



yell
YOUNG EUROPEANS
LOVE LANGUAGES



Analysis Summary

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Project partnership

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1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of multilingualism has been outlined in the communication of the Commission promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity (An Action Plan 2004 – 2006 (COM 2003)) and the Commission describes the ability to understand and communicate in more than one language as “a desirable life-skill for all European citizens” (European Commission 2005). It is said to

- § encourage people to become more open to other people’s cultures and outlooks,
- § improve cognitive skills and strengthen mother tongue skills,
- § enable people to take advantage of the freedom to work or study in another Member State.

The enlargement of the European Union, the raise of mobility within Europe including migration to the EU, and the development and objective of a society based on knowledge influenced highly the issue of multilingualism and its importance. Currently about 450 languages are spoken in the European Union. For the European Union member states, especially for decision makers, there is a challenge to create a system of communication above barriers of foreign languages and cultures. Moreover the knowledge of foreign languages and cultures can positively influence the development of entrepreneurship, better working places, intercultural dialogue and international communication.

For these reasons, awareness raising and motivation enhancement to learn (foreign) languages are of paramount importance to each EU member state. This might not be new for most of us but there has still been some lack of motivation or lack of reasons for learning in particular referring to young, deprived learners.

Thus this project, YELL Young Europeans Love Languages, is a network whose main aim is to promote languages learning as a key competence for lifelong learning and therefore addresses formal but also to a greater degree non-formal and informal learning environments and situations (in education, cultural, social, sport institutions offering various ways of spending free time among young people) who can enhance language learning of this target group.

One of the first activities performed within the network was the research on the country situation on relevant aspects to improve the above described situation. This document shows the summary of the main analysis outputs of it. Details can be found in the single country versions and the full paper (available at the project website: <http://www.yell-project.eu/en/home-en>).



2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The YELL-Young Europeans Love Languages project is a co-founded project from the EU that is running from January 2009 until December 2011. The following ten EU member states are involved:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the UK.

It is structured in a manner which enables teachers to educate young Europeans about discovering the importance of learning modern foreign languages. This has been done through setting various objectives regarding collective good practice examples, recommendations from each participating country as well as training and trend indications with the aim to later select and provide those of value for a possible implementation in any organisation dealing with formal, non-formal or informal learning.

The main objective of YELL is to offer all dealing with young people and to motivate young learners through different teaching approaches and training materials, as well as to demonstrate how language learning can be carried out in a fun way through non-formal and formal situations along, with the use of different materials and concepts. For this, good practices have been collated in the partner countries with recommendations of how these could be implemented in the YELL products. Based on information how the education system works and which trends can be seen in the partner countries, any education provider and organisation offering learning environments is free to use the offered approaches to their learners.

Good Practices

To start with a good practice example from Belgium: 'The Story Telling Festival of Alden Biesen'. People are invited to tell stories in their native language; which is adapted to suit all levels. This is a cost effective language learning event which can easily be organised in any country and can be modified to suit all ages. (Please see page 212 in the YELL document for further details). Italy's 'The language learning city' is a further good practice example. This is another proposal which could be implemented in other countries rather easily and can be altered to suit different target groups. Guided and unguided city tours allow learners to practice new vocabulary and expand their knowledge in relation to their surroundings, be these names of buildings, places or people. These new innovative ways of teaching language outside the classroom encourage language learning in an original way. (Further details can be found on page 250 of the YELL document).



Trend indications

Many countries involved in the project have already got good language teaching practice throughout their education system. Since 1991 Austria has had an: ‘English as working language’ project in place which ensures learners are taught foreign languages through subject-orientated learning across the educational board. (Please see page 17 for further details.) Italy has also formerly introduced a similar system which ensures that some subjects such as history, mathematic, geography and physics are taught in English (page 104).

Most participating member states organise language study trips and exchange visits in native schools. Erasmus schemes are also offered to students in higher education. This scheme allows learners to have the experience of studying for one or two terms in a foreign country; thus improving their foreign language skills and at the same time enables familiarisation and interaction with other cultures. (Pages 2250 and 106 provide more information on this scheme).

A further common trend in this YELL document is the use of ICT within language teaching. Most countries are enthusiastic about using online communities such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to entice target groups into learning languages through common interests. Considerable awareness is shown towards getting to know students better via new technologies. Becoming accustomed with these new materials empowers teaching languages on a new level. (See page 22 and 312 for further details). Especially the UK acknowledged the importance of using these mediums to encourage their already high numbers of unmotivated language learners within schools (page 341). The UK explains their decrease in applications from language learners is due to the change of regulations in 2002, since then learning a foreign language is no longer mandatory. However adult foreign language courses have continued in popularity.

Recommendations for the development of the YELL products

The trend of using modern ICT technology is not restricted to just teaching within the school but also for teachers away from the classroom. The importance of being able to share, exchange, collect, and collaboratively improve lesson plans as well as having the opportunity to discuss best practices and raw materials related to language learning, have proven to be very important for all participating countries. Norway even communicated that this was their strongest recommendation (page 328) and went on to saying that: ‘As educators, we must take advantage of these new global platforms, even if we are careful to understand their limits and their risks.’



Austria has recommended continuing the use of traditional materials such as course books within the classroom but along side modern ICT. They also stress the importance of introducing other materials such as newspapers, magazine articles, movies, songs and books to make language learning more interesting; this is also expanded to outdoor and informal environments such as language learning trips to sports clubs.

