JENNIFER SCHUMM FAUSTER
ULLA FÜRSTENBERG (Eds.)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN AUSTRIA

From theory to the classroom and beyond

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English Language Teaching in Austria: From theory to the classroom and beyond

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Jennifer Schumm Fauster and Ulla Fürstenberg

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Introduction

Our motivation for this book project was to fill perceived gaps in ELT publications in Austria: between theory and practice; international and local perspectives; teacher education and classroom practice; secondary school and other educational contexts; pre-service and experienced teachers. To achieve this, we invited contributions, often written collaboratively, from authors who are current classroom teachers as well as authors who are researchers working in teacher education at the tertiary level.

The content of the book focusses on topics that the contributors consider particularly useful and relevant for English language teachers in different types of Austrian schools and educational institutions. In this way, we hope it will provide an accessible introduction to the field for pre-service teachers, but also serve as a useful guide and reference for more experienced teachers to consult, especially if they find themselves working in educational institutions they are unfamiliar with.

The book combines ELT theory with a strong practical, interactive component. All of the chapters have the same structure: following a section on theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context, they include examples of practical applications, which make the content personally relevant for practitioners. The chapters conclude with reflection tasks, a commentary on these tasks and suggestions for further reading.

The chapters are organized into four thematic sections. Author biographies can be found at the end of the book.

Section 1: The teacher

The focus of this section is on the experience of being and developing as an English language teacher in Austria. It considers some important concepts that influence teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

Fürstenberg and Schumm Fauster discuss the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a standard methodology in ELT. Fürstenberg and Bicman explore the role of an updated concept of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) for different teaching situations. Erling and Paar reflect on the importance of facilitating productive classroom talk. Burkert gives an insight into professional development for language teachers.

Section 2: In the classroom

The focus of this section is on practical considerations for the English language classroom. It addresses various areas of classroom practice by providing information which can inform teachers' decisions and choices.

Lang-Heran provides a comprehensive overview of the role of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the Austrian curriculum and educational standards. Kaplan and Campbell discuss the status of coursebooks in Austria and ways of using them effectively. Miglbauer and Prohaska give a state-of-the-art account of teaching English with technology in the Austrian context. Moser and Schweighofer consider central aspects as well as mediating factors of assessment and feedback. Paar and Fürstenberg explore the concept of Assessment for Learning (AFL) and different ways of putting it into practice.

Section 3: Language skills and subskills

The focus of this section is on language skills and subskills that teachers should foster in their learners. It is imperative that teachers have a sound understanding of these skills in order to make their English language classrooms lively and effective spaces for learning.

Fürstenberg and Schumm Fauster reflect on the four skills and take an integrated approach to teaching them. Newby and Pölzleitner present a communicative approach to teaching grammar. Platzer and Mercer discuss the importance of integrating global skills into language teaching. Pölzleitner and Schumm Fauster present ways of promoting intercultural competence and the potential of literature in this context. Blumrich and Hermann consider the concept of Open Learning (OL) and how they apply it in their teaching.

Section 4: Special contexts

The focus of this section is on teaching English in various contexts which teachers might encounter throughout their careers. The chapters give insights into how to work with heterogeneous groups at the interface of content and language.

Da Rocha and Müller-Caron explore concepts of differentiation and their practical application in Mittelschule (lower secondary school). Kletzenbauer and Moser discuss the necessity of taking a process approach to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at FH (University of Applied Sciences) and BHS (vocational secondary schools). Hofstadler and Kettemann introduce the concept of Content and Lan-

guage Integrated Learning (CLIL) and its implementation in Austrian schools. Phillips and Phillips reflect on how to meet the challenges of teaching English in adult education.

We would like to end this short introduction with a concluding thought. When we set out to publish this book, we had a number of aims in mind, but one aspect that we had not anticipated developed throughout. Through the exchanges during the work on this project, a community of practice developed amongst contributors. We hope that it will now expand to include the readers of this book. Having spent almost a combined 60 years in the profession which has given us so much satisfaction, we hope to now give back to the community of English language professionals with this publication and in doing so, promote further collaboration between researchers and practitioners.

A note on terminology

The German terms for educational institutions and organisations as well as specific legal terms are used throughout. They are italicized and glossed in English within the chapters.

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1 The role of the English language teacher in Communicative Language Teaching

Ulla Fürstenberg and Jennifer Schumm Fauster

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Key words

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Meaningful communication

Teacher as facilitator

Real-life situations

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What has the influence of CLT been on classroom practice in Austria?

What are the main characteristics of CLT?

What is the difference between 'strong' and 'weak' CLT?

What is meant by the 'post-communicative approach'?

What is the role of the teacher in CLT?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Two changes concerning language teaching in the last few decades seem to have shaped the landscape of foreign language teaching in Austria. The first one occurred in 2004 when language teaching was brought in alignment with the Common European Framework in a new curriculum. As a result, the focus was not on a knowledge-based curriculum that specified topics to be covered anymore, which had been the case before, but on a competence-oriented communicative curriculum. This first change required teachers to consider the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in their teaching in order to implement these curricular changes (Spöttl et al., 2016).

The second change was the introduction of a standardised school-leaving exam in 2015/16 (*Matura – standardisierte Reife- und Diplomprüfung SRDP*), which reinforced the new focus on language skills rather than factual knowledge. This far-reaching change, even more than the new curriculum, led to a re-examination of how teachers approached language teaching. For example, researchers have noted an increased interest in the authenticity and communicative purpose of writing tasks in the classroom and for homework in preparation for the *Matura* (Kremmel et al., 2018).

Both of these changes are also mirrored in the most recent version of the curriculum for English language teacher education (2019/2021) with its strong focus on CLT. What is striking about this curriculum is the list of competences which future language teachers have to acquire during their studies. It also emphasises skills such as reflection, awareness, critical examination and evaluation which language teachers are expected to master in order to be able to teach a complex competence-based curriculum.

CLT in practice

As CLT is the prevailing methodology used by English language teachers in Austria, this approach is worth addressing, all the more so as it is notoriously hard to define (Harmer, 2015; Richards, 2006; Scrivener, 2005; Ur, 2012). However, there seem to be certain characteristics that are found in every definition:

- Language is for communication
- All skills have a communicative purpose
- Emphasis is put on what language is used for
- Learners learn by participating in meaningful communication
- Meaning is more important than accuracy
- Meaning is negotiated between the learners and the teacher and the learners among themselves

As Harmer (2015) points out, CLT is often seen as a term "to describe a philosophy which stresses the communicative nature of language, rather than as a precise description of a method" (p. 58). Still, there are certain activities which particularly promote purposeful communication and the negotiation of meaning and are therefore strongly associated with CLT. Examples of such activities are functional dialogues (e.g., asking for directions), role plays (e.g., ordering in a restaurant) and information-gap activities (e.g., two students have to read different texts about a famous city and then communicate with each other to write their own text about it).

The fact that CLT is not very clearly defined inevitably affects teachers' implementation. While most language teachers today use communication-focussed activities in their teaching and describe their teaching style as communicative, many regularly include tasks in their lessons that are more focussed on accuracy and explicit grammar instruction. This 'weak CLT' is also supported by most coursebooks and is much more common than 'strong CLT' where explicit instruction is extremely limited (Scrivener, 2005; see Practical Applications at the end of this chapter for examples of 'weak' and 'strong' CLT).

It is also worth mentioning here that the influence of CLT can be seen in popular approaches such as Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL, see chapter 17 in this volume). The latter is particularly relevant in the Austrian context due to its increasing popularity at all levels of education (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2019). Like CLT, CLIL is based on the assumption that learners acquire the L2 best through meaningful communication. In this case, students communicate about the content of non-language school subjects such as physics or history. In the 'hard' version on CLIL, the focus is more on the content, while 'soft' CLIL allows for more language instruction.

There is no doubt that CLT has had a wide-reaching influence on language teaching. However, in reality, few teachers follow one method exclusively, and this also applies to CLT. Most methodologists refer to this picking and choosing of elements from different methodologies as the post-communicative approach, which is eclectic in nature. While its focus is still on communication, it also borrows from other methodologies. For example, a teacher who teaches communicatively might still use drills (a typical feature of the audiolingual approach) occasionally if they consider this method appropriate for their own classroom and learning goals. Teachers' collection of preferred methods and activities has been described as their "personal methodology" (Scrivener, 2005, p. 40). Building a personal methodology requires the ability to critically reflect on and evaluate materials and new approaches teachers are confronted with in the course of their career – a goal which is central to the current language teacher education curriculum.

The role of the teacher in CLT

In the course of a lesson, a language teacher takes on many different roles, for example the role of "controller", "resource and tutor" and "organiser / task setter" (Harmer, 2015, pp. 116-117). All of these roles serve a purpose in order to allow learners to achieve the given learning goals. In the case of CLT, the most important goal is to enable communication, which determines the role the teacher plays. For this reason, the teacher often acts as a "facilitator and monitor" who provides the parameters and support in the background rather than as a director who micromanages what happens at every point in the lesson (Richards, 2006, p. 5). These two contrasting teacher roles are often referred to as the 'guide on the side' and the 'sage on the stage', respectively, in the literature.

The popularity of roleplays in CLT underscores the 'guide on the side' role of the teacher. In a CLT lesson, the teacher will often set up a roleplay that is based on a

real-life situation that they expect their learners to encounter, e.g., shopping, asking for directions, leading a meeting, expressing their opinions in a discussion. At the beginning of the activity, the teacher explains the context and purpose and assigns the roles. While the learners work on the roleplay, the teacher observes in the background and facilitates the communication where needed. During the activity, the teacher does not interrupt the learners' communication by correcting their language, nor do they interfere as the learners negotiate meaning. This does not mean that accuracy is completely disregarded. Learners often receive feedback on this aspect of their language production after the end of the activity, most commonly in the form of general feedback for the whole group.

It is clear from this example that, unlike in more traditional approaches, there is not a lot of lecturing ('chalk and talk') by the teacher in CLT. Knowledge is not transmitted from the teacher to the learners, but rather constructed together. Therefore, it can be said that it is not only the teacher's role that is different compared to traditional approaches, but also the learners' role as they are expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning (Richards, 2006). Thus, CLT is only one example of how our conceptualisations of teaching and learning have expanded to embrace greater learner autonomy and independence. Its enduring popularity shows that our understanding of language teaching has changed considerably over the last few decades, and will most likely continue to evolve as new insights into language teaching and learning become available to teachers.

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will practice asking and answering questions in a formal setting; learners will use topic-related language

Activity: role play – job interview

Rationale: to practice a real-life situation

Pre-knowledge: wh- questions, language of interviews, structure of interviews

Level: B1 and above

Procedure

1. Teacher provides job advertisements from newspapers.

2. Learners form groups of four.

3. Teacher gives one job advertisement to each group.

4. Learners read the advertisement and discuss it.

5. In their groups, learners write two biographical descriptions for suitable candidates.

6. Half of each group plays the interviewers and should come up with questions for the given job advertisement.

7. The other half of the group plays the role of each of the interviewees. They should familiarize themselves with the biographical descriptions of their respective candidate.

8. Learners perform their role-play in small groups using wh-questions or learners perform the role-plays in front of the class. The interviewers carry out an interview with each candidate in turn.

9. Teacher provides feedback to the whole class.

Example 2

Goal: learners will work together to solve a murder mystery; learners will practice storytelling; learners will revise and practice the correct use of the past simple and the past progressive in narrative contexts

Activity: group speaking task – Murder Mystery

Rationale: to encourage learners to exchange information with other learners to solve a mystery; to raise learners' awareness of past simple / past progressive in stories

Pre-knowledge: familiarity with the basic elements of a crime story; some knowledge of narrative tense use in the past

Level: B1 and above

Procedure

1. The teacher prepares a story about a murder mystery and role cards for the students. An example can be found here: https://onestopenglish.com/games/lesson-share-speaking-murder-in-the-classroom/154250.article.

2. The teacher puts students into groups. The group size depends on the number of roles in the game. In addition to one student for every role, it is a good idea to have a note-taker who writes down everybody's contribution.

3. The teacher reads out the mystery that the learners have to solve and explains that they should study their role cards carefully as every role card contains information about their character's relationship with the victim and about what they were doing at the time of the murder. This information will help their group to solve the mystery if they work together.

4. The learners study their role cards. When they are familiar with the content, each learner in the group shares the information on their cards which they believe to be relevant. The note-taker writes down everybody's contributions. At this stage, the teacher is available for questions and to help with vocabulary, but does not correct learners' language use.

5. The learners discuss the information the note-taker has collected and work out who does not have an alibi for the time of the murder and must therefore be the murderer.

6. The teacher confirms or corrects the conclusions the different groups have reached.

7. The teacher elicits information about the alibis of different characters in the mystery from the learners, e.g., 'What was X doing when she heard the shot?' – 'X was chatting to her friend when she heard the shot.' These sentences can be written on the board.

8. The teacher draws learners' attention to the way the past simple (events) and the past progressive (background) are used in the example sentences. The teacher and learners discuss this pattern and add more examples, gradually moving beyond individual sentences and towards a narrative.

9. For homework, learners write a short statement from their character's point of view that provides an alibi for them, using the pattern they have practiced.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Study the tasks in the Practical Applications section of this chapter and decide which one represents 'strong CLT' and which one 'weak CLT'. Explain why.

2. In what way is the standardised *Matura* 'communicative'?

3. Look at a unit in a coursebook you are currently using / you are familiar with and identify the principles of CLT reflected in it.

4. Consider your own teacher role. Where do you see yourself on the continuum from director to facilitator?

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Spöttl, C., Kremmel, B., Holzknecht, E., & Alderson, J. C. (2016). Evaluating the achievements and challenges in reforming a national language exam: The reform team's perspective. *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment, 5*(1), 1-22.

Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Suggestions for further reading

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques & principles in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

This book introduces different methods for teaching languages, including content-based instruction and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). In addition to the theoretical principles behind each method, it also gives an insight into how the method works in the classroom.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.

This book provides an overview of the historical development of CLT and how it is being understood and implemented today. It includes reflective tasks for the reader.

Spiro, J. (2013). *Changing methodologies in TESOL*. Edinburgh University Press.

This book explores the changes in English language teaching and learning over the years. The reading activities, discussions and links to online resources make the book a very accessible resource.

Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

This book provides an overview of English language teaching by combining both theory and practice. The author considers the teaching of the various skills and also has a chapter dedicated to CLIL.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. The job interview role play represents a 'strong CLT' approach because the teacher provides the general framework for the task and the learners work independently and communicate among themselves. There is very little explicit instruction and the teacher primarily facilitates the session.

The Murder Mystery activity represents a 'weak CLT' approach. The elements of 'strong CLT' discussed above are present; however, there is explicit grammar instruction and a strong focus on language patterns, too.

2. The tasks are based on real-life communicative situations, which include an awareness of context, purpose and audience. The focus is on language skills and communication, not content knowledge.

3. to **4.** Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on CLT.

2 Teaching and learning Language Awareness

Ulla Fürstenberg and Vida Bicman

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Key Words

Language proficiency and Language Awareness (LA)

Teacher Language Awareness (TLA)

English as a global language

Language change

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What are LA and TLA?

Why is language awareness important in the context of teaching English in Austria?

What should an up-to-date concept of (T)LA include?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Historically, there used to be a clear distinction between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) in ELT theory, which is illustrated by Kachru's model of the three circles (cited in Rose et al., 2020). In this model, English is spoken as a native language in countries such as the USA, the UK and Ireland (inner circle); it has an official role in countries such as India (outer circle); and it is learned as a foreign language in many other countries (expanding circle). Austria, as an expanding circle country, would traditionally have been considered the province of English as a Foreign Language. However, the role of English as a global language is now subverting the model of the three circles.

Although English has no official role in Austria (unlike minority languages such as Croatian in the province of Burgenland), it plays an important and growing role in everyday life. Smit and Schwarz (2020) find that English is the most frequently used and most prominent language after German in Austria and see this as a sign of a "growing de facto bilingualism" in Austrian society, particularly among the younger generation (p. 299). The ease and confidence with which many young people now use English, however, is only partly due to the fact that Austrian learners of English start studying the language in their first year of primary school, if not before, and that they are expected to reach CEFR level B2 by the time they take their secondary school leaving exam. Informal learning of English outside a traditional classroom setting also plays an important role. This development is attracting some research

interest at the moment, as the field of second language acquisition (SLA) is becoming more conscious of the growing role of what has been described as extramural English (EE). For example, in Austria a study shows that 15/16-year-old teenagers spend more than four hours per day engaging with English on average. Popular activities include listening to music, watching films online and reading in social media, but more niche activities such as fan-fiction writing or online gaming also play a role. This informal input far exceeds the input the teenagers receive in their English lessons in school (Smit & Schwarz, 2020).

Thus, learners of English in Austria, as expanding circle users of English, have needs that extend beyond foreign language use. In other words, due to its dominance in media and culture, English can no longer be considered a purely 'foreign' language for Austrian learners. There can be no doubt that English is now an international, global language and is perceived as such by today's learners. They understand that they will use English not only to communicate with people from English-speaking countries, but also as a global lingua franca. Teachers will have to adapt their classroom practices to this new reality, and (Teacher) Language Awareness plays a key role here.

Defining Language Awareness (LA) and Teacher Language Awareness (TLA)

There are many different definitions of LA, but one of the most commonly cited ones is by the Association for Language Awareness, which defines LA as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use" (Association for Language Awareness, n.d.). This definition does not only cover LA in the field of foreign language teaching, but is more general. For example, questions of LA arise in fields such as advertising or language use in multilingual settings. Nor is LA only relevant to L2 contexts. In fact, the concept of Knowledge about Language (KAL) was developed in Britain in the late 1980s in response to a perceived need for better L1 literacy teaching in British schools which was understood to require "conscious awareness of the nature of language in its social, affective and cognitive domains" (Komorowska, 2014, p. 5). This interest in LA was later transferred to the fields of SLA research and English language teaching.

In this chapter, we will focus on the role of LA in teaching English in Austria. Both components of the definition of LA quoted above – explicit knowledge about language and conscious perception of and sensitivity towards language – are highly relevant to ELT.

First of all, being language-aware means possessing explicit knowledge about language. This should not be confused with language proficiency: while language proficiency is implicit and intuitive, LA is conscious and explicit (Thornbury, 2017). Even very proficient speakers of a language may find it difficult to discuss its properties (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) explicitly. Being able to explain language phenomena to learners is obviously a very important skill for a language teacher to have, and it requires LA.

Conscious perception and sensitivity towards language, the second part of the definition, refer to the way a person engages with language. Arndt et al. (2000) describe language-aware individuals as being "'alive' to language", by which they mean that they show curiosity about how language works and a general interest in language phenomena (p. 11). According to Young (2018), being language-aware requires "simple curiosity, open-mindedness and a willingness to undertake life-long learning" (p. 35). This aspect of LA can help a language teacher improve their knowledge base and gain a more sophisticated understanding of the material they teach.

Thus, it could be said that LA is relevant to language teaching in two ways: as teachers, we want our learners to develop LA; and we can only achieve this if we have a high degree of LA ourselves. The concept of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) comprises both of these aspects. A popular definition of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) is "the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively" (Thornbury, 1997, p. x). This focus on language systems has meant that TLA has often been reduced to an understanding of the grammar of the L2, but this is a misconception. It should be "seen as applying in principle to the full range of a teacher's language knowledge and awareness, not just grammar", including, for example, an awareness of register and language variation (Andrews, 2003, p. 75). In addition to that, up-to-date conceptualisations of TLA should arguably also include an awareness of the current role of English as a global lingua franca and of language change, which have an impact on the way we teach English today.

Expanding the concept of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA)

As teachers of a global language, we have to be aware that providing input for our learners is no longer our primary function as the English language is all around our students in an easily accessible form, thanks to the internet, readily available e-books, social media, etc. The function of the English teacher therefore needs to shift from providing input to helping students learn from the input in the world around

them. They have to support learners in developing an awareness of various different language elements (e.g., vocabulary, grammatical structures, register) so that they can eventually develop as users of English beyond the classroom and without explicit instruction.

English teachers can also not afford to ignore the fact that the English language is changing rapidly. According to David Crystal (2001), developing a methodology that recognizes and adapts to language variation and change is even the most important challenge facing English teachers today: "[T]here is no doubt in my mind that the concept of 'best practice' for the next century will need to be grounded in a dynamic linguistic relativism, recognizing as axiomatic the notions of variation and change. This is the chief challenge facing ELT specialists" (p. 63). To ensure the relevance of the English which is learned in the classroom, teachers have to be aware of the processes of change that are at work around us. This awareness should have an impact on a variety of classroom practices, from grammar teaching to error correction.

To summarize, then, an up-to-date concept of TLA should include an awareness of the global role of English and of changes in the English language as well as an awareness of the language system.

Impact on classroom practices

All three components of LA discussed above have (or should have) an impact on classroom practices.

As for an awareness of the underlying system of English, this meta-linguistic understanding of the L2 allows teachers to monitor their learners' progress more closely and contributes to a deeper understanding of individual language development. A teacher with a well-developed TLA can uncover gaps in the learners' knowledge, which in turn allows them to customize feedback procedures. For example, a teacher with a well-developed understanding of the language system does not only spot an error in a learner text, they also understand the source of the error (e.g., L1 interference, overgeneralisation). They can then specifically address the source of the error in their feedback and point the learner towards appropriate resources.

A well-developed awareness of the language system also allows teachers to understand learners' needs at a particular stage of their language development and to provide content on a level appropriate to learners' proficiency. Firstly, this concerns their own language use. Teachers who are proficient speakers of the language

may have got into the habit of using complex language structures or idiomatic expressions automatically, and it takes practice to understand which ones cause difficulties to the learners. A teacher who is aware of the idiosyncrasies of their own language use can adapt it to their learners' level. Secondly, this is relevant for designing effective language learning tasks. In order to do so, the teacher has to have a clear understanding of the language goal of the task, which requires an in-depth understanding of the underlying language structures. They also have to be able to look at the task from the learner's perspective to assess how challenging it is likely to be and if it will allow learners to notice the language feature a particular task is intended to teach. In this way, they will be successful at designing tasks which, in turn, raise learners' LA.

Similarly, a good understanding of the language system allows teachers to critically evaluate and adapt all kinds of published teaching materials to suit their learners' needs or even simply makes them better at understanding the goal of a task in a coursebook (see chapter 6 in this volume). For example, coursebooks sometimes include pronunciation tasks that are intended to familiarise learners with a specific aspect of pronunciation, such as the different ways of pronouncing the past tense suffix *-ed*. A teacher who has a good understanding of this feature of English pronunciation, rather than just the ability to produce the feature correctly themselves, will get more out of the materials and be better able to support their learners' emerging awareness of the feature in question.

Concerning an awareness of the global role of English, this is important so that teachers can make sure that the language they teach is relevant to their learners' goals, i.e., what they are likely to use English for. As we said above, learners in Austria will overwhelmingly use English for lingua franca communication. Teachers and learners could explore examples of lingua franca communication together and discuss what qualities a successful communicator needs in such settings. These skills (e.g., paraphrasing) could then be practiced in class.

Another way to ensure the relevance of the content taught is to work with the English the learners engage with outside of class, for example, the teacher and the learners could analyse some film dialogue together and discuss features such as puns and other forms of language play. This can encourage learners to move beyond simply understanding what is going on and engage with language on a deeper level. Such tasks contribute to the development of learners' LA and pave the way for more autonomous language learning.

