

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions – Group 1: Quality in Language Teaching and Learning – moderator Irina David

At the beginning of the session, participants were encouraged to express their opinion on a list of quality guidelines extracted from the NELLIP Guidelines Report.

The second point on the agenda was to discuss and agree on a common definition of quality in language learning and teaching. Initially, participants highlighted the difficulty of suggesting a list of general criteria. The main challenge they identified was represented by the heterogeneous nature of language teaching and learning, due to the wide range of proficiency levels or communication skills students need (i.e. general English as opposed to ESP). Eventually, they agreed that there are some general aspects which should be taken into account: following the guidelines presented in the CEFR, improving communication skills in the respective foreign language, ensuring the development of transferable skills, motivating students and trainers, investing in the trainers' professional development.

As example of good practice, participants were invited to discuss about "My Unispace", a project based on e-mentoring, which involved online communication between secondary school students and university students.

The main strengths of the project mentioned by the members of the work group were related to psychological and social aspects that could enhance the participants' learning/teaching experience. Thus, the benefits that the discussion focused on are: empowering students, increasing their employability opportunities, increasing students' self-confidence and motivating them.

The challenges of implementing a similar project were also identified. During the discussion, special attention was paid to child protection issues (since for instance parents' approval would be required in the case of the secondary school students, as well as experts' control of the content of online communication). Regarding the quality checklist included in the NELLIP Guidelines, the participants stressed the importance of identifying effective ways to show that the project does indeed contribute to improving communication skills in the chosen foreign languages. The main suggestions were:

- Encouraging participating students to complete questionnaires on their expectations and progress at various stages of the project
- Comparing samples of students' correspondence at various stages of the project to assess their progress.

Conclusions – Group 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning – moderator Lucia Grosu

The group work started from a general discussion of the Checklist for projects (extracted from the NELLIP Guidelines). Participants agreed on the importance of each item in the Checklist.

Special attention was given to *motivation* of students involved in language learning projects. One of the participants (Maria Monalisa Plesea) shared some of her experience with projects concerning the teaching/ learning of French in high school and the vital relationship between formal education and practical situations.

At this point, the discussion touched upon a possible project aim, namely the importance of language learning for increasing students' employability chances. Ms Plesea mentioned that high school students were impressed by the opportunities open to French speakers in the private sector.

The group also concluded that it is very important for learners to grasp the practicality of language skills not only for personal development but for their future careers as well.

The following topic covered by group discussions focused on the ELL priority *language learning and sports*. One of the participants, Georgeta Bolojan, brought to our attention a project proposal on which she had worked and which was unsuccessful to receive funding. The project called *FunSports* applied for Comenius Regio as a consortium of Romanian and Spanish members.

After a long and fruitful discussion taking into account the NELLIP Project Checklist, the group managed to formulate a few suggestions for the improvement of that project proposal in the hope of applying for Erasmus+ in 2014. Here are a few of the ideas mentioned:

- Better definition of the target groups (the project involves both trainers and students)
- Project aims need to be re-formulated so as to focus equally on trainers and students
- Foreign language learning/ Language competences as communication of Olympic values (i.e fair play, competitiveness, overcoming limits, etc.) would be an asset for the project, because this would also connect to the 2013-2014 ELL priority. Creating a link between "Olympic values" and "universal values" (equal chances, friendship, excellence, etc.)
- Involving the private sector as well in order to give the project a better visibility and the possibility of learning outside the formal environment.

Conclusions – Group 3: Networking among Language Learning Experts – moderator Liliana Dellevoet

The discussion in this work group revolved initially around some key questions related to networking in European projects:

- What is networking?
- Why is networking important in educational projects?

- Can policies at European level be changed through effective networking?
- How can networks be built, maintained and extended?
- What are the benefits for the teachers and students participating in networks?

The work group studied the example of good practice in networking and dissemination set by the “EuroIntegrELP” project, which obtained the ELL in Romania, but also the European Language Label of Labels in 2012 in Cyprus.

The next step was to discuss a project proposed by one of the participants, namely “Cinco” and to brainstorm ideas for the best ways to expand its network and promote the project products to a wider public.