

**ECML Project B.1:  
Intercultural Communication in Teacher Education  
Workshop Report National Training Event  
Ljubljana, Slovenia  
7- 8 October, 2005**

## **CONTEXT**

The Slovenian National Training Event was organised by Veronika Rot Gabrovec, Faculty of Arts/University of Ljubljana, and Martina Huber-Kriegler, Graz Federal Pedagogical Academy and team member of project B1, who functioned as ECML travelling expert.

Ms Rot Gabrovec had previously proposed the event to be formally registered in the *National Catalogue of Continuous Education of Primary and Secondary School teachers*. The proposal had been accepted, and the training event was thus officially approved of by the Slovenian Ministry of Education. It was supported also by the British Council Slovenia, together with IATEFL Slovenia (Special Interest Group for Literature and Culture).

There were 25 participants (from the National Educational Institute, from primary and secondary schools, tertiary level teachers, and three students - future teachers). The secondary school teachers came both from grammar schools (*gimnazija*) and various vocational schools. It is worth mentioning that 11 participants were from Ljubljana and 14 from other parts of Slovenia (Maribor, the Gorenjska region, the Zasavje region, the Koroska region) which hopefully means that the backwash effect will not be limited to the schools in the Slovenian capital only.

The seminar consisted of two sessions:

- **7 October 2005** / the afternoon session: the introductory theoretical part was followed by more practical input and was facilitated by Ms Huber-Kriegler
- **8 October 2005** / the morning session: further possibilities of ICC activities based on literary texts (extracts from novels, poems, visually supported materials) were discussed. The second part was Ms Rot Gabrovec's responsibility and she co-facilitated it with two other colleagues, Breda Arnejsek and Vineta Erzen. (They have all been involved in the project "*Promoting Tolerance of Diversity through Literature*" carried out by Special Interest Group for Literature & Culture IATEFL Slovenia and the British Council Slovenia.)

## **CONTENTS**

Not only did the warming-up exercise (sentence starters about individual and personal intercultural experiences) prepare a very humorous entrée for the participants, it also delivered lots of first-hand examples of culture bumps which could later be tied back to when the terminology was explained and some background theory given. The group was extraordinarily open and active which made it very easy to create a welcoming atmosphere and hold in-depth discussions of cultural phenomena.

The ECML as an institution and other projects with similar topics (LEA, Cultural Mediation) as well as ECML resources were introduced to the participants. Teachers were particularly pleased to receive a selection of ECML publications ("*Mirrors & Windows*", "*How Strange*", copies of "*Cultural Mediation*" and the Workshop report of the previous project) and to learn about downloadable publications and the procedures of how to become involved in ECML projects. Many were very impressed with the scope of the ECML's agenda and showed great interest in visiting the website or even the center itself in the future.

Key terminology, definitions and concepts of culture and ICC were then explained, and the iceberg metaphor developed out of an activity to provide an introduction to the theoretical background of intercultural communication. Many experiences related in the introductory round could then be re-evaluated from a new perspective.

An introduction to "*Mirrors and Windows*" and a number of activities taken from the book formed the core of the seminar and were eagerly tried out and discussed by the participants. These activities were supplemented by some further tasks prepared especially for the NTEs by the team. Participants seemed to enjoy doing all of these activities very much, and mentioned their willingness to try them out with their own students.

In the second part of the seminar (the session on Saturday) the participants revisited the basic concepts of ICC, using a range of teaching materials based on literary texts. The chosen texts belonged to different genres (extracts from novels and short stories, poetry, films based on literary texts, cartoons) and all dealt with various aspects and categories of *culture(s)*.

