in 2022 from the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) under the Project of „Language education as an important part of developing the key competencies of the TEIP program participants in the context of educational challenges in Poland 2022.”

The publication reflects only the standpoint of authors. FRSE waives all responsibility for the contents.



This publication is available under the license of Creative Commons CC BY-NC 4.0 DEED Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International



## Introduction

In the Teaching English in Poland program run by the Kosciuszko Foundation, the most important challenge has always been to improve the English language skills of its participants. The Foundation invites excellent teachers and volunteers, who are at the same time native speakers, to undertake this task for two weeks. Is it possible to achieve a significant improvement in language proficiency in such a short period of time? Not if we think only in categories like knowledge of grammar or proficiency in writing and reading. Students on vacation cannot be expected to sit down with textbooks in school desks, and teachers, tired from a whole year, don't long to return to a typical classroom either.

That's why, in the TEIP program, language learning takes place in the woods, on the playground, on a bike trip, while canoeing. Together with American teachers, students hike in the mountains, dance, sing, and play baseball. Together, they paint and prepare theatrical miniatures, cook, and roast marshmallows over a campfire. The result of these activities is a significant improvement in their English-speaking skills. The most important thing, however, is that the students are able to feel in practice how much communication skills mean, and, thanks to the favorable conditions, they gain courage in speaking English.

Summer English lessons without grading take place in an atmosphere conducive to learning, amid laughter, games, and fun. Thanks to the conditions created at TEIP camps, it is possible to teach language to students with developmental dysfunctions. For them, as Barbara Skrok writes in her article, motivation and satisfying the need for positive reinforcement are most important. The success of American volunteers' work with our camp participants has been often praised and appreciated. Likewise, opportunities to improve key language skills have been plentiful. Participants take on a variety of challenges, including learning responsibility, decision-making, and teamwork. The activities are designed so that everyone has a chance to succeed, not just in language. You can read about strengthening self-confidence, agency, and subjectivity in the article by Aleksandra Kujawska.

Examples of activities undertaken at the camps and comments from participants can also be found in videos compiled from the footage of this year's TEIP. Let them serve as proof of how much a good atmosphere can add the joy of learning.

Grażyna Czetwertyńska

President of The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland



---

## Table of contents



• <b>ABOUT THE TEACHING ENGLISH IN POLAND PROGRAM</b> Aleksandra Kujawska	9
• <b>AGENCY, RESPONSIBILITY AND NEW VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH, OR THE FORMATION OF A YOUNG PERSON'S ATTITUDE AT THE TEACHING ENGLISH IN POLAND CAMP</b> Aleksandra Kujawska	14
• <b>HOW TO HELP AND SUPPORT A STUDENT WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DYSFUNCTION IN ENGLISH CLASSES?</b> Barbara Skrok	20
• <b>ONE PERSON CAN CHANGE THE WORLD</b> Kristin Miller	26
• <b>THE AMERICAN SUMMER LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN MIŁAKOWO</b> Joanna Romanik	30

# About the Teaching English in Poland program

Aleksandra Kujawska

The Teaching English in Poland (TEIP) program implemented by the Kosciuszko Foundation is a form of English language promotion among Polish youth. It combines leisure with improving English language skills and learning about the elements of US culture. The formula of the summer or residential camp has basically remained unmodified for 30 years: we offer an opportunity to improve English under the supervision of experienced American teachers during a two-week vacation camp. In the mornings, there are usually classes in groups formed according to language proficiency level and age, while the afternoon consists of workshops in groups that bring together young people with similar interests and talents. American teachers and their assistants conduct interactive classes in English that allow Polish students to enrich their vocabulary related to US culture, history, geography, customs, and traditions. It's a time when young people learn to talk about their emotions, express their opinions, and discuss a song or movie. They can talk about basically any topic. There is only one condition: you have to speak English. American teachers are recruited by the Kosciuszko Foundation team in New York. It's an open-ended process, with the idea of teaching English as an essential component. In language classes, the emphasis is on developing and improving communication skills and, above all, on breaking down barriers that can prevent pupils from speaking English. "The biggest benefit of participating in the TEIP program is learning without the pressure imposed by school. Students learn so much in two weeks. Without even realizing they are gaining knowledge. We focus

on the practical use of English," says Kristin Miller, TEIP volunteer leader, about our method of work. We strive to ensure that camps conducted as part of the TEIP program are the result of close cooperation between Polish and American staff members. This allows us to introduce qualitative changes both in the methodology of language teaching and in the preparation of Polish and American staff to work together at the camp. This yields better educational results and greater student and parent. We hope that this will result in increased interest from other centers in joining the TEIP program and that the camps will become an attractive offer for volunteers, who will be able to improve their inter-cultural dialogue, linguistic, and so-called soft skills. For each language camp, a team of more than a dozen teachers and assistants from the US arrives in Poland. Its leader is responsible for the preparation of the language curriculum and its smooth implementation. The Polish camp manager is responsible for all activities carried out at the camp. The staff consisting of Polish tutors and teachers also reports to the Polish head. Since 2018, TEIP has been undergoing major changes. First of all, we are adapting it to the dynamic social and economic situation in Poland. We hope to spread our offer primarily to students from outside of metropolitan areas, where opportunities for meeting a native English speaker are significantly limited. The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland team not only seeks to establish cooperation with more schools and community organizations but also systematically standardizes TEIP's curricula, evaluation methods, and the conditions of participation for students and volunteers. One could conclude that the TEIP program

is in a constant process of change, which is obvious if we consider that we are teaching about two countries (Poland and the US) whose society, culture, and economic situation are also constantly evolving.

## THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE TEIP PROGRAM

### Cultural exchange:

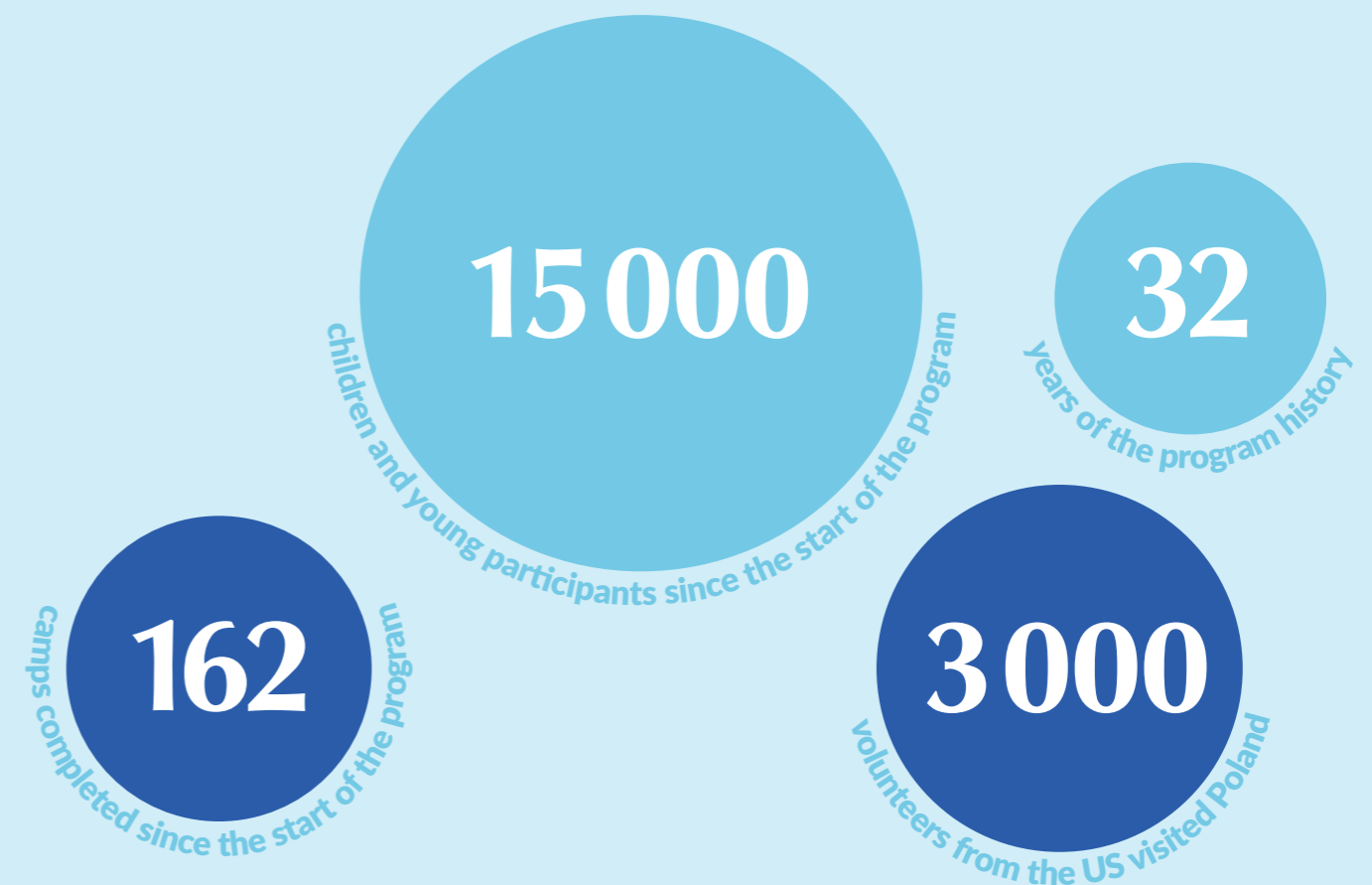
- Enabling financially disadvantaged children and young people from Poland to immerse themselves in the English language and American culture;
- Familiarizing Polish children and young people with various aspects of American life and culture;
- Acquainting American teachers with Poland and its culture, history, and traditions in the hope that their knowledge and impressions will be passed on to their students, families, friends, and communities in the United States;
- Encouraging local communities in Poland to host American volunteers and share their own experiences with them;
- Promoting an open approach to cultural and social diversity among both the Polish and American communities.

### Developing the social skills of camp participants:

- Formation of civic attitudes and intercultural competencies, including diplomacy, social and cultural awareness and expression, as well as responsibility and commitment;
- Developing key competencies of the future, such as cooperation, problem solving, creativity, innovative thinking, entrepreneurship, agency, and autonomy

### Developing language skills:

- Providing Polish children and young people with a variety of experiences with the English language in the American cultural context;
- Improving and developing the communication skills of camp participants;
- Engaging all language skills to ensure interactive communication in the English language;
- Providing interdisciplinary learning opportunities that utilize the English language as a tool to develop Polish campers' skills in math, science, technology, sports, music, literature, and art;
- Developing students' confidence in using English on a daily basis.



### Professional development of teachers:

- Improving the teaching and methodological competence of Polish and American staff of the language camps;
- Mutual learning and observation of the teaching methods used;
- Establishing contacts between Polish and American educators to develop the cooperation and intercultural competence of both educators and campers;
- Enabling Polish teachers and assistants to enhance their English proficiency;
- Creating, updating and developing teaching resources that can be used and adapted by TEIP camp staff and other English teachers.

