

Enhancing language teaching through Action research communities for language teachers

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Project aims

- To make techniques for action research widely available to language teachers through the establishment of a community of practice
- To strengthen professional networks by linking academic expertise on action research & good practice in the language classroom
- To contribute to improvements in language education by giving teachers across Europe better access to action research
- To enable teachers to reflect on practice & to propose & test innovations within a community of practice



Project objectives

- To design action research tools which help to improve the quality of teaching & foster dialogue between teachers in different sectors
- To demonstrate how research can feed into practice & practice into research
- To show how undertaking action research is beneficial to teachers & learners
- To create European models for peer learning activities which can be implemented at school/national level



Project team

Christine Lechner, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol

- Co-ordinator

Brynhildur Ragnarsdóttir, Language Centre, Reykjavik

- Web-site correspondent

Angela Gallagher-Brett, SOAS, University of London

- Communications person

Tita Mihaiu, [Centrul pentru formarea continuă în limba germană \(CPD\)](#)

- Second language documentalist



Project team

Associate partners

Renata Zanin, University of Bolzano

- Teacher educator

Jim Murphy - CALL expert from Newfoundland

Anita Konrad, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol

- German specialist

Melanie Steiner, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol

- German Specialist

Marianne Jacquin, Teacher training institute (IUFE),
University of Geneva



Project first steps

- Networking & discussions at regional levels of partners
- First workshop during International Week at Pedagogical University Tirol
- Action Research Workshop for German teachers in Sibiu / Hermannstadt October 2016
- Action Research Workshop in Graz November 2016



Sibiu / Hermannstadt template for 3-day Action research workshop : Day 1

| Getting into action research | Content-pack | Aims |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening & introductions Activity finding out what we have in common | <p>Learning about target-language country culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Austria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To open up to working together, challenging ideas and developing teaching |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do I already know about the theme? | <p>Getting into the theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we all have the same ideas when we think of Austria? How to be an Austrian? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To clarify that there are different approaches to a topic & different ideas |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytic discourse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posters on teaching about the target language country: my status quo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To get to know each other & to demonstrate an action research tool To show that discussions about teaching aren't always critical, comparative... |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From analytic discourse to perspectives on themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current (opposing) trends in cultural studies & intercultural learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring the strands together To demonstrate a feedback cycle |



Sibiu / Hermannstadt template for 3-day Action research workshop: Day 2

| Getting into action research | Content-pack | Aims |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & arrival activity • Different ideas & perspectives • Comments on feedback from Day 1 & procedures for Days 2 & 3 | <p>True or not true?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of three stories is not an Austrian story? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To bring group back together • To continue with multi-perspective thinking • To demonstrate taking feedback on board |
| Some ideas about action research | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a theoretical framework |
| | <p>Input on theme in form of islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of life in Austria • Regions • Literature from Austria • My life in my environment • Thinking about stereotypes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide content for development of joint lessons |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding themes & groups for lesson development • Short evaluation: The Wailing Wall | <p>Which materials provided were useful?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that joint planning will work in a concrete way • To demonstrate a feedback cycle |



Sibiu / Hermannstadt template for 3-day Action research workshop: Day 3

| Getting into action research | Content-pack | Aims |
|--|--|---|
| Welcome & comments on evaluation | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring group back together To demonstrate taking feedback on board |
| Ideas on joint planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group diamond activity to find a common vision | Our vision for good lessons about the cultures of target-language countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To open up ideas for joint planning/ joint visions |
| Developing a lesson together | Lessons on the culture of a target-language country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To put joint planning/ joint visions into practice |
| Presentations & conclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “What is different now?” Expectations how the lesson will work in the different classes Clarifying reports Official written evaluation & paper-ball evaluation | Lesson formats on the culture of a target-language country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To stimulate interest for the work of others To demonstrate a feedback cycle |





