



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MODERN LANGUAGES

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Project B2 – LEA

Language Educator Awareness

Developing plurilingual and pluricultural awareness
in language teacher education

Report of Central Workshop 1/2005

(Graz, Austria, 26-29 January 2005)

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The report is accessible in English and in French on the ECML website: <http://www.ecml.at>

The Executive Director of the ECML should be informed about any full or partial translation of the report and a copy of the translation should be sent to the ECML for information.

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LEA: Developing plurilingual and pluricultural awareness in language teacher education

Report of Central Workshop 1/2005

Background

From 26-29 January 2004 the LEA team organised at the ECML the workshop entitled “*Language Educator Awareness: Developing plurilingual and pluricultural awareness in language teacher education*”. Together with the five members of the expert team (Mercè Bernaus, Martine Kervran, Anna Murkowska, Ana Isabel Andrade and Fernando Trujillo), 33 participants from 29 nationalities met to discuss plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in connection with language teacher education, following the guidelines of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. As expected, most participants were in-service and pre-service language teacher educators.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to present a draft kit and to train participants for the development of plurilingual and pluricultural awareness in language teacher education.

Under these two general objectives some other aims were specified:

1. to discuss the most relevant concepts in relation to the project (language, culture, communication, identity, diversity, plurilingual and pluricultural competence);
2. to experience the activities designed by the expert team;
3. to motivate participants to learn more about the approach suggested in the rationale of the draft kit;
4. to foster participants to create activities collaborating, if possible, with other colleagues.

Contents

The workshop covered the following subjects:

1. The questionnaire:
 - ? some items of the questionnaire were discussed and then the results of the pre-workshop questionnaire were presented.
2. The rationale:
 - ? a detailed explanation of the most important concepts was presented so as to facilitate a reflective access to the activities included in the draft kit.

3. The project “portfolio”:
 - ? the two views of the portfolio, as a process of personal development and as a product to show that development, were introduced as a way of carrying the project out.
4. The “dimensions”:
 - ? as a project aimed at teacher education, two dimensions were considered: the personal and social dimension, and the professional dimension:
 - i. The teacher’s personal and social development, either as an individual and/or as a social player, is expressed in the observations that the teacher is able to make of him/herself, of others and of the contexts in which he/she has to work. In this dimension we include attitudes and knowledge such as interpersonal skills, the ability to learn and the ability to commit to one’s training with a view to building a fairer, more democratic society, one capable of enhancing the role played by linguistic and cultural diversity. The aim here is to perceive the language teacher (be it of the mother tongue, of the language of the school or of foreign languages) as an individual who has social responsibilities, including responsibilities towards him/herself, as a plurilingual and pluricultural speaker and towards the others.
 - ii. Within the professional dimension we include everything that relates to the process of teaching and learning languages or cultures, i.e. everything that concerns the concept, organisation and experimentation of propositions to be developed in education environments in which linguistic and cultural diversity is considered as a means of development for learners. In this training dimension we include teaching knowledge and know-how, i.e. knowledge that translates directly into specific teaching measures. The aim here is to see the teacher within the framework of the education system, the school and the classroom, where he/she conveys teaching and didactic knowledge that makes each learner an individual capable of reading and building the world.
5. The linguistic and professional biography: a sample activity:
 - ? this activity was chosen to show how main theoretical concepts can be put into practice in language teacher education.
6. The draft kit activities:
 - ? a brief review and discussion of the rest of the activities was held; after the discussion of the activities, participants were invited to pilot them, making all the modifications and enrichment they considered suitable.

7. The conception of activities:

- ? orientations and detailed guidelines were provided so as to facilitate the future development of the project;
- ? the participants sketched activities following a template; these were presented and discussed.

8. Homework:

- ? procedures and deadlines were discussed and negotiated for future actions.

Organisation

A constant balance between plenary sessions and group work was maintained during the workshop. Six working groups were involved simultaneously in studying the rationale, discussing the concepts and the activities, designing new materials and preparing for future work.

The atmosphere of the workshop was a constant concern for the expert team; thus, several activities devised to create and maintain ties of friendship and co-operation were carried out during the whole workshop.

Evaluation

The expert team was careful to evaluate the development of the workshop on a daily basis. The positive results of these evaluations encouraged the team to keep working, and confirmed the interest of the project itself.

Follow-up

Participants were expected to be in a position to contribute to the kit's further development and to pilot it in their own context. Thus they are committed to staying involved in the subsequent phases of the project by providing regular feedback on the piloting of the kit and by attending the network meetings. They should thus be in a position to contribute to the final publication.