### The main principles of cooperation in the TEIP program

1. Provide adequate infrastructure for teaching groups of up to 20.
2. Provide the residential camps with accommodation, adequate sanitary facilities, and a canteen for Polish and American students and staff.
3. Supply educational materials, teaching aids and art tools that were agreed upon by both parties in advance.
4. Provide transportation for a group of volunteers from the United States from the airport and to the airport on their return flight.
5. Ensure members of the American personnel have liability insurance.
6. Organize a 3-day trip for American volunteers after the language classes and pay all costs of the trip.
7. Ensure there are Polish educators, preferably English language teachers.
8. Appoint a Polish teacher to serve as the head of the Polish staff, and allow the head of the American staff to contact this person. •

7  
camps in 2023

79  
days of having fun together in 2023

210  
Ukrainian children participated in the camps in 2023

400  
Polish children participated in the camps 2023

66  
American volunteers taught during the TEIP camps in 2023

### TEACHING ENGLISH IN POLAND – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

#### American staff leaders

Experienced volunteers, managing the American staff on their respective camps. They are responsible for communication with Polish organisers, working alongside with the Kosciuszko Foundation during the camp preparation phase as well as supervising the organization and teaching activities.

#### Volunteers

American volunteers from all walks of life and of many different professions. They come to Poland to teach English to Polish students, as well as actively spend time with them. Among our volunteers there's of course a lot of teachers, but also professional pastry chefs, yoga teachers or former FBI agents. During TEIP camps they not only teach English as a foreign language in a classroom, but also give cooking lessons, play sports, do arts and crafts but also provide children with knowledge on how to collect... fingerprints.

#### Polish organizers

A school/local government body/NGO responsible for the organization of TEIP camp in Poland as well as contacts with the Kosciuszko Foundation.

#### Polish Staff

Polish teachers working hand in hand with the American volunteers during camps. Experienced and enthusiastic educators, they teach classes, organize sport lessons and events, do arts and crafts and take the participants out for trips and themed events.

#### TEIP summer camp

Almost two weeks of good fun and learning English from American volunteers and Polish teachers. Active recreation and immersive English learning all day long, even during the meals, playtime and free time.

#### Task based learning

Its main focus is to „submerge” the student in the language by using it not only during class, but also extracurricular activities! Students go over their fear of speaking by simple everyday interactions. By talking to the volunteers about their hobbies and interests, the schedule or simply by asking them to pass the salt during lunch – they're practicing without even knowing it!

#### Teacher assistant

Teacher assistants are younger volunteers working alongside their more experienced colleagues.

#### Post TEIP camp trip for American volunteers

After the TEIP camp is over, American volunteers get some well-deserved rest as they go on a trip around Poland for a few days. They get to see more of Poland's beautiful scenery, historic sites as well as lively cities.



“

*I was also humbled to recognize how by teaching English, you can help these teens improve their language skills, which can open up so many new opportunities for them in their future.*

**Angelique Marya Bolding**  
TEIP camp volunteer  
in Basznia Dolna

# Agency, responsibility and new vocabulary in English, or the formation of a young person's attitude at the Teaching English in Poland camp

Aleksandra Kujawska

**The Teaching English in Poland Program TEIP is a method of working with students to increase and improve their language skills. In addition to the unquestionable linguistic successes achieved by participants in TEIP summer camps, it is important to note the positive changes in a young person's attitude. The TEIP summer camp is a process of shaping the student's attitude of agency and subjectivity, during which creativity and activity are developed.**

For several years, I have been observing American volunteers working with children and young people at language camps as part of the Teaching English in Poland program. The American team consists of experienced teachers, educators, trainers, as well as people who have little to do with teaching: they run their own YouTube channel, are retired lawyers, FBI employees or accountants, or have their own passions: baking cakes, traveling or music or dancing. What pedagogical measures do they take so that, after two weeks, a young person leaves not only with the knowledge of new vocabulary, the audacity to speak English, and the conviction that he/she knows how, has potential to, and can actually do it? After all, it's only learning English, and in addition, in a holiday environment, without tests, grades and credits. And yet, many observers, including educators and parents, emphasize that their

children at the TEIP camp have 'grown': they have become more confident, taken on new challenges, are braver. It is worth looking at the work of TEIP volunteers and analyzing their idea of building in a young person a sense that he/she is capable of independent action, can be active if he/she wants, and even knows what kind of change he/she wants to make. The pedagogical activities undertaken are the process of building a sense of subjectivity and agency in a young person, the ability to act independently and make autonomous decisions, as well as to develop their sense of responsibility. The situations in which the teacher and the student find themselves at the camp require them to act when faced with the daily life of the camp. There is no doubt that an educational process is taking place at the TEIP camp: the organizers want the young person to learn about American cul-

ture, learn a few songs in English, prepare a play, learn interesting news about American cities, and, in addition, to use English freely when talking about his/her interests, a movie, a book, or even favorite sport. The student is invited to work, to be active together, and this means taking initiative and getting involved. Education at a TEIP camp thus resembles a process in which the educator creates a situational framework (a theater script, an idea for a photo exhibition, a pizza bakery), and the student responds to the situation. The American teacher gives space for the student to make a decision, to refuse to participate, and sometimes suggests something else. He/She listens to the needs of his/her students, initiates the learning situation, but it is the student who decides whether to accept the invitation and develop his/her language competences. The degree of activity and involvement is left to the student's decision. This resembles the situation of surrendering subjectivity by the educator to the subjectivity of the student, which K. Chałas defines as follows: "The subjective positioning of a person in the world of values and relating to them provides a platform for problem solving and empowers them, while developing creative forces, improving skills, forming an attitude of responsibility" (Chałas 2006:31).

So, a TEIP language camp is not just about learning English. It is a myriad of situations based on the subjective treatment of the student, the individualization of needs and interests, as well as socialization — after all, in the classes, there are rules to follow, there are other participants with their habits, values and needs. The essence is that the American volunteer recognizes the importance of the participant's personal needs and often refers to them in his/her work, or uses them to invite a conversation on a given topic. Conversations about emotions, feelings, impressions, moods are, on the one hand, a widening of the vocabulary of words in the English language from the scope, and on the other hand, potential situations for the formation of attitudes and social relations. Such educational interactions are the creation of conditions for the student's subjectivity; at the TEIP camp the assumption is made that, "The student must be treated as a subject equipped with the same basic competencies as adults (teachers) that enable him to

learn about the world and interact with it. Only the way in which these competencies are revealed and used is different, and the content that he/she gathers with their help is different" (Semków 2000:97-100).