Graz workshop participants

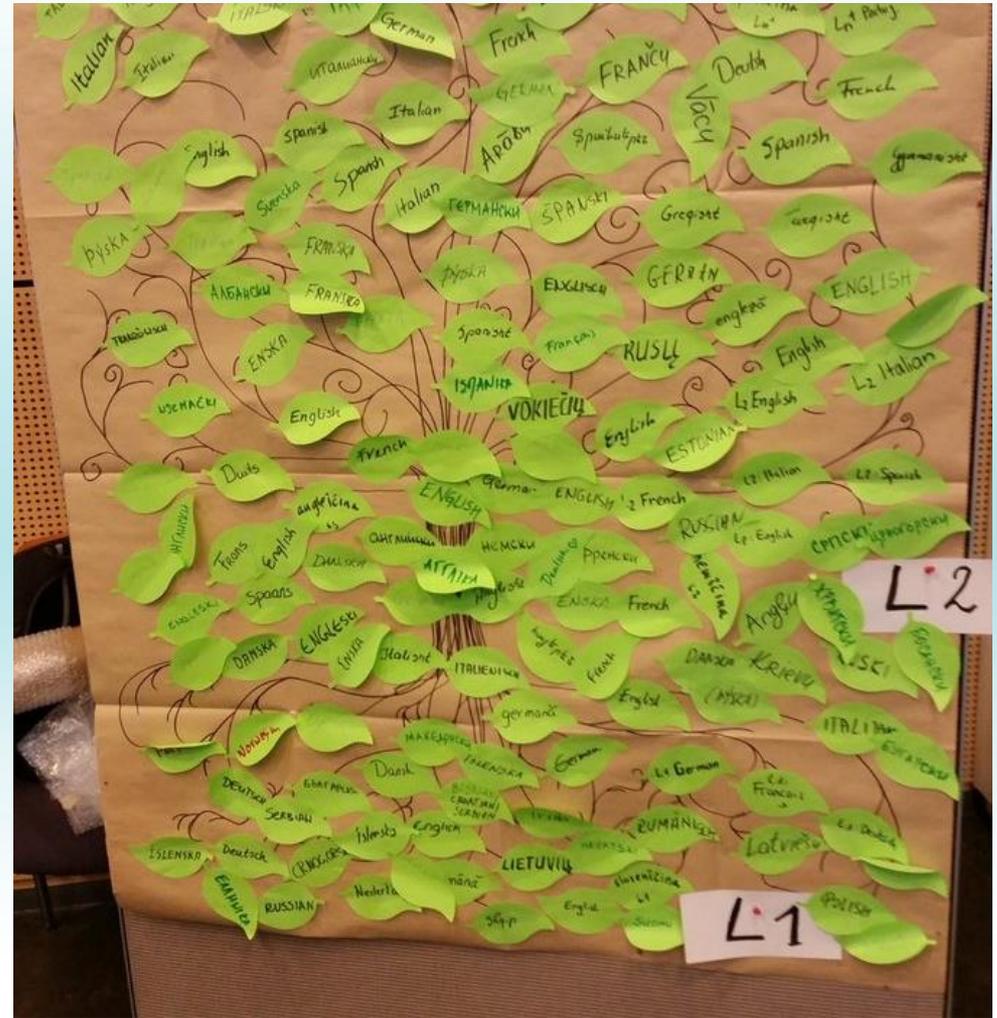


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Graz workshop: our languages tree

- Tree representing the languages spoken by workshop participants



Graz workshop mini-projects: research topics

- Does an explicit focus on critical thinking skills in our lesson planning and instruction enable students to engage in critical thinking? Participating countries: [Albania, Netherlands, Malta, Latvia](#)
- How can pupils' language skills be enhanced by using news media and Facebook sharing in language teaching? [Croatia, Iceland](#)
- Breaking barriers: Can we identify barriers for professional learning English as a second language at university level? [Armenia, France](#)
- What is the role of the teacher in university student-centred activities? [Finland, France](#)
- How does teaching vocabulary learning strategies contribute to learner autonomy in CLIL & MFL classrooms? [Ireland](#)
- Wie kann erreicht werden, dass die Kinder im Unterricht in der Zielsprache Deutsch sprechen? [Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Romania](#)



Graz workshop mini-projects: research topics

- Using the European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Languages ([EPOSTL](#)) as a self-reflection tool for improving pre- and in-service teachers' competences. [Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Greece](#)
- Challenges of CLIL teachers
Intercultural competences through a student- based project. [Czech Republic, Poland](#)
- CLIL in secondary vocational schools seen through students' perspectives. „The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia“, [Serbia](#)
- Intercultural competences through a student-based project. [Austria, Denmark, Montenegro](#)
- The teacher as co-constructor of knowledge. [Bulgaria, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Slovenia](#)



Workshop Follow-up

- Collaborative action research projects developed and carried out by workshop participants
- Dialogue throughout the year between teams and ARC co-ordinator
- Abstracts published on project web-page:
<http://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/Professionallearningcommunities/Results/tabid/3040/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>
- Full project reports shared on a Padlet wall



Next steps

- Project team is working on a tool for teachers of languages
- Action research projects continuing
- Network meeting being prepared where projects will be shared and tools will be trialled



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Project website

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