It is also possible to foster language engagement and learner autonomy by giving learners opportunities to become aware of their own learning process and the level

of English they have already reached. This may take the form of class discussions, (anonymous) surveys and feedback forms, for example. At the end of a teaching segment, the teacher may choose to let students evaluate the segment with regard to retained elements, self-assessment of their own progress and areas that need further attention. Many coursebooks now encourage this kind of reflection.

As for language change, language-aware teachers should make sure, most of all, that the language they use in the classroom reflects contemporary standards. The 'singular they' is a good example. It was seen as incorrect not too long ago, but is now an accepted way to use English in a gender-neutral way. It is important that teachers also explicitly discuss such developments so that their learners understand that language is not static, but dynamic, and they may well notice changes themselves over the course of their career as language learners.

As can be seen from these examples, "pupil language awareness does indeed start with teacher language awareness", and several of the examples given show teachers and learners collaborating to develop their LA further (Young, 2017, p. 35). In fact, according to Arndt et al. (2000), working on (T)LA should be considered an important strand of teacher development as it results in "a broader and better informed knowledge-base from which to teach, thus boosting confidence, and widening teaching perspectives" (p. 13).

Practical Applications

Example 1:

Goal: learners will understand different ways of reporting speech; learners will become aware of the different functions these have

Activity: reporting on an interview

Rationale: 'Tense backshift' in reporting is quite rare in real-world language use and has a specific function, yet it is often taught as the default. This activity aims to create a more holistic understanding of reporting by making learners aware of how it is used in authentic texts.

Pre-knowledge: standard rules for 'reported speech'

Level: B1 and above

Procedure

1. Revise any rules learners might already be familiar with for 'reported / indirect speech', including rules for 'tense backshift'.

2. Ask learners how we informally report what somebody said. Point them towards films, sitcoms, young adult literature etc. (This can also be a homework task.)

3. Elicit forms such as 'and he's like,…' etc. Establish that such forms are typical of contemporary spoken English and that the rules for 'tense backshift' do not apply here.

4. Hand out a newspaper article that contains reporting. Tell learners to mark passages that refer to things somebody said and ask them to identify strategies used by the writer to report speech.

5. Elicit three main strategies: summarizing, quoting and reported speech (with or without backshift).

6. Let learners guess which of these strategies is least common (answer: reported speech).

7. Discuss how a writer chooses which strategy to employ when they write about what somebody said.

8. Get learners to interview a classmate or teacher on a topic of their choice and write a piece of reporting, using all strategies appropriately.

9. Give feedback reinforcing or correcting learners' emerging awareness of the conventions of reporting speech.

Example 2:

Goal: learners will understand slogans on t-shirts; learners will revise and practice storytelling

Activity: t-shirts with a message

Rationale: to make use of English in the learners' environment as a starting point for language learning; to make them aware of English in their environment as a language learning resource

Pre-knowledge: narrative tense use in the past, vocabulary for personality traits (revision)

Level: B1 and above

Procedure

Preparation:

Ask the learners if they own t-shirts with funny or cute sayings in English printed on them. Invite them to wear these t-shirts to class for their next English lesson or bring a photograph of such a t-shirt.

In class:

1. Talk about the messages on learners' t-shirts/photographs and clarify vocabulary as needed. Then show learners a photograph of a t-shirt with a funny slogan, e.g., 'I'm not listening'.

2. Tell them to work in pairs or groups of 3 and answer the following questions: 'Would you wear this t-shirt? Why (not)?', 'Do you think the message is funny? Why (not)?', 'Why do you think somebody would decide to wear this t-shirt? What kind of person do you think they are?' Share the answers with the whole group. Revise vocabulary to describe people's personalities as you go along and write the expressions on the board.

3. Tell the learners that they are going to write the story of a person who decided to wear this t-shirt one day. They have two options:

- a story about why somebody decided to wear this t-shirt: what happened before? Why did they want to tell everybody they encountered that they were not listening?
- a story about what happened when somebody wore this t-shirt for a day: who did they encounter? How did they react to the message on the t-shirt?

They should give their protagonist a name and discuss what sort of person he/she is before they start writing. Remind them to use the past tense for their story and revise the background/event structure: *When she **was walking** along the street, she **noticed** that a man was staring at her t-shirt*. Tell the learners to underline all the past tense forms (simple and progressive) in their story and make sure that they are correct. If in doubt, they should ask the teacher.

4. Get the pairs/groups to read out their stories. Let the class choose the best story (vote).

5. The learners write a similar story individually about a different t-shirt. Just like in class, they should underline all the past tense forms.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. What is the difference between language proficiency and LA?

2. Why do some theorists claim that Austria is in a state of 'de facto (German-English) bilingualism'?

3. Give one specific example of how you have integrated / are planning to integrate English that is relevant to your learners.

4. Can you think of any changes in the English language that you have observed yourself over your career as a learner and teacher of English?

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Suggestions for further reading

Andrews, S. (2007). *Teacher language awareness*. Cambridge University Press.

This is a theoretical discussion of TLA with particular reference to grammar. The links between TLA and teaching practices are also explored in detail.

Rose, H., Syrbe, M., Montakantiwong, A., & Funada, N. (2020). *Global TESOL for the 21st Century*. Multilingual Matters.

This book explores the pedagogical implications of the global spread of English and proposes innovations for teaching a global language effectively.

Thornbury, S. (2017). *About Language: Tasks for Teachers of English*. Cambridge University Press.

This practical resource book is aimed at teachers who want to develop their TLA. It is mostly, but not exclusively, focussed on an awareness of the formal properties of language, especially grammar, but it does include references to register and language change. There is a key, making it a good choice for self-study. (A very similar book is Bolitho, R., & Tomlinson, B. (2015). *Discover English: Language Awareness for Teachers*. Macmillan.)

Commentary on reflection questions

1. Language proficiency is the ability to use a language; it is implicit and intuitive. LA refers to a more theoretical understanding of the language; it is conscious and explicit.

2. Because many people, especially from younger generations, use English a lot in their everyday lives. Thus, English cannot be considered a 'foreign' language in the strict sense of the word anymore.

3. to **4.** Your answers to the reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on TLA.

3 Facilitating productive classroom talk

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Key words

Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences

Effective questioning strategies

Strategies for productive teacher feedback

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is the importance of productive classroom talk for language learning?

How can Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences contribute more meaningfully to learners' language learning?

How can effective questioning strategies develop learners' language and thinking skills?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Geoff Petty (2014) writes that "[m]any experts on education, including many experienced and effective teachers, consider verbal questioning to be one of the teacher's most potent tools" (p. 178). Through his work in this area, Petty shows how the questioning strategies that we adopt as teachers can make a significant difference in the proportion of learners who participate, both mentally and verbally, in our lessons. His guidance on teacher questioning is based on research undertaken in education that has consistently shown the importance of 'productive classroom talk' – i.e., learners talking, thinking and reasoning together – for developing their thinking and language abilities (Alexander, 2008; Littleton & Mercer, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Productive classroom talk differs from what is considered to be traditional classroom talk, which tends to be strongly teacher-centered and often focuses on the mere reproduction of memorized factual knowledge (van der Veen et al., 2017).

In recognition of these educational insights, the Austrian curriculum for modern foreign languages was adapted in 2009 to include *an Gesprächen teilnehmen* (participating in conversations) to the initial four skills listed (reading, listening, writing, speaking). The curriculum for lower secondary requires teachers to dedicate an equal amount of time to each of the five skills, thus putting more emphasis on speaking skills than before (Wallner, 2014). The curriculum for upper secondary schools stipulates further that learners at level B2 are supposed to be able to express

their thoughts and opinions clearly, to keep a conversation going, to argue convincingly and to react to other learners' statements and arguments, as well as to make comparisons, to evaluate different suggestions and to know how to hypothesise. This reflects the division of skills in the CEFR, where speaking skills are divided into 'production' and 'interaction' (see chapter 5 in this volume).

The standards set out in the Austrian curriculum and the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (see Richards, 2006 and chapter 1 in this volume) expect teachers to engage learners in meaningful, personalized dialogue about authentic and relevant topics. Thus, group and pair work activities have already become an integral part of teachers' routines. However, classic CLT activities might not always be the most appropriate choice for supporting learners in practicing and acquiring communication skills such as learning how to speak up in a bigger group, how to respond to other classmates' opinions (by using specific discourse functions) or how to negotiate meaning in a whole-class setting. It could be argued that productive classroom talk is a more appropriate means of developing such skills.

Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences in the language classroom

Engaging learners in productive classroom talk is a challenging task for all teachers, but perhaps especially so for language teachers, because they are teaching learners who are developing competence in a foreign language. Arguably, we learn to think *and* to speak *by* speaking. Thus, enabling productive classroom talk is a particularly important skill for language educators to master. There is, however, evidence to suggest that it is also a skill that teachers struggle to develop. Classroom research has revealed persistently restrictive patterns in the questions that teachers ask learners, and this can also be said of many ELT classrooms (Jäkel, 2014; Nikula, 2007; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). The most common pattern that has been identified is called IRF: the teacher initiates (I) an exchange by asking a question that is followed by a student's response (R) after which the teacher takes over again and gives some feedback (F) before the next question is asked. The following is an example of an IRF sequence:

Teacher:	What can you see in the picture? Yes, Luisa?	Initiation
Luisa:	I can see a mountain.	Response
Teacher:	Very good, Luisa.	Feedback
Teacher:	Now Clemens, what can you see in the picture?	Initiation
Clemens:	The sun.	Response
Teacher:	Please say the whole sentence.	Feedback
Clemens:	I can see the sun.	Response
Teacher:	Good!	Feedback

In this extract, the teacher asks a so-called 'display question' that she already knows the answer to. She calls on a learner who eagerly has her hand raised. She is expecting an already pre-determined response that is to come in a particular linguistic form. When she gets that response, she gives evaluative feedback by either praising the student or by asking them to correct their response and try again. There is not a lot of space within such interactions for learners to think, to express their own opinions and to use language creatively and meaningfully.

There has yet to be a comprehensive programme of research investigating patterns of interaction in English language classrooms in Austria, and whether or not there can be found a preponderance of similar IRF interactions. In the absence of this, an example from Germany might serve as a meaningful comparison. The DESI Study (Deutsch Englisch Schülerleistungen International), commissioned by the German Ministry of Education in 2001, investigated language learning outcomes and classroom practices in the subjects German and English. The study included analyses of videos of English language classrooms from a nationally representative sample of schools (DESI-Konsortium, 2008). The study found three insights relevant to classroom talk:

Firstly, teachers on average speak twice as much as all learners together. Secondly, teachers' questions are answered within three seconds 50% of the time. If they are not answered within this time, the teachers usually provide the answers themselves. Thirdly, there is a rather high presence of target language use in the classrooms: 84% of teacher talk and 76% of student talk is in English. However, only half of the examples of student talk in the target language were categorized as individually worded responses.

This data suggests that teachers do the majority of the talking in English language classrooms and that when they ask learners questions in order to engage them in the lessons, they often do not give them sufficient opportunity to think about these questions and formulate their responses. Instead, teachers answer their questions themselves and move on to the next topic. When learners talk in the English language classrooms, at least half of the time their talk is limited to closed responses to teachers' questions, which might be reading out answers to questions in the textbook or finishing a teachers' sentence stem with the correct answer. Such classroom exchanges do not contribute to productive classroom talk and make only a limited contribution to the development of learners' thinking and language skills.

Effective questioning

So, how can we as English language teachers better engage learners in productive classroom talk, even when they are at lower levels of language competence (e.g., A2 or B1)? Concerning learners of higher levels of language, how do we ensure that classroom talk is productive and facilitative of learning? Petty (2014) suggests that there are two ways that we can do this: one is by improving the questions that we ask our learners (the I's in the IRF patterns) and the other is by improving our feedback on learners' responses (the F's).

The first step is to start working on our I's by planning questions that move away from the above-mentioned traditional IRF pattern. The focus should be on open questions that require learners to use different (higher) levels of thinking rather than on fact-based questions that mainly encourage rote learning and the simple reproduction of knowledge. If we consider the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and apply them to the questions we ask, the lowest level of thinking referred to as 'knowledge' relates to questions that focus on the recall of information (e.g., Who?, What?, Where?, When?), in other words, to most questions we ask within the traditional IRF pattern. The sixth and highest level, on the other hand, known as 'evaluation' involves questions that expect learners to develop, justify and defend their opinions ('Why do you think so?'), to compare, evaluate and judge other learners' statements ('Do you agree with … that …?') and to take decisions ('Based on what we've just discussed what would you do?').

When planning our questions, teachers always have to keep in mind that the main purpose of questioning is to promote learning and support learners in developing their higher-order thinking skills. In order to do so we need to plan and prepare questions that become increasingly more challenging and gradually cover all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (Gast, 2013). Effective questions that encourage learners to also draw on their experiences and their prior knowledge of the topic as well as to build on each other's contributions will steer learners towards making an effort to articulate their ideas and getting their messages across, ultimately helping them to become independent thinkers. According to Petty (2014), the knowledge thus gained is more likely to be transferable as learners do not only passively listen to their teacher's talk, but are also actively involved in constructing and co-constructing knowledge. As learners in productive classroom talk settings might be called upon anytime to build on a classmate's argument, they are also required to pay attention to each other's contributions and are hence more involved. Of course, learners may not always have all the language they need to discuss topics in the target language, but they might be motivated by intellectually challenging content to activate all of their linguistic resources in order to make a contribution.

Strategies for productive teacher feedback

Well-planned question sequences can certainly motivate learners of all levels to engage in productive classroom talk, but to ensure deep learning, good and instant teacher feedback (see chapter 8 in this volume) on learners' answers is also essential. Improving on the F in the aforementioned IRF pattern means moving away from solely evaluative feedback towards more comprehensive feedback that triggers additional learner contributions. Well-intentioned evaluative comments such as 'well done' or 'very good' can even have an adverse effect on learning because they serve a " 'finale' function that precludes further attempts by others to articulate their understanding and/or explore alternative answers" (Lyster, 2018, p. 10). In a well-planned feedback move a teacher may challenge learners' opinions. They may also require them to justify and explain their answers or to give an example (e.g., 'Yes, good idea. Can you elaborate on that a bit more, explaining why....'; 'Can you give another example?'; 'Good, and why do you think so?'). Thus, feedback allows both the learner being questioned and the rest of the group to correct errors or misconceptions they might have had and to further develop and deepen their understanding of the topic being discussed. It also encourages them to use language that goes beyond the short answers required in the typical IRF pattern. Such feedback takes on a more discoursal function as it focuses more on content than on form and helps promote a dialogue between the teacher and the learners (Cullen, 2002).

In addition to that, appropriate feedback can be an important motivating factor for learners to show their success in learning by having successfully contributed to class discussions. Productive classroom talk, far more than group or pair activities, facilitates the immediate assessment of learners' (language) output. As only one learner is supposed to be talking at a time, the teacher can more easily monitor their answers and immediately help them clarify their thinking. Hence, effective questions do not only make learners aware of what they do and do not know, but also enable teachers to gain a good insight into what learners know and have understood (Lyster, 2018; Petty, 2014).

Implementation of productive feedback procedures

There are various ways that we can integrate challenging topics into the classroom (see, for example, Gast, 2013; Keith, 2016; Petty, 2014) by pre-teaching concepts and vocabulary as well as required structures or phrases. Using visuals, pictures or gestures will help learners, especially beginners, to visualize and understand more demanding concepts. It can be a good idea to allow learners to use their L1s to work out responses to questions that require higher order thinking. They can then work together to find ways to convert these responses into English. Allowing learners to

use their entire linguistic repertoire and co-create responses, i.e., to think, talk and plan their responses together, will further promote language learning at different levels. Thinking should take precedence over language use. Once the understanding is there, teachers and peers can support the expression of this understanding in the foreign language.

When planning to discuss a challenging topic, it is important for teachers to develop their questions beforehand. The questions should be open, easy to understand and involve different levels of thinking. Often questions starting with 'Why' or 'How' are more likely to lead to learner responses that require higher order thinking. After each question, it is important to wait long enough so that learners are given enough time to think about their responses. One way to ensure that all learners are engaged in the thinking process is to tell them not to call out or raise their hands, but wait to be asked (e.g., ask younger leaners to sit on their hands). In addition, strategies such as moving closer to learners or establishing and keeping eye contact are good ways to also engage learners who are at the back of the classroom, who tend to be unresponsive or who try to avoid the teacher's questions. If a wrong answer is given, teachers should simply say that it was wrong and ask another question to help the learner back on track. If the learner does not know the answer, the teacher should ask another learner if they can help out, but it is important that the teacher then goes back to the first learner and has them try again.

If a question still does not generate any answers, the teacher might need to rephrase it and wait for a response. Sometimes strategies such as 'Shout it out loud' or 'Think-Pair-Share' that allow learners to first try out their thoughts/opinions in a safe environment are useful to get the ball rolling. 'Think-Pair-Share', for instance, allows learners to get some feedback from a classmate first before they share their ideas with the whole class. When using 'Shout it out loud', the teacher should ask the learners to answer the question all at the same time and encourage them to shout the answer out loud by giving them a clue such as 'Go!' or 'Class!'. There are also variations such as giving the answer in a whisper, in a hoarse/deep or high-pitched voice. This strategy is intended to encourage even shy or reluctant learners to take part. The pressure of giving a correct answer is taken off them, as individual answers are not under scrutiny. The teacher can then ask for responses again in the whole-class setting and praise any meaningful contributions.

Effective questioning can be a very powerful and efficient strategy that can yield good results if used appropriately, but as with any other method there are some challenges that need to be met. It is a technique that is not easy to master as it may not come naturally to teachers and therefore has to be practised and developed.

Teachers are sometimes reluctant to initiate productive classroom talk in whole-class settings, as it might seem difficult at first to ensure that all learners in the group are involved in the talk. Some preparatory work will therefore have to go into establishing an atmosphere in which learners feel safe and their answers are not ridiculed; in other words, teachers need to create an atmosphere in which mistakes and incorrect answers are not only tolerated but also seen as an opportunity to deepen learning.

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will read different argumentative texts on a pre-selected topic; learners will find arguments in the texts supporting their own opinion; learners will justify their reasoning to their classmates; learners will react to other learners' expressions of opinion (see curriculum for upper secondary, 6th-8th grade)

Activity: whole group discussion

Rationale: to build on each other's opinions

Pre-knowledge: language to express opinions, agreement/disagreement; discussion ground rules

Level: CEFR B1+ and above

Procedure:

1. Agree on a topic that learners are personally interested in. Collect 5-10 topics on the board and have groups of four agree on three topics and rank them according to their importance.

2. Collect the results from each group and display them on the board. Choose the topic that has been selected by most of the groups.

3. Find argumentative texts online (in any language) and send the links to learners.

4. Have them read the texts at home and select three statements they agree/disagree with strongly. If the statements are not in English, have learners explain them in English.

5. Prepare any language which learners might need to fulfill the task (e.g., opinion phrases, vocabulary).

6. Select a learner to introduce the topic in class and start with a statement justifying their opinion.

7. Ask the class to either agree or disagree with this response by showing differently coloured cards (green = fully agree, yellow = not sure; neither agree/disagree, red = strongly disagree).

8. Select another learner to defend their position/opinion by building on what their classmate has said before. They can agree or disagree with their classmate. Always give feedback on the quality/accuracy of learners' answers before moving on to the next contribution.

9. Learners can then, either voluntarily or prompted by the teacher, add their opinions as well, always ensuring that they consider the statements that have been made before.

10. Call upon another learner to introduce a new statement. Ask learners again to agree/disagree (show of cards) and select a learner to continue the discussion by giving their opinion.

11. Continue the activity as described above.

12. Towards the end of the discussion (after a certain number of statements have been made) seek consensus from the group. Consensus requires learners to consider all the statements (pros and cons) which have been made and to relate them to their own opinion.

As a follow-up activity, learners could be asked to convey the ideas discussed using visuals, to write them up in an executive summary or to display them in a list of pros and cons that can then be used as the basis for an opinion essay.

Example 2

This idea is based on Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats Model developed in 1985 (Gast, 2013; Kivunja, 2015) in which parallel thinking processes are used to reflect critically on an issue/problem. Learners are asked to consider a problem by putting on one of the five differently coloured thinking hats. The whole process is guided by the teacher who wears the sixth (blue) hat and is responsible for leading the discussion and planning the next steps.

The six hats represent the following modes of thinking:

BLUE HAT: The teacher has to manage the thinking process of learners. They have to lead the discussion and stimulate it by asking the right questions and deciding which thinking hat is to be put on next.

WHITE HAT: When learners wear this hat, they are interested in obtaining all the information and data needed to solve the problem. They have to be neutral and objective without making suggestions or being emotional. They just state the facts.

YELLOW HAT: When learners wear this hat, they look on the bright side of things. They look out for the benefits and the reasons why an idea/suggestion will work. They are optimistic and positive.

BLACK HAT: When learners wear this hat, they slip into the role of 'the devil's advocate'. They should identify what is wrong with the ideas suggested, evaluate and question them, be reasonable, critical and logical.

GREEN HAT: When learners wear this hat, they are as creative as possible and try to think of new and innovative ideas and alternatives that have not been used yet. They are provocative and think outside the box.

RED HAT: When learners wear this hat, they express their personal feelings and emotions on the subject/problem without having to justify them in any way. They can have different feelings about the issue.

When using this model with younger learners it might be helpful to provide them with paper hats which they wear and/or a summary of the role they are expected to take on. Even older learners might need a reminder (brief description and colour of the respective hat).

Possible discussion questions based on (real-life) problems:

'What can we do about homework assignments not being done on time or at all?'

'Shall we buy a fish tank for our classroom?'

'Should official graffiti walls be installed in Graz?'

Goal: learners will explore different viewpoints; learners will make decisions; learners will solve problems

Activity: 6 Thinking Hats – whole group discussion activity

Rationale: focus on creative and constructive higher-order thinking skills

Pre-knowledge: language to express opinions, agreement/disagreement; discussion ground rules

Level: A2 and above

Procedure:

1. The teacher introduces the topic/problem/scenario to be discussed. This requires some preparatory work with learners so that they can easily talk about the topic (e.g., reading articles, doing some research on the internet, linking the problem to a topic covered in the coursebook).

2. The teacher decides which thinking hat should be worn first. This depends on the topic and might differ each time this method is used. The most important thing is that the group only wears one thinking hat at a time.

3. The teacher asks the first question and gives learners some wait time to think about it. To get the ball rolling, the teacher then addresses one of the learners. The teacher should be prepared to manage the discussion by inviting other learners to expand and comment on the statements and ideas put forward by their classmates. It might be helpful to keep track of the ideas mentioned by noting them down on the blackboard for further reference.

4. The teacher should go through some or all of the thinking hats until they feel that a sound and well-informed decision can be made or a solution to the problem has been found.

As a follow-up activity, learners could be asked to write a report based on the findings of the meeting or to write the minutes of the meeting.

Example 3

Goal: Learners will activate prior knowledge on a topic; they will review previous learning (correcting misconceptions)

Activity: Buzz Groups, small group discussions (groups of 3 or 4)

Rationale: to listen to each other's responses and agree on a group answer that is reported back to the whole group

Pre-knowledge: language to express opinions, agreement/disagreement; discussion ground rules

Level: A2 and above

Procedure

1. The teacher prepares a set of thought-provoking questions on one topic (e.g., grammar: *What is the difference in meaning between the following two sentences: I have lived in Graz for five years. vs. I lived in Graz for five years.*).

