

PILOT PROJECT No. 13

Evaluation of VGU by former students presently studying at one of Graz universities

FINAL REPORT and EVALUATION

PROJECT TITLE

Evaluation of VGU by former students presently studying at one of Graz universities

PILOTING INSTITUTION(S)

VGU, Graz, Austria

PILOTING INSTRUCTOR(S)

Mag. Henriette Pire
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Dr. Elga Wolf

CONTACT PERSON(S)

CONTACT DETAILS

as above
Vorstudienlehrgang der Grazer Universitäten (VGU)
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PROJECT SUMMARY

Please describe briefly the overall goal and objectives of the pilot project.

CHAGAL students who are presently/were recently full-time students at one of the universities in Graz were asked to evaluate the access courses they had to pass at VGU from the point of view of their present/past experiences as full-time students.

TARGET GROUP

Please indicate age, gender, national profile and number of students in the pilot group and level of their language proficiency according to the European Framework.

Home countries, gender and age of the interviewed students are:
Rwanda, female, 26

Rwanda, female, 24
Rwanda, female, 27
Palestine, male, 21
Palestine, male, 35
Kosovo, male, 28
Brazil, female, 26
Iran, male, 31
Iran, male, 46
Columbia, female, 22
Nigeria, male, 26
Turkey, male, 25
Turkey, female, 26
Turkey, male, 23

The level of their language proficiency at the time of leaving VGU was B2/C1 and has in most cases become higher in the meantime. While some have achieved near, native-speaker level the communicating competence of one of them is still very basic (lower than B2)

PILOT PROJECT RELATION TO CHAGAL PRINCIPLES

Please specify how your project fits into the CHAGAL Curriculum Guidelines.

The goal of the project was a retrospect needs-analysis of under-represented and disadvantaged international students in order to improve course structures teaching methods at VGU in the future. The disadvantages arise from the fact that these students come from a completely different cultural background and learning tradition. Many of them had no colleagues with the same mother tongue in their VGU classes.

METHODOLOGY

Please give a description of the methodology that you will use to achieve your pilot project objectives. Indicate the tools/instruments that will be developed/used during the pilot project (e.g. visual aids, questionnaires, handouts, teacher-developed materials etc.).

We designed a questionnaire which was the basis of the face to face interviews we conducted with the students.

ACTION PLAN

Please provide a short description of the activities carried out within your pilot (e.g. who was doing what and when).

Recruiting of available students (Nov 03 - Jan 04)
Designing the interviews/questionnaire (Nov 03)
Execution of interviews (Dec 03, Jan, Feb 04)
Analysis of interview data (Feb 04)
Final report (March 04)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Please indicate what YOUR idea of the outcomes was BEFORE starting the pilot project (=text of your proposal).

It was expected that the level of German the students reached at VGU was not sufficient for studying at the universities effectively. The problems with which they were and are confronted are probably more numerous and different from those an average Austrian student has to face.

ACTUAL OUTCOMES

Please compare the outcomes AFTER the end of the pilot project to the expected outcomes above.

The problems of the students interviewed can be classified as follows:

- listening comprehension (especially as not all lecturers use standard language)
- technical terminology
- multi-tasking during lectures (listening, analyzing and writing)
- writing reports and seminar papers in German
- social problems like getting in contact with Austrian students or being ignored by fellow students and even lecturers

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please list the materials you have developed (e.g. questionnaires, forms, handouts, records, notes, students' feedback etc.). - Please include the documents into the **APPENDIX**.

Letter, questionnaire

PILOT PROJECT FINAL EVALUATION

Please answer the guiding questions below as far as possible. Additional comments are highly welcome, though.

We sent out 56 letters to ex-VGU-students of the target group, but there was just one reply. So we tried to call them and again the responses were very poor. This was partly because the period chosen was when the students were busy with their end-of-semester-exams, and afterwards they weren't in Graz because of the holidays and partly because their interest in taking part in the project was disappointingly low. So in the end only 14 persons were available and willing to answer the questions. But these students took it very seriously and seemed to be glad to get the possibility to talk about their experiences.

We realized that their language skills had improved more or less improved, and

the students themselves also feel that their German keeps improving. We would judge their oral levels between B2 and near native speaker level.

Although the group of interviewed students was very small and therefore far from representative, we believe the problems expressed might be similar if identical for most of the other foreign students with the exception of those with an extremely high willingness and motivation to reach their aims. (One student is working from 9am to 12pm 7 days a week).

It is obvious that the personality of every single student plays a very important part as regards their performance at university : Where is the personal limit of frustration? Is he/she very extrovert/introvert? Etc.

The students' evaluation of VGU was generally very positive, although we are aware of the facts that politeness may not have allowed them to criticise the courses and that students with negative experiences may be among those who didn't respond to our letter.

