

## **“Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in pre- and in-service language teacher training, for mentors and teacher trainers”**

*Project description*

*Version 1.0*

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### **1. CONTEXT**

Our aim is to encourage teacher trainers, mentors and language teachers in general to shift the focus from teaching only lexical and grammatical competence to emphasizing, teaching and practicing intercultural communicative competence in their classrooms. In order to achieve this it is important to identify the organizational conditions for incorporating cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence in the curricula in teacher training institutions.

Currently, intercultural competence is not necessarily included in the curriculum in teacher training programmes in Central and Eastern Europe. Whether trainees learn anything about intercultural competence solely depends on the lecturers and professors whose classes they attend. However, it is obviously of great importance to increase intercultural understanding in Europe and incorporating intercultural communicative competence in teacher training programmes does have a beneficial multiplying effect in this field. Therefore, training teacher trainers to accept and disseminate this approach should be the first step in the process everywhere in Europe.

The present project is supported by the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz and is included in its medium-term programme of activities for 2000-2003. Additional funding to support specific activities within the project has been envisaged from the British Council in Budapest and the Hungarian Ministry of Education.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES / EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of the project by the end of 2002 are the following:

- a) tested and validated guidelines to incorporate intercultural communication in the curriculum of teacher training institutions;
- b) recommendations for the assessment of intercultural communicative competence of future language teachers to ensure that intercultural communication becomes an integral part of teacher training;
- c) defined structure of teacher training modules that incorporate intercultural communication;
- d) sample teaching materials developed by the team of researchers and the workshop participants at the workshop and in the networks created; a task-based textbook with practical teaching ideas to help trainers and teachers incorporate intercultural communication in their teaching could later be developed from this collection;
- e) development of expertise by the researchers and trainers participating in the project, the conclusions of which could be the starting point for further research and development as well as broader dissemination.

## 3. ACTION PLAN

### Preparation

March - November 2000:

- March: finalising questionnaire for data-collection (coordinator with team)
- March -April: planning structured interviews and training package/session for focus groups (coordinator with team)
- March -April: contacting teachers of English<sup>1</sup> for questionnaire study and focus group interviews in the researchers' countries (team)
- April -September: conducting questionnaire study and initial focus group interviews to find out how intercultural communication is dealt with in language classes in our countries at present (each team member will have 50-100 completed in questionnaires and five interviews from his/her country)
- October: data processing and analysis (coordinator)
- November: team's three-day preparatory meeting in Graz to evaluate findings, discuss focus group training session/package, and plan central workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the initial questionnaire study will only target teachers of English, in the subsequent stages of the project, e.g. workshop, networks, the issues will also be addressed for other languages.

### Central workshop

April 2001

- presentation of research results familiarizing participants with the current status of language-and-culture teaching;
- providing workshop participants with intensive practice in using intercultural awareness activities and in developing teacher training modules with this purpose,
- guidelines for incorporating intercultural communicative competence in teacher training curriculum;
- setting up six networks (each coordinated by one team member) to give participants assistance in developing plans and materials for integrating these pilot modules into their own teaching as well as to help focus participants on how to disseminate this approach to language teaching;
- providing recommendations to participants on how to win support from colleges and authorities for the inclusion of intercultural communicative competence among the compulsory requirements for graduating language teachers.

### Research and development

- April - December 2001: production and/or adaptation of teaching resources and pilot modules in the networks
- December 2001: meeting of coordinators and spokespersons in Budapest to assess the teaching resources and pilot modules developed
- December 2001 - May 2002: implementation of pilot modules in the curriculum of networking participants' teacher training institutions
- May 2002: meeting of networks in Graz to assess the implementation of new teacher training modules and materials
- June 2002 - December 2002: compilation of sample teaching materials and recommended structures developed and adapted during the previous stages

### Further dissemination

December 2002: Dissemination workshop in Budapest<sup>2</sup>  
Presentation of results and experiences, presentation of pilot modules, and sample teaching materials.

## **4. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS / PEOPLE INVOLVED**

### People involved in the one stage

- the team;
- respondents to the questionnaire;
- five teachers from each country for the focus group interviews;
- ECML staff for professional and logistical assistance.

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<sup>2</sup> Depending on logistical and financial support from the British Council in Budapest.

### Participant profile for the central workshop in Graz in April 2001

Participants at the central workshop should be language teacher trainers or mentors. Participants do not necessarily have to have experience in teaching intercultural communicative competence, but they will be responsible for networking and carrying out tasks (outlined above) after the workshop as well.

Trainers and mentors coming to the workshop should bring:

- the pages from (or summaries of) their own country's national core curriculum that describe the requirements for foreign language teaching at secondary level;
- a description of the courses and qualification requirements of future language teachers at college/university;
- documents about courses or projects related to the teaching of intercultural communication in their country (if they know of any).

## **5. WORKING LANGUAGES**

The working languages of the workshop and the project as a whole will be **English** and **French**. **Simultaneous interpretation will be provided between these two languages at the workshop.** Participants must have productive and receptive skills in one and receptive skills in the other language. However, it would be desirable that teacher trainers for languages other than English or French are also among the participants.