2. Learners get together in buzz groups of 3 or 4. All learners discuss the question in their groups and check on each other's thinking and understanding of the questions. They then need to agree on one answer that is put forward by a speaker of the group. The group members are usually interested in making sure that the speaker does not misrepresent their group's answer to the class. This leads to a high level of participation, as the correct wording of the answer needs to be negotiated between all the group members.

3. The teacher then asks the speakers to give their group's answer and explores learners' thinking process by asking them, for instance: 'Why did your group think that?', 'Did any other group get the same answer?', 'Has anyone got a different answer?'. The speakers should be selected by the teacher and be changed after each buzz group round. The teacher does not yet evaluate the answers or give the correct answer.

4. After having listened to each other, the whole class discusses the groups' answers and needs to agree on a 'class answer' that has to be explained and justified. The aim of this activity is to achieve consensus. Once learners have agreed on their answer, the teacher either confirms or corrects it by giving feedback on the learners' thinking.

5. An advantage of this activity is that it gives learners a lot of thinking time. Learners may also feel more comfortable putting forward their answers to the whole class because it is not their individual idea that is under scrutiny but the group's answer. In addition, the teacher receives constructive and representative feedback on how well the class has processed a new topic, grammar item, etc.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Look through some of your past lesson plans, check how many classroom speaking activities you planned and which of those followed the IRF sequence. In hindsight, what would you do differently, and what types of questions would you prepare for these discussion activities?

2. When preparing a new lesson plan, reflect on the talk formats you will use to achieve your teaching goals.

3. Plan for a productive speaking task in which you do not follow a closed IRF sequence:

- What questions will you ask to support the development of learners' learning and language?
- Write out at least three questions. Check whether they start with 'why' or 'how'.

4. Reflect on your role as the teacher in a particular discussion activity. Are there any learners that you want to pay particular attention to? How are you going to achieve that? What kind of feedback might be most productive?

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This classic book covers not only questioning strategies, but also other essential aspects of teaching.

Mercer, N. (2019). *Language and the Joint Creation of Knowledge: The selected works of Neil Mercer*. Routledge.

This book gives an insight into Neil Mercer's work on the role of talk in education and on the relationship between spoken language and cognition. It relates theoretical ideas to research evidence and to practical educational situations.

Gaunt, A., & Stott, A. (2019). *Transform Teaching and Learning through Talk: The Oracy Imperative*. Rowman and Littlefield.

This book draws on academic research in the area of talk in the classroom and outlines practical applications. The authors share personal insights and anecdotes as well as tried-and-tested approaches.

There are several resources for improving questioning strategies based on Bloom's Taxonomy.

For examples, see these Question Stems: https:/www.teachthought.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/blooms-question-stems.jpg

Geoff Petty's website contains useful resources for enhancing your questioning style in the classroom. While his work is not specific to ELT, you could easily adapt it for your classroom needs: http://geoffpetty.com/training-materials/questioning/

The Thinking Together website contains resources to support the development of learners' thinking and learning in the classroom. It is based on the findings of research from scholars such as Neil Mercer and Karen Littleton: http://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk

For more information on promoting talk across the curriculum, and building a classroom culture which values talk in ELT and beyond, see the website of Voice 21: https://voice21.org/, an educational organization that promotes oracy education as means to develop and deepen learners' subject knowledge and understanding through talk in the classroom. You can hear Alice Stott talk about their initiative here: https://www.wested.org/resources/oracy-in-the-uk-for-all-students-current-research/.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **4.** Your answers to the reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on your use of teacher talk.

4 Fostering professional development as a teacher

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Key words

Teacher autonomy

Reflective practitioner

Tools for reflection

Community of Practice (CoP)

Practitioner research

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What role does teacher autonomy play in the growth and development of a teacher?

Why is reflection essential in a teacher's professional development?

How can teachers foster their own professional development?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Professional development already begins during pre-service teacher education. In Austria, the year 2015 marked a turning point in pre-service teacher education programmes with the introduction of a new *Lehramt* teaching degree. The new curriculum was designed to provide students with a sound understanding of foreign language methodology as a tool for their future teaching. In the English teacher education courses, students should "gain knowledge of the relevant theoretical basics for differentiated language teaching" and "innovative forms of teaching and learning" (University of Graz, 2019-2021, p. 173). They should further develop "the ability to critically reflect on communicative language teaching" and "to evaluate teaching and learning materials as well as compile new materials themselves" (University of Graz, 2019-2021, p. 173). To achieve these goals, the new curriculum was adjusted to accommodate more methodology classes. In addition, students in the teacher education programme were required to complete more periods of practical training than before.

Although significant changes were made to the teacher education programme, one aspect has remained, namely that future teachers are introduced to Newby et al.'s (2007) European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages/*Europäisches Portfolio für Sprachenlernende in Ausbildung* (EPOSTL/EPOSA) early on in their studies. The EPOSTL is a tool in which students can self-assess a wide range of skills that are

important for effective language teaching and track their progress in said skills over time, thus documenting their professional development. In doing so, pre-service teachers learn to "reflect on the competences a teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge which feeds these competences" that help prepare them for their teaching careers (Newby et al., 2007, p. 5). As continuous professional development is becoming increasingly vital not only for newly qualified but also for well-established teachers, the EPOSTL can support students in pre-service teacher education in acquiring the skills and competences they need in order to see professional development as a lifelong process. Closely related to this, they can acquire and improve the personal development skills they need to stay up to date with innovations in areas such as methodology and materials design as well as tools such as digital media. In this way, teachers gain agency over their professional development as autonomous teachers.

Professional development and teacher autonomy

As has been pointed out in the previous section, it is a widely accepted view that the development and growth of a teacher is a lifelong continuous process, which starts during pre-service teacher education but goes far beyond that. Therefore, just as the notion of learner autonomy can be seen as one way of becoming a successful learner, we can consider the concept of teacher autonomy as a way of becoming a more successful teacher. In this context, Little (1995) makes the following observation:

> Genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest degree of affective and cognitive control over the teaching process, and exploring the freedom this confers (p. 179).

The exact meaning of the concept of teacher autonomy has been the subject of much debate in the literature on second language education, and to date no real consensus has been found. However, according to McGrath (2000), it is possible to identify two dimensions of the concept: self-directed professional action or development on the one hand and freedom from control by others on the other. Smith (2003) further elaborates on the two dimensions identified by McGrath (2000) and differentiates between the following sub-concepts:

In relation to professional action:

1. Self-directed professional action, i.e., self-directed teaching

2. Capacity for self-directed professional action, i.e., teacher autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's teaching)
3. Freedom from control over professional action, i.e., teacher autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's teaching)

In relation to professional development:

1. Self-directed professional development, i.e., self-directed teacher-learning
2. Capacity for self-directed professional development, i.e., teacher-learner autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher)
3. Freedom from control over professional development, i.e., teacher-learner autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's learning as a teacher) (p. 4)

In his discussion of teacher autonomy, Smith (2003) focuses particularly on the role of the teacher as learner, thus coining the term 'teacher-learner autonomy', and bases his definition on one of the most widely recognized understandings of learner autonomy: "[a]n autonomous learner is an active participant in the social processes of classroom learning, but also an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already and uniquely knows" (Dam et al., 1990, p. 102).

In line with Dam et al. (1990), Smith (2003) defines teacher-learner autonomy as "the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in co-operation with others" (p. 1). It goes without saying that continuous professional development can only unfold when teachers see themselves as lifelong learners. In other words, teaching in the classroom and activities connected with it should be seen as learning opportunities for one's own growth and development.

Professional development and the reflective practitioner

One fundamental aspect of a teacher's growth and development is, without doubt, the capacity and willingness to critically reflect on their own teaching practice as well as on the beliefs, attitudes and values they hold about teaching.

Professional development, therefore, draws on the teacher's own inner capacity for change:

> It is centred on personal awareness of the possibilities for change, and of what influences the change process. [...] It is a self-reflective process because it is through questioning old habits that alternative ways of being and doing are able to emerge (Head & Taylor, 1997, p. 1).

It has therefore been recognized for decades in the field of teacher education that professional development must be rooted in critical and reflective thinking. In this context, Wallace's (1991) model of the reflective practitioner is arguably one of the most widely known. There are two stages of Wallace's (1991) model, namely, a trainee's existing knowledge and experience in the pre-training phase of their career (Stage 1) and reflection on previous teaching experience and professional education/development with the final goal of working towards professional competence (Stage 2). In stage 2, there is a reciprocal relationship between what he calls received knowledge (i.e., language skills, linguistic theory) and experiential knowledge (i.e., professional knowledge gained through classroom practice). In other words, the pre-service teachers should reflect on received knowledge in the light of experiential knowledge, and experiential knowledge should in turn feed back into their received knowledge through a continuous cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Wallace's (1991) model of reflection can easily be applied to teacher education. For example, in stage 1 pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to gather concrete classroom experience by micro-teaching elements. In stage 2, they then describe and reflect on what happened in the classroom and use their received knowledge to find explanations for and solutions to what occurred. They then go back to the classroom with the findings from stage 2.

Tools for practitioner reflection

There are several ways for teachers to critically reflect on their professional actions. One way is keeping a teaching diary or journal in which they document their practice and note down any thoughts and feelings connected with it. According to Bailey (1990), a teacher diary can be used "to reflect, experiment, criticize, doubt, express frustration, and raise questions" (p. 218). Bailey (1990) further recommends that teachers do not only record their practice, and everything related to it, but also review what they have written and look for recurrent themes and patterns. Although Bailey et al. (2001) admit that diary writing is an inherently private endeavour, they also propose that teachers share their writing with colleagues as this does not only promote critical reflection of their thoughts, ideas, and actions but also establishes a critical dialogue between colleagues. It is often this cooperative interaction among colleagues which leads to teacher learning. For example, by sharing good or even bad practice and changed action in the classroom with their colleagues, teachers can consider other perspectives of a given situation and ways of handling it in future.

Another tool for reflection and inquiry to foster professional growth is the observation of other teachers. According to Gebhard and Oprandy (1999), observing others teach helps teachers "to construct and reconstruct [their] own knowledge about teaching and thereby to learn more about [themselves] as teachers" (p. 35). In other words, observing colleagues or teachers from other institutions gives practitioners a better sense of what they are doing in their classrooms and can inspire them to critically reflect on their own teaching practice. Thus, peer observation is not only beneficial to the person being observed but also to the teacher carrying out the observation. In fact, observing colleagues teaching can prompt teachers to reflect on their own approaches to learning, as well as on the methods, techniques and materials they are using.

Team-teaching in various forms (e.g., between two equal partners or between mentor and mentee) is also regarded as an effective tool to raise teachers' awareness of their own attitudes and values. Buckley (2000) suggests the following definition of team teaching:

> Team teaching involves a group of instructors working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students learn. As a team, the teachers work together in setting goals for a course, designing a syllabus, preparing individual lesson plans, actually teaching students together, and evaluating the results. They share insights, arguing with one another [...] (p. 4).

According to Freeman and Richards (1996), this type of collaboration, which requires shared responsibility inside and outside the classroom, gives teachers an opportunity for heightened reflection. Being required to synchronize teaching acts means that team teachers must negotiate and discuss their thoughts, values, and actions in ways that solo teachers do not encounter because they are working on their own. With regard to professional development, team teaching can foster learning from each other as it encourages critical reflection and dialogue, thus helping teachers to identify new classroom practices and motivating them to pursue life-long learning.

Community of practice

Another way for teachers to enhance their skills is to seek out colleagues or peers with whom a so-called community of practice (CoP) can be formed. A CoP can evolve naturally because of the members' common interest in a particular field or area, or it can be created deliberately with the goal of gaining knowledge related to a specific field. Through the process of sharing information and experiences with

the group, members learn from each other and have an opportunity to develop personally and professionally (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This can be done on an informal level through discussions with colleagues and peers or by going to conferences and sharing thoughts and ideas with like-minded people. A CoP can provide teachers with a network, often beyond their immediate professional network, in which they share experiences, explore new ideas, and, most importantly, generate new knowledge, all of which can help them to develop professionally.

Practitioner research

Teachers can also develop professionally by carrying out practitioner research. This can be shared with teachers' CoP. It can also be made public at conferences or in the form of publications. The most common types of practitioner research are action research (see Practical Application at the end of this chapter) and exploratory practice (EP). According to Watts (1985), AR can be defined as the "process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using techniques of research" (p. 118). A common reason for practitioners implementing AR is to bring about some kind of change or improvement to classroom practice. In contrast to this, EP focuses solely on understanding what is happening in the classroom or as Allwright (2005) puts it: "Exploratory Practice (EP) is an indefinitely sustainable way for classroom language teachers and learners, while getting on with their own learning and teaching, to develop their own understandings of life in the language classroom" (p. 361). The main advantage of EP is that it does not take away classroom time as it provides a framework that allows for teaching, learning and research in which both teachers and learners are involved in the process of understanding what is happening in the classroom.

In order to show the importance of professional development in the teaching profession, I would like to share my story of professional growth over decades of working as a language teacher.

My story of professional growth

After I completed my pre-service teacher education at the English and the French Departments of the University of Graz in the mid-eighties, I spent a whole school year teaching a first-year French and a second-year English class at a *HAK*, a secondary school with a business focus. For me as a young teacher, this was a highly valuable experience as I was responsible for my two classes in terms of planning, giving marks and talking to parents on parents' evening. In my daily teaching, I followed the principles of the communicative approach and used both coursebooks

and additional materials of my own to achieve my teaching goals. Due to this approach, I seemed to be seen by my new colleagues as the young and innovative teacher who had brought a breath of fresh air into the daily teaching routine.

After completing my teacher education, I moved on to teaching English and French in adult education and finally at university level. Although I received excellent feedback from my learners at the English Department right from the beginning, I was not satisfied and had the feeling that something was missing in my teaching. However, I could not exactly pinpoint this 'something'. What is more, I felt that I was not developing as a teacher although I regularly attended in-service teacher seminars, which sometimes even lasted a few days. This was the main reason why I then took the decision to delve deeper into the field of EFL methodology by doing a Ph.D.. Little did I know at that moment that this would be the best decision I had ever taken in my whole teaching career as it brought me into contact with the concept of learner autonomy, which for me personally was an eye-opening experience.

It was first and foremost the following quote by Dieter Wolff (1994) which prompted me to rethink my teaching practice and also made me understand most clearly what was missing in my own classroom:

> In lessons designed according to constructivist principles, the classroom becomes a learning workshop, the learners become researchers who independently gather, analyze and process knowledge (p. 422, editors' translation).

I realised that, up to that time, I had never given my learners a say in decisions relating to their learning; instead I, the teacher, had been the one to determine the content, the goals and the methodology, and it had always been me who was entirely responsible for the assessment of the outcome of my learners' learning. I would not exactly say that my learners had been passive receivers of knowledge, but at least there was no genuine interaction and dialogue among them, apart from the traditional pair- or group work activities.

There was another quote from the literature on learner autonomy which influenced me deeply and made me see my learners in a different light:

> For a teacher to commit himself to learner autonomy requires a lot of nerve, not least because it requires him to abandon any lingering notion that he can somehow guarantee the success of his learners by his own effort. Instead, he must dare to trust the learners (Little, 1991, p. 45).

My teaching had always been guided by the conviction that my explanations were the decisive factor for my learners' successful learning progress. I now realized that

I had also often intervened when my learners were grappling for meaning instead of believing in their capacity to arrive at a solution on their own. Eventually, it was the classroom practice described by Leni Dam (1995), the most widely known practitioner of learner autonomy, which set me off on a new and hugely rewarding path on my journey as a teacher.

Some changes that I integrated into my teaching which are informed by learner autonomy include having students sit and work in groups of four, which facilitates a learner-centred teaching/learning situation. I also included activities like learner diaries to foster reflection, evaluation and goal-setting as well as peer-reviewing, peer-teaching and collaborative text writing tasks. All these activities contribute to establishing a continuous dialogue between the learners themselves and between the learners and me, the teacher.

According to Smith (2011, n.p.), "[e]ngaging with and developing learner autonomy, and taking control of one's own professional development as a teacher are inseparable". From my own experience, I can entirely confirm this statement. As soon as I had implemented aspects of a pedagogy for autonomy in my classroom, I started to explore my own teaching practice (see, for example, Burkert, 2011) and over time became a practitioner researcher. My preferred research methods are semi-structured interviews, questionnaires with open and closed questions, and data collection through audio-recordings. I also found my CoP in the Learner Autonomy Special Interest Group (LASIG) of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), in which I have been serving as a committee member since 2008.

I have, in the meantime, published multiple articles in the field of learner autonomy, attended a great number of international conferences, and even organized two conferences in Graz, in 2012 and 2017, respectively. I have also had the privilege of changing and developing as a teacher with three of the leading figures in the field of learner autonomy: Leni Dam, David Little and Lienhard Legenhausen. However, my professional development is by no means complete as is very well expressed in the following statement from the conference report on The Canarian Conference on Developing Autonomy in the Classroom: "This autonomy puzzle will always have missing pieces as it is a never-ending process which forces us to continue to grow as we look for new insights" (Conference Report, La Laguna, Tenerife, 2003).

Conclusion

Both the theoretical input as well as my account of professional development seem to clearly show how important it is for teachers to develop and grow throughout

their careers and to see themselves as lifelong learners. Continually reflecting on one's own teaching practice and staying open for new developments and changes are prerequisites for successful teacher growth. Furthermore, by exploring one's teaching through practitioner research and creating networks with like-minded people in CoPs, a teacher undoubtedly adds another dimension to their own professional development.

Practical Application

Example

Goal: the teacher will reflect on and improve their practice by carrying out action research (AR)

Activity: AR project

Rationale: to explore practitioner research; to promote teachers' professional development

Pre-knowledge: familiarity with the group of learners and their language level

Procedure:

1. An AR project needs to be planned well. This includes identifying a research topic, question or problem that is related to the teacher's challenges in the classroom, e.g., my students are not doing their homework and I want to know why.

2. The teacher develops an AR plan which outlines what to do, when, and how. In the case of students not doing their homework, a teacher may hand out a questionnaire or conduct individual feedback sessions. This can be done at the beginning of the class or at the end, online or in person.

3. The third step is implementing the AR plan and gathering data.

4. The next step is to review the data and develop a possible solution, e.g., a rewards system for doing homework.

5. The final step is applying a possible solution, e.g., a rewards system, and observing the results to see if it can really solve the problem being studied.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Go back and read Anja's story about her professional development. What do you do to develop professionally as a teacher?

2. Try to find out what your own CoP is or could be.

3. Teacher as practitioner researcher: Identify one aspect of your teaching practice that you would like to explore further and plan a small-scale study you could carry out with your students.

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Suggestions for further reading

Burns, A. (2009). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

This book is a practical guide intended for teachers and teacher educators new to the concept of action research.

Hanks, J. (2017). *Exploratory practice in language teaching: Puzzling about principles and practices*. Palgrave Macmillan.

This book deals with the development of Exploratory Practice since the early 1990s and draws on case studies, vignettes and narratives from teachers and learners engaging in EP around the world.

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge University Press.

This book offers a variety of tools for teachers to engage in professional development in language teaching.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. Responses will vary based on teachers' experience, work context, job description, etc.

2. You may have colleagues at your own school or colleagues with whom you did your initial teacher education, or colleagues from other areas or countries who you have met at any teacher education event or conference and with whom you could discuss your teaching practice and any concerns you might have. You could also plan a small-scale research project together.

3. You may want to know what your learners think of materials you are using or activities you are doing in the classroom. You could conduct a small questionnaire study with your students. Alternatively, if you are not satisfied, for example, with

your learners' class participation, you could have your learners conduct short interviews with each other for which they have to devise the questions themselves.

5 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the Austrian curriculum

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Key words

CEFR language levels and scales

CEFR and the Austrian curriculum for modern foreign languages

Washback effect of the CEFR

CEFR and the standardised *Matura*

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

Where does the CEFR originate and what does it mean for language teachers in Europe?

How is the CEFR integrated into the Austrian curriculum?

How does the CEFR influence assessment and tests in Austria and the standardised *Matura* in particular?

What is the washback effect of the CEFR on language teaching approaches in Austria?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a detailed description of language learner levels according to different skills, is commonly found in descriptions of teaching materials and language tests today. Not only does the CEFR aim to provide a common understanding of language learning for teachers, but it also addresses different partners in the field of language learning. Thus, apart from supporting teachers and educators, it is an invaluable document for examination boards and textbook authors, and it is the basis of curricula and syllabuses across the member states of the Council of Europe (CoE).

The CEFR was developed by the CoE between 1989 and 1996. Its main aims are:

- promoting plurilingualism and diversification in the choice of languages in the curriculum
- supporting the development and demonstration of the plurilingual profile of individual learners
- developing and reviewing the content of language curricula and defining positive 'can do' descriptors adapted to the age, interests and needs of learners

- designing and developing textbooks and teaching materials
- supporting teacher education and cooperation among teachers of different languages
- enhancing quality and success in learning, teaching and assessment
- facilitating transparency in testing and the comparability of certification (Council of Europe, 2001a)

Work on the CEFR began in the 1970s at a time in which there was a shift in language teaching methodology away from the grammar and translation approach towards a communication skills approach. The heart of the framework has since been a communicative approach to language teaching, learning and assessment, which is action-oriented. It aims to create learning that leads to action, i.e., being able to do things.

While the CEFR has remained true to this original goal, it is by no means static. Two recent changes to the CEFR show that it is dynamic and evolving. The first innovation was the introduction of the concept of mediation in the CEFR Companion Volume of 2018. Mediation (which combines reception, production and interaction) is an umbrella term for language activities that make communication possible between people who are unable to communicate directly, e.g., paraphrasing a text in a different language so that it can be understood by somebody who does not speak the original language of the text. The inclusion of mediation in the CEFR recognizes the importance of such skills in pluricultural and plurilingual societies. Even though the authors of the CEFR companion volume state clearly that they have not developed mediation to its full potential yet, they emphasize the importance of mediation in today's increasingly diverse classrooms and in the teaching of other subjects in English (see chapter 17 in this volume). Thus, mediation should be seen as a part of all learning, but especially of all language learning.

The second innovation was replacing the term 'native speaker' with more inclusive terms such as 'speaker of the target language', 'other participants [in a conversation]' or 'proficient speakers' because the term 'native speaker' is increasingly seen as controversial. The highest level of attainment is now defined by the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease with which highly successful learners use the L2.

In this context, it should also be stressed that the CEFR was never intended to be prescriptive. It was originally designed with the intention of creating a tool to facilitate educational reform projects and not, as is commonly assumed, as a standardisation tool. In addition, there is nobody monitoring its use. It was written with the

purpose of raising questions rather than telling practitioners what to do and it does not attempt to impose a specific methodology.

In November 2001, a European Council Resolution recommended using the CEFR to set up systems of validation of language ability. Since then, the CEFR has formed the basis for various language assessment tools and has become the foundation of numerous language courses and international exams (e.g., the Cambridge English Qualifications).

