PILOT PROJECT No. 7

"Learner's Biography"

FINAL REPORT and EVALUATION

PROJECT TITLE
LEARNER`S BIOGRAPHY

PILOTING INSTITUTION(S)
Studienkollegs Aachen/Köln/Köthen

PILOTING INSTRUCTOR(S)
Gisela Haack & Mahmoud Chemli & Peter Roth & Resi Beckers

CONTACT PERSON(S) Resi Beckers
CONTACT DETAILS

PROJECT SUMMARY
Please describe briefly the overall goal and objectives of the pilot project.
The overall goal of our project is to create an "awareness" of as many biographical factors of the learners as possible which might interfere with the learning process.

Such awareness is necessary in order to enable the teacher to plan the lessons more effectively. Furthermore a knowledge of the basic phases of the so-called culture-shock should be obligatory.

Similarly, such awareness is also necessary for the learners so that those hidden, vaguely felt problems can be discussed openly and resolved, thus minimising the difficulties.

The studienkollegs on the threshold of the learners for a new culture and for university must seize the chance of turning unrealistic or negative expectations into realistic and effective goals.

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.

The target groups in Aachen: 4 courses with 79 students, all between 18 and

26; from Asia, Nothern Africa, South America, Eastern Europe
about one third of them: women.
Language proficiency B – C.

PILOT PROJECT RELATION TO CHAGAL PRINCIPLES
Please specify how your project fits into the CHAGAL Curriculum Guidelines.

The CHAGAL-guidelines say: The learners are in the centre of interest
They are adults
They have a rich life experience
They have a need for shaping or broadening their social identity.

We take these words seriously and being interested in the life experience of
the individual learner we realise the CHAGAL demand for a holistic approach.

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.).

The first step to get some information was questionnaires given to students
a) after six month in the Stuko and b) after 4 weeks.
The evaluation was presented to the courses and discussed.

The second step depended on the results in the courses. When problems like
cultural identity were of topical interest, conscience-sharpening handouts
(e.g. from a project of the Universität Dresden) were given to the learners.

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

The Studienkollegs Aachen/Köln/Köthen planned a suitable questionnaire.
In Aachen all colleagues of all subjects made proposals, which formed the basis
of the final formulation.
In December and January the questionnaires were given to the courses in
Aachen, Köln and Köthen and evaluated by the pilots.

After that there was a meeting in Aachen, where the results were presented
and compared.
The pilots agreed upon the steps to be undertaken in future.

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

> Our idea was that the questionnaires would give us a profile of the students who come to the Studienkolleg highlighting some aspects which might otherwise have a negative influence on the learning process.

ACTUAL OUTCOMES

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

> What we found out was more than we had expected.
>
> 1. The teachers now had a relatively detailed picture of their students.
>   We can better compare the demands here in Germany with those in the home countries. We now know better what is easier here and what is more difficult and why.
>   The fact that the students had become less content within the first 6 months led to other questions about the reasons for this. And so we gathered more information about the normal phases of acculturation.
>   This showed us that the results are interesting in two ways:
>   a) to get to know the students of a course better
>   b) to generalise the findings and **our** need for a sociological framework.
>
> 2. We were also surprised to see the students' reactions. There was no mistrust in being questioned, the students had, in fact, a **need** for the opportunity to tell and write about their lives.
>
>   A student found some help in the fact he/she was not the only person with a particular problem, that he/she was neither better and nor worse than the Europeans but "different" just as the peers were different.

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** .

> Questionnaire + evaluation sheets (Aachen)
> Report on the project (referring to the aspects below)

PILOT PROJECT FINAL EVALUATION

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

> **The answers to the following questions and a detailed description are to be found in the REPORT**
>
> 1. Please describe the added value of the pilot project: benefit for the chagal student target group (e.g. with regard to competences, study skills, integration …).
>
> 2. If applicable, please give a brief outline how (methodologically, in terms of content…) your pilot project supported / guided students into academic

study – more efficiently, intensively…. than it would have been possible without the pilot project?

3. To underpin the findings above: please give a summary of students' feedback:

4. If any, which level of study language proficiency would you think as preconditional for carrying out a project like your pilot project? Please indicate the level according to the European Framework.

5. Please describe the added value of the pilot project: benefit for the academic community at (host) universities (e.g. benefit for academic (everyday) life, for academic studies, effects on the internationalisation process /Bologna Process, benefit for majority student groups …).

6. You have finished a chagal pilot project. How much extra work did it afford (hours per week)?
How would you define the pilot project workload in terms of cost-benefit-ratio?

7. Sustainability:
   - How do you feel about continuing your pilot project work/ developing it further / implement your findings into your teaching? If applicable, please indicate any plans how you will proceed further.

Is your pilot project /or parts of it?/ transferable into mainstream teaching/learning at your institution? In which way would you suppose it might be implemented? Do you intend to do anything about it? Is there any support the chagal team can offer?