

ECML Project B.1 – ICCinTE

Incorporating Intercultural Communication in Language Teaching and Learning

**National Training Event
Malmö, Sweden, 12-14 December, 2005**

Report

The twelfth NTE for the ICCinTE project took place in Sweden, in Malmö, as integral part of a workshop "Multiculture, Plurilingualism and Democracy" (11 - 16 December 2005) held within the Council of Europe In-Service Training Programme for Education Professionals. The workshop was organized by the In-service Training Department of Uppsala University, (the Swedish agency of this programme) and was hosted by The City of Malmö.

The 5-day seminar comprised, apart from the two-day NTE for the ECML - ICC project, a number of lectures on issues connected to the topic areas of multiculturalism, plurilingualism and democracy, group work sessions and school visits to several schools in the City of Malmö. Carin Söderberg, of the University of Uppsala, NLO of Sweden and one of the organizers of the course, was also a participant in the ECML central workshop for the ICC project, and was responsible for including our NTE in the Council of Europe seminar. The other organizers were Leif Brettell and Annika Nittmar, and the course leader was Metta Fegraeus.

The ICCinTE sessions were facilitated by Gabriela Matei, director of EduPlus Consulting, Timisoara, Romania, team member in the ICCinTE project of the European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz. The two-day NTE took place on December 12 and 13, 2005. Dr. Matei also co-facilitated other group-work sessions on December 11, and was present in Malmö to welcome the participants on December 10.

In terms of its participation and organization, the Malmö event resembled Graz central workshops, in the sense that it was a 5-day event, with international participation. It was attended by 27 participants from 20 countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. However, unlike in Graz, not all participants were language teachers: many of them taught other subjects, or were psychologists.

The objectives for the NTE were:

- to raise participants' awareness of intercultural communicative competence (ICC);
- to familiarize participants with basic concepts related to the theoretical background of intercultural communicative competence;
- to give practical interactive training in developing ICC in teaching and in teacher training.

The structure of the five-day seminar was the following, with the specific sessions moderated by G. Matei highlighted:

PROGRAMME

Council of Europe In-Service Training Programme for Education Professionals – Workshop on "Multiculture, Plurilingualism and Democracy", Malmö, Sweden, 11 - 16 December 2005

Sunday, 11		
15.00 – 18.30	Registration	Quality Hotel
18.30 – 21.00	Reception and dinner	Quality Hotel
Monday, 12		
9.00 – 9.30	Opening of the workshop <i>Bo Pellnäs: What could teachers do about a mad world?</i>	Town Hall
9.30 – 10.30	We introduce ourselves <i>Course leaders, lecturers and participants in the workshop</i>	Town Hall
10.45 – 11.30	Continued presentations and presentation of the aims and structure of the seminar	Town Hall
11.30 – 13.00	<i>Ulrika Lundquist: Democracy in the classroom. Perspectives on Learning for Sustainable development</i>	Town Hall
14.30 – 15.30	Group work: What do we mean by culture, mother tongue, nation, citizenship,(<i>Metta Fegraeus, Ulrika Lundquist, Gabriela S Matei</i>)	Town Hall
15.45 – 16.30	Continued work in groups	Town Hall
16.30 – 17.30	Reports in plenum from the groups. Feedback and summing up	Town Hall
Tuesday, 13		
8.00 – 10.00	Celebration of the feast of S:t Lucia at S:t Petri School with Lucia coffee	S:t Petri School
10.00 – 12.00	<i>Kerstin Larsson and Lars Uddbäck: How do local authorities, universities and the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement collaborate to promote school development work?</i>	S:t Petri School
13.30 – 15.30	<i>Gabriela S Matei: Incorporation Intercultural Communication in Teaching and Learning</i>	Town Hall
16.00 – 17.00	Group work: Follow-up of Gabriela S Matei's lecture	Town Hall
17.00 – 17.30	Reports in plenum from the groups. Feedback and summing up	Town Hall
Wednesday, 14		
8.15 – 12.00	School visits	
14.00 – 15.00	<i>Gabriela S Matei: Stereotypes</i>	Town Hall

15.30 – 17.30	Continued lecture: <i>Gabriela S Matei</i>	Town Hall
Thursday, 15		
8.15 – 12.00	School visits	
20.00	Final dinner with invited guests. Entertainment by the Double Quartet led by Annika and Bo Isgar. A medley of Swedish music.	Quality Hotel
Friday, 16		
8.30 – 9.30	Group work in connection with the school visits (Metta Fegraeus)	Town Hall
9.45 – 11.30	Reports in plenum from the groups. Feedback and summing up	Town Hall

After a brief presentation of the European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz, its projects, activities and its website, the workshops consisted of interactive presentations, as well as tasks for participants, pair and group activities, many of them based on the textbook *Mirrors and Windows*. Carin Söderberg also arranged for all participants to receive copies of the two ICC publications, plus other useful ECML materials.

The workshop presentations and activities were well received by the participants, who cooperated fully with the facilitators and with one another. The participants also appreciated the materials received from the facilitators, in particular the two project publications.

Participants mentioned in their feedback questionnaires that:

1. they took away from the workshop “a deeper understanding of achieving competence in intercultural settings”, as well as “knowledge of terms and their elaboration; some teaching ideas; attitudes/ideas/perceptions of my colleagues concerning multiculturalism”, “a lot of ideas of activities to be done in a friendly way with my students; a lot of information (books and internet addresses).”
2. they were surprised by various things during the workshops, such as: “the fact that even under very tolerant circumstances people might hurt each other, unintentionally → stereotypes do root in us very deeply.”; “how easy complicated things may appear”; “there are so many stereotypes that seem natural to me.”
3. they would recommend the organization of further such meetings, in their own countries.

This NTE, which in fact was not a national training event, but an international one, posed extra challenges for the organizers and the facilitators: the fact that many participants were not language teachers challenged us to find ways of making our ICC project relevant outside the sphere of language education. The feedback we received from participants during and at the end of the two training days reassured us that we achieved the outcomes we expected from the workshops: participants mentioned that they left the workshops with a raised awareness of not only intercultural differences, but also of the

importance of developing their own and their students' intercultural communicative competence; they also mentioned that they felt inspired to incorporate ICC elements in their teaching, at knowledge, skills and attitudes level. We would like to finish with the words of one participant, when asked to write about the most important thing s/he learned on that day:

“I never thought about culture before today. I didn't realize that to live with different people issued from different cultures was depending on such different levels as attitude, skills, knowledge. Now I can see my own responsibility ...“

Carin Söderberg
Gabriela Matei