In Austria, like in many other countries, the curriculum for modern foreign languages is aligned with the CEFR. For example, the current curriculum in *Sekundarstufe I*, lower secondary level, consists of ten descriptors per year for all four skills, whereas the curriculum for *Sekundarstufe II*, upper secondary level, has been divided into modules, each of which states clear descriptors for individual skills with the explicit aim of reaching B2 level at the standardised *Matura*. In addition, the IKM^{plus} test (a test of educational attainment taken by 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds) and the standardised *Matura* also reference the CEFR.

For Austrian foreign language teachers of all school forms, it is therefore vital to have a sound understanding of the CEFR in order to comprehend and to execute the requirements and demands of the Austrian curriculum.

CEFR levels and scales

The CEFR could be said to provide a 'learning ladder' on which a learner's progression can be visualised and measured. Instead of aiming at perfect language production, the CEFR gives language learners an overview of the stages they have reached thus far. More specifically, it describes smaller targets appropriate to the abilities at a certain stage of a learner's language acquisition.

At its core, the CEFR provides a series of six reference levels, which allow users to describe a learner's progression in detail. These levels, according to the 2018 CEFR companion, must be seen as a necessary simplification in order to organise learning and track and describe progress (Council of Europe, 2018). On the one hand, they help educators to decide which language activities are relevant for a particular group of learners, and on the other hand, they give learners a clear idea of what needs to be achieved in those activities in order to reach a certain language goal. It should be noted that the reference levels represent substantial chunks of learning. Potentially, language instructors need to specify much smaller baby steps for their learners.

In the CEFR, the language learner starts at level A1 and the highest level to be reached is C2. Rather than providing information on what the learner 'must learn' or taking a deficiency approach (i.e., focussing on what the learner does wrong or is not able to do, which was common in language assessment in the past) the learner's progression is described with 'can-do' statements. For each level, the CEFR describes in depth the language knowledge, skills and competences needed for effective communication. This approach is particularly apparent in the self-assessment grid, which is specifically designed for learners' own use.

Many language learners are familiar with the global scale of the CEFR (see Figure 1 below), which provides a general idea of what is required at each level in the form of 'can-do' statements. The descriptors are phrased in the first person, which makes them more direct and personal. In this way, learners' own responsibility for their progress is stressed: instead of 'the teacher wants me to learn', they are encouraged to frame their learning in terms of 'I need to learn this in order to get to, e.g., B2 level'.

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Figure 1 – CEFR Global Scale

This global scale gives the learner an idea of where they are heading when developing their language skills. Not only does it tell the learner what needs to be mastered

at a certain level, it also includes topics (e.g., for level B1, talking about dreams and hopes) and, by implication, language functions and structures that are needed in order to fulfil these requirements (e.g., when talking or writing about hopes and dreams, the language learner needs to be able to use the future and certain modal verbs correctly). So rather than listing grammar items or word fields to acquire, the scale very cleverly gives the language learner an idea of what they need to be able to express in the foreign language at a specific level. The progression starts at a very personal level (personal details, personal lives, surroundings), moves on to events, dreams, hopes, giving viewpoints, and finally to utterly flexible and precise use of language in every domain and in every given situation.

In addition to the global scale, the CEFR includes more than 80 illustrative scales. They are grouped into three main categories. LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES cover the four main skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking) in the main areas of Reception, Production, Interaction and Mediation. LANGUAGE STRATEGIES are needed to achieve the language activities in all the skills listed above. LANGUAGE COMPETENCES cover the linguistic and socio-linguistic, pragmatic and plurilingual and pluricultural knowledge needed to communicate successfully. These subscales cover different areas, but are all applied to the same six levels of A1 – C2.

The main function of the illustrative scales in the CEFR is to help align curriculum, teaching and assessment. When creating a curriculum or a syllabus for a course, descriptors can be selected according to their relevance to the particular context. Descriptors can also be adapted if necessary. In this way, the descriptors provide a detailed, flexible resource for:

- relating learning aims to real world language use, thus giving a framework to action-oriented learning;
- providing transparent 'signposting' to learners, parents, sponsors;
- offering a 'menu' to negotiate priorities with adult learners in a process of ongoing needs analysis;
- suggesting classroom tasks to teachers, usually tasks that will involve activities described in several descriptors;
- introducing criterion-referenced assessment with the criteria relating to an external framework (here the CEFR). (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 42)

These illustrative scales form the basis of many assessment scales, for example, the ones developed by a group of experts for the Austrian standardised *Matura.*

Washback effect of the CEFR

Since the CEFR has been the template for the Austrian curriculum (and before that for the *Bildungsstandards* - educational standards set for schools), it has changed the attitude and approach to foreign language teaching in Austria considerably. It has caused a great ripple effect in ELT professionals' understanding of sustainably teaching language and also assessing it, and its impact can be seen, for example, in the changes to coursebooks, professional development seminars for teachers and initial teacher training courses.

The effect of the CEFR is most notable in the Austrian curriculum. Before the CEFR became the foundation of our curriculum, the curriculum provided teachers with lists of *Lehrinhalte* (teaching contents). In other words, the focus was on what must be taught, rather than on what learners reliably ought to be able to do. Today, the explicit goal of foreign language acquisition is the development of sustainable communicative language competence, from which ensues the ability to successfully communicate in private and professional everyday situations in a socio-linguistically appropriate way. It stipulates which situations the learners should be able to successfully deal with in the foreign language without specific preparation at *Matura* level and clarifies the linguistic, strategic and pragmatic complexity of the language level allocated to each year of learning, based on descriptors adapted from the CEFR descriptors.

Another aspect of the CEFR is that it has also strongly influenced teaching approaches and assessment, namely the requirement that all four language skills, i.e., listening, reading, speaking (monologue, dialogue) and writing must be taught with equal emphasis. By teaching grammar without any connection to its meaningful use in real life communication, the new requirements of the CEFR and the curriculum cannot be met. This means that the exclusive use of 'traditional' teaching approaches, for example, grammar-based teaching with a strong focus on structure and form and translation, cannot be reconciled with the CEFR and hence the current curriculum (see chapter 11 in this volume). The methods and approaches of communicative language teaching (see chapter 1 in this volume) are better suited not only to train the four skills with equal emphasis, but also to link teaching to real life language use as much as possible.

The CEFR and the standardised *Matura*

The Austrian curriculum is based on the CEFR. The curriculum for *Unterstufe* and *Oberstufe* describes the levels that need to be reached at a certain year of learning as based on the CEFR. The target level is B2 after eight years of language learning and

B1 after six years of learning. As a result, the standardised *Matura* in modern foreign languages is based on the descriptors at level B2 and B1 respectively, depending on how long a learner has studied a language.

The test construct for the exam was originally developed at the University of Innsbruck and is now continuously provided by a team of skilled experts at the Ministry of Education. Each exam item is piloted on Austrian students. The exams consist of two parts: the written exam and the oral exam.

The written exam is standardised and the four skills are tested independently. The task types are the following:

- Reading: four tasks of the following task types: true/false with justification (first four words of the sentence the information was taken from), multiple choice (four options), matching, short (four word) answers
- Listening: four tasks of the following task types: multiple choice (four options), matching and short answers (four words)
- Language in Use: four tasks of the following task types: multiple choice, word formation, banked gap filling, open gap filling
- Writing: two writing tasks, a short one (250 words) and a long one (400 words) such as essay, article, report, e-mails (formal/informal), blog and blog comment

The correction of the receptive skills and Language in Use tasks is done by teachers with a key sent out by the ministry. The correction of the written texts must be carried out by teachers using the assessment scales for the levels B1 or B2, provided by the ministry. These scales were developed using the illustrative CEFR descriptors for Communicative Language Competence (Council of Europe, 2001). Instructions on how to use the assessment scale correctly in order to grade learner texts are provided by the Ministry of Education (see suggestions for further reading at the end of this chapter).

The oral exam in the subject English, the first modern language that learners learn, is not standardised, but must be drawn up by the teachers, who are also the examiners, themselves. In order to do this, a high level of expertise is expected from Austrian *AHS* and *BHS* teachers. The oral exam is also based on the descriptors of the CEFR.

A research team of the University of Innsbruck led by Carol Spöttl determined the design of the Austrian oral *Matura* (see Spöttl et al., 2016 for more detailed information). A major shift was made from a mainly fact-based exam in the past, where

candidates were asked factual questions on topics covered in class, to a communicative exam that consists of two separate tasks, namely a monologue (presentation) which is allocated a time slot of five minutes and a dialogue, either conducted with another pupil or with the teacher as the dialogue partner, with an allocated time slot of 10 minutes. Different skills are needed for these two performances. A versatile, spontaneous command of the language is required to master the dialogue task. By contrast, uninterrupted, coherent speech is expected from the learners in the monologue. They have to cover a topic drawn from the *Themenkorb* (the given pool of topics). This consists of a number of topics (the exact number depends on the number of lessons per year the subject was taught in all four years of upper secondary school). The pool of topics is compiled by the class teacher and must be approved by the team of English teachers of the school the learner attends.

The descriptors listed below are stated as the target descriptors that need to be present in the learner performances in the oral *Matura* (see, for example, BMBF, 2013). The correlating CEFR descriptors are quoted in brackets.

- Kann Sachverhalte klar und systematisch beschreiben und darstellen und dabei wichtige Punkte und relevante stützende Details angemessen hervorheben. (CEFR: Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.)
- Kann zu einer großen Bandbreite von Themen aus ihren/seinen Interessensgebieten klare und detaillierte Beschreibungen und Darstellungen geben, Ideen ausführen und durch untergeordnete Punkte und relevante Beispiele abstützen. (CEFR: Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.)
- Kann die Sprache gebrauchen, um flüssig, korrekt und wirkungsvoll über ein breites Spektrum allgemeiner Themen oder über Freizeitthemen zu sprechen und dabei Zusammenhänge zwischen Ideen deutlich machen. (CEFR: Overall Spoken Interaction: Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas.)
- Kann sich spontan und mit guter Beherrschung der Grammatik verständigen, praktisch ohne den Eindruck zu erwecken, sich mit dem, was sie/er sagen möchte, einschränken zu müssen; der Grad an Formalität ist den Umständen angemessen. (CEFR: Overall Spoken Interaction: Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign

of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.)

- Kann sich so spontan und fließend verständigen, sodass ein normales Gespräch und anhaltende Beziehungen zu Muttersprachlerinnen und Muttersprachlern ohne größere Anstrengung auf beiden Seiten gut möglich sind. (CEFR: Overall Spoken Interaction: Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with speakers of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party.)
- Kann die Bedeutung von Ereignissen und Erfahrungen für sich selbst hervorheben und Standpunkte durch relevante Erklärungen und Argumente klar begründen und verteidigen. (CEFR: Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.)

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Study the CEFR global scale and the self-assessment grid and make a list of adjectives and descriptive phrases that are used in the descriptors of the different levels / topics for the different levels. Consult your list to determine at which level the learners must be able to do what. What topics do they have to be able to communicate about?

2. How can you apply the knowledge from question 1 in your lesson planning?

3. Descriptors from the *AHS Oberstufe* curriculum indicate what a teacher needs to teach and on what level. Think of what tasks you could set to practice the descriptors listed below.

- Unkomplizierte Sachinformationen über gewöhnliche alltags-, berufs- und ausbildungsbezogene Themen verstehen und dabei die Hauptaussagen und Einzelinformationen erkennen können, sofern klar artikuliert und mit vertrautem Akzent gesprochen wird. (*Hören*, 6. Klasse, Kompetenzmodul 3+4)
- Flüssig, korrekt und wirkungsvoll über ein breites Spektrum allgemeiner Themen sprechen und dabei Zusammenhänge zwischen Ideen deutlich machen können. (*An Gesprächen teilnehmen und zusammenhängend Sprechen*, 8. Klasse, Kompetenzmodul 7+8)

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Suggestions for further reading

The 'Praxisreihe' series of publications by the ÖSZ (Österreichisches Sprachenkompetenz Zentrum) offers a wide range of excellent materials for teachers. For example, this publication from 2020 provides valuable materials in preparation for the oral *Matura:*

Mündliche Reifeprüfung Englisch: Modellaufgaben und Videoperformanzen auf dem Niveau B2 http://www.oesz.at/OESZNEU/document2.php?Submit=&pub_ID=229

These publications from 2018 provide valuable materials in preparation for the written *Matura*:

Modellbewertungen zu Englisch-Schreibperformanzen mit dem Beurteilungsraster B1
http://www.oesz.at/download/publikationen/praxisreihe33_web.pdf
Modellbewertungen zu Englisch-Schreibperformanzen mit dem Beurteilungsraster B2
https://www.oesz.at/download/publikationen/praxisreihe_29_web.pdf

More information on the *Matura* can be found on the webpage of the Ministry of Education: https://www.matura.gv.at/srdp/lebende-fremdsprachen

Teachers need to check the above link regularly, since the structures demanded at the *Matura* each year are adapted and changed rather frequently. Thus, a regular information update for teachers is a prerequisite.

Commentary on reflection questions:

1. Level A

simple, basic, routine phrases, familiar everyday expressions, concrete needs, slow, clear, immediate environment, frequently used expressions, repeat, rephrase, etc.

Topic: me and my immediate concrete surroundings (for learners in school: my family, that's me, my school, my house, my clothes, etc.)

Level B

Familiar topics, understand main points, complex, fluency, spontaneity, without strain, clear detailed, viewpoints, offer various options, state advantages and disadvantages, coherent, contemporary literary prose, essay and report, etc.

Topics: concrete and abstract – wide range of current topics (for learners in school from the *Themenkörbe*)

Level C

No difficulty, fast, abstract, linguistically complex, specialized article, literary works, idiomatic, fluent, shades of meaning, colloquialisms, clear, coherent, complex, appropriate to style, logical, smooth, effective

Topics: all topics and genres

2. Your answer to this reflection question will depend on your learners' language level.

3. On the following page is a sample task from: Österreichisches Sprachenkompetenz Zentrum. (2020). *Mündliche Reifeprüfung Englisch: Modellaufgaben und Videoperformanzen auf dem Niveau B2*. (p. 28). http://www.oesz.at/OESZ-NEU/document2.php?Submit=&pub_ID=229

Rules and laws

Aspect: smoking

Foto: Adobe Stock, Mikalai Badnikou

Foto: Adobe Stock 201673567, AungMyo

Individual long turn

Give a five-minute talk on the topic of smoking in which you

- use these pictures to **speculate** about reasons why people smoke,
- **discuss** the legal situation in regard to smoking in Austria,
- **analyze** whether regulations benefit people's health.

Figure 2: Oral *Matura* sample task

6 Using coursebooks effectively

Andreas Kaplan and Nancy Campbell

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Key words

Deficiency view of coursebook use

Difference view of coursebook use

Coursebook use of beginning and experienced teachers

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is the role of coursebooks in Austrian ELT classes?

What can teachers expect their coursebooks to contribute to their teaching?

What can teachers not expect from coursebooks?

How can teachers entering the profession use their coursebooks effectively?

How does effective coursebook use develop as a teacher gains more experience?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

In the Austrian school system, the coursebook has a particular legal status (see suggestions for further reading at the end of this chapter), and any discussion of the role of coursebooks in the language classroom must take this into account. Since educational reforms in the 1970s, Austrian school students have been provided with personal copies of coursebooks free of charge (*Schulbuchaktion*). The state checks and approves all coursebooks available this way to make sure they follow the curriculum and fulfill certain other minimum requirements (*Approbation*). This means that, in Austria, every learner at a school can be provided with their personal copy of a book to use in class and at home, which has made coursebooks an integral part of ELT in the Austrian school system.

Although schools are not obliged to use the approved coursebooks, in practice coursebook use is widespread in Austria. How the choice of coursebook is made varies from school to school. Some leave the choice to the individual teachers, while others ask all teachers of a subject (*Fachkonferenz*) to agree on one book. Depending on the kind of school, the law states that the final decision is to be made either by all teachers collectively (*Schulkonferenz*) or a parent-teacher conference (*Schulforum*). The book budget is limited, so sometimes difficult decisions have to be made on which coursebooks can be afforded.

This specifically Austrian situation has contributed to a special status of coursebooks in Austrian school ELT classes. However, this special status does not regulate in detail how coursebooks should be used in the language classroom. Some teachers mistakenly believe the coursebook to be the curriculum, rather than materials intended to help cover some parts of it. This does not seem to be an exclusively Austrian idea, as Appel (2011) comments: "In no other school subject do coursebooks exert a similar influence as in language teaching. The book is in fact often treated as the syllabus" (p. 39). Teachers who subscribe to this idea might place a lot of emphasis on 'completing' or 'finishing' the coursebook with a class, thinking they can follow the curriculum by doing all tasks in the book from cover to cover.

The move in Austria towards standardisation of teaching, learning and testing, particularly in connection with the centralised *Matura*, which was introduced in 2007, has increased the importance of coursebooks in classes. In response to increasing standardisation, teachers might be implicitly or explicitly expected to follow the progression of their assigned coursebook, completing as much as possible in the available time. When principals ask their teachers to write similar tests in parallel classes, for example, it is often easiest for teachers to agree on certain chapters of the coursebook which all of them will cover to prepare the students for a test.

Overall, coursebooks play an important role for ELT teachers at Austrian schools, providing both structure and content for their lessons. However, this does not mean that coursebooks are accepted without question. One criticism is that coursebooks are only used by lazy or unskilled teachers. Language teachers are likely to come across this criticism both in their time as student teachers and in the early years of professional practice. This extreme view of the role of the coursebook in language teaching is encapsulated in the deficiency and difference views discussed by Allwright (1981).

The deficiency view sees teaching materials, including coursebooks, as a means of saving learners from the deficiencies of their teacher in that the coursebook can be relied on to cover the syllabus and to present carefully crafted, meaningful activities. Allwright (1981) argues that this view could lead to coursebook use being regarded as superfluous by skilled teachers but also as a way of compensating for poor teaching. In contrast, the difference view posits that decisions about what to teach are best taken by someone other than the teacher: teachers are in the classroom to teach, and it is not their role to produce materials, which is a task better left to experts.

These extreme positions are worth discussing because they are arguably at the core of negative attitudes towards coursebook use. Let us first address the question of

laziness. Is it true that reliance on coursebooks is the prerogative of lazy teachers? We argue that this is not the case. Popular textbooks employed in language teacher training courses in Austria (e.g., Grimm et al., 2015, Harmer, 2015; Ur, 2012) provide a more balanced and reasoned perspective on the role of coursebooks in the language classroom. Grimm et al. (2015), for example, emphasise the link between coursebook use and three teacher-related factors: academic background of the teacher, teaching experience and degree of personal commitment . They argue convincingly that the extent to which teachers rely on coursebooks depends on how well trained they are, on the stage they are at in their career, and on the amount of time they are willing and able to spend on preparing lessons.

Grimm et al.'s (2015) commonsense approach to coursebooks in the language classroom is one which we share: it is simply unrealistic to expect the same degree of commitment to materials development from all teachers. Teachers with extensive knowledge of language acquisition and of language in general, who have taught for many years and are both well established in their profession and prepared to invest in further training, are less likely to follow a coursebook systematically than an inexperienced teacher, who may additionally have to contend with less favourable working conditions (too many contact hours, large classes, precarious contracts). We must also remember that teachers have other commitments outside of the classroom, including family duties. To equate coursebook use with laziness is therefore unfair and ignores the key variables of teacher education, experience, professional commitment and working/life context.

The deficiency view can thus be rejected. The difference view, however, does have some validity. As Pit Corder (1973) pointed out in an influential publication, language teaching involves several players apart from classroom teachers, including materials designers, curriculum and syllabus writers as well as educational planners. Pit Corder (1973) uses the term "language teaching operation" to refer to this complex context for language teaching (pp. 10-15). This discussion of the language teaching operation is highly relevant to Austria for several reasons.

First of all, Austrian schools are not independent entities but are subject to centralised regulation, for example, in curriculum design and the centralised *Matura*. These external constraints may be forgotten by opponents of coursebook use. Secondly, Pit Corder's (1973) recognition of materials designer as a distinct role in the language teaching operation points to a distinction between classroom teaching and materials design. Although some teachers may also be skilled materials designers, this is not necessarily the case, and we should be cautious about conflating

these two roles: designing materials is clearly not the same as teaching while effective teachers are not necessarily good materials designers. Further, writing single tasks involves less time and effort than designing a syllabus or sequence of tasks. Writing materials is extremely time consuming, and it is unrealistic to expect beginning teachers to write all their materials themselves at the same time as they get to grips with classroom practice.

Clearly, the question of whether to use coursebooks in the language classroom or not cannot simply be reduced to a yes/no question. There are simply too many factors which have to be taken into account, ranging from teaching context to individual teachers' expertise and experience. Bearing this diversity in mind, the next sections of this chapter will take a closer look at how to use coursebooks to full effect both at the beginning of a teacher's career and as the teacher becomes more experienced.

What can teachers expect from a coursebook?

To become an effective teacher, it is essential to know what you can or cannot expect your coursebook to do for you. This enables you to choose the best possible book and make good use of the strengths of your chosen coursebook while compensating for what it cannot provide. There are several features of approved coursebooks which teachers should be able to rely on (see Harmer, 2015, pp. 71-72).

Firstly, a well-edited coursebook should be well-researched and virtually free of errors. You should be able to depend on your coursebook to teach correct English in a coherent syllabus, both in vocabulary and grammar. The instructions for tasks should be clear and the tasks should work as described, without needing a lot of extra explanations. The tasks should suggest methodology which is similar to or at least compatible with your own. If the coursebook explains grammatical concepts in a different way from how you have chosen to present them in class, the two approaches should not be confusing to the learners.

Your coursebook should offer practice and reference materials intended for self-study by learner. These can be presented in a workbook plus answer key or a website, or both. If the book offers many tasks learners can do without much input from you, this allows you to spend valuable one-on-one time with those learners who need additional support. In addition, materials for self-assessment can provide valuable feedback to students which can complement your own. A good coursebook can thus help learners to take more responsibility for their learning and be less dependent on their teacher (Ur, 2012).

Writing exam materials is a complex affair, especially when the tasks are meant to mimic standardised exam formats such as the *Matura* accurately. Good coursebooks offer a regular supply of tasks without letting classes deteriorate into 'teaching to the test' situations by integrating the test formats into teaching sequences. Furthermore, exams keep evolving, and with them, approved coursebooks. Therefore, using a coursebook that is as up-to-date as possible will prove enormously helpful to teachers when devising tests: ten-year-old exam tasks might be very different from current examples.

Secondly, while it would be unrealistic to expect reading the coursebook to become your learner's favourite leisure time activity, the coursebook should be somewhat engaging, providing some fun tasks from time to time and not demotivating for your learners. Since learners are used to professionally designed images, the book should be more visually appealing and well-designed than you could make your own materials look on a regular basis.

Finally, coursebooks save teachers valuable time. Finding relevant authentic materials is time-consuming and judging whether their level is appropriate for learners is demanding work, even more so for audio and video materials than for written texts. A coursebook can take some of that load off your shoulders by offering a range of appropriate texts as well as audios and videos that can then be supplemented with materials on current topics of interest to your learners. The teacher's guide which accompanies the learner's book is not just useful for its answer key, but also for ideas on the intended learning goals and on how to best do the tasks in class.

Overall, a good coursebook should not only help you teach your learners, but should also support you in becoming a more highly skilled teacher. It might suggest activities you would not have thought of yourself, encourage you to try out a variety of approaches to different topics and keep you up-to-date with developments in teaching and testing methodology. If a coursebook succeeds in doing so, it can definitely be an "agent for change" rather than a crutch (Crawford, 2002, p. 83).