Thus, the conditions of working on developing linguistic and cultural competences facilitate a process of empowerment. The situation in which a young person consciously plans his/her development, discovers and develops his/her passion, awakens to social activity, resembles the method of education known as tutoring. Common elements in the work of TEIP teacher and tutor can be seen both in directing the development of the other person, creating a relationship to develop, support, without imposing good and effective solutions.

Positive communication, support for learning by pointing out successes, the message "you don't know how yet/you don't know what yet/try again," treating a mistake as a learning situation and, above all, creating a situation where everyone (students and teachers) learn — these methods are used by American volunteers and it should be emphasized that they are very effective in building proficiency, understood as "convincing the student that he/she has the potential to shape his/her life according to his/her own needs and goals" (Witkowski 2023).

Empowerment and subjectivity intermingle at TEIP camps. The participants learn to name their competencies and to be aware of their own value. These are the effects of the process that we see at the end of the language camp, and sometimes many months afterwards. The design of the classes taught by the American volunteers is based on several principles that are implemented consistently by the US team of teachers.

**Curiosity.** To have a learning partner in a student, you need to arouse interest in him or her. This can be achieved by telling them about where you live, the journey you took to teach English at the Miłakowo school, your work in faraway New York, or your family connections to Tadeusz Kościuszko.

**Learning Objectives.** This part of the lesson is familiar to basically every male and female student of a Polish school. With the definition of the learning objective, the teacher begins each lesson. And moments



later the criteria for success are stated. So, what is different about defining lessons at a TEIP camp? It's worth noting the specifics, TEIP classes provide a quick indication of success: *Look, you didn't know these vocabulary words, and after today's class you can translate a song/write a cake recipe/tell a story.* The class participant sees the concrete and can say: *I can, I understand, I speak!*

**New knowledge.** The process of acquiring new knowledge or new linguistic competence goes on for two weeks. How much a young person learns is entirely up to him/her. The TEIP teacher supports them in this process, does not hold them accountable, shows progress and rejoices in successes. A new skill is language immersion – the need to communicate in English if you want to be understood and talk to Americans because they don't know Polish.

**Use of new knowledge and skills.** The activity program implemented by TEIP volunteers is designed to give students the opportunity to use newly learned words. Therefore, after a certain knowledge/resource of words is given, each student is given a task: tell, present, describe, sing. The task to be completed is realistic, i.e., possible for the camp participant, and the TEIP teacher is a support and participant in the process. Many times at a language camp, a volunteer chooses a song to sing together, but the accompanying dance arrangement is arranged by a group of participants. The result of the work is singing and dancing together.

**Reflection.** This comes at the end of the two-week camp, and here, the main task belongs to the TEIP volunteer. Americans summarize the work of their students, name the skills they learned and other success they achieved. To make everyone feel the positive effect of learning English, at TEIP we organize the so-called Expo – a time to sum up, show the effects of learning, perform a theatrical improvisation together, sing a song or present a chosen sports game.

A TEIP language camp is an extension of school for most of the school community. Given the fact that camps are usually organized at school on a semi-camp basis, no doubt, this means a continuation of the school rhythm. A TEIP camp, even if it is organized in a school building, quickly ceases to be a school duty. A lesson is called an activity, an assignment is called a joint exercise, and a break is called a short rest break. American teachers, on the one hand, are capitalizing on the habits of school routine, and on the other, they are showing that school can be a place of adventure. And language classes become a process that builds a sense of subjectivity, responsibility, agency and the awareness of one's own creativity. TEIP camps are about giving young people situations in which they have a sense of meaning, strength or power to accomplish a task and to take responsibility for their own learning.

The innovation of the Kosciuszko Foundation's program has been the same for almost thirty years: volunteers from the US use musical pieces in English to provide an opportunity to learn new vocabulary and grammar in a memorable and engaging way; they use the drama method to motivate learning and activity during class; the teacher learns the names of the participants before starting the class, and individually invites them to the class. Students see that the teacher cares about their progress and educational success. The process of teaching English is transformed into an activity aimed at developing an attitude of proficiency and responsibility. TEIP camps are events in which educational goals are pursued in subjective terms: learning is oriented towards multidirectional and holistic perception of the student's needs (of course, as much as this is possible during a two-week camp). The result of such activities is a young person who, in September, after the TEIP summer camp, will return with increased language competence and a sense of self-efficacy, creativity, confidence in his/her own abilities, which should be read as the implementation of the empowerment process. •

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Chałas, K. (2006) *Wychowanie ku wartościom. Elementy teorii i praktyki. Godność, wolność, odpowiedzialność, tolerancja*, t. I, Kielce: Jedność.
- Juszczyk-Rygałło, J. (2016) *Kształtowanie podmiotowości ucznia w relacji do jego tożsamości*. W: *Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce*, 11 (240), 13-24.
- OECD Learning Compass [online] [dostęp 11.12.2023] <2030 [https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/learning-compass-2030/OECD\\_Learning\\_Compass\\_2030\\_concept\\_note.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/learning-compass-2030/OECD_Learning_Compass_2030_concept_note.pdf)>
- Semków, J. (2000) *Świat wartości koniecznym punktem kształcącego się człowieka*. W: *Kultura i Edukacja*, 3-4.
- Witkowski J., *Sprawczość i podmiotowość jako podstawa kompetencji przyszłości* [online] [dostęp 11.12.2023] <<https://projektujemyprzyszlosc.pl/sprawczosc-i-podmiotowosc-jako-podstawa-kompetencji-przyszlosci/>>

ORCID 0000-0003-4270-2003

**Aleksandra Kujawska** Doctoral student at the Doctoral School of the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw. Associated with the non-governmental sector for almost 25 years. Author of training scenarios on evaluation, adult education, time management, use of active methods of work at school. Director of the Office of the Kosciuszko Foundation. Since 2021, involved in the process of creating Saska Real School.



