

Grouplead

Group facilitation in language teacher education

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The starting point

We believe that in order to make the most of the potential of any learning group, teachers need a thorough understanding of group dynamics, familiarity with different modes of working, and a number of key qualities and skills. Above all, though, successful facilitation of learning in groups depends on deeply held attitudes and values related to the aims of education, the roles of teachers and learners, and the educational climate that a teacher helps to create in his/her classroom.

What this publication offers

The aim of this publication is to provide you with an introduction to what working with groups in a facilitative mode involves. As facilitation is closely bound up with attitudes and personal qualities, you cannot learn to become a facilitator just by going through the material provided here. What we set out to do is to give you an overview of what we see as the main issues related to facilitation, to provide you with plenty of food for thought, guidelines for observation, triggers for self-reflection, and some practical tools which you can adapt and try out in your own practice.

Who it is for

As the title suggests, this publication is intended for mentors and trainers working with groups of language teachers. In particular, as some of the materials grow out of an ECML workshop organised for teacher trainers interested in running their own courses on facilitation, you will find a number of tasks and activities which can be used on training courses focusing on group facilitation. However, as there are strong parallels between training rooms and classrooms, some of the activities and ideas can also be adapted and used by teachers for their own development in the area of group facilitation.

The Council of Europe has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Ever since it was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of the second world war, the Council of Europe has symbolised reconciliation.



<http://www.coe.int>

Languages for social cohesion 
Language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe
Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
L'éducation aux langues dans une Europe multilingue et multiculturelle

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European Centre for Modern Languages
Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



GroupLead

Focusing its work on promoting innovative approaches in language education since 1995, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe plays a significant role in disseminating good practice and assisting in its implementation in member states.

The ECML runs research and development projects within the framework of medium-term programmes of activities. These projects are led by international teams of experts and concentrate mainly on training multipliers, promoting professional teacher development and setting up expert networks. The ECML's publications, which are the results of these projects, illustrate the dedication and active involvement of all those who participated in them, particularly the project co-ordination teams.

The overall title of the ECML's second medium-term programme (2004-2007) is "Languages for social cohesion: language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe". This thematic approach aims to deal with one of the major challenges our societies have to face at the beginning of the 21st century, highlighting the role of language education in improving mutual understanding and respect among the citizens of Europe.

Set up in Graz, Austria, the ECML is an "Enlarged Partial Agreement" of the Council of Europe to which 33 countries have currently subscribed¹. Inspired by the fundamental values of the Council of Europe, the ECML promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and fosters plurilingualism and pluriculturalism among the citizens living in Europe. Its activities are complementary to those of the Language Policy Division, the Council of Europe unit responsible for the development of policies and planning tools in the field of language education.

For further information on the ECML and its publications:

<http://www.ecml.at>

How the material is organised

Although the material is sequenced starting with background and principles and moving on to practical application, you can pick and choose from it based on your interests, needs, and past experiences with facilitation. It is divided into eight sections and is organised around eight thematic areas.

Sections:

- 1 Video extracts
- 2 Key quotations
- 3 Short articles
- 4 Reflective diary entries
- 5 Stories
- 6 Activities
- 7 Checklists
- 8 Further reading

Thematic areas:

- 1 What is facilitation?
- 2 Facilitation: background
- 3 Group life
- 4 Facilitation: qualities and skills
- 5 Facilitation: toolkit
- 6 Questions and questioning
- 7 Feedback
- 8 Developing as a facilitator

¹ The 33 member states of the Enlarged Partial Agreement of the ECML are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", United Kingdom.