What can a coursebook NOT do?

If coursebooks are really such an invaluable resource in the language teaching classroom, as indicated above, why is coursebook use so often equated with laziness or incompetence on the part of the teacher? The reason for the bad reputation of coursebooks can be summed up in two mistaken views about their purpose. Firstly, coursebooks may be seen as prescribing a correct methodology which teachers are

expected to follow; in other words, methodology is seen as integral to the design of the coursebook.

This view is questionable: following a coursebook is not a substitute for considering appropriate methodology and coursebook writers do not see prescribing methodology as part of their remit. Of course, certain methodological approaches will seem more appropriate than others, but teachers will always have to give careful consideration as to how to present new material to learners and how to practice this material in an effective manner. In short, no coursebook can ever substitute for methodological considerations.

A related problem is that using a coursebook may be regarded as a straightjacket to the creative teacher. This view is particularly damaging to the inexperienced teacher because it equates using a coursebook with the teacher's lack of creativity. This does a serious injustice to the skill of the coursebook writer as well as to the ability of the teacher. A more useful way to view the coursebook is as a "scaffold for what happens in the classroom" (Levrai, 2013, p. 5). Coursebooks give less experienced teachers support and guidance concerning how to implement the curriculum while more experienced teachers can employ them as a useful source of materials which they can select and adapt according to the needs of their learners.

Scrivener (1998) sums up this more balanced view of coursebook use as follows:

> [U]ntil you feel secure, use your coursebooks exactly as intended by the author. When you are ready, then experiment a bit [...] by personalizing a few exercises, choosing not to do some of them, etc. Gradually assume control over the book and use it increasingly as a resource rather than the centerpiece of the course (p. 43).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to provide teachers with a practical approach to coursebook use which recognises the varied teaching contexts they are likely to confront both at the beginning of their teaching careers and as they gain professional experience. Our discussion is firmly contextualized in the Austrian school system, where the coursebook has a specific legal status which, we argue, cannot be ignored. Well-designed coursebooks contribute in important ways to effective language teaching, and their value changes according to the experience and teaching context of individual teachers. Levrai's (2013) discussion of the role of coursebooks sums up our position succinctly:

> Love them or hate them, commercially produced coursebooks are with us and will remain with us for the foreseeable future. As our profession continues to grow and evolve, so must these coursebooks and our attitudes towards them (p. 4).

Practical applications

We have already said that a beginning teacher might be expected to follow the progression and suggested tasks of the coursebook used quite closely. In contrast, experienced teachers can be expected to have a clearer idea of the level of their learners and the intended learning outcomes. In addition, it is likely that they can draw on a wide range of self-produced materials for all kinds of situations. Therefore, experienced teachers may have less need of a coursebook to structure their lessons or provide appropriate materials. Such teachers can afford to use the coursebook and its accompanying materials more selectively, only choosing single tasks that suit their aims and replacing the rest with their own materials.

The two following examples show how a coursebook text might be used differently depending on the experience of the teachers involved. Example 1 is designed for beginning teachers, while Example 2 is intended for more experienced teachers. Both use pages 24 and 25 of the coursebook *way2go! 6*, which you can access via this link: www.oebv.at/flippingbook/9783209091895/24/.

Example 1:

Goal: learners will read for specific information; learners will become familiar with a *Matura* test format

Activity: reading task

Rationale: to prepare for a *Matura* test format

Pre-knowledge: previous introductory work on the topic of art and museums

Level: CEFR B1+

Procedure

1. The teacher asks learners to work in pairs to talk about the questions given in exercise 14a.

2. The teacher walks around the class, listening in on conversations without interrupting.

3. After about five minutes, the teacher asks three learners to give a short summary of their conversation to the whole class.

4. The teacher asks learners to read the 'Strategies' box, then answers any questions they might have about the task.

5. The teacher shows the class an example of a multiple matching listening task they have done previously and points out the similarities.

6. The teacher asks learners to read the texts and complete the task.

7. After about fifteen minutes, the teacher goes through the correct answers with the class. The learners are asked to justify their answers with the corresponding sentences of the texts. Any wrong answers are discussed to find out what kind of misunderstanding occurred.

Example 2:

Goal: learners will read for meaning; learners will summarize findings orally; learners will become familiar with a *Matura* test format

Activity: integrated reading and speaking task

Rationale: to reflect real-life language use; to prepare for a *Matura* test format

Pre-knowledge: previous introductory work on the topic of art and museums

Level: CEFR B1+

Procedure

1. The teacher divides the class into five groups. The members of each group read one of the five texts.

2. The teacher asks learners to prepare an oral summary of their text for the other learners and to choose three expressions from their text to explain to their peers.

3. After about five minutes, the teacher puts the learners into new groups so that each group has at least one expert for each of the five texts.

4. The teacher asks learners to present their text to the group and listen to the presentations of the other members. Learners have to take notes on the content and the expressions they are presented.

5. After about fifteen minutes, the teacher stops the group work and asks learners to match the statements in the task to the five texts.

6. Once learners have matched as much as they can, they are allowed to read all five texts and compare their understanding with the ideas they got from the group work.

7. The teacher goes through the correct answers with the class and asks learners to justify their answers with the corresponding sentences of the texts. Any wrong answers are discussed to find out what kind of misunderstanding occurred.

8. The expressions learners have chosen are collected on a learning platform to be practiced and expanded on in the following lessons.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. For this activity, you should have a particular class in mind. Select a unit from a coursebook which you are using or have used in school. Identify a task in the unit which you would like to adapt, for example, to focus on a specific language point, and design a teaching sequence based on your chosen activity. One idea is to employ a story included in a unit to focus on the use of past simple and progressive.

2. Select a task from a coursebook which you are using or have used in school. Adapt this task for a different learning goal. For example, you might take a listening or reading task and devise a writing activity, or a reading task and devise a speaking activity.

3. Are coursebooks just for lazy teachers? What is your opinion now?

4. How does the coursebook you currently work with (or one you have at hand) support your work? What do you have to add or adapt to fulfill the requirements of the curriculum?

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Suggestions for further reading

Grimm, N., Meyer, M., & Volkmann, L. (2015). *Teaching English*. Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.

This book discusses key issues and trends in language teaching and learning. It is of particular interest because the discussion focusses on the German educational context and therefore offers the reader the opportunity to draw parallels between Austrian and German teacher education and language learning.

Students and beginning teachers are recommended to familiarise themselves with the legal basis for coursebook choice and use in Austrian schools by accessing these documents:

Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes, Schulunterrichtsgesetz (SchUG)

Legal basis for coursebooks in §14

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Dokumentnummer=NOR40119622 [August 23, 2019]

Rights of students and parents to have a say in the choice of coursebooks

§58 students

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Dokumentnummer=NOR40019426 [August 23, 2019]

§61 parents

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Dokumentnummer=NOR12126608 [August 23, 2019]

Obligation of the Austrian state to pay for school books

§ 31 Familienlastenausgleichsgesetzes 1967 (FLAG)

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/NormDokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008220&FassungVom=2019-08-22&Artikel=&Paragraf=31&Anlage=&Uebergangsrecht= [August 23, 2019]

The details are published yearly as an *Erlass* from the ministry

https://www.schulbuchaktion.at/sba_downloads/sba2019/Schulbucherlass_2019_20.pdf [August 23, 2019]

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **2.** Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on your use of coursebooks.

3. A good starting point would be to reflect on any comments you have heard from school teachers or teacher educators concerning the role of coursebooks. Bearing in mind what you have read in this chapter, how would you react both to negative and positive comments?

4. First of all, read the curriculum for the specific school type and year group which the coursebook is aimed at. Try to find tasks in the book which specifically address features of the curriculum. Is there any area which is missing? Two areas which you should pay particular attention to are writing tasks and extensive reading. With writing, check to see how much instruction and guidance is given concerning specific text types.

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7 Technology in the English classroom

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Key words

CALL, MALL, SAMR

E-Learning

Mobile Learning (M-Learning)

Flipped learning/Flipped classroom

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What are the main principles in connection with technology use in the classroom?

What are the main drivers of technology use in Austrian classrooms?

What are the advantages and challenges of incorporating technology into the English language classroom?

What are some ways of implementing technology in the English language classroom?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

The advancement of technology and the internet has not only significantly altered people's (communicative) lives but also teachers' and learners' lives in educational settings. Electronic devices with WIFI reception have entered the classrooms with considerable impact on how teachers teach, and learners learn. However, the preponderance of tools and apps for teachers also often means that teachers have to face certain challenges and pressures that they have not been properly prepared for. In addition to incorporating technology into teaching, these include reflecting on, re-evaluating and adapting teaching styles as well as providing learning opportunities. Despite these pressures and various challenges, incorporating technology into teaching also means new fields of discovery for both teachers and learners. Yet even though teachers and learners routinely use apps for contemporary social practices, transferring them into their professional environments does not always work seamlessly (Kessler & Hubbard, 2017; Winke & Goertler, 2008). This could be seen when teachers had to move to online teaching overnight during the COVID Pandemic. Most teachers had adequate knowledge about computer-assisted language learning (CALL) principles and digital competencies/literacy (Dudeney et al., 2013). However, the abrupt move to online teaching in 2020 very clearly showed the necessity of adapting and implementing these principles in everyday teaching.

In this chapter, we will introduce some of the key terms for technology in general before focusing on the Austrian context and the drivers for technology use in Austrian classrooms. We will then highlight some advantages and challenges which occur when implementing technology and discuss some first steps towards applying tools and apps in the English language classroom.

Key terms for digital technology

The potential of technology and the computer in particular as a tool for language learning was recognised early on. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the introduction of computers for the masses, a discipline called CALL (computer-assisted language learning) was developed. A very broad and early definition describes CALL as "any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language" (Beatty, 2010, p. 7). CALL covers a myriad of diverse activities and technologies, material designs, modes of instruction and pedagogical approaches such as behaviourism and constructivism. Due to the changing nature of electronic devices, CALL as a discipline had to continuously develop new approaches, or rather adapt to the introduction of new devices. In the CALL tradition, software programmes (e.g., for text manipulation), CD-ROMS and synchronous as well as asynchronous computer-mediated communication (e.g., email, chat, video- and audioconferencing) were applied to language learning.

However, as digital devices were becoming increasingly smaller and, above all, handheld, such as smartphones, tablets, and even small laptop computers, a new acronym seemed necessary and was introduced: MALL - mobile-assisted language learning. The focus shifted from transferring knowledge to supporting learners and their learning. MALL differs from CALL "in its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity, or spontaneity of access and interaction across different contexts of use" (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008, p. 273). A number of functions and apps such as recording speech, making a video and taking pictures are now accessible to teachers and learners to support language learning with just one device.

Another key term teachers should be aware of is SAMR, which refers to a model developed in the mid-2000s for classifying and evaluating learning activities as well as encouraging and supporting teachers who apply technology in their teaching. The SAMR model consists of four classifications of technology used for learning activities: substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition. While substitution and augmentation lead to the enhancement of tasks, modification and redefinition transform tasks by using technology. To provide a few concrete examples of

how this model could be applied in the classroom setting, we could say that substitution occurs when an essay is typed instead of written by hand; augmentation involves using word processing tools such as spell checkers; modification results in reshaping a task by, for example, embedding multimedia artefacts to complement a reflective diary on a blog; and redefinition allows for completely new tasks previously impossible such as collaborative process writing via wikis or cloud services (Dudeney et al., 2013). The SAMR model has received criticism due to its hierarchical structure, the focus on product instead of process and the absence of context (see e.g., Hamilton et al., 2016 for further details). However, it does have potential to function as a form of reflection on one's own didactic use of technology.

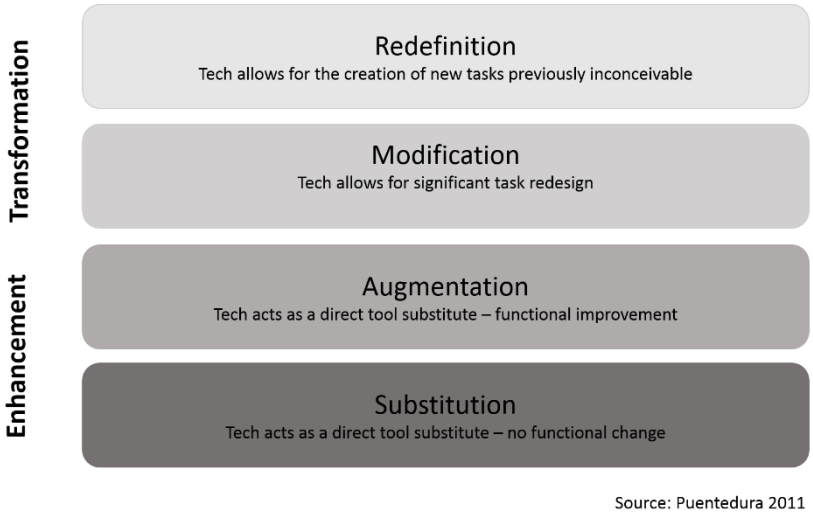

Figure 1: SAMR model

In addition to CALL, MALL and SAMR, other terms and approaches have been introduced to educational contexts. E-learning, being the broadest term, encompasses all forms of instruction delivered via computers using a variety of media. Mobile learning or m-learning can be defined similarly, the only difference being that the instruction and practice occurs on a mobile (and smaller) device. Seamless learning refers to learning anywhere, anyhow and anytime and bridges different kinds of learning such as in-school and after-school learning, formal and informal learning and learning online and offline. Learners are encouraged to use any learning resources to their advantage and to make use of their out-of-class experiences for their learning (see chapter 2 in this volume).

One final term that can be considered when talking about e-learning is the digital escape room. Multimodal literacy has become crucial for today's learning and one way learning and literacy can be incorporated into teaching is through digital escape rooms. They are virtual rooms filled with tasks (clues) which need to be solved in order to reach or unlock the final assignment. These digital escape rooms can be about a specific topic comprising a variety of language tasks with gamified elements (see Practical Applications at the end of this chapter).

Drivers for technology usage in Austrian classrooms

In the Austrian context, using technology in teaching is tied to and fostered by the digi.komp competence frameworks for pupils (https://www.digikomp.at/). These frameworks are guidelines for incorporating tools into teaching and for teaching learners digital competencies alongside the subject content. These digital competencies include the use of digital technologies for learning and the ability of performing tasks effectively in digital environments (Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2008). Taking into consideration the Austrian school system, four frameworks for digital competencies were developed: digi.komp4 for primary school, digi.komp8 and digi.komp9 for lower secondary school and digi.komp12 for upper secondary school. Each of these frameworks comprises objectives learners should reach by the end of the respective grade. These frameworks are also accompanied by teaching materials for teachers to use.

In addition to these frameworks for learners, the digi.kompP framework displaying the digital competencies necessary for teachers was developed (https://www.virtuelle-ph.at/digikomp/). The curricula for primary and secondary school teachers' education at some universities and university colleges of teacher education already include digital competencies. Continuous development courses about digital competencies for teachers are also categorised according to this framework (see www.digifolio.at for further information).

There are three drivers for fostering technology in the classroom in Austria: the Austrian Ministry of Education, the National Center of Competence (NCoC) eEducation Austria and *Virtuelle PH* (The University College of Virtual Teacher Education), as well as Flipped Classroom Austria. The Austrian Ministry of Education has released several policies to enhance teaching and learning with technology over the last few years, such as Schule 4.0, digifolio.at and the introduction of *Digitale Grundbildung* (basic digital literacy) as a compulsory subject in lower secondary school. Even if *Digitale Grundbildung* is taught as a subject of its own, this does not mean that digital competencies should be ignored in the English language classroom. For

example, by incorporating various aspects into the English language classroom, digital competencies and language skills can be fostered simultaneously (Miglbauer, 2017).

Two institutions focusing on digital literacies of learners and teachers which have a considerable impact on the Austrian educational landscape are the National Center of Competence (NCoC) eEducation Austria and the *Virtuelle PH*. The former supports schools and their engagement in digital literacy. Schools can obtain badges for their digital expertise acquired in continuous professional development courses on implementing e-learning/mlearning, learning with digital media, and coding, to name a few. The *Virtuelle PH* supports teachers and university colleges of teacher education by providing online courses on digital competencies and didactic use of online tools to pre-service teachers and (university) teachers. Further, the *Virtuelle PH* supports university colleges of teacher education in implementing blended learning and online learning strategies into their teaching.

Another initiative with considerable impact on teachers and the implementation of blended learning is Flipped Classroom Austria (www.flipped-classroom-austria.at/). This initiative's goal is to make this blended learning model known and popular in Austria. Flipped Classroom uses out-of-classroom time for content transmission (usually via multimodal media) and classroom time for practice, questions and guidance of learners (see Bergmann & Sams, 2012 for further details) and can be used in English language classrooms (see Practical Applications at the end of this chapter).

Advantages and challenges of using technology for and in the EFL classroom

There are a number of advantages and challenges teachers may encounter when using technology in their teaching. As diverse as teachers are, so are the advantages and challenges of using technology. In this section, we would like to mention a few advantages and challenges that we have encountered in our own professional lives.

One of the main advantages of using technological tools in the classroom is the aspect of sustainability in both teaching and learning. For example, using technology for lesson planning and creating interactive worksheets means that materials are only a few mouse clicks away whenever they are needed. Further, less or no time is needed for copying materials. This is even more the case if the worksheets, for example, are interactive and can be worked on either via an app or the learning management platform that is used.

Another advantage is that learners' autonomy is enhanced by providing materials online. Such materials can either be prepared beforehand or produced during the lesson. For example, during a brainstorming session, an audience response system, such as Socrative, Mentimeter or AnswerGarden, could be used for collecting learners' contributions, and these could then be made available in electronic form to learners. Generally, giving learners the opportunity to take more control of their learning has a positive impact on the teacher's role in the classroom by putting a stronger focus on supporting learners rather than merely providing knowledge to learners.

For learners, the aforementioned higher degree of autonomous learning can be regarded as advantageous. Doing tasks on their electronic devices enables learners to do them at their own pace and they are time- and location-independent. Learners in secondary schools particularly use various apps primarily for entertainment and communication. Yet, learners still need to be made aware of how smartphones can be used as a tool for their language learning. By using smartphones, for example, to watch video clips, listen to music and play games, learners are already involved in informal learning mostly without them being aware of it. Using technology for learning, such as gamified tasks (e.g., platforms such as learningapps.org, h5p.org, Digital Escape Rooms, etc.) can also be fun and another motivator for learning English. Learning with technological tools in the classroom also facilitates immediate feedback on learners' learning progress since they learn about the correctness of their answers instantly.

One final advantage of using technology in and outside of the classroom is the opportunity it offers to work on transversal skills, which are skills not tied to a particular subject. For example, let us consider the transversal skill of digital literacy. Engaging with learners' (online) communicative practices in English can be beneficial in two ways: 1) complementing what is learned in the classroom; 2) making what happens in the classroom more relevant and resemble the 'real world' for learners.

However, there are also a number of challenges involved in implementing technology in the classroom. Firstly, testing tools in real-life classroom situations before using them in the classroom is often not possible. In fact, testing and using a tool usually occurs live in the session, thus putting additional pressure on teachers. Additionally, teachers may be insecure about using tools in the classroom since tool developers tend to highlight the attractiveness of tools rather than their educational purpose. Moreover, time or the lack of time is an issue, the more so if the WIFI is unreliable, which means that starting a quiz or app may become a time-consuming

process. Finally, learners' diverse range of electronic devices may also pose unforeseen problems.

Being open to and feeling confident about implementing tools didactically means that instruction and support is needed. However, official IT- and didactic support is often not provided to teachers by their educational institution. This means that teachers are left to acquire (didactic) knowledge of tools on their own, which may be yet another hurdle to using tools in their language classrooms.

Ways of implementing technology in the EFL classroom

In this section, we would like to briefly introduce three ways of implementing technology in the EFL classroom by focusing on merging technology use with language skills. These include fostering collaborative writing, providing and receiving feedback and practising and revising grammar and vocabulary.

Collaboration

Collaborating is a crucial global skill (see chapter 12 in this volume) which enables learners to practise working together. Giving learners control over the writing process and the end product ties in with learner autonomy and collaborative learning. Even though writing is usually perceived as individual work, acquiring writing skills does not necessarily need to be a solitary learning process. Learning from each other, supporting each other, discussing what to write and how to express ideas benefits learners during the writing process and consequently their individual work.

Using tools that support collaborative writing makes the writing process transparent as all learners and the teacher have access to the text during the writing process. One such tool is https://etherpad.net/, which is an open source online editor which facilitates collaborative writing and editing in real time. For collaborative learning, learners share a pad, each one of them is allocated a colour in which their writing is presented and they can write and edit using their own electronic devices. One of the benefits of this approach is that learners do not necessarily need to sit next to each other during the writing process since a chat function is also available. In addition, the teacher has access to all pads and can see each learner's contribution and, more interestingly, even how the writing develops.

Another way of collaborating in the English language classroom is when preparing presentations and negotiating how to visualise the contents. In addition to PowerPoint, there are tools such as Sway, Prezi, or even infographic open source programmes that can be used.

Collaborating online can also take place in the form of videos. An example of an online video response platform is Flipgrid (flipgrid.com). The platform enables teachers to set tasks for their learners (written instructions, video clips, pictures, etc.), who record their responses in the form of short video clips. They can learn through video clips (the teacher's and their classmates' video clips); they voice their opinion and provide feedback to each other. In this way, language skills and digital competencies are merged, and learning does not only happen inside but also outside the classroom.

Giving and receiving feedback

Giving and receiving feedback is another area where digital tools can help both the teacher and learners. Feedback tools can be used for brainstorming ideas, asking for opinions and providing feedback individually. Such tools are, for example, Mentimeter, Tricider and Answergarden. These tools also support learners who are not as confident in speaking out because it is possible to collect opinions anonymously. Using such tools is highly efficient since learners write their answers simultaneously and the teacher does not need to collect them by writing them on the board. Additionally, the results can be saved and used at a later stage, for example, for when teachers return to them and show their learners how much better they have become.

Some other examples of feedback tools are audience response systems such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Socrative. Feedback tools and audience response systems provide immediate feedback on learners' performance and opinions. Learners can also create quizzes for each other, which fosters collaborative work and taking control of their learning.

Practising and revising

Practising and revising (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) are essential parts of language learning. A multitude of online tools and websites can support this process. Websites and apps such as learningapps.org or Quizlet allow teachers to create their own learning sets but also provide a wide variety of learning materials that can be adapted or used immediately. The advantages of practising grammar and vocabulary with such tools are location-independence (m-learning), enhancing students'

motivation through instant rewards and the immediate feedback on learners' performance.

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goals: learners will be prepared for the next lessons by introducing new content (e.g., new grammar structures, intercultural topics, etc.) via video; learners will learn to listen for detail; learners' independent learning will be increased

Activity: learning with the flipped classroom approach

Rationale: A considerable amount of classroom time is spent on introducing new content. Some learners may not need a lot of explanation or repetition of the newly introduced topics, while others may need more time for coming to terms with the new topics/skills. The flipped classroom method allows teachers to prepare their learners for the next lesson by providing content beforehand and to use the time in class for practising or discussing the topic(s). Self-paced learning is promoted as learners who need more time, explanation or repetition have the opportunity to watch the video several times and stop whenever they want. Direct instruction is delivered to learners outside class.