“

*TEIP summer camps are beacons of hope, connection, and a place that helps to cultivate joyful learning experiences to help our children grow emotionally and intellectually.*

**Alexandra Hernandez**  
An AFT volunteer at the TEIP  
camp in Basznia Dolna

# How to help and support a student with developmental dysfunction in English classes?

Barbara Skrok

In today's global world, foreign language skills have become a key competence of the future. The dominance of English has meant that, for many years, this language has been taught compulsorily at every stage of universal education. Despite this, children and young people continue to take advantage of extracurricular forms of learning in language schools, courses, private lessons, or language camps organized both at home and abroad.

It is preferable to learn in small groups, where it is easier to develop and improve communication skills. However, regardless of the size of the group, there is always the possibility of forming a heterogeneous group. It may include both exceptionally gifted students and those who struggle with a variety of developmental problems: diagnosed dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome, ADHD, ADD or alalia. It is the students with special educational needs who pose the greatest challenge for teachers and foreign language teachers.

**Students with developmental dyslexia** constitute the largest group of students with special educational needs. They exhibit difficulties in reading and writing skills, which are the foundation of all educational strategies. Exposed to constant school failure, they have low self-esteem and do not believe in their own abilities. Therefore, the most important thing in working with this group of students will be to properly motivate them. Let's not spare positive reinforcement and praise, because self-confidence is an

extremely important element of successful learning. A child with high self-esteem learns better and is more motivated to acquire knowledge.

Let's demand from our dyslexic students, let's help them, but let's not do everything for them. Let's make sure they feel safe, but let's gradually eliminate our help so they can learn independence. Let's do everything we can to make them believe in their abilities. With small steps and using creative exercises, let's guide them to success according to their psychophysical capabilities. They need to believe that their dyslexia is just an island of difficulty in an ocean of skills and abilities.

Let's base the educational process on the student's strengths. Let's take advantage of their lush imagination, thinking in pictures, and ease of visualization. Let's support memorization with mnemonics, graphic notes, rhymes, or associations. From the first lessons, let's use letter puzzles and guesses, word sliders, disappearing letters, or other strategies to remember the graphic form of a word.



In order to motivate dyslexic students to like writing longer texts, such as a description of a story or an email, let's introduce them to the technique of parallel writing. Let them work with a model text (template), which will show good composition and the correct choice of vocabulary. When reading with comprehension, it's a good idea to divide the text into smaller sections and check comprehension with the help of review questions, true/false

sentences, completing sentences according to the content, or filling in missing information. It's also possible to color the text passages and the questions to them to help students, lost in a sea of letters, find the information they need more quickly. Keep in mind to use the techniques that suit the capacity of a student with difficulties and are meant to motivate them to actively participate in language classes.

## JIM'S PARTY

My name is Jim. It was my birthday on Saturday. I was eight. My three cousins came to see me in the morning, and in the afternoon I had a party at my house. Nine of my friends came. We played some games outside.

Jim's birthday was on .....

There were .....of Jim's friends at the party.

Then Mum said, 'Go out in the garden again.' There was a clown there! He told us a story about the jungle and drew some pictures. My friends and I laughed because he was very funny. We went inside and had ice cream and cake in the kitchen. Then my friends went home.

When the children went outside, they saw .....

The..... was about the jungle.

I helped Mum to clean the kitchen. 'Where's Dad?' I asked Mum. 'In the living room,' she said. I went to find Dad but I could only see the clown there. Then I looked at his face. It was Dad! 'Thank you, Dad!' I said. 'This was the best birthday present.'

## JIM'S PARTY

My name is Jim. It was my birthday on Saturday. I was eight. My three cousins came to see me in the morning, and in the afternoon I had a party at my house. Nine of my friends came. We played some games outside.

Then Mum said, 'Go out in the garden again.' There was a clown there! He told us a story about the jungle and drew some pictures. My friends and I laughed because he was very funny. We went inside and had ice cream and cake in the kitchen. Then my friends went home.

I helped Mum to clean the kitchen. 'Where's Dad?' I asked Mum. 'In the living room,' she said. I went to find Dad but I could only see the clown there. Then I looked at his face.. It was Dad! 'Thank you, Dad!' I said. 'This was the best birthday present.'

1. When was Jim's birthday?
2. What did the children do at the party?
3. Who was in the garden?
4. What did the clown do?
5. What did the children eat?
6. Who helped mum?
7. Where was dad?

Another serious developmental disorder that can significantly affect a child's life is **Asperger's syndrome**. Being a teacher to such a student requires a lot of individual attention, looking for non-standard solutions and creative strategies that will facilitate the child's learning and the teacher's work. The variety of symptoms that can appear in a child on the autism spectrum is huge. If we are dealing with a student diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, it is impossible not to notice his alienation, isolation, difficulty in establishing relationships, avoidance of eye contact, mood swings, and sensory hypersensitivity. These students like to act according to patterns, show great attachment to objects, and often have an almost obsessive interest in one subject.

Although these traits never occur all together, even if only a fraction of them accumulate in one child, it is enough for him to be seen as a freak and a loner. Like dyslexic students, students on the autism spectrum have their strengths. Above all, their meticulousness, accuracy, perceptiveness, and logical approach to tasks can facilitate academic success. Good mechanical memory and visual thinking allow them to remember information quickly.

It is on the strengths of the student that we should base the education of children with special educational needs. However, children with Asperger's Syndrome are absent-minded in spirit, distracted by internal stimuli, and very disorganized. They have difficulty sustaining focus on what is happening in the classroom. Therefore, the next strategic action should be to induce the student's interest in the lesson enough that we can pull the autistic child out of the circle of the enchanted world and make him/her an active participant in the class. It's worth starting the lesson with a language warm-up to focus attention on the here and now.