As a result of the outcome of the project we would like to suggest the following points to be taken into consideration for future students:

- encourage the students to act and learn more autonomously and with a greater involvement
- increase the amount of listening comprehensions
- improve their multi-tasking-ability (listening/analyzing and writing)
- offer special courses according to the students' fields of studies where they could gain a competence of basic technical vocabulary
- offer practice in multiple choice tests

The work linked with this project was very enjoyable and interesting though it required much effort and time (about 25 - 30 hours/person).

We would like to initiate a monthly "Stammtisch" for VGU-students in order to

- keep in touch with ex-VGU-students and be able to continue with the project work
- increase communication between students and ex-students

APPENDIX: Supporting Documents

Mag. Henriette Pire – Mag. Bernhard Unterweger – Mag. Helga Wenzl – Dr. Elga Wolf

Vorstudienlehrgang der Grazer Universitäten

Burgring 8-10
8010 Graz

Herr
Mohamed Afana
Ghegagasse 17/20/3
8020 Graz

Graz, im November 2003

Sehr geehrter Herr Mohamed Afana,

im Rahmen eines europaweiten Projekts von studienvorbereitenden Institutionen möchten wir ehemalige Studierende unseres Lehrgangs, die zur Zeit ein Studium an Grazer Universitäten betreiben oder ein solches schon abgeschlossen haben, interviewen. Dieses Projekt dient dazu, künftigen internationalen Studierenden eine noch bessere Vorbereitung auf ihr Studium in Österreich zu bieten.

Wir bitten Sie deshalb herzlich, sich für uns für zirka 20 Minuten Zeit zu nehmen, um uns einige Fragen zu Ihrer Zeit am Vorstudienlehrgang und während des Studiums danach zu beantworten.

Folgende Termine am VGU, Burgring 10, 1. Stock stehen zur Auswahl:

- 9. 12. zwischen 8.00 und 12.00; zwischen 15.40 und 17.30
oder um 18.15 Uhr
- 11. 12. zwischen 8.00 und 16.00 Uhr
- 12.12. zwischen 12.00 und 15.00
- 15.12. ab 18.15 Uhr
- 16.12. zwischen 8.00 und 12.00 oder zwischen 15.40 und
17.30 Uhr
- 17.12. zwischen 13.00 und 17.00 Uhr

Wir bitten Sie um Rückmeldung (per Telefon oder E-Mail) bei einer der unten angeführten Kontaktpersonen für einen Termin.
Natürlich sind auch individuelle Terminvereinbarungen und andere Treffpunkte möglich.

Selbstverständlich bleiben Sie in unserer Untersuchung vollkommen anonym und die Daten werden nicht an unbeteiligte Personen weitergegeben.

Wir stehen Ihnen natürlich auch für weitere Fragen zur Verfügung. Über das gesamte Projekt können Sie sich unter www.vwu.at/chagal informieren.

Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Mitarbeit und danken dafür im Voraus.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

P.S.: Vielleicht haben Sie noch Kontakt zu ehemaligen Studierenden des Vorstudienlehrgangs, die auch bereit wären, uns ein Interview zu geben.

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Zeit direkt nach VGU?				
VGU?				
D-Kenntnisse heute 100, wie bei Beginn des VGU?				
D-Kenntnisse vorher?	ja wo erworben?	nein		
D-Kurs/Inhalte? Was besonders geholfen?	Noten1-5			
	Grammatik			
	Schreiben von Texten			
	Lesen			
	Hören			
	Sprechen			
	Wortschatz?	zu wenig	gerade richtig	sehr viel
	Was zu viel /nicht notwendig?			
	Wovon hätten Sie gern mehr gehabt?			
	Was gefehlt?			
Noten für VGU im Hinblick auf Studienvorbereitung? (1-5)				
Leben in Graz damals?	Kontakte im Kurs?			
	Kontakte außerhalb	Landsleute?	andere Ausländer?	Österreicher?
Uni?	Schwierigkeiten?			
	sprachliche Schwierigkeiten?	wie gelöst?		
	Kontakte ?	Landsleute?	andere Ausländer?	Österreicher?
Besuch von weiteren D-Kursen? (wenn möglich)				
	Was hat geholfen beim Studium?	im Alltag?		beim Freunde treffen?
	Was hat gefehlt beim Studium?	im Alltag?		beim Freunde treffen?
Warum in Graz studiert?				
Persönliches:	Herkunftsland			
	Alter			
	Geschlecht			
	Studium	abgeschlossen?	Semester?	
	Anfang am VGU?	Stundenausmaß?		
	Fächer?			
	Anzahl der Kurse?			
	Prüfungsnote?			