GOING PLACES METHODOLOGY IN RELATION TO THE USE OF ICT IN VOCATIONAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

METODOLOGIA PROIECTULUI GOING PLACES PRIVIND UTILIZAREA COMPETENȚELOR TIC ÎN ÎNVĂȚAREA LIMBILOR STRĂINE

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Abstract. *Young people involved in education and training struggle to understand how language skills can improve their effectiveness in becoming competitive EU citizens with a full understanding of languages and cultural context to fulfill their potential in the labour market. The Going Places project could be an example on how to combine ICT with teaching vocational languages, aiming to provide some innovative tools to tackle issues of engagement and motivation in language learning in upper secondary and pre-vocational and vocational education and training. The concept aims to making learning a language an enjoyable experience and immersing the learners in a story (with the adventure of the first days of work theme) that would enable them to make decisions based on their knowledge of a situation together with their learned understanding of a language and culture.*

Key words: *languages, ICT, vocational, VET, game, innovation*

Rezumat. *Tinerii implicați în procesul de educație și formare se luptă pentru a înțelege modul în care competențele lingvistice pot îmbunătăți eficiența acestora în a deveni cetățenii UE competitivi, cu o înțelegere completă de limbi și contextului cultural pentru atingerea potențialului maxim pe piața muncii. Proiectul Going Places ar putea fi un exemplu asupra eficienței combinării compenețelor TIC în predarea limbilor pentru domeniul profesional. Oferind o serie de instrumente inovatoare care abordează problemele de angajare și motivare în învățarea limbilor străine în învățământul secundar, vocațional și al formării profesionale. Conceptul are drept scop transformarea învățării unei limbi într-o experiență plăcută prin cufundarea cursanților într-o poveste (aventura unui tănâr în primele sale zile ca angajat), care le permite să ia decizii pe baza cunoștințelor dobândite legate de limbă și cultură.*

Cuvinte cheie: *limbi, TIC, vocational, VET, joc, inovație*

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INTRODUCTION

New technologies have become the dominant feature which influences living and working at the beginning of our millennium. The resulting challenge to education has been discussed and the explanation is "that with knowledge doubling every five years – every 73 days by the year 2020 – we can no longer attempt to anticipate future information requirements. If students are to keep pace with the rapid increase of knowledge, we cannot continue to organise curriculum in discrete compartments … the disciplines as we have known them, no longer exist. They are being replaced by human inquiry that draws upon generalised trans-disciplinary bodies of knowledge and relationship." (Costa and Liebmann, 1995).

"As a result, the traditional skills of information gathering and storming as well as the more learning of facts will no longer be sufficient in order to live, work and learn in the coming centuries. Consequently, the ultimate aim of teaching and learning will be to assist learners in their need to develop strategies of knowledge processing. Therefore, the traditional transmission model of learning must be replaced by models which emphasise information processing and knowledge construction as acts of learning most suited for the acquisition of the king skills needed for the knowledge society. Education a detaching in the knowledge society can no longer be reduced to "the act, process, or art of imparting knowledge and skill" as Roget's Thesaurus proposed, but learning must be recognised as an act in which a learner plays the role of an active constructor of knowledge. Criteria based on such principles need to be considered when evaluating the effectiveness and value of technology enhanced materials for language learning." (Rüschoff and Lund, 2003)

There is a general and specific need to familiarize language teachers and trainers with the use of ICT and to show them how to use these to their best advantage in different vocational training situations. There is an urgent need to develop the new types of literacies (scientific, digital, practical, linguistic and cultural) if vocational language teachers and trainers are to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by virtual learning environments.

The Going Places project could be an example on how to combine ICT with teaching vocational languages, aiming to provide some innovative tools to tackle issues of engagement and motivation in language learning in upper secondary and pre-vocational and vocational education and training. The concept aims to making learning a language an enjoyable experience and immersing the learners in a story (with the adventure of the first days of work theme) that would enable them to make decisions based on their knowledge of a situation together with their learned understanding of a language and culture.

The project aims to support the promotion of language learning and to empower both learners/trainees and teachers/trainers to engage in more effective ways of developing language and cultural competencies. It also aims to give opportunities to teachers/trainers to develop tasks at a higher level,

hence becoming a progressive learning and teaching tool, where learners/trainees and teachers/trainees can generate new learning situations. This would be achieved by the development of guidance tools for creating new content using the existing animated scenarios.

There will be a set of materials giving suggestions for other activities focusing on specific vocabulary to a certain area corresponding to the stage in the animation as well as suggestions for the teachers themselves on how to organize situational activities with their students that will allow for more freedom in the choice of vocabulary and type of interaction.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The main educational resource promoted by the project is the Going Places with Languages DVD, a new and exciting language learning tool. This interactive DVD will support the teacher to increase the attractiveness of the teaching techniques, making the lessons more enjoyable and motivating for students. It will also give students the opportunity to discover that learning a language can be fun and can help them access different information sources and interact easily in a foreign country.

The topic of the learning animations focuses on the development of transferable basic business language skills which are useful for vocational learners involved in areas such as business, retail, travel and tourism and customer service.