Pre-knowledge: general technical knowledge; general knowledge of the topic-related vocabulary.

Level: CEFR A1+ and above

Procedure

1. The students receive an instructional video (e.g., a self-made video, a screencast, a video from one of the popular video platforms, etc.) or another digital learning object which covers the content of the next lesson. As part of their homework, learners prepare for the next lesson (e.g., by watching the video clip, looking for further information if necessary, collecting questions) and come to class well prepared.

2. As the teacher does not need to spend time on direct instruction in class because learners come to class individually prepared, class time can be used for discussion, further practice, group work or individual support. Often teachers check learners' knowledge (e.g., through audience response systems) to get a general impression

of their learners' understanding and to prepare the next steps of teaching and practice.

3. Furthermore, the teacher can take the flipped class to the next level – e.g., deeper learning strategies, like inquiry-based learning or project-based learning. By way of examples, learners can create their own (instructional) videos or concentrate on working more intensively on a specific topic. This additional step can encourage learners to immerse themselves more deeply into their own learning process. Working with different forms of media, using one's own creativity, focussing on individual topics of interest and skills can lead to learners working on their own projects in a more motivated way and taking on responsibility for their own learning.

Example 2

Goal: various skills will be combined and practiced (depending on the skills included in the digital escape room); learners will be prepared to work in teams or improve their ability to work in a team; learners will solve tasks and mysteries in order to get the key for the next assignment; learners' deductive reasoning will be improved

Activity: Digital Escape Room (also known as "Edu Breakout") created with OneNote App

Rationale: Escape Rooms have made their way from recreational entertainment into the classroom. In order to get passwords or clues, the learners need to solve mysteries or brain teasers together in small groups. These riddles work with nearly every content area, particular skill or objective that has to be taught and are an enormously engaging method of introducing learners to new content and/or practising acquired structures. Furthermore, analogous and digital educational materials can be combined, language skills and digital competencies can be merged, students' collaboration competencies are promoted and deductive reasoning and logical thinking are practised.

Pre-knowledge and required materials: general technical knowledge (working with a digital notebook, e.g., OneNote), general knowledge of the vocabulary area, one laptop per team (if played in teams) or per player (if played individually)

Level: CEFR A2

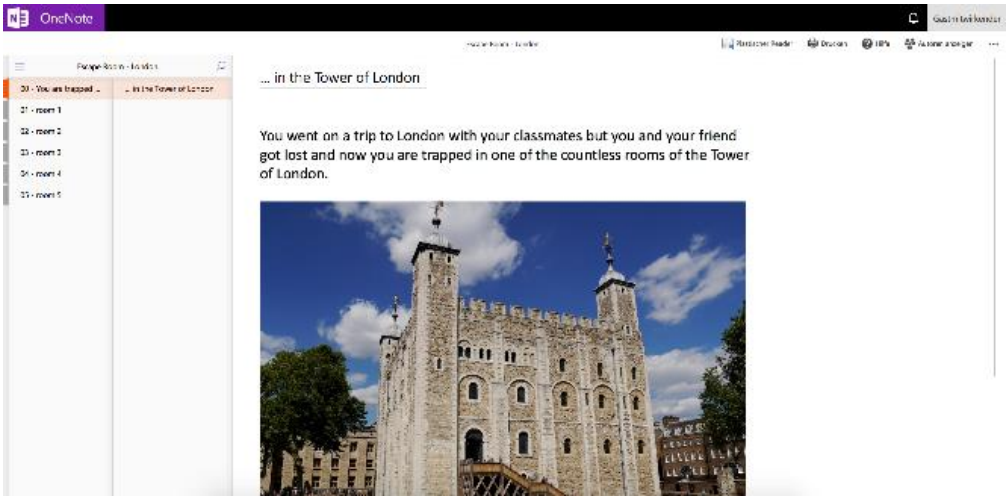

Figure 2: Digital Escape Room London (screenshot)

Procedure

1. The teacher prepares several analogous and/or digital mysteries and tasks that need to be solved (e.g., using platforms such as learningapps.org, h5p.org, Office Forms, etc.). After solving the task, learners receive a password for 'opening' the next room (e.g., the password is a combination of letters, the solution of one of the mysteries, etc.).

2. As a next step the teacher creates a OneNote notebook in which the elaborated mysteries and tasks are integrated into separate OneNote sections. For each mystery, a OneNote section of its own is required.

3. Every section needs to be provided with a password. The password for the next room is always the solution of the mystery solved before. Information or instructions on how to find the solution needs to be given (e.g., the mystery is a crossword puzzle and the password for the next room is a combination of all first letters of the answers).

4. For using the Digital Escape Room in the classroom, the teacher shares the link to the OneNote notebook with learners via email or QR code. Learners start working on solving the mysteries and brain teasers in groups or individually. Working on the tasks can be even more engaging and challenging if a time limit is set (e.g., 60 minutes). Within these 60 minutes all rooms need to be unlocked by learners in order to escape the room.

5. Finally the mysteries and tasks and the process of solving them can be reflected on and discussed in class. The following Digital Escape Room (topic: London) gives a short insight into how this idea could be implemented in class: https://kurzelinks.de/escaperoomlondon.

Figure 3: QR code

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Look at a recent lesson plan and check to what extent digital competencies (as listed in digi.komp4, digi.komp8 or digi.komp12) are taught in an integrated fashion.

2. Design your own lesson plan in which you integrate one to two digital tools. Consider the didactic scenario and how the tools enhance or transform the tasks (see SAMR model).

3. Implementing tools didactically in their teaching may be particularly challenging for novice teachers. What steps could support novice teachers?

4. How can digital competencies be integrated into online English lessons (distance / hybrid learning)? Think of various ways and benefits of merging digital competencies and language skills efficiently.

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Suggestions for further reading

Strasser, T. (2018). *Mind the App! 2.0.* Helbling Languages.

This book is a practical guide for using technology in the English classroom by providing a variety of web tools, applications and activities for the class.

Hockly, N. (2016). *Focus on Learning Technology*. Oxford University Press.

This book gives a theoretical introduction to technology in language learning and provides an overview of current theories and research on the impact of technology for young and adult learners.

Hockly, N., & Dudeney, G. (2014). *Going Mobile: Teaching with hand-held devices*. Delta Publishing.

This book explains and provides activities on how to use mobile devices in the English language classroom.

Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2015). *Flipped learning for English instruction*. International Society for Technology in Education.

This book is a practical guide for teachers who want to flip their English classroom. It shows practical ways of how to integrate flipped learning into the English classroom such as teaching writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary by using the flipped classroom method.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. and 2. Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on using digital tools in your language classroom.

3. Possible steps to support novice teachers are: looking for a mentor; finding colleagues for sharing and asking questions; joining a professional learning network (e.g., on Twitter #twitterlehrerzimmer, #educhat, following teachers); taking a didactic scenario and thinking about which tool(s) could foster the learning process of learners; choosing three tools that they want to try out and feel comfortable using and continue using as it is not necessary to use a wide range of tools

4. Some ways of integrating digital competencies into online English lessons include:

Speaking: communicating via social media, presenting your online persona, creating video clips like a YouTube vlogger, uploading these video clips and presentations (slideshare, YouTube)

Writing and reading: writing / reading a blog post, creating / reading a website

Listening: watching video clips, listening to podcasts

Some benefits of merging digital competencies and language skills are that learners focus on creating something, thus, practising language skills happens incidentally; learners practise communication as it would happen in the real world; learners use genres they are familiar with in their L1.

8 Correction and feedback

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Key words

Formative and summative feedback

Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF) methods

Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) methods

Feedback in process writing

Mediating factors

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is the difference between formative and summative feedback?

What types of oral corrective feedback (OCF) and written corrective feedback (WCF) are there?

What is the role of feedback in a process writing approach?

What should teachers consider when choosing a feedback method?

What are some important mediating factors that affect the feedback process?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Undeniably, giving feedback – whether on oral performance or written assignments – is one of the main tasks of English teachers and a considerable part of their workload. When learners produce language, the teacher's response can be a rich source of information and an important contributor to the learning process. However, when taking a look at the various points of view of researchers, it can be difficult for a teacher to determine which feedback method to choose for oral corrective feedback (OCF) and written corrective feedback (WCF), respectively. This is not surprising as researchers' views on feedback range from it being seen as effective (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Ellis, 2012) to it being ineffective (Truscott, 1999).

One case in point is the differing views on grammar correction. Many researchers stress its effectiveness, claiming that learners need it to be able to acquire the grammatical structures of the target language. Truscott (1999), on the other hand, believes in its ineffectiveness as it does not support the acquisition process. Truscott's opinion that teachers should not correct learners' grammar even when they request it certainly started a heated debated among researchers (as well as teachers) about

the value of correction and feedback. Many researchers have since argued in favour of grammar correction and conducted many studies valuable for teachers today.

In order for teachers to establish their personal idea of feedback, they should stay up-to-date on current research on feedback, be willing to adapt their method(s) regularly and take their learners into account. Ultimately, the decision about which feedback method to use will depend on the teacher's notion of self and their core beliefs about providing feedback for learners.

When thinking about how to incorporate feedback into classroom instruction, a teacher must make a number of decisions such as when feedback should be given, which type of feedback would work best in a particular situation, and whether in a given moment feedback should be provided at all. This chapter will outline various considerations for OCF and WCF and specific strategies that could be used, paying particular attention to the Austrian context. We also discuss mediating factors that may impact how successfully feedback is carried out. Finally, we offer practical recommendations for feedback on writing and speaking.

Formative and summative feedback

In any discussion of feedback, a fundamental distinction needs to be made between summative and formative feedback. These terms are tied to Scriven (1967) who distinguishes between feedback which focuses on the learning process and on how teachers can support learners to achieve their goals (= formative) and assessing learners' performance (= summative). Summative feedback is usually associated with formal, structured assessments that are designed to evaluate what has been learned by the end of an instructional unit and are often connected to a grade (see chapter 9 in this volume). Formative feedback gauges learners' knowledge and skills throughout instruction and provides both the teacher and the learner opportunities to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This kind of feedback takes place in the form of frequent, low-stakes assessments such as homework tasks, questionnaires, self-reflection tools, and activities that allow learners to practice and make mistakes without negative repercussions. In the Austrian school context, summative feedback used to be much more common than formative feedback, but recent years have seen a shift in this respect, and formative feedback is being adopted by more and more teachers. It is also recognized in the latest version of the Austrian curriculum for English (see RIS, 2022).

As stated above, unlike summative feedback, formative feedback focuses on the learning process and provides learners with tools to improve their performance. This entails not only stating the purpose of the chosen feedback method, but also

strategies to work with it effectively. Ideally, formative and summative feedback work together: information about learners' progress that is gathered from brief, formative assessments is then used to guide further instruction, paving the way for learners to meet the goals that summative assessments are intended to measure.

Oral corrective feedback

Generally, learners depend on the teacher for useful feedback on their spoken language and expect to receive feedback on their errors. In the case of advanced and adult learners, it is often welcomed and sometimes even requested. For example, in schools, when speaking tasks are used to prepare for formal assessments such as the oral part of the *Matura*, learners feel they need to receive feedback on the relevant skills and competences.

At all levels, learners will be more open to receiving feedback when they are confident and see that making mistakes – as highlighted in the Austrian curriculum – is part of the learning process. Well before designing speaking tasks, the teacher should therefore be mindful of the learning environment that they establish in their own classroom. This is because learner confidence increases in an atmosphere that invites learners to support each other during spoken interaction and encourages risk-taking when trying out unfamiliar language. Such an atmosphere offers many opportunities for the teacher to provide feedback.

An important consideration for oral feedback is **when** in the course of a lesson it should be given. This question is not usually relevant with writing, as WCF is generally provided after a written text is produced. When it comes to speaking, however, it is useful to think about the objective of the task at hand. For tasks where the main objective is accuracy, providing immediate feedback during the task helps speakers focus on form. In contrast, in fluency-based activities and communicative tasks that focus on conveying meaning, a teacher may choose to delay the feedback until after the task has been completed. In this case, the teacher avoids disrupting the flow of communication and instead notes down errors to bring to the class's attention in a post-task phase. Feedback could begin with the teacher's general comments on content, followed by a discussion of the most frequent problems that the teacher and the learners noticed. When doing so, it is important that individual learners who made the errors are not identified. Conducting delayed feedback with the whole class in an anonymous manner prevents learners from feeling fearful about being singled out for making mistakes in front of their peers. Rather than

being concerned about who made the mistake, all learners can benefit from examining the error and are encouraged to consider their own use of that particular language item, thus improving their own understanding.

Another decision that teachers must make is **which** errors to correct. First, the teacher should try to decide whether the incorrect form was a slip that a learner may be able to correct if prompted, or if it was an error that resulted from a lack of knowledge. Differentiating between the two can sometimes be difficult, especially if there are many errors to correct. Attempting to correct every error is not only unrealistic within the time constraints of a typical lesson but also demotivating for learners. Therefore, a reasonable approach is to focus on errors that pertain to the relevant language point of the lesson and those errors that cause problems in communication (Harmer, 2015).

Types of Oral Corrective Feedback (OCF)

Once it is determined that a particular error needs to be corrected, the teacher has an array of options for which method to use. Research on OCF has offered a variety of classifications of feedback methods (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster & Saito, 2010), but they can generally be understood in terms of either direct or indirect feedback, which can be given explicitly or implicitly.

Direct feedback involves the teacher providing learners with the correct version of the utterance. This can be done in the form of recasts or reformulations, where the teacher repeats back the correct form of the utterance (e.g., L: She no eat meat, T: Ah, she doesn't eat meat). The correction can also be recast in an implicit manner, usually accompanied by a question, which allows the student to acknowledge their mistake (e.g., T: She doesn't eat meat, is that what you mean?). Direct feedback can also be given as explicit correction that points out the corrected form (e.g., T: You need to say 'she doesn't' eat meat), or the teacher may choose to provide a metalinguistic explanation by highlighting an aspect of the language using specialist terminology (e.g., T: When we use the third person 'she' we use 'does not').

When indirect feedback takes place, the teacher prompts and guides learner to produce the correct form rather than producing it for them. When done implicitly, the teacher can repeat the incorrect form, forcing the speaker to rethink their utterance (e.g., T: She no eat meat?), or they can ask for clarification, signalling that something is wrong (e.g., T: Could you say that again? I didn't understand). Alternatively, the teacher can elicit the correct response from the learner with a prompting question, sometimes done by providing a metalinguistic clue (e.g., T: Could you correct the verb?).

The difference between these types of strategies is that direct, input-providing feedback does not encourage learner uptake – in other words, a corrected response from the learner. In contrast, indirect feedback in the form of prompting allows for self-correction and is usually followed by uptake. Lyster and Ranta (1997) found recasts to be the most common type of feedback among teachers but the least effective in generating uptake, whereas learners were more likely to repair their utterances when prompted through elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and requests for clarification.

Later studies have gone beyond the question of whether uptake occurs, investigating whether certain types of OCF results in learners' acquisition of the form being taught. McDonough and Mackey (2006) found that "primed production" was associated with learning (p. 693). This means that when learners were provided with recasts that included the target syntactic structure, they were able to produce the correct structure on their own several turns later, rather than merely repeating the recast immediately after hearing it. Research by Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) showed that, compared to feedback in the form of recasts, providing metalinguistic feedback was more effective in contributing to learners' implicit and explicit language knowledge. Other research findings on the relationship between uptake and acquisition have been mixed, as acquisition may depend on individual differences and contextual factors such as emphasis on form in instruction. Nevertheless, there indeed seems to be evidence that "oral CF – in one form or another – can benefit acquisition" (Sheen and Ellis, 2011, pp. 604).

Drawing on our own experience, we argue that learners who are accustomed to being corrected while speaking usually repeat the corrected version and, in an effort to maintain their flow, continue speaking without stopping to think about the error. Thus, prompting is recommended because it instigates immediate awareness of their utterance. It openly encourages interaction and can be motivating for learners. Moreover, too much direct feedback can be overwhelming and can thus have a negative impact. Of course, for self-correction to work successfully, learners need to have the appropriate metalinguistic knowledge. If a teacher's attempts to elicit self-correction do not work, it is recommended that they follow up with explicit correction. Ultimately, we emphasize that there is no one strategy that is considered superior over another and that each of them can be appropriate depending on how the teacher judges the error in the context that it was made.

Thus far, we have only addressed oral feedback in terms of error correction, but the importance of providing positive feedback cannot be overstated. If students perceive that the teacher is only concerned about highlighting errors and problematic

language use, they are likely to withdraw from participating, thus undermining the goals of communication, especially in fluency-based tasks. Being mindful of giving positive feedback and praising good use of language lowers their anxiety levels and reinforces good language use. However, the teacher should be mindful not to praise in a vague manner (e.g., 'OK') or to overly praise, otherwise they risk appearing insincere. Instead, thoughtfully worded praise that makes clear what is being commended can be a powerful form of feedback. For example, 'good!' and 'nice job!' may be well intentioned but are not as informative for learners as specific comments such as 'your pronunciation has really improved', 'clever use of that idiom', and 'great, you figured out a different way to say it!' Specific praise that addresses good language use makes learners aware of behaviours that can be repeated and gives them the confidence to move forward.

While in most cases learner self-correction is the aim of oral feedback, it is important to remember that other learners can be a valuable source of feedback in the classroom, too. Peer feedback in speaking tasks is becoming more commonplace in Austrian classrooms, which is not surprising because involving learners is beneficial in the process of "clarification, rephrasing, and confirmation" (Kerr, 2017, p.7). Some learners may feel reluctant to give feedback directly to their peers, or they may be unreceptive to receiving feedback from anyone besides the teacher. For this reason, ensuring a smooth exchange of peer feedback requires the teacher to supply learners with the appropriate language and feedback mechanisms. With plenty of modelling and practice, peer feedback can be quite stimulating and even fun. In pair work, for example, other students can act as 'spies', observing specific pre-determined criteria and noting them down for a post-task discussion as a group. Learners should also be encouraged to share what others in the group have done well.

Written corrective feedback (WCF)

The focus of written corrective feedback (WCF) can be on either form or content, and it is the learning goal that determines the type of feedback. If language accuracy is the main goal of a task, then a focus on form in the teacher's feedback is essential, but if well-structured arguments are needed, focus on content is more important. As learners are graded on form as well as on content in many standard assessments such *Schularbeiten* (in-class tests) and the written *Matura / schriftliche Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (secondary school leaving exam), it is essential to consistently provide feedback on form as well as content throughout.

When providing feedback, a teacher further has to decide if their feedback should be focused (only one type of error is addressed) or unfocused (all errors are addressed). For beginners focused feedback might be more beneficial as they can concentrate on improving one particular area. Intermediate and advanced learners, however, often prefer all their errors indicated. In the correction process they then might decide to work on only a couple of errors or seek help from their peers or their teacher.

As with OCF, WCF can also be direct, where the correct form is provided, or indirect. Indirect feedback, i.e., indicating the error without providing the correct form, can take many forms. It can be accomplished by circling, highlighting or underlining the errors, as well as a simple indication in the margin of the number of errors in a line or paragraph. Indirect feedback should always include a second step where students then need to correct these errors and get the teachers' (or their peers') feedback.

Another type of feedback is metalinguistic, where errors are explained to learners. This can take two forms: either error codes in the text or in the margin, where usually rather broad categories are used (e.g., article, tense), or metalinguistic explanations. The latter is more time-consuming for the teacher as learners' errors need to be explained in detail, but it is beneficial for them because it helps them to better understand the nature of their errors.

Types of written corrective feedback (WCF)

Which kind of feedback a teacher uses often depends on their overall approach to teaching writing. One of the most common types of error correction is direct feedback, when the correct form is given by the teacher. The rationale behind it is simple: it is not as time-consuming as other types of correction. In addition, certain types of errors, such as idiomatic expressions, are a challenge for learners and reformulation is often seen as the most efficient way of showing learners how to express their thoughts in a more idiomatic way. The difficulty for teachers, however, is not to change learners' utterances or their style of writing too much as this can be seen as imposing their own style onto their learners.

Many teachers acknowledge that a drawback of this form of correction is that learners only file their work in a folder, very likely never looking at their corrected piece of writing again. Teachers would naturally prefer them to re-write their assignments, however, to ensure that they actively think about and work on their errors instead of passively accepting their teachers' corrections.

This active engagement with corrections can be more effectively encouraged when a process approach to teaching writing is taken. In process writing, learners produce a text in a series of stages, beginning with planning and prewriting, then composing, followed by revising and editing before a final draft is published. Learners are expected to use the information they receive from their teacher to revisit their text and rewrite it, sometimes in multiple drafts.

Error indication, a type of indirect feedback where the teacher does not provide the correct form of the error, is very common in process writing approaches. For example, using error codes is a popular type of error indication, where abbreviations (e.g., 'art' for article) or colours (e.g., green for spelling) are used to indicate the type of error. Learners then have to figure out how to self-correct these code-marked errors.

Self-correction definitely requires learners to engage with the errors they made on a cognitive level. However, self-correction needs to be embedded in the teacher's overall approach to teaching writing and learners need to be provided with strategies to be able to self-correct their errors. In addition, as this method demands commitment on the learners' part, the teacher has to explain its value explicitly to the learners to ensure their acceptance. Learners have to realise that writing is a process where several drafts are needed and trying to correct errors themselves will help them in the long run to avoid making them in the future.

Peer feedback (also known as peer response or peer correction) can be another valuable addition to a process writing approach. It was originally developed for L1 process writing but has become popular in L2 writing as well. It should be stressed, however, that learners need to be trained in giving their peers feedback for it to be effective for them, and they need to be guided by the teacher. For example, the teacher has to decide according to the level of the learners which area of a peer's work learners should comment on. Focus on form might be less valuable for beginners, whereas focus on a specific area of content might be easier to tackle.

Which feedback method?

There are many ways teachers can give feedback to their learners. It is essential to keep the needs of a specific group of learners in mind when choosing a feedback method, and learners should always be told why a specific feedback method is used in a particular situation so that they understand how it can aid their learning process. Teachers also need to explain to learners how they should work with the feedback they receive to ensure that they get the most out of it.

No matter which type of error correction a teacher chooses, however, a personal statement should always be provided. Personal statements are especially popular among learners because they are addressed to them individually. Tailoring the statement to the individual learner is imperative as general or vague comments such as 'Well done!' are not appreciated by them (see Moser, 2020), and it is always a good idea to start with a positive note on their assignment before telling them what they can improve. Similarly, when written feedback is given on long-form oral production, such as presentations or speeches, a personal statement can be valuable for commenting on distinct, individual aspects of a learner's spoken performance.

Another aspect that always needs to be taken into account when talking about giving feedback is undeniably the mediating factors which are at play with both OCF and WCF. The feedback method itself, learners' own laziness, their personal interests, self-confidence as well as anxiety have a considerable impact on their engagement with corrective feedback (Moser, 2020). In addition to the important role teachers and peers play in this respect, other factors come into play, too. These factors very often go unrecognised by teachers because they are rooted in learners' personal lives. For example, as a teacher you might suspect that the reason for learners not doing their homework is simple laziness. More often than not that is true, but sometimes there are other reasons for this behaviour. For example, learners might be so preoccupied with a problem in their personal life that they do not complete their assignments (Moser, 2020).

It should be stressed, therefore, that taking learners' individual needs into account and reflecting on feedback methods on a regular basis are definitely necessary if teachers want to provide effective feedback.