A child with Asperger's syndrome may show incredible ease in memorizing rhymes or songs in a foreign language and a commitment to learning new things. We can teach vocabulary to younger children by preparing theme songs to the tune of "Are you sleeping Brother John?". So, we can sing this melody with lyrics about food/clothes/color/school, etc.

Asperger's students will remember grammar more easily if we introduce rhymes,

mnemonics, and graphic notes, because they have good visual memory. They will associate the construction of the *Present Continuous* tense with the drawing of a cat and the use of other grammatical forms with the help of rhymes.

Given the high dominance of visual thinking, we should use visualizations, a variety of picture cards, and short videos projected on an interactive whiteboard because they attract students' attention, encourage further focus, and allow better assimilation of the curriculum.

Research shows that people with Asperger's syndrome can be very creative, especially in the originality of proposed solutions (they think outside of the box, which promotes the creation of innovative solutions). We can use descriptions, short stories, picture stories, writing story endings, changing the narrative, and other similar exercises that will meet the objectives of the next strategic activity, which is to get the student interested in the lesson. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is another serious neurological disorder commonly encountered in school. It is a dysfunction often confused with bad behavior. The latter is temporary in nature, while ADHD is visible in the child constantly, from early childhood. This allows for the disorder to be diagnosed quite early. Conflicts, fights, spitefulness, and a lack of discipline, as well as lying and pranks — these are just some of the situations that teachers will have to face when working with a child with ADHD.

Many teachers dream of their hyperactive students being at least a little less busy, remembering to do their homework, not walking around the classroom, not arguing or fighting with their peers, learning to apologize, and not interrupting when someone is talking. It may be hard to believe, but children with ADHD are very intelligent and really want to learn. They are creative, imaginative children, gifted with extraordinary intuition and physical prowess. However, they are hindered in life by their challenging behavior, which largely depends on whether teachers and classmates facilitate or hinder the possibility of proper behavior.

But one only has to look at the other side of the mirror to see the many strengths of a student with ADHD. They have above-average intellectual development, good per-



ceptiveness, divisibility of attention, and a good store of knowledge about the world around them. The key to working with children with ADHD, will be to DISCIPLINE them during classroom activities. We can involve them in small errands for the benefit of the class: handing out worksheets, collecting papers/notebooks, wiping down the blackboard, and scribbling crayons/pencils. When disciplining students with ADHD, remember to override non-verbal responses over verbal ones. Let's first try to make eye contact, show by gesture the need to maintain silence (a finger on the lips, a hand up calling attention, a gentle tap on the bench), approach the misbehaving student, and only then give verbal attention or refer to the class code. The teacher should solve problems in a way that does not lead to escalation and use a whole range of preventive and anticipatory measures.

Children with ADHD are talkers and discussers. It is said that for every word from the teacher, there are 20 words from a child with hyperactivity. Therefore, a good idea (for the whole class) is to introduce a voice wand in grades 1-4. It can be a toy microphone, drumstick, telescopic pointer, or other gadget. The student speaks and answers the teacher's questions only when given the voice wand.

It is sometimes the case that a student with ADHD, for the sake of venting his hyperactivity, is constantly snooping in his/her backpack. That's why some teachers designate a place in the classroom where students put away their backpacks after setting out their books, notebooks, and needed supplies. The "Bag in Detention" technique is a very effective way to control the behavior of hyperactive children.

Another effective activity is the Tournament of Smiling Faces. The teacher attaches magnets or draws five smiling faces on the board, informing the students that for every bad behavior, another smiley face will be removed. Teaching by a peer group, where one student assumes the role of teacher, can be beneficial for children with ADHD. Children with ADHD learn well in active teaching situations. So-called peer tutoring or mix-and-mingle exercises work well when students don't work by sitting in desks but by circulating around the room and asking questions of classmates to fill in information gaps on worksheets.

It is said that a school that is good for children with special educational needs is a better school for everyone, and there is much truth in this. For with the techniques and forms of work mentioned above, learning languages can be a great adventure. •

**Barbara Skrok** Passionate teacher of English and Russian as foreign languages. Graduate of the PASE Methodological Academy. For many years she has been helping students with special educational needs and accompanying them in overcoming difficulties in learning English.



“

*The students themselves were amazing, talented, and conscientious. In a classroom setting they tended to be shy and reticent.*

*Outside the classroom, they opened up as I engaged them in conversation, whether during meals, or through other activities, or just in passing as we crossed in hallways. It was a pleasure to participate this year and hope I made some difference. I look forward to participating again next summer.*

**Ed Mohylowski**

A volunteer at the TEIP/EFC camp in Olsztynek

# One person can change the world



Kristin Miller

**When we chose *One person can change the world* to serve as the theme for the Kosciuszko Foundation's Teaching English in Poland Program English-learning camps, we hoped it would be so much more than a just a theme – we created it as a call to action for all of our Polish, Ukrainian, and American campers and teachers. In these times of such great geopolitical turmoil, we knew it was of paramount importance to remind all of our participants of the power that each one possesses to make a difference in the world.**

