



Young Europeans Love Languages

Newsletter 2

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"Young Europeans Love Languages" is a network of European partners whose aim is to promote language learning as a key skill of lifelong learning.

We believe that fun, attractive, and unconventional forms of language learning should be incorporated not only in formal education but also in other non-formal/informal contexts and leisure activities.

The network comprises 11 partner organizations from across 10 European countries: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Norway, Holland, Spain, Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia and the UK.

By December 2011 the partnership will strive to identify a number of tools to raise awareness and to demonstrate the importance of language learning which will help to increase the effectiveness of language teaching.

Our aims are:

1. to identify previous projects where innovative and useful language tools have been developed but not sustained and, where possible, revive and adapt them for use with young people in non-formal and informal environments
2. to make the process of learning meaningful and fun e.g. language learning as an aspect of sport, social and cultural activities
3. to create a toolbox containing language learning tools which have been adapted to be integrated in other social, cultural and sporting activities for young people.

Visit our website www.yell-project.eu

Developers' Meeting

On the 9th and 10th December 2009, the YELL developers' team met in Nijmegen, Netherlands to discuss and adapt the didactic deliverables of the project (the Handbook), how to implement best practice on raising awareness about cultural diversity, the motivation of young people to learn foreign languages, and the Virtual Documentation Center. The partners from GODALEN - Norway, IAL CISL - Italy, VHS - Germany, BEST - Austria, ROC Nijmegen – Netherlands took part in the meeting.

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The Handbook “How to implement best practice”

“No matter how one may think himself accomplished, when he sets out to learn a new language, science, or the bicycle, he has entered a new realm as truly as if he were a child newly born into the world.”

Frances Willard
(American educator)

The partners worked to finalise the handbook which will be one of the main project deliverables. The handbook will describe best practices regarding innovative and fun learning environments and innovative language learning concepts, tools and methods. The Handbook will present awareness raising tools about cultural diversity, effective methods to attract participation of young people in lifelong learning, and strategies to motivate them to start or continue learning foreign languages.

The Handbook will focus on concrete case studies with availability of all materials and tools necessary for transferring and adapting them. This will soon be available online in English, and will be distributed to teachers, trainers and relevant stakeholders who can exploit and adapt the described practices and adopt them in their country.

Some best practices of language learning include:

ensuring a friendly environment for learners (such as sport and outdoor activities, other non-formal language learning outside the class room);

learning based on **real life situations**, such as every-day communication, problem solving and relationships with friends, peers, colleagues, clients.;

learning activities **connecting language learning with hobbies** (football, cars and music etc.)

and activities that **enhance the social skills** young people need in their environment, etc.

Virtual documentation centre of best practices



The partners discussed the development progress of the Virtual documentation centre (data base). The virtual centre will consist of identified best practices of motivation for learners to learn languages outside formal education in enjoyable and attractive ways. The best practices will be selected from previous initiatives and partners' experiences.

The database will benefit teachers and trainers, in non-formal education, the cultural sphere, sport, social associations, as well as stakeholders and decision-makers on a regional, national and European level in education, entertainment, recreation and other sectors. The users will be able to search best practices/ tools organised by themes, according to the context and specified target group.



The importance of innovative language learning

Learning a foreign language is an enriching experience for everybody. Not only is language a communication system, it is also a cultural code which transports complex information about cultural norms, values, traditions and rules of conduct. Foreign language competencies thus enable deeper insights into other cultures and lifestyles; they broaden our horizon, promote intercultural communication and help us to overcome personal and national barriers.

Learning a foreign language becomes tedious if vocabulary and grammar are taught by drill. Language teaching is not only about imparting knowledge, it is also important to develop ability. Innovative language teaching can be important in relation to neurological, social and behavioural theories and offer theoretical strategies and innovative examples for language learning.

**“The best teachers
teach from the heart,
not from the book.
(author unknown)**

Readers' Theatre in Nijmegen

To illustrate innovative practices for enhancing the motivation of young learners to study foreign languages, the partners were introduced to an innovative language learning practice that took place in real life. A group of students from the ROC Nijmegen performed their Readers Theatre.

Readers Theatre is an activity in which students, reading directly from scripts, tell a story in an entertaining form, without props, costumes, or sets.

This is a *reading* activity, and students are not asked to memorise their lines. They are, however, encouraged to "ham it up" and use intonation and gestures appropriate to their characters and their characters' words. This way of working with a foreign language makes it fun for students whilst learning more words and phrases at the same time.

As Joost, one of the performing students, says: "To me, Readers Theatre was a very new experience. But it was great! At my school, we're familiar with theatre. But to do this in English, with a script, on stage, that's different from what I'm used to. Eventually we performed our text for an audience, and it went quite well! I hope we will do more of this kind of task!!"



European Language Label

The European Label is an award that encourages new initiatives in the field of teaching and learning languages, rewarding new techniques in language teaching, spreading the knowledge of their existence and thereby promoting good practice. The Label is open to all aspects of education and training, regardless of age or methods used, with its main focus being to promote innovation in language teaching.



For 2010-2011 Label Campaigns the Commission identified 2 European priorities: language learning in the community and language skills as a preparation for work.

See also:

[European Language Label](#)

[European Label Projects of the Month](#)

[Europa Languages Portal](#)

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