Latvia stated that students learn a language better through their interests such as football, ice-hockey, and dancing and went on to explain that these are often single sex groups for which there are no individual teaching specifications that match distinct needs. Belgium added that younger children learn languages quicker. If language learning is introduced at a young age throughout all European members states, and materials which motivate young learners in a formal and non-formal manner are widely available, the YELL concept will be very successful (page 325). Bulgaria was of the opinion that the benefits of promoting a language should be stressed more, this is especially important amongst young people to increase motivation.

Motivation can be enhanced through the introduction of a native language teaching assistant, an area which Austria and Spain (page 331) speak about in this YELL document. Meeting a native speaker can motivate students to learn a foreign language as it can help them comprehend the usefulness and importance of being able to communicate with a person from a foreign country. Spain also conveys the importance of encouraging autonomous learning, if students are given the opportunity to meet a native speaker.

The UK recommended the introduction of a compulsory language qualification which should be compulsory when entering education at university level. This is specific to the UK but paramount, as currently the language motivation within schools is decreasing in all subjects apart from Spanish. (page 340)

Conclusion

To conclude, young students enjoy new and exciting ways of learning which is key to their motivation in learning a new language. Keeping traditional learning styles is necessary but the foremost importance of YELL is to make language learning enjoyable, to awake a child's interest and keep them motivated. This can be accomplished by implementing good practice as well as implementing trends from one another. This needs to be achieved by embracing new technology, making use of popular social networking websites in innovative learning environments and locations as well as by sharing materials and advice on best practice throughout European member states.



Detailed background information on good practice examples, recommendations and trend indications collected by the YELL project partners are offered in a full document version and per country.

For further details, please consult the project website: <http://www.yell-project.eu/en/home-en>



3 APPENDICES

§ **Definition of Key Terminology**

§ **Bibliography**



3.1 Definitions of Key Terminology

3.1.1 Education Levels

The LLP scheme foresees the following education levels (and codes)

ISCED 2PV	Lower secondary or second stage of basic education - level 2 - pre-vocational programmes
ISCED 2VOC	Lower secondary or second stage of basic education - level 2 - vocational programmes
ISCED 2GPV	Lower secondary or second stage of basic education - level 2 - general and pre-vocational programmes
ISCED 2VPV	Lower secondary or second stage of basic education - level 2 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes
ISCED 2A	Lower secondary programmes designed for direct access to level 3, in a sequence which would ultimately lead to tertiary education (i.e. entrance to ISCED 3A or 3B)
ISCED 2B	Lower secondary programmes designed for direct access to level 3C
ISCED 2C	Lower secondary programmes designed for direct access to the labour market
ISCED 3-4	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4
ISCED 3-4VOC	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4 - vocational programmes
ISCED 3PV	Upper secondary education - level 3 - pre-vocational programmes
ISCED 3VOC	Upper secondary education - level 3 - vocational programmes
ISCED 3GPV	Upper secondary education - level 3 - general and pre-vocational programmes
ISCED 3VPV	Upper secondary education - level 3 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes
ISCED 3VPV-SCH	Upper secondary education - level 3 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes - school based
ISCED 3VPV-WRK	Upper secondary education - level 3 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes - work based
ISCED 4PV	Post-secondary non-tertiary education - level 4 - pre-vocational programmes
ISCED 4VOC	Post-secondary non-tertiary education - level 4 - vocational programmes
ISCED	Post-secondary non-tertiary education - level 4 - general and pre-vocational programmes



4GPV	
ISCED 4VPV	Post-secondary non-tertiary education - level 4 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes
ISCED 4VPV-SCH	Post-secondary non-tertiary education - level 4 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes - school based
ISCED 4VPV-WRK	Post-secondary non-tertiary education - level 4 - pre-vocational and vocational programmes - work based
ISCED 4A-B	Post-secondary non-tertiary designed to provide direct access to level 5

3.1.2 Good Practice

In this project we understand as good practice any innovative - in at least one of the partner countries - measure, approach, material, information or similar for raising the motivation of young people to learn foreign languages and to improve the implementation of language learning in attractive forms (particularly in informal and non-formal settings) which is adaptable and attractive and which thus may be of added value to be used or transferred in this project.

The research of good practices can be done via desk and field research and will cover several steps, inter alia: Collation (using the template for good practice examples), rating (applying the foreseen criteria), selection (for further data processing in later work packages).

3.1.3 Learning types

Regarding Learning types the Glossary of CEDEFOP (2000) and the Communication of the European Commission (2001)¹ give the following definitions regarding:

Formal learning is defined as learning that occurs within an organised and structured context (formal education, in-company training) and that is designed as learning. It may lead to a formal recognition (diploma, certificate). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Non-formal learning refers to learning which is embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

¹ CEDEFOP (2000) Glossary, in Making Learning Visible (Thessaloniki, Cedefop) and European Commission (2001) Communiqué Making a European Area of Life-long Learning a Reality, (Brussels)



Informal learning is defined as learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and can, to a certain degree, be understood as accidental learning. It is not structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time and/or learning support and, typically, does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases, it is non-intentional (or ‘incidental’/ random). (CEDEFOP (2000) Glossary, in Making Learning Visible (Thessaloniki, Cedefop) and European Commission (2001) Communiqué Making a European Area of Life-long Learning a Reality, (Brussels))



3.2 Bibliography

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