It is also this belief in the power of individual acts that first brought me and my family to the Teaching English in Poland Program (TEIP). My Polish roots have always been an important part of my identity, and I wanted to give back to the country that has shaped my family's history. Since the TEIP Program allows teachers to volunteer alongside their family members, I knew the TEIP Program would be an incredible chance for my young son to experience Poland and his heritage in a way that most tourists cannot. I also firmly believe in the transformative power of language education and wanted to provide students in my camps with an opportunity to improve their spoken English skills, gain confidence, and ultimately give them a tool with improved English to open many doors in their futures and broaden their horizons. Spending each summer in a different region of Poland has always been a rewarding, and enriching experience. Each region offered its own distinct charm and cultural flavor, but what has remained consistent was the warmth and hospitality of the people. This summer, living in a small village on the border between Poland and Ukraine allowed my fellow volunteers and me to immerse ourselves in the local culture and really un-

derstand the history and importance of the region. Spending this summer in a region so close to Ukraine was definitely marked by a sense of heightened awareness. As soon as our camp started, nearby Lviv was bombed and President Zelenskyy issued concerning statements about the future of the Zaporizhzhia power plant. We tried not to let these events cast a shadow over our program, but they certainly did remind us of the geopolitical realities our students faced every single day. Despite this, we realized how important it was for us to make sure our camp was a safe and supportive space for our students to learn, heal, and grow. We taught English through interactive activities, discussions, and project-based learning to not only improve their language skills but also to encourage them to think critically about the camp's theme and how they could make a positive impact when they returned to their respective communities.

While our primary mission is to be an English-learning camp, the geopolitical events in the area highlighted the importance of providing emotional support and a sense of stability for the students – both Polish and Ukrainian. It was clear from the beginning

of camp that the war was impacting and changing families' lives on both sides of the border. We ensured that there were open channels of communication for students to express their concerns and fears, and we focused on fostering an inter-national sense of community and belonging. We enlisted the help of a local charitable organization, the Folkowisko Foundation, that has worked in the area for years and since the beginning of the war has shifted its mission to include working with Ukrainians in need, both in Poland and in Ukraine to help provide additional social and emotional support for our Ukrainian students.

We focused so much on social-emotional learning because over the years, we have learned that the success of our TEIP Program hinges on effective communication and flexibility. Listening to the students' feedback and adapting the curriculum and activities accordingly has been key to keeping kids engaged and motivated. Moreover, it is this feedback loop that is essential to create an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and respected, regardless of their background or language proficiency.

As with any project, there are always areas for improvement and the TEIP camps are no different. Given the circumstances, providing even more additional resources for mental health support and crisis management

could be valuable for the future. Additionally, incorporating even more "after-school" activities that promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the Polish and Ukrainian students could further enhance the camp experience for everyone involved. Of course, if funding and staffing were not an issue, expanding the program to even more students in even more underserved areas would always be a valuable goal. Post-Covid, the TEIP Program has shifted its focus to underserved, rural areas where students often don't get as much exposure to native English speakers. I hope this trend continues as it is important to ensure that all children are afforded quality educational opportunities that will positively impact their lives. Embracing the camp's theme One Person Can Change the World and encouraging the students in all regions of Poland to believe in their own potential can lead to lasting positive change, both individually and collectively.

For me, every summer as a camp leader and educator in the TEIP Program is a profound experience. This summer's programs especially highlighted the transformative power of education and cultural exchange, even in the face of geopolitical tensions. It is my hope that the impact of a single camp can evolve into something that transforms students' and teachers' lives, cultures, and perspectives. •

**Kristin Miller** Educator with a passion for international learning who serves as the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme coordinator and instructional coach for Oberlin City Schools in Oberlin, Ohio. Over the past nine enriching summers, Kristin and her family have embarked on journeys to Poland with the Kosciuszko Foundation's Teaching English in Poland Program. They have been warmly welcomed by camps in Otwock, Załęcze Wielkie, Ocypel, and, most recently, Basznia Dolna. These annual visits to their beloved second home in Poland and their teaching at TEIP camps are cherished traditions for Kristin and her family.



“

*We believe  
TEIP camps to have contributed greatly to our  
students' achieving high grades for English at the  
last year's primary school final exam. By joining such  
projects, our teens find much better opportunities to  
enhance their English skills.*

**Joanna Romanik**  
English teacher at the TEIP  
camp in Miłakowo

# The American Summer Language School in Miłakowo



## Joanna Romanik

Contrary to our fears, the camp, which we called the American Summer Language School, was a huge success. Both we, the teachers, the teaching body, as well as our students and their parents, were impressed by the results the training produced.

Our cooperation with the Kosciuszko Foundation has been ongoing since 2019, when we organized the first camp at our school in Miłakowo, during which we hosted American volunteers. Although we had a lot of experience in working with partners from other countries, there were doubts about whether we would be able to organize a summer language school. We were concerned whether such a venture would work in our small town in the Mazury region. Would the children, who had just started their summer vacation, want to go back to school for two weeks to learn English. Will we be able to secure adequate funds for this purpose.

In 2023, we organized the camp for the third time, this time with young people from Ukraine. Children were able to learn English from its native speakers,

using a wide variety of circumstances. The activities very often took place outdoors, on the field, in the catering, music or art room. Games such as baseball, Bingo or even solving together jigsaw puzzles made the students from Varazov and Miłakowo eager to spend time at school during the vacations. Our American volunteers were always smiling, ready to work and very well organized (together with the American leader we created a work schedule for each week, so there was no chaos and everyone knew what they were responsible for). In addition all of them were well-prepared for the activities, and had excellent contact with both our students and the young people from Ukraine.

