

**ECML Project B.1: Intercultural Communication
in Teacher Education
National Training Event, Notodden, Norway
August 17th-18th, 2005**

Workshop Report

Context

This event was prepared by Hilde Beate Lia of Telemark University College and Notodden kommune. Martina Huber-Kriegler, team member of project B.1 functioned as travelling ECML-expert. According to Ms Lia the main reason for organizing teacher training workshops at the very beginning of the new school year was that the new curriculum for English as a foreign language featured “Intercultural Communicative Competence” as one of four main areas of expertise that teachers should strive to develop in their students. Even though following the new curriculum will only become compulsory in 2006, many pro-active schools like Ms Lia’s have decided to adopt the new goals already in the present school year. Since hardly any of the foreign language teachers of her generation and her community had heard more than a few catch words and phrases about the topic Ms Lia felt there was a great need for a structured introduction to ICC.

In order to reach as many teachers as possible directly, Hilde Beate Lia decided to invite 4 groups of teachers altogether, 2 groups of secondary school teachers to Notodden Ungdomsskole and 2 groups of primary school teachers to Notodden Høgås skole. She asked me to ensure that the theoretical input covers the basics but also to provide teachers with practical ideas and methods for incorporating ICC in their regular course work. In Norwegian teacher training, Ms Lia stressed, it was very important to give examples of good practice by “model teaching”, i.e. actually making teachers do relevant exercises themselves and discussing variations or alternative ways of teaching afterwards. This way, she felt, they could gather first-hand experiences with the activities and materials and gain insights into the didactical and methodological aspects of incorporating ICC.

The first group at Notodden ungdomsskole, a lower secondary school, consisted of 18 English Teachers from the school and several other schools from the widespread Notodden area. They teach the age group 13-16.

In the afternoon we had an unexpectedly small group of German teachers (4 participants), but this made a lot of in-depth discussion of the concepts and activities possible. French teachers had also been invited to attend this workshop but none of them came.

At the primary school the next day we had two groups of twenty English teachers who participated in the morning and the same number of German teachers in the afternoon. They teach the age group of 6 – 12. To accommodate the German teachers I, of course, not only gave the presentations in German but also translated all worksheets we were using into German.

Contents

First of all I introduced the participants to the ECML as an institution, its role and resources and gave a brief report of the previous and the present project to explain the context in which these teacher training events are taking place. I also informed them about the ECML website with the project websites and mentioned similar projects (e.g. LEA) they could learn about on the internet.

Then we moved to definitions of key terms which I tried to present in an interactive manner and which should help them with further reading. When discussing “culture” the “iceberg-metaphor” is a very powerful eye-opener when people are first confronted with it and lends itself to generating lots of ideas for topics in culture teaching and discussion starters.

The rest of the time was spent doing practical exercises taken from “Mirrors & Windows” but I also used adapted and/ or translated versions of new activities that had been created by my colleagues in the workshop team.

The Norwegian participants at first seemed a bit reluctant to try out pair or group work exercises and had to be asked to do so several times, but then very lively discussions followed and teachers felt they could easily use most activities in their own classrooms.

I also presented activities from yet unpublished Austrian materials: Anna Grigoriadis, also a participant in our current project, created English ICC materials for the age group 10-15; and for German teachers I presented the Austrian SKE – KIESEL (Kinder entdecken Sprache)–series which at present can be downloaded for free from the ÖSZ-website.

Evaluation and Feedback

Since the time we had with each group was very limited (3,5 hours including short breaks), Ms Lia felt we should use a very quick form of evaluation. We decided to draw a “thermometer” – poster with a “content” and “atmosphere”-side to place coloured stickers in. Before participants left the classroom they each placed a sticker on the poster which indicated their degree of contentment with the workshop. However, what we missed with this form of evaluation was the information about what they especially liked (or disliked) and why. Informal comments during breaks and after the workshop were very favourable, though, and the teachers mentioned things like practicability of the worksheets and suggestions for activities, a good balance of theory and practice and that the topic of Intercultural Communication was not only a very necessary, future-oriented concept for language teachers but also entertaining to talk and learn about.

Several teachers commented on how much they enjoyed this form of language practice before starting into the new school year (both for English and German)! And many were impressed by receiving “Mirrors and Windows” and “How Strange” for free. None of them seemed to have heard of the ECML before and they were eager to check out the website and the publication list. I also explained the procedure of how participants were selected by the national nominating authorities and several

teachers said they would contact the Norwegian nominating authority and declare their interest in possibly becoming a future project participant. It also became obvious that most teachers felt they would need more information of this kind and will need time and opportunity for further education and self-study in this new field.

Workshop Planner

<p>Facilitators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Organizer: Hilde Beate Lia, Telemark University College, Notodden + Notodden kommune • ECML expert: Martina Huber-Kriegler, Pädagogische Akademie Graz and Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz
<p>Venues</p>	<p>Day 1: Notodden ungdomsskole, 3679 Notodden Day 2: Høgås skole, 3684 Notodden</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>August 18th and 19th 2005</p>
<p>Training Design & Participants' Profile</p>	<p>4 consecutive workshops, 2 on each day; <u>Aug. 18th:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-11.30 Teachers of English in lower secondary school, age group 13-16; 18 participants • 11.30-12.00 Lunch • 12.00- 15.30 Teachers of German in lower secondary school; 4 participants <p><u>Aug. 19th:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8-11.30 Teachers in primary school, age group 6-12; 20 participants • 11.30-12.00 Lunch • 12.00-15.30 Teachers in primary school, age group 6-12; 20 participants
<p>Expected Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of the necessity of incorporating intercultural communicative competence into language teaching; • Assisting Norwegian teachers to fulfil the requirements of the new curriculum 2006 which includes "intercultural communication" as one of 4 main areas by providing them with theoretical concepts and numerous examples of good practice and useful materials • Disseminating the results of ECML projects in the field • Making the ECML and its resources better known