With the help of facilitators the participants explored the conscious part of the iceberg (laws, rules and in particular the customs) and the unconscious part (tradition, unconscious habits and routine behaviour) as seen in the texts by A. Desai, J. Kay, I. Welsh and in some clips from various films. They discussed the marginal cultures, culturally-influenced beliefs and perceptions, and paid particular attention to visually supported materials as films and theatre may well be counted among those arts which are of particular interest to our students, and in which the whole co-involvement of human experience can be presented very successfully. The participants were asked to rethink their (traditional?) roles in the classroom and were in conclusion invited to try their hand in designing their own material.

## **EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK**

The event took place at the British Council premises in Ljubljana. The British Council also kindly functioned as a co-organizer (they sponsored the coffee breaks).

As the Slovenian Ministry of Education has a habit of using a standard evaluation form for all the events taking place with their support, the forms (questionnaires) were used to evaluate this event as well.

At the end of the seminar on Saturday, 19 (out of 25) participants returned the official questionnaires (only those teachers who need certificates of attendance have to fill in the questionnaires, for others it is optional).

- *The contents, materials, lecturers in general, the teaching approaches and methodology used:* most of the participants (16) awarded the seminar with 4, some of them with 3 points (on the scale 1 – 4).
- The same number of points as above was given for *the organisation* (4) and *the venue* (3.5).
- All the *facilitators/presenters* got an average of 5.5 (on the scale 1 – 6).

According to the results of the formal evaluation and the informal feedback the local organiser got by E-mail, it can be well claimed the seminar met and exceeded the expectations of the participants, and gave them the theoretical core and support, hands-on materials and lots of food for thought.

I would like to mention one more time how much I enjoyed working with this group that was so outstandingly friendly, open, active and full of esprit. It made this event an exchange – much more than a one-way interaction! Veronika Rot Gabrovec has assured me that she, too, enjoyed the co-operation very much. She certainly hopes to find more possibilities for further collaboration.

Graz / Ljubljana, 2 November 2005

Martina Huber-Kriegler  
Veronika Rot Gabrovec

**National Training Event Slovenia**  
**ECML Project B.1: Intercultural Communication in Teacher Education**

**Workshop Information**

<b>Facilitators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Organizer:</b> Veronika Rot Gabrovec, Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana)</li> <li>• <b>ECML expert:</b> Martina Huber-Kriegler, Pädagogische Akademie Graz and Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz</li> </ul>
<b>Cooperating Institutions</b>	Faculty of Arts, English Department (University of Ljubljana) The British Council Slovenia
<b>Venues</b>	The British Council Slovenia, Tivolska 30, Ljubljana
<b>Date</b>	October 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2005
<b>Training Design</b>  <b>&amp;</b>  <b>Participants' Profile</b>	<p><b>Friday, 7. 10. 2005</b>  <i>Intercultural Communication</i>  <b>Martina Huber-Kriegler</b>  13.30 – 15.00  15.15 – 16.45  17.00 – 18.30</p> <p><b>Saturday, 8. 10. 2005</b>  <i>ICC and Literature</i>  <b>Veronika Rot Gabrovec, Breda Arnejsek, Vineta Erzen</b>  9.00 – 10.30  10.45 – 12.15  12.30 – 14.00</p> <p><b>Participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary school teachers (4)</li> <li>▪ Secondary Schools: Gymnasium/Grammar school teachers (9), Vocational school teachers (6)</li> <li>▪ National Institute of Education (1)</li> <li>▪ University teachers/teacher trainers (2)</li> <li>▪ Students/Teacher trainees (3)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness for the necessity of incorporating intercultural communicative competence into language teaching;</li> <li>• Assisting Slovenian teachers to implement ICC in their teaching by providing them with theoretical concepts and numerous examples of good practice and useful materials</li> <li>• Exploring various possibilities for using literature in ICC training</li> <li>• Disseminating the results of ECML projects in the field</li> <li>• Making the ECML and its resources better known</li> <li>• Encouraging the participants to design their own ICC materials suitable for their teaching practice and environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Context in which seminar took place</b></p>	<p>The seminar was part of the officially recognised In-Service Teacher Training (Continuous/INSETT education).</p>