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will provide oral feedback to each other after performing a fluency-based task, in addition to teacher feedback

Activity: an interactive speaking task (e.g., storytelling or roleplay)

Rationale: to engage learners in a constructive exchange of feedback that prioritises communicating during the task while allowing for reflection and error treatment afterwards

Pre-knowledge: learners need to know metalanguage and phrases for giving feedback, what their role is in the task, and which criteria to give feedback on

Level: CEFR B1+ and above

Procedure

1. The teacher divides learners into groups of four and distributes a picture sequence.

2. The teacher instructs two learners to observe the other two learners in that group.

3. The first pair is asked to work together to tell a story based on the picture, roleplaying as the characters in the picture.

4. As the speaking pair speaks, the observers take notes. One observer focuses on one aspect of language, such as vocabulary, while the other observer focuses on another, such as agreement. Notes are recorded in a + column for good use of language and --> column for areas to improve.

5. The teacher observes each group without interrupting and makes their own notes.

6. Afterwards, speakers share what they noticed about their own performance. Observers share what they have recorded.

7. The pairs switch roles; the speaking pair now becomes the observers and vice versa as they roleplay a different picture sequence.

8. Afterwards, the new speakers share what they noticed about their own performance. The new observers share what they have recorded.

9. In a whole class discussion, the teacher encourages groups to share their observations and the class comes up with a list of common errors, perhaps putting them on the board. The teacher elicits suggestions for how they can be corrected.

10. The teacher provides any additional feedback, including their own observations of how the peer feedback exchange went.

Example 2

Goal: learners will work on errors in their written work themselves before getting final feedback from their teacher

Activity: writing assignment (e.g., a report)

Rationale: to guide learners from seeing feedback as a product to seeing it as a process

Pre-knowledge: learners need to know how the feedback method works

Level: CEFR A2+ and above

Procedure

1. The teacher provides learners with a written assignment.

2. Learners are asked to write the assignment and upload their document on a learning platform.

3. The teacher downloads learners' documents and colour codes learners' errors (e.g., blue for grammar, green for spelling etc.).

4. Hints are given in brackets for certain errors (e.g., expressions, grammar, and content).

5. The teacher posts the colour coded document on the learning platform.

6. The teacher adds a personal written statement for each learner, telling them what they did well and which areas they need to improve.

7. Learners correct the colour coded errors themselves, mark everything they have added in bold, and then upload the document to the learning platform.

8. The teacher checks learners' changes to the colour coded parts and underlines any new corrections so that learners can immediately see what has been changed.

9. Short explanations are provided in brackets for certain errors (e.g., grammar) to support learners in correcting their written assignments.

10. The teacher uploads the document on the learning platform and writes a second short personal statement.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Critically reflect on your preferred WCF method. Does it take learners' individual needs into account?

2. Thinking back to the types of oral feedback outlined in this chapter, observe a class and try to understand why the teacher chose to correct an error (or ignore it) and why that type of correction was made. Would you have handled it differently?

If you do not have the opportunity to observe a class, you can find some sample lessons on YouTube.

3. What are some reasons for implementing self-correction in WCF?

4. Come up with a list of your own personal guidelines for giving oral feedback.

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Suggestions for further reading

Brookhart, S. M. (2017). *How to give effective feedback to your students* (2nd ed.). ASCD.

This book, while theoretically grounded, provides practical guidelines for implementing feedback for both writing and speaking. In addition to detailed examples, it also offers a 'snapshot view' of feedback as an episode of learning, a 'long view' that considers its impact on learning, as well as content-specific suggestions.

Ferris, D. R. (2011). *Treatment of error in second language student writing* (2nd ed.). The University of Michigan Press.

This book provides a theoretical and practical guide for dealing with errors. It addresses the fundamental issues of which errors to attend to, how to respond to them and some of the most effective ways to provide feedback on errors.

Reitbauer, M., Campbell, N., Mercer, S., Schumm Fauster J., & Vaupetitsch, R. (Eds.). (2013). *Feedback Matters. Current Feedback Practices in the EFL Classroom*. Peter Lang.

This book shows a variety of feedback methods, ranging from peer feedback, online feedback to feedback on specific skills areas. It is especially valuable for obtaining an insight into different ways of giving feedback and also provides examples from classroom practice.

Ur, P. (2012). *A course in English language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 7 of this book, 'Error correction', is particularly useful as it presents practical self-reflection tools for teachers, encouraging them to think about their own views and attitudes about giving feedback. It also includes questionnaires about oral and written correction that can be used to understand both student and teacher preferences for giving and receiving feedback.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. and 2. Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on your preferred methods for feedback and error correction.

3. Research shows that self-correction is not a feedback method favoured by learners – mainly because it involves a lot of work. When it is only one element of a teacher's overall approach to feedback, however, learners are usually not that opposed to the idea of doing it. The value of self-correction is clear. Learners need to go through their written assignment once more and become aware that they make errors in certain areas. In addition, learners are cognitively challenged as they need to figure out what is wrong by themselves. In this way, they are engaged in the correction process and are encouraged to see writing as a process, not a product.

4. Answers to this question may vary as a teacher's preferred feedback methods may be informed by many factors such as their views on authority, learner autonomy, student interaction, and whether correction should be done privately or in front of the whole class.

9 Assessment for Learning

Sybille Paar and Ulla Fürstenberg

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Key words

Assessment for Learning (AFL)

Summative and formative assessment

Core principles of AFL

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is Assessment for Learning (AFL)?

How is AFL reflected in the Austrian Curriculum and the *Leistungsbeurteilungsverordnung (LBVO)*?

What are possible ways of putting AFL into practice in the English classroom?

What should teachers consider when introducing and using AFL in their teaching?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

In their discussion of classroom-based assessment, Brown and Lee (2015) describe the fact that learners often perceive testing and assessment as "dark clouds hanging over their heads" and suggest that this negative experience could be avoided if teachers understood "the benefits of tests and their place within the larger domain of assessment" (p. 513). Assessment should be understood primarily as a source of information for the teacher. As Ashman (2018) points out, Hattie (2009) found that "one of the most powerful effects of feedback is when feedback is provided *to the teacher*" (p. 127, emphasis in the original). Likewise, Green (2014) insists that language assessment needs to be "put in its place" in the learning process and seen primarily as a source of information for teachers:

> To be really effective as teachers, we need to find effective ways of assessing learners. We need to use what we learn from assessment to decide on actions to take that will help learners to improve their knowledge of the language or their skill in using it (p. 10).

Putting this Assessment for Learning (AFL) approach into practice is often a challenge for teachers.

In Austria, the *Leistungsbeurteilungsverordnung* (LBVO, see RIS, 2022) is the main document that regulates assessment and grading in Austrian schools. It distinguishes between the so-called *Informationsfeststellung* (§ 1, Abs. 2 LBVO) and the

Leistungsfeststellung (§ 3 LBVO). While *Informationsfestellungen* should help teachers determine whether specific teaching goals have been reached and if there are still aspects or areas that need further attention and instruction, *Leistungsfeststellungen* mainly serve a summative purpose. According to the LBVO, *Informationsfeststellungen* are not to be used for the assessment of learners' performance. In the National Report on Education from 2015, Schmidinger et al. (2016) point out that teachers in Austria thus have to take on two contradicting roles that are at times hard to reconcile. On the one hand, they are supposed to act as facilitators who support learning through the use of formative assessment and on the other hand, they are meant to measure learners' attainment by awarding grades, hence also inevitably fulfilling a gate-keeping function. This conflict between teachers' roles as 'coaches' and 'judges' has also been noted by Brown and Lee (2015).

In the current version of the LBVO from 1974, there are no recommendations or documents to guide these two different types of assessment. When we take a closer look at the Austrian curricula, however, we do not only find some suggestions for teaching methods and strategies that are consistent with AFL, such as learning journals, portfolios, project work and open learning. The curricula also clearly emphasize the importance of developing individualised feedback methods that focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each student (see chapter 8 in this volume). Detailed feedback on learners' performance should render the assessment (i.e., grading) process more transparent and comprehensible. In the curriculum for lower secondary school, one of the didactic principles is to even include learners' individual learning progress and their effort to improve their language output when assessing their performance. However, once again it is not stated how exactly this should be done.

Teachers are also required to make learners understand that learning is a process and to give them opportunities to assess themselves against clearly defined criteria. As stated in the curriculum, this should help raise learners' motivation, perseverance and self-confidence. Learners should also be actively involved in planning and designing their learning processes and in controlling and analyzing their respective output.

Even if the term AFL is not explicitly referred to anywhere, the aforementioned guidelines seem to imply the importance and necessity of an ongoing assessment approach that is in line with the principles of AFL. However, when comparing the LBVO with the curricula, the gap between instruction and assessment becomes clearly apparent and teachers are left to decide for themselves how they reconcile the contradicting requirements of these documents that form the basis of their

teaching. The shortcomings of the current LBVO with regard to the practical implementation of the existing legal regulations were already outlined by Eder et al. (2009) in the National Education Report from 2009. Since 2011, a task group of the Ministry of Education has been working on an updated version of the LBVO. As the National Education Report from 2015 again includes a chapter on assessment in which the formative function of the *Informationsfeststellungungen* is in the focus, it can be assumed (and hoped) that AFL will find its way into the new LBVO whose publication date has not yet been set at the time of writing.

In the meantime, teachers can only try to comply as best they can with the legal basis they are provided with and to incorporate assessment for learning wherever possible in order to better support learners in their language learning process. Even if AFL has not yet been acknowledged by school law, its positive effects on learners' attainment cannot be refuted, as Wiliam (2011) points out:

> We know that teachers make a difference, but we know much less about what makes the difference in teachers. However, there is a body of literature that shows a large impact on student achievement across different subjects, across different age groups, and across different countries, and that is the research on formative assessment (p. 33).

Thus, there is a strong case to be made for AFL in the English language classroom. This chapter aims to explore how some of the research findings can be put into practice by suggesting a variety of examples and possible ways of implementation.

Reconceptualizing assessment

To start with, Wiliam's (2011) statement that "no test can capture all that is important for future progress" should challenge our traditional view of testing and assessment (p. 18). In other words, we cannot test everything that is essential to developing language proficiency and by implication, not everything that we test is necessarily a good indicator to judge learners' language proficiency and even less so to help them develop their skills further. For example, Newbold (2017) cautions against testing language features that are not critical for learners' progress simply because they are (over)represented in coursebooks, visible and easily explained.

Swaffield (2011) transforms the idea we have of assessment by taking a closer look at the roots of the word 'assessment', which is derived from the Latin verb *assidere*, 'to sit beside'. Considering this translation, we no longer picture a learner being tested and examined, but rather a teacher sitting beside a learner, giving support and watching over them. Accordingly, assessment is seen as a process in which

teachers observe and accompany their learners in their learning and use the evidence and knowledge thus gained to the benefit of learners (Wiliam, 2011). This is exactly what assessment for learning involves: "adjusting teaching as needed while the learning is still taking place" (Leahy et al., 2005, p. 19). In this respect, AFL is considered to be a quality assurance rather than a quality control process. Instruction and assessment are no longer two separate entities; on the contrary, everything that is part of the process of instruction and learning (such as learners' questions and answers, their engagement in activities, work done silently, homework) is observed, analysed and evaluated by the teacher in order to guide instruction.

In other words, the data that are continuously gathered throughout the lessons serve as the evidence on the basis of which the teacher decides how to plan the next (instructional) steps in order to address leaners' needs (Leahy et al., 2005; Wiliam, 2011). Teachers try to interpret what learners have understood, i.e. where learning and teaching has already been effective and where there is still room for improvement. This should be communicated via individual feedback which does not only include what needs to be improved, but also gives advice on how this could be achieved and what has already been successfully mastered. Such feedback, which lies at the heart of AFL, should give learners the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and to ideally develop an understanding of their performance, which will enable them to readjust their learning process (Swaffield, 2011).

The wealth of information on learners' achievements generated by AFL might at first sight seem overwhelming and unmanageable to teachers. However, the improvements thus achieved speak for themselves and make it worth investing time and effort in finding methods and strategies that turn a traditional classroom where performance is solely reflected in grades into an AFL classroom. Black and Wiliam (2010), in their influential review of literature on assessment for learning in the classroom, discovered that learners whose teachers made use of AFL attained in six or seven months what would have cost them a year if they had been taught and assessed in a traditional way. Another study, which was conducted in 2004, shows that these improvements in learning could even be upheld over longer periods and were also confirmed in standardized tests (Black et al., 2004; Leahy et al., 2005).

Of course, AFL is not a panacea for any and all kinds of educational problems. However, based on the research findings so far it can be said with certainty that AFL works, that it raises standards of achievement and is beneficial for learners, especially so for low achievers who tend to benefit from AFL even more than other learners (Black & Wiliam, 2010). The question now remains how AFL is best put into practice. While the general principles of AFL are relevant for all subject areas,

the way that they are applied with regard to methods, tasks and activities can vary widely depending on which subject is taught (Black et al., 2004).

AFL Strategies

The following paragraphs will therefore outline five AFL strategies (Leahy et al., 2005; Swaffield, 2011) that are accepted as the core ingredients of AFL and that work for teachers of different subjects and at different levels. A sixth strategy, which we deem to be of particular importance within the Austrian context, will be introduced in the next section. Specific examples accompanying these strategies will demonstrate how they can be applied in a language learning environment.

1. To start with, the most important component of AFL is **feedback** that supports learners in making progress. However well-intentioned some teacher feedback might be, it is often not conducive to learning when students fail to successfully incorporate it and act upon it. This can justifiably lead to frustration on both sides. The reasons might be that the feedback is either not informative enough because it does not address the areas where learners need to improve or it is not related to success criteria that inform learners what is expected of them. If learners do not know or understand what they are supposed to achieve, they cannot adjust their performance accordingly. Thus, comments such as 'Well done!'; 'You've made an effort!'; 'Try harder next time!', are not effective because they neither identify learners' strengths nor do they make any suggestions for improvement. Instead, teachers' feedback comments should be specific (e.g., 'The example you used in paragraph three of your essay really supports your argument very effectively'; 'Remember to avoid contractions in a formal text type such as an opinion essay') and forward-looking ('In your next essay, try to avoid generalizations and provide specific examples instead').

2. From the very start of the learning process, the **criteria for success and the learning objectives** need to be clearly communicated. For instance, by providing students with strong and weak work samples that they have to analyse, their critical thinking skills are trained. To start with, samples should be chosen where the good and weak points are easily discernible for learners. Once they have developed their analytical skills, samples of similar quality can be selected (Leahy et al., 2005). When learners know and comprehend the desired learning outcomes, they are prepared for their teacher's feedback. The feedback should be given continuously throughout the whole learning process and not just at the end. By doing so, it serves as scaffolding, which learners climb on their way to achieving the agreed-upon standards. In order to bring about all the desired outcomes of AFL, learners need to

understand where they are in relation to their aims, where they are heading to and what they can do to bridge this gap. Only if all three of these aspects are fulfilled will they be able to successfully work on and improve their performance (Black & Wiliam, 2010; Stiggins, 2005).

3. It is important to note, however, that in AFL classrooms, the teacher is not the only source of feedback. The introduction of **peer-assessment** is another important step in helping learners to become actively involved in the learning process. Learners need to engage with the learning content and understand the set criteria in order to be able to evaluate their peers' work. Thus, both parties, i.e. the recipients and the providers of feedback, benefit from peer-assessment tasks. According to Leahy et al. (2005), learners up to the end of secondary education are also more likely to find mistakes in someone else's work than in their own, and it is easier for them to work on feedback given by peers rather than by the teacher, which is often just passively received. In order to prevent learners from giving grades on their peers' work, it is helpful to introduce peer-feedback templates/tasks that guide learners in the process of giving valuable and constructive feedback. For lower secondary school learners 'Two Stars and a Wish' has proven to be successful in reinforcing motivation and self-confidence by not only giving a suggestion for improvement (one wish) but by also spotting and emphasising the positive aspects (two stars) of the work. A similar task for upper secondary school learners is the so-called 'Tickled Pink and Green for Growth' highlighting method where learners underline in pink two examples that meet the requirements of success and then find an aspect which offers room for improvement which is highlighted in green. In a discussion, learners work through the passages marked in pink and explain to each other what they liked about them and suggest how the part in green could be improved (Stern, 2001).

4. The fourth principle of AFL requires learners to **take responsibility for their own learning** or, more accurately, to share this responsibility with their teachers. As it is the case with peer-feedback, self-assessment can only be successful if learners know and understand the learning objectives. A quick and easy self-assessment activity that prepares the ground for more challenging self-assessment tasks are 'traffic light cards'. Learners are asked to label either their written work or their understanding of a concept green, yellow or red. The colours indicate their level of understanding (good, partial, little) or their assessment of their written work (good, ok, room for improvement). In a next step, learners can be asked to give reasons for their evaluation. In a more challenging task, learners are provided with a list of success criteria (see peer-assessment above) against which they compare and evaluate their own work. In this way, they train their metacognitive skills and develop

a much clearer idea about what is expected from them (Black et al., 2004; Leahy et al., 2005).

5. Another way of checking learners' understanding and guiding their process of learning is the use of **classroom discussions and effective questions** (see chapter 3 in this volume). In AFL questions can be used to find out where learners are in their learning, if they have grasped a recently taught concept or where instruction should start. The important thing, according to Leahy et al. (2005), is not to "listen for the 'correct' answer", but to listen "for what we can learn about the students' thinking" (p. 21). Using the answers we elicit from our students to inform our instruction as well as to guide or even change the course of our lesson might be daunting at first, but will prove to be successful in the long term.

Formative use of summative tests

Already in 1998, Black and Wiliam (2010) criticized that "the problems of the relationship between teachers' formative and summative roles have received no attention" (p. 84). More than 20 years later, this is still the case in Austria. That is why we discuss **the formative use of summative tests** as the sixth principle of AFL in this chapter. In this respect, tests should not be treated as separate entities which mark the end of a teaching cycle after which a new 'content block' starts, but should be used to direct the next steps in teaching and help modify instruction accordingly. It should not be the grade alone that informs learners of their performance, but feedback that learners can and should work with. The formative use of summative assessment starts already with the learners' preparation for the test. Instead of passively reading through their learning materials, learners should become more active in their learning.

A way to stimulate this active engagement is to rewrite the subject matter by turning it into learning objectives, which clearly describe what students are expected to know/be able to do (can-do statements). Learners can then apply the traffic-light method described earlier by marking the statements green, yellow or red (Black et al., 2004). Students can use this information to guide their review process. Handing out their last written test and asking learners to go through the areas they had difficulties with is another way of linking assessment to learning. In pairs, learners might question each other on 'red' areas to find out if they have closed this gap in the meantime. In order to help learners develop an overview and a clearer understanding of the subject matter, they could be asked to develop some test questions/tasks together, one or two of which might be used in the actual test.

When preparing the test, it is important to ensure that it actually tests what it is meant to test; in other words, it should be in accordance with the learning objectives and linked to the learning activities carried out in class. The feedback that learners receive on their test performance should go beyond the giving of a mere grade or percentage. The above-mentioned methods 'Two Stars and a Wish' or 'Tickled Pink and Green for Growth' also work for feedback on tests and give learners more information on their performance than a grade. Learners also engage more actively with teachers' feedback when they are expected to rewrite their own or even one of their peers' texts.

This section suggests that the two forms of assessment (summative and formative) do not necessarily have to occupy opposite points on the spectrum of assessment, but can be used to inform and benefit each other.

Conclusion

Research has shown that AFL has the potential to have a positive impact on learners in a number of areas: "[learners'] engagement with learning, their attainment as measured by tests, and most importantly their growth in becoming more self-regulating, autonomous learners" (Swaffield, 2011, p. 447). Teachers benefit as well, and the culture of the classroom is transformed (Swaffield, 2011). However, the sheer number of methods associated with AFL might be overwhelming at first sight and even discourage teachers from attempting to implement it. Still, even though it is true that making AFL work in your own class setting requires time, perseverance and effort, it is worth taking "risks in the belief that such investment of time will yield rewards in the future, while "delivery" and "coverage" with poor understanding are pointless and can even be harmful" (Black & Wiliam, 2010, p. 87).

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will identify characteristic features of the target text type in their own and their peers' work; learners will give and receive peer feedback; learners will revise their written work based on peer and teacher feedback

Activity: learning from assessment (genre writing)

Rationale: to allow learners to experience assessment for learning

Pre-knowledge: characteristics of the target text type

Level: CEFR B1+ and above

Procedure

1. The characteristics of a text type learners are working on (e.g., blog / article / essay…) are revised in class. For example, this can be done by providing successful examples of the target text type to analyze. If necessary, learners can put together a checklist of things to watch out for when writing this particular text type.

2. For homework, learners individually write a text on a topic set by the teacher (first draft).

3. In the next lesson, learners form groups of three and compare their texts. Together, they find the best arguments, introductions, topic sentences, conclusions etc., referring to their class notes or checklist as needed. Finally, they produce a new text using the most successful bits and pieces of their individual homework texts (second draft).

4. These new texts (second drafts) are discussed in class. The groups have to argue why they think their introductions, paragraphs, conclusions etc. are effective. The teacher guides the discussion and highlights examples of successful writing.

5. The groups revise their texts again based on the feedback received from their peers and the teacher in the class discussion (third draft). The third drafts are submitted to the teacher for marking.

6. The teacher evaluates and assesses the texts and gives feedback, focusing on both successful elements of the text and areas that need improvement.

Alternative version:

It is sometimes useful to focus specifically on the logic of the arguments in a learner text. In such cases, the group phase (steps 3 to 5 above) can be replaced by a pair correction phase in which learners are told to identify the main arguments in each paragraph of their partner's text and to summarize the main content points of the text, essentially 'reverse-engineering' their partner's line of argumentation. This allows the writer of the text to see if they have communicated their ideas successfully before they submit their texts to the teacher for marking.

Example 2

Goal: learners will revise their work after some time has passed; learners will practise peer reviewing (first alternative version); learners will incorporate their teacher's feedback into their revisions (second alternative version)

Activity: Two-Phase Assessment (based on Stern's (2011) concept of *'Zwei-Phasen-Arbeit'*)

Rationale: to allow learners to experience assessment as part of the learning process

Pre-knowledge: depends on the content of the test

Level: CEFR A2 and above

Procedure

1. Learners complete a test set by the teacher. The teacher collects the tests, but does not grade them.

2. In the next lesson, learners get the opportunity to revise their tests without consulting other sources or their class notes. The teacher sets a time limit for this revision phase.

3. The teacher grades the revised version of the test.

Alternative versions:

The version of two-phase assessment described above can be seen as the 'classic' version. It can be adapted in various ways to suit different levels and needs:

1. The teacher annotates the test before returning it to learners for revision; peer reviewing is also possible at this stage.

2. The teacher grades the first version; if a learner's corrections show that they have improved, this can positively affect their grade in the area of active participation (*Mitarbeit*). The second alternative version is useful if teachers feel that this approach to grading might be challenged by parents or the school authorities.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. How can AFL change teachers' understanding of assessment?

2. What elements of the Austrian curriculum are compatible with AFL?

3. Pick one of the core AFL strategies and think about how you could apply it in a class you are currently teaching.

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Suggestions for further reading:

Black, P., Harrison, C., & Lee, C. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Open University Press.