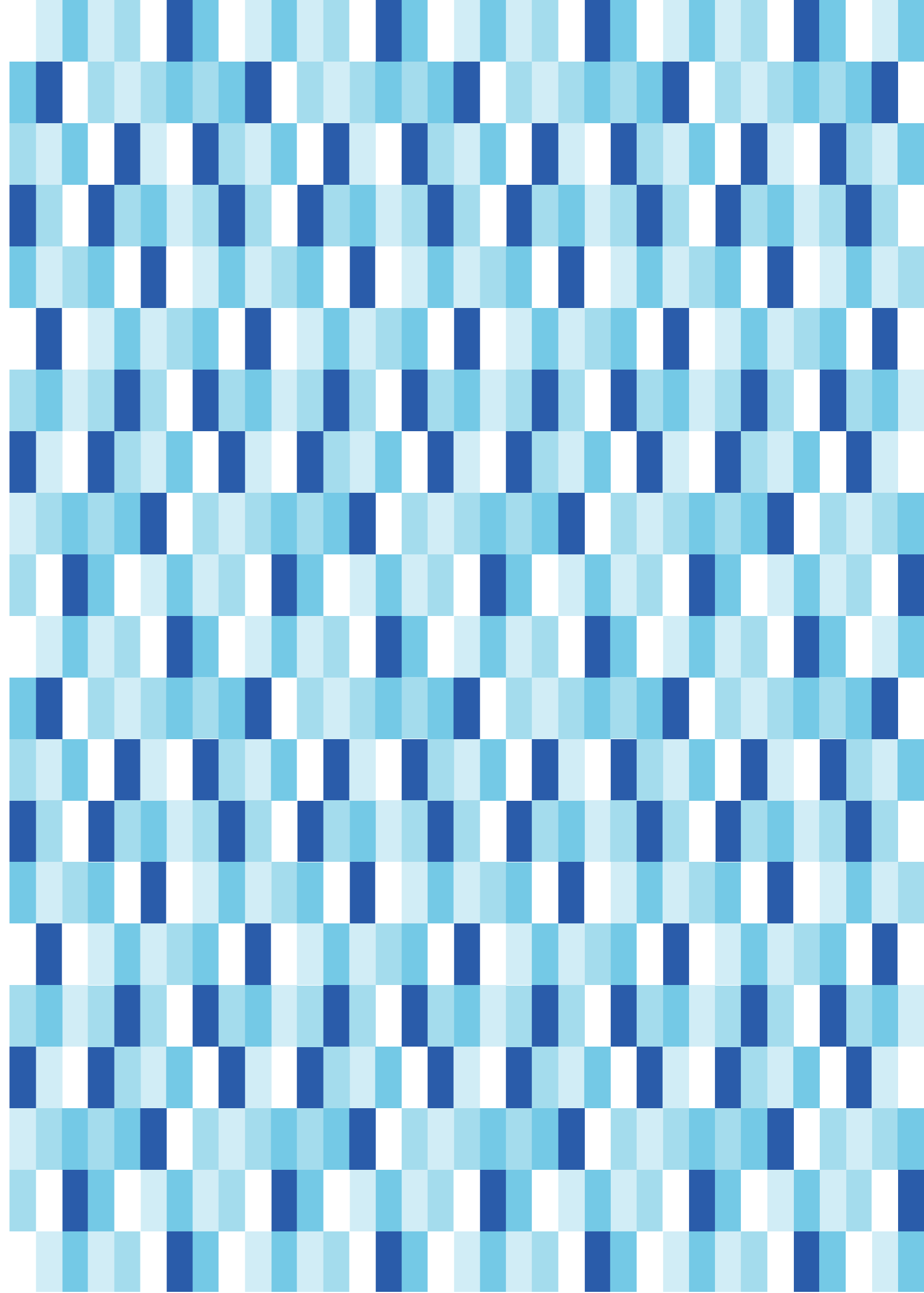
The activities lasted until late in the afternoon. At the end of each day, we did an evaluation, during which each student could evaluate the day by attaching a smiley face to the board or writing what he or she liked. An interesting idea was to prepare a celebration of US Independence Day and Ukrainian Constitution Day. During the activities,

the children made decorations, posters and flags of the respective countries. Then they decorated the playground together, and in the evening, during the barbeque, they danced belgijka, polonaise, Ukrainian folk dances, sang karaoke or listened to a bandura concert. Excursions to Gdansk, Malbork and recreational trips to the cinema, swimming pool and rope park were also a great way to integrate. The young people then had the opportunity to practice their language skills in informal situations, and could get to know their teachers better and become friends with them. Some children still keep in touch with American volunteers. They write to them on Instagram or Messenger about their successes and joys. The staff of Polish teachers also gained a great deal by observing the work of the volunteers. Educators learned

many interesting ideas for activating students through various language games or theater activities, which were very successful. We also believe that the organization of the camps, contributed greatly to the high results of our students at the primary school final English exam. Young people who take an active part in such projects have a much greater opportunity to raise their level of English. Young people broaden their horizons, become tolerant, open-minded and creative. This has been confirmed by the results of a survey we conducted among 35 of our school leavers in September 2023. All of them believed that participation in the Teaching English in Poland camp had an impact on their English language learning achievements, and almost all of them are satisfied with their results. •

**Joanna Romanik** Graduated in English Philology from the University of Gdansk. For 20 years she has been working at the School and Kindergarten Complex in Miłakowo teaching English. Certified trainer of the international Dreams & Teams program aiming at the development of social competencies among youth. As of 2019, coordinator of TEIP camps.





## The Kosciuszko Foundation Inc.

The Foundation was established in 1925 in New York. For nearly 100 years of its history, it has been awarding grants to students and researchers in Poland and the United States. It works to popularize and spread knowledge about the history of culture and science in Poland by holding exhibitions, concerts and competitions, as well as promotes Polish art overseas. The Foundation is dedicated to commemorate Thaddeus Kosciuszko, an outstanding general, insurgent, leader and a Polish émigré in America.

## The Kosciuszko Foundation Poland

Initiated in 2010, the Foundation has been supporting intellectual, scientific and cultural exchanges between Poland and the United States. It organizes cultural events, participates in organizing scholarship abroad for researchers and artists and hosts American students as well. The Foundation holds competitions and participates in the selection of laureates of The Kosciuszko Foundation awards for exceptional physicians (The Bohdan and Zygmunt Janczewski award) and researchers (FamLab). It makes efforts to cultivate our mutual Polish and American history. Teaching English in Poland is the flagship program of the Foundation.

### Find out more:

[www.thekf.org](http://www.thekf.org)

facebook: @FKPoland, @thekf.org