The animation of the DVD is based on a young man's first work experience and the adventure he embarks on. The story of the main character starts with his first day of work in a company. As he knows a foreign language, he ends up navigating his way around Europe with his boss and lands the company its largest ever contract, and also a well-paid job for himself. The learners will follow the main character on his European adventures, and assist him with information gathering, booking travel arrangements, problem solving, communicating with other business professionals and many other activities. The topic are everyday business language topics, and the resource is particularly suitable for youngsters in year 9/10 who are interested in using computer games and ICT based resources.

The animation is available for developing vocational language skills in German, French and Spanish, and it also provides various teaching/learning supporting materials for CLIL for vocational learners.

The planned activities are:
1. Research and contextualization in each partner country in relation to VET
- An analysis of the present state of languages education and national policies supporting VOLL and CLIL in vocational language education, current implementation models in the countries of the partners.
- Identifying current training and professional ways of development for teachers and trainers in the context of vocational language teaching.
- Identifying current accreditation models for Vocational Education in languages.
- Identification of potential issues in the analyzed areas as follows: VET education; Policy for supporting training of teachers in the field of vocational language education; Models for teaching with an emphasis on identifying the use

129

of ICT in teaching languages in vocational education; Current accreditation models in use.

The information will be collected via desk research, questionnaires and focus groups with teachers, policy makers and staff involved in training of teachers/trainers in vocational education

2. Adaptation of the resource

The aim of this activity is to modify and adapt the original resource to meet the needs on the new target groups. With the help of this package, the interactive resource content will be adapted in the languages of the partner countries. The language of instruction (EN) will also be modified for use as a CLIL resource. Adaptation of the resource will also take into account sociocultural aspects of the target countries to maximize the European dimension.

3. Implementation 'Train the Trainer'

The aim is to develop training materials to conduct training of teachers/trainers in using the new adapted resource. The training materials will include guidance for possible accreditation of non-formal techniques used in language learning, according to the European Framework (EF). This will form the basis for the Implementation concept which will take into account the results of the WP 2 and ensure suitability for the target groups in each of the countries.

Another aim will be to conduct training of teachers and trainers and obtain feedback for the train the trainers' events - evaluation of training.

4. Piloting and testing of the resource

The piloting and testing of the resources will be conducted by the trained teachers in class with their students; by liaising with lead partners they will get feedback on usage issues, limitations and suggestions for further improvement. This is part of the evaluation process and will impact on the adaptation plan of the resource to ensure that it takes into account end users' feedback. Once feedback has been received, the resource will be adapted accordingly and as soon as all partners are agreed on the content, it will be launched.

5. Evaluation, Impact and Quality Assurance

The aims are to analyze the transfer, to identify possible impact indicators for further improvement (which will feed back in the production stage) and implement a quality assurance process to ensure the projects aims and objectives are met to high standards. In this stage the partnership cooperation will also be evaluated alongside the evaluation of the resource produced and the training materials. The evaluation and quality assurance aims will be an on-going support for the partners to maximize cooperation, expertise and collaboration. Quality assurance is a key element of the project and will be closely monitored throughout its lifetime, via the project quality plan. This plan outlines the key aims and objectives and is clearly linked to specific deliverables and milestones from the initial stage of the project to its final evaluation.

6. Production Stage

The aim is to produce the final product, which is the adapted and modified version of the original resource in three other languages - German, Polish and Romanian. A guidance booklet for trainers/teachers will be available in DE, PL, RO, EN, including guidance on accreditation. Mapping of the resource to the European Framework will be included. This package aims to ensure that the final version of the resource is produced, which takes into account results from the piloting, testing and validation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results of the project:
- 4 reports on the analysis of the current state of languages education and national policies supporting VOLL and CLIL in vocational language education in RO, DE, PL and UK;
- 160 (40 per country) target people involved in the questionnaire researches;
- 48 (6 per country) target people involved in the focus group researches;
- 1 teacher guide on how to use the resources developed within the Going Places project
- 1 guidance on how the resources are mapped according to the European Framework and steps for accreditation;
- Interactive materials to be used as guidance in the teaching process;
- 18 (6 per country) teachers involved in the trainings for teachers;
- 150 (30-60 per country) students involved in piloting activities;
- 9 adapted DVD's (available in Romanian for learning German, French and Spanish; available in Polish for learning German, French and Spanish; available in German for learning French and Spanish; and available in English for CLIL);
- Evaluation and feedback forms;
- 200 (50 per country) booklets (guidance for teachers);
- Project website http://www.going-places.eu;
- Dissemination and exploitation materials and events.

CONCLUSIONS

The short term impact of the project will be aimed at VET teachers/ trainers in upper secondary education and in formal VET. The learners and trainees will also benefit during the piloting, testing and validation of the resource. Teachers/Trainers, and learners, should witness a greater interest in language learning, through increased accessibility to innovative teaching/learning tools enabling them to become better prepared language teachers/trainers and learners.

The long-term impact of the project will be spread wider than the project consortium and will be carried out by the dissemination and exploitation plan by making interested parties aware of the project, the products produced, the methods explored and the experiences of project participants. This impact will be felt through the inclusion of project products into mainstream language teaching programmes and accredited tools (in the partner countries and beyond). Higher quality of language teachers/trainers formation – using modern and "fun" tools for learning. The impact will be felt also by VET pupils, students, and their language teachers, educators and decision makers in the field of education and labour with the overall level of quality of vocational education and training in languages in the target

131

countries being raised. There will be innovative added value for new target groups and new vocational sectors.

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