

**ECML Project B.1: Intercultural Communication
in Teacher Education
National Training Event, Kaunas, Lithuania
August 29th - 30th, 2005**

Workshop Report

CONTEXT

The training event was organized by Ms. Romualda Liutkuvienė of Jonas Jablonskis Gymnasium, at the Pedagogical Center of Kaunas for both English and German teachers. Martina Huber-Kriegler of Graz Federal Pedagogical Academy and team member of project B1, served as ECML- travelling expert. For the teachers it was the first week of the school year which is dedicated to meetings and in-service training before the pupils arrive the week after.

The goal was to introduce the topic of intercultural communication in (foreign) language teaching, to make participants aware of the ECML and its projects around this topic, its role and resources and to present a number of examples of good practice to link theory to teaching practice.

Ms. Liutkuvienė had established very efficient cooperation with the local Pedagogical Center and invitations had been sent to all secondary schools in the Kaunas area. 30 English teachers registered for the first one-day workshop, 28 German teachers for the second day. The certificates issued were said to be especially “valuable” for the participants, since the seminar counted as an “international seminar”, held by an “international expert” in the foreign language they are teaching, which the teachers particularly appreciated.

CONTENTS

After a warming-up exercise, which allowed participants to get to know each other a little bit better, we started the workshop by explaining the history of our project and the objectives that led to the organization of the seminar. I also told participants about my personal approach to the field and my goals for the specific workshop.

The ECML as an institution and other projects with similar topics (LEA, Cultural Mediation) as well as ECML resources were introduced to the participants. Teachers were particularly pleased to receive ECML publications (“Mirrors & Windows”, “How Strange”, some copies of “Cultural Mediation” and the Workshop report of the previous project) and to learn about downloadable publications.

Key definitions and concepts were then explained and the iceberg metaphor developed out of an activity to provide an introduction to the theoretical background of intercultural communication. Since all of the information seemed very new to almost all of the participants, clarifying the terms and outlining current developments in language pedagogy took some time but were openly received by all participants.

The largest proportion of time was, however, spent on presenting and trying out a number of practical activities, partially taken from “Mirrors and Windows”, partially from materials created by the project team or participants. Romualda had also prepared a great number of worksheets taken from various sources for English teachers with examples of information on “c”-culture of English speaking countries. She conducted the activities with her colleagues who obviously very much liked the ideas and suggestions for their own teaching.

The German group on the second day experienced a special surprise: Dr. Hans-Harry Drößiger, translator of the German version of “Mirrors & Windows” visited our workshop as “special guest” and presented all teachers with a free copy of “Spiegel und Fenster”. We felt this was a very kind gesture since a good number of German teachers would not have been able to read the English book. Dr. Drößiger then briefly gave an account on his experience of using the book in his German classes at Vilnius and Kaunas University and gave an example of how to use a particular chapter in language lessons.

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

As these were whole-day training workshops, we felt we could ask the participants to evaluate them in more detail. Romualda had designed a short questionnaire with the following questions:

- 1) Was this topic new to you or did you have any previous training in ICC? If yes, where and when?
- 2) Do you think the contents of this seminar will be relevant for your work? Yes / No, because....
- 3) Will you be able to use the activities in your classes (with modifications)?
- 4) What else do you think you would need to include ICC in your teaching?
- 5) Any other comments:

English group:

- For 18 out of 20 participants it was a new topic.
- All of them found the contents relevant. Several teachers mentioned it was going to be relevant in a few years time – they were referring to the fact that in Lithuania at present ethnic minorities go to separate schools – they don’t mingle with the majority and thus they don’t have any multicultural classrooms yet.
- Apart from one “maybe” all of them said they were planning to use the presented activities in their own classrooms.
- Question 4 was not answered by everybody. Some of the comments included the following: practice (3), books for pupils (2), ICC should be included in curricula, to visit (other) foreign countries, religion of other countries,...
- Other comments: several participants expressed their gratefulness for the opportunity to attend the seminar, several said “it was very interesting and useful”; one wrote “It was very nice to hear a nice English language before September”.

German group:

- For all except 2 the topic was entirely new.
- All of them found the contents of the seminar relevant, because “students would be interested in learning about these things”, “it is a current topic and is becoming more relevant day by day”, and because “it will make my classes more lively”
- All of them said they would use the materials at least in some of their classes
- Question 4 was only answered by 4 people: two mentioned the possibility to use the Internet, one would like to attend a similar seminar after a while and one would like even more materials, suggestions and advice.
- The majority used the space provided to express their thanks for the seminar and to qualify it as “useful and interesting”.

Workshop Planner

Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Organizer: Romualda Liutkuvienė, a teacher expert of English, Kaunas Jonas Jablonskis Gymnasium. • ECML expert: Martina Huber-Kriegler, Pädagogische Akademie Graz and Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz
Venue	Kaunas , Centre of Teachers' Qualification
Date	August 29 th and 30 th 2005
Training Design & Participants' Profile	<p>2 6-hour workshops, 1 on each day;</p> <p><u>Aug. 29th:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 – 15.00 Teachers of English from secondary schools (different levels), 30 participants. • 13.00 -13.30 Lunch <p><u>Aug. 30th:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 – 15.00 Teachers of German from secondary schools (different levels), 28 participants. • 13.00 -13.30 Lunch
Expected Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness for the necessity of incorporating intercultural communicative competence into language teaching; • Assisting Lithuanian teachers to fulfil the requirements of the new curriculum 2006 which <u>might include</u> “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

Graz, Oct. 05

Martina Huber-Kriegler