Based on a cooperation with schools, this book aims to connect research and practice in Assessment for Learning.

Green, A. (2014). *Exploring Language Assessment and Testing: Language in Action*. Routledge.

This is a good overview of current theories and recent research that is relevant for common assessment issues.

Sigott, G. (Ed.). (2018). *Language Testing in Austria: Taking Stock / Sprachtesten in Österreich: eine Bestandsaufnahme.* Peter Lang.

This book represents ten years of language test development and language testing research in Austria, both for German as a first language and modern foreign languages including English.

Stern, T. (2010). *Förderliche Leistungsbewertung*. ÖZEPS.

This book addresses innovative forms of assessment in an Austrian context. It can be downloaded free of charge from oezeps.at: https://www.oezeps.at/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Leistungsbewertung_Onlineversion_Neu.pdf

A solid, concise introduction to the principles of AFL ("Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles. Research-based principles to guide classroom practice of Assessment for Learning") by the Assessment Reform Group can be found at: http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/SBA/HKDSE/Eng_DVD/doc/Afl_principles.pdf

Practical guidelines for AFL can be found at: http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/curriculum/assessment/assessment_for_learning/afl_practical_guide.pdf and https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/assessment-learning-activities-0

Commentary on reflection questions

1. Assessment and instruction are not seen as separate; rather, assessment supports learners in the learning process and guides teachers' decisions as to what needs to be addressed in their teaching.

2. The process character of learning is emphasized; learners should be given opportunities to assess themselves; some suggestions for teaching methods and strategies are consistent with AFL (e.g., learning journals, portfolios, project work...);

the importance of individualized feedback methods that focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each student is emphasized; the assessment process should be transparent and comprehensible for the learner – however, it is not explained how exactly all of this should be done.

3. Your answer to this reflection question will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of this question is to encourage reflection on AFL strategies and how they can be applied.

10 Skills for communication

Ulla Fürstenberg and Jennifer Schumm Fauster

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Key words

Skills and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Integrated approach to skills

Receptive skills

Productive skills

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

How did the introduction of the centralised *Matura* in Austria influence the way skills are taught?

What are the arguments for taking an integrated approach to teaching skills?

What should teachers consider when teaching receptive skills?

What should teachers consider when teaching productive skills?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

The year 2004 was a turning point in the development of the Austrian foreign language curriculum because it was linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (see chapter 5 in this volume). This prompted a shift from a more grammar- and knowledge-based curriculum to one that had a stronger focus on competences and communication (see Spöttl et al., 2016). Although this shift had already begun much earlier with the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (see chapter 1 in this volume), linking the curriculum to the CEFR placed an even stronger emphasis on the importance of skills required for communication by explicitly stating what learners should be able to do at various stages of language learning. The centralised *Matura,* the new secondary school leaving exam introduced in 2015/16, was also in line with this approach, which arguably had a washback effect on how English was taught in the language classroom as teachers adapted their way of teaching to better prepare their learners for taking the exam. In practice this meant that teachers focused more on skills work. Naturally, skills had always been a part of language teaching but with the introduction of the new curriculum and *Matura* they gained greater importance.

Skills are traditionally categorized as receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Other more general skills (e.g., critical

thinking) are also relevant and are reflected in the transversal principles of the Austrian curriculum, and mediation is now included in the CEFR. The *AHS Matura* tests the four central skills; the *BHS Matura* covers these four skills and mediation as well. The focus of this chapter will be on the four central skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. It is important to remember that skills work is not only about preparing for the *Matura;* skills work is essential from the beginning of language learning because learners can only learn a skill if they practice it.

In real life, we do not use language skills in isolation, and this should be reflected in the way skills are practiced in the language classroom. While teachers often need to focus on one individual skill for practical purposes, ideally, best practice should consist of a more integrated approach to language skills (e.g., reading a letter and then responding to it in writing). In this chapter, we will first look at each skill individually before providing examples of an integrated approach (see Practical Applications at the end of this chapter).

Receptive Skills

Reading

Reading is a communicative act between the writer of a given text and whoever may read it – be it the intended audience or anyone who may pick up the text out of interest or for any other reason. This means that the purpose of a written text is to convey a writer's message, which, in turn, is decoded by the reader. Naturally, it is unclear whether a reader actually comprehends the intended message of a given text, but this model of reading shows that the skill involves communication between the writer and the reader and highlights the fact that reading entails more than just decoding the words in a given text.

In fact, reading is a skill that requires learners to interact with a text like in a conversation with another person, except for the fact that the text cannot answer back. Nuttall (1996) describes this process as "active interrogation of a text", thus highlighting two very important aspects involved in the skill of reading: the fact that it is an active process and that it requires learners to question a text in order to understand the writer's message as best as possible (p. 10).

Highlighting the communicative purpose of reading is one way that teachers can help to develop their learners' reading skills, thus placing the focus more on meaning and not the individual words in front of them. However, in most cases, this

probably will not be enough. This means that, like with other language skills, teachers need to practice this skill with their learners both inside and outside of the classroom by focusing on how people read and the subskills that can facilitate reading.

When reading a text two processes are being employed: top-down processing and bottom-up processing (Nuttall, 1996). Top-down processing requires readers to activate schemata (prior knowledge and experience) which they use to make sense of the text and to construct meaning. In contrast, bottom-up processing is often used by readers to deal more closely with the written word if certain passages are not clear and readers want to acquire the full meaning of a text. During the reading process, readers often move back and forth between both processes employing whichever approach facilitates reading and acquiring as much of the writer's message as possible.

For learners who are avid readers, the processes above most probably are used unconsciously and they do not require much assistance in reading and acquiring the writer's message. However, for learners who are more reluctant readers, teachers may need to call their attention to the different ways of reading (skimming, scanning, reading for gist, reading for detail) and actively practice them in class through intensive reading under the teacher's guidance. By focusing on the different ways of reading for different purposes, teachers can raise learners' awareness about why they are reading and what information they actually want to obtain from the given text. Such an approach to reading also moves away from seeing the skill as merely a way to test learners' comprehension as it requires them to engage with a text more purposefully.

Intensive reading in class also involves working on sub-skills such as getting learners to call on previous knowledge about the subject of the text or the text type, employing prediction, working on word-attacking strategies and paying attention to signposting. Learners should also have the opportunity to read different types of texts in order to heighten awareness of different ways of reading and to engage with texts that are slightly more challenging lexically in order to maximize learning. In an intensive reading lesson plan, these skills can be practiced by starting with a pre-reading activity (e.g., arousing learners' interest in the topic & introducing key words), providing a while-reading activity (e.g., skimming for gist & guessing the meaning of words from context) and concluding with a post-reading activity (e.g., focusing on new vocabulary & transferring language work to a speaking or writing task).

In addition to intensive reading, teachers should also include extensive reading in their syllabus. This type of reading is done outside of class for learners' enjoyment

and involves longer texts (e.g., graded readers, novels, longer articles), which should be at their language level or slightly below. The reason for employing texts which are less challenging linguistically is because the goal of extensive reading is "to increase reading fluency" and the pleasure of reading in general (Hadfield & Hadfield, 2008, p. 96). Possible activities to facilitate this include keeping a reading journal, doing book presentations in class or online and running reading circles.

Listening

The skill of listening may pose more of a challenge for learners than teachers are often aware of (Paran, 2012). One reason for this is that while spoken language might be well-structured like a written text, in many situations this is not the case. In a spoken conversation, for example, speakers may leave out words, include irrelevant information or backtrack in order to add information they left out in mid-sentence. They may interrupt each other, speak over their partner and use hesitation all within one exchange (Hadfield & Hadfield, 2008). Another reason learners may struggle is because, in contrast to a written text, a spoken text disappears after being uttered, leaving learners with nothing more than their memory to rely on.

All of these factors can contribute to listening activities being stressful situations for learners of a foreign language. Yet listening is a very important skill because without it, learners will struggle in communicative situations such as when skyping, conducting telephone conversations and watching a movie. Therefore, it is important for teachers to provide their learners with skills and strategies that can help facilitate their listening and boost their confidence along the way.

Like with reading, top-down and bottom-up processes are used while listening. Top-down refers to listening for the overall message while bottom-up means understanding single words in order to comprehend the spoken text. For learners, "the key to success" is being able to grasp the overall meaning of what they are listening to as well as fill in the gaps where needed (Harmer, 2015, p. 337). This can be particularly difficult for language learners at lower levels who often concentrate on single words and the individual sounds while listening, thus restricting them from understanding the general message.

Teachers can work on both of these processes by practicing intensive listening in their classrooms. For example, top-down listening can be facilitated by asking learners to make predictions about what they expect to hear. This may not only put learners at ease as they have time to think about the listening task but also build up learners' confidence when they realize that they have pre-knowledge which can help them during the listening process (Harmer, 2015). Other possible approaches

include asking learners to listen for gist by posing a general question before doing the listening task so that they know what they should pay particular attention to.

Concerning bottom-up listening, teachers can require learners to listen for specific information which promotes focused listening. In such lessons, learners should be given the questions before listening to the text so that they know what they should concentrate on and have time to activate schemata. Dictation can also be used in which teachers dictate sentences that include certain aspects of speech, with the aim of raising learners' awareness. This activity requires learners to write down everything they hear while allowing teachers to focus on features of spoken language, like linking of words (Harmer, 2015).

By focusing on the different aspects of listening, teachers do not only contribute to developing learners' confidence but also move away from approaching the skill of listening as merely a way to test learners' comprehension. After all, being able to employ different ways of listening prepares learners for real-life situations. As the ultimate goal of CLT is to prepare learners for foreign language use outside of the classroom, teachers should also provide opportunities to listen to a wide variety of recorded materials from podcasts to films that cover different situations, levels of formality and accents. In the case of film, teachers may also want to consider the type of input: audio, visual, both audio and visual, subtitles etc. By including visual input, teachers can also ask learners to consider the role non-verbal features such as gestures, facial expressions and eye contact and the influence they have on listening.

Like with reading, an intensive listening lesson usually includes three stages: pre-listening (e.g., introducing the topic, making predictions, presenting comprehension questions), while-listening, which can include multiple repetitions (e.g., listening for gist, specific information, identifying words in connected speech), and post-listening (e.g., looking at the transcript and detecting new vocabulary, including a speaking or writing task). By spending class time on practicing listening skills, teachers also send the message that this skill is not merely an activity that should be used to fill in the last ten minutes of a lesson when learners are tired, and their level of concentration is waning.

Finally, teachers can encourage learners to work on extensive listening outside of class. Like extensive reading, this is done for pleasure and can include anything that learners like to listen to in their free time (e.g., music, YouTube videos, films). As follow-up activities, learners can present their favourite song lyrics in class, make their own music video or write a review of a film, just to name a few options. In the end, the more contact learners have with listening, the more confident they

will be when encountering spoken texts for the first time or in stressful situations like at the *Matura*.

Productive Skills

Writing

The way writing is taught in Austrian classrooms has been strongly influenced by the standardised *Matura* exam, even at lower levels. For example, a handbook of advice for teachers on building up their learners' writing skills in lower secondary makes frequent reference to the *Matura* as the ultimate goal of writing instruction (Horak et al., 2012).

For the writing part of the *Matura*, learners have to produce texts that fulfil the requirements of specific text types whose characteristics are clearly defined (genre writing). Genre writing requires learners to have knowledge of the conventions of the genre they are writing in (e.g., blog post, opinion essay). They have to write in an appropriate style and register (formal/informal) and consider the intended reader of a given text type (even though in reality, most texts will only be read by their teacher). All of this makes genre writing highly complex, and the teacher's support is crucial for learners' success.

When a new text type is introduced, the teacher cannot assume that learners are familiar with it. Learners first have to develop an awareness of the genre they have to write in, usually by studying successful examples of the text type that illustrate its various characteristics and stylistic features. When they produce their own texts, they need detailed feedback from their teacher on language (vocabulary, grammar), but especially on content, structure and register.

This central role of feedback (see chapter 8 in this volume) is why genre writing lends itself to a process writing approach, even though genre writing works towards a clearly defined end product - a successful example of a specific text type. Learners should be encouraged to focus on the process of writing itself, not just the finished product. They should always produce and edit several drafts of a text based on their teachers' feedback at each stage of the process before they arrive at a finished product.

It can be easier to focus on the process of writing if it is brought into the classroom itself as a cooperative activity. Traditionally, writing tasks are set as homework. This means that learners have to produce a text by themselves, based on the information they received in class, without the opportunity to consult their peers or their

teacher when questions arise. Writing in the classroom generates more ideas, provides opportunities for discussions that lead to a deeper understanding of text types and allows learners to benefit from their peers' feedback on their writing. Tools such as shared files, wikis and learning platforms can facilitate cooperative writing (see chapter 7 in this volume).

A process writing approach is not exclusive to genre writing, however. Creative writing, e.g., when learners produce poems, fairy tales and stories, works best when there is an audience learners can share the finished texts with, and peer reviewing and other aspects of cooperative writing can easily be adapted to suit such creative writing tasks.

While creative writing is, at first glance, not related to the type of writing tasks learners will eventually have to deal with at the *Matura*, it would be a mistake to neglect it. Learners who are insecure and unenthusiastic about their writing have to work on developing a "writing habit" before they can tackle complex writing tasks (Harmer, 2015, p. 367). One way of achieving this is by getting them to cooperate on enjoyable, low-stakes tasks that are properly scaffolded by, for example, providing a simplified version of a task and then gradually increasing the complexity, describing or illustrating a task in various ways to ensure understanding or giving learners a model example.

Music or pictures can be used to generate ideas, and writing frames and patterns can give reluctant writers some orientation in the writing process. If learners are used to writing as a normal part of their English lessons from lower levels onwards, they will be better equipped to tackle more demanding genres and tasks later on.

Speaking

Speaking is likely to be seen as the most important skill by the majority of learners (Ur, 2012). When they use English outside the classroom, this often takes the form of conversations in English with people who do not speak the learners' first language. This also means that learners' command of spoken English is the most visible aspect of their language competence and the one they will most likely be judged on in 'real life'. This adds to the perceived importance of this skill for both learners and teachers.

Teachers and learners would probably agree that the goal of teaching speaking is for learners to become fluent speakers of English, and accordingly, many typical activities in a communicative English classroom are designed to improve learners' fluency (e.g., role plays). This aligns with the principles of CLT. While CLT means

different things to different people, it is generally understood to place considerable emphasis on authentic communication and to privilege meaning - i.e., learners getting their point across - over accuracy (Harmer, 2015).

This approach has strongly influenced the way speaking is taught. The first concern of teachers is often to get learners to overcome their shyness about speaking a foreign language and 'getting them to talk', i.e., participate actively in communication tasks. Pair work and group work activities are a good way of easing shy learners into speaking as such learners often find it easier to speak to their peers than to answer the teacher in front of the whole class. When learners do speak in front of the whole group, teachers are careful to correct them in a way that does not put them on the spot and discourage them from speaking up in class in the future.

In order to motivate learners to speak, it is obviously important to give them something to speak about that they find interesting. Many teachers therefore supplement their coursebooks with materials that reflect the interests of their learners, and the learners are encouraged to express their opinions on current topics and discuss issues they care about (see chapter 6 in this volume). In such cases, teachers tend to largely disregard errors of form as long as the learners manage to make themselves understood and to get their point across, putting the focus squarely on fluency rather than accuracy.

While it is doubtlessly important to encourage learners to express themselves freely and fluently from early on in their careers, merely getting one's point across should not be the ultimate goal of advanced language instruction. The CEFR descriptors for speaking at B1 level refer to 'enough language to get by'. However, at the B2 level speakers are described as showing 'a relatively high degree of grammatical control' and using 'some complex sentence forms'. Learners have to be challenged and supported if they are to reach this higher level and not get stuck on the ‘intermediate plateau’. This means teachers should also increasingly take accuracy into consideration when they plan speaking activities for more advanced learners.

Of course, speaking tasks should always be designed with clear language objectives in mind. However, while this is done intuitively at lower levels of proficiency, where the teacher is always very conscious of the limitations of what the learners can do with language, setting language objectives requires more conscious planning at higher levels. Once the learners can 'get by' in English to a degree that allows them to discuss most general topics with the language at their disposal, speaking tasks should focus on specific aspects of grammar or vocabulary so that the learners can expand their repertoire of structures and patterns, resulting in greater complexity in their production.

One area in particular that is worth thinking about in this context is register. Due to the dominance of English in popular culture, learners often pick up non-standard phrases and expressions that are not appropriate in more formal settings (such as, for example, an oral exam in front of a panel of examiners like the *Matura*). It is important to make learners aware of different registers without discouraging them from engaging with and learning from the English they encounter outside the classroom. If they are given the tools to develop their language awareness, this can form the basis for independent language learning beyond their school career (see chapter 2 in this volume).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that teachers need to take into account a number of pedagogical considerations when working on developing their language learners' skills, while always keeping the communicative purpose in mind. For the sake of clarity, each skill was discussed individually; however, skills should be integrated when taught in the language classroom, which the tasks in the practical applications section aim to show.

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will read for meaning; learners will summarize findings orally; learners will synthesize findings in a written report

Activity: report writing

Rationale: to reflect real-life language use

Pre-knowledge: style and layout of a written report as required by the *Matura*

Level: CEFR B1+ and above

Procedure

1. The teacher prepares a questionnaire on a topic of interest to learners. This can consist of basic yes/no questions or multiple-choice responses.

2. Learners read the questionnaire and fill it in.

3. The teacher collects all of the questionnaires and cuts them up into separate individual questions.

4. The teacher distributes individual questions to small groups of learners so that each group must evaluate the responses to one question.

5. Learners evaluate the individual question assigned to them.

6. In their small groups, learners present the results of their evaluation to the whole class.

7. The teacher or a learner collects the results on the board, making them visible for the whole class.

8. In their small groups, learners transfer the results of the questionnaire into a collaborative written report.

9. Written reports are posted on a learning platform for the whole class to read.

10. Every learner must read one report by another group and post a comment about whether it conforms to the requirements of the text type.

11. In the next class, the teacher gives feedback on the group reports and addresses any issues and questions that may have arisen from the peer feedback.

Example 2

Goal: learners will practice making predictions; learners will listen for a purpose; learners will learn to retell a story

Activity: listening to a story

Rationale: to practice listening for gist and details

Pre-knowledge: basic structure of a narrative text

Level: CEFR A2 and above

Procedure

1. The teacher provides learners with key words or pictures from the story and asks learners to make predictions about the story based on them.

2. The teacher plays the audio recording of the story and learners listen in order to see if their predictions were correct.

3. In pairs, learners try to reconstruct the story, using key words or pictures if needed.

4. The teacher elicits stories from learners and asks the class to fill in any information that may be missing.

5. The teacher plays the audio again and learners read the transcript of the story.

6. Learners re-tell the story in pairs.

7. In small groups learners prepare to act out the short story.

8. Learners act out and videotape their version of the short story and present it to the class.

This activity could also be done with a scene in a play or movie. After the lead-in prediction activity, learners listen to the scene without viewing the play or movie. Once learners have performed their version of the scene, the teacher can show the original and learners can compare their understanding with it.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Look at a recent lesson plan and check to what extent skills are taught in an integrated fashion.

2. Design your own lesson plan in which you integrate skills for a real-life context.

3. What are the reasons for working only on one skill with learners / for integrating skills?

4. Are there any skills that you find particularly difficult to integrate into classroom teaching? Why and what could you do about it?

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Suggestions for further reading

Field, J. (2009). *Listening in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

This book goes beyond viewing listening for comprehensive purposes and considers the processes that are involved. Practical examples are provided for classroom use.

Hyland, K. (2016). *Teaching and Researching Writing*. Routledge.

This book provides an overview of current theories and research on writing and is also a guide to good practice that provides many specific examples of writing instruction.

Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Macmillan Heinemann English Language Teaching.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of reading skills and strategies that teachers should consider when teaching the skill of reading as well as ways they can integrate reading into their lesson planning and assess it.

Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Pearson Longman.

This book gives a theoretical introduction to spoken language production and provides suggestions for practical ways speaking can be integrated into the language classroom, as well as a task file.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **2.** Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on integrating skills in your teaching.

3. Reasons for working only on one skill: this is usually prompted by practical considerations, e.g., skills are often tested separately (for example, at the *Matura*) and learners have to be prepared for those specific test formats; the teacher may notice that a particular group of learners struggle with one specific skill or subskill.

Reasons for integrating skills: skills are not used in isolation in real life and classroom practice should reflect this.

4. This question will be answered differently by different teachers, but many teachers may feel that reading and writing are more difficult to integrate. With listening and speaking, it is possible to involve the whole class, while reading and writing are

more often done individually. This can feel like a waste of class time in the context of CLT. It may be helpful to see reading and writing as acts of communication and design activities that allow learners to read and write collaboratively.

11 Teaching communicative grammar

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Key words

Communicative grammar

Grammatical notions

Grammatical objectives

Learning aims

Learning stages

Factors that optimise learning

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is communicative grammar?

What are the main differences between traditional and communicative grammar?

How can grammatical objectives be defined?

What criteria can we apply to evaluate, adapt and design grammatical activities?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

As in many European countries, grammar exercises and activities found in Austrian schoolbooks and widely-used classroom practices tend to follow a fairly traditional approach to the teaching of grammar. Teachers looking for guidance from the latest version of the Austrian school curriculum on how to teach grammar may be disappointed; whereas previous versions of the curriculum provided a discussion of principles of communicative grammar and specified grammatical objectives in terms of grammatical notions (see discussion below), recent versions have been dominated by specifications of learning content in terms of skill-based learning outcomes without making specific references to grammatical categories. Nor will teachers find much support from international manuals on foreign language methodology: grammar is the one area of language teaching which has been neglected by many methodologists who find it difficult to incorporate into communicative approaches. Indeed, both among teachers and among methodologists, grammar is often seen as a 'problem'. In this chapter, we illustrate how grammar, if taught according to certain principles, is wholly compatible with modern approaches and theories of learning. These principles and the categories and terms discussed in this chapter are dealt with in more detail in Newby (2017).

Tasks of the (grammar) teacher

When teaching grammar, teachers have to carry out several pedagogical tasks. The most important are:

- Setting **grammatical objectives** so that teachers know exactly what they are teaching, and learners know what they are learning. As we shall see, whether objectives are specified by means of grammatical meaning or by grammatical form will have important consequences.
- Dealing with **grammar rules**. The most common way of 'transmitting' rules to the learner is by teacher/textbook explanation; other ways are picking up rules 'implicitly' by using grammar or discovery of rules in the course of activities.
- Selecting or designing **grammar activities**. This entails recognising the learning aim of a specific activity and evaluating how well this activity might support this aim.
- Providing or designing a **sequence of grammar activities** which leads learners from initial awareness of a grammar rule to a stage where they can use grammar automatically.
- **Testing** grammar. Assessing how well grammar has been acquired by learners. This task must be carried out by taking into consideration the overall aims of learning. A fill-in-the-gap test does not necessarily provide information about whether learners are able to use grammar for communication.

Reasons for learning grammar

Before considering aspects of pedagogy, we need to begin with a statement of why our learners learn grammar and what the overall outcome of our teaching should be. This statement might run as follows: the overall purpose of learning grammar is to be able to express your **own ideas in real situations** in language that is as **correct, meaningful** and **appropriate** as possible. Let's look at each of these in turn:

It follows from the phrase '**own ideas in real situations**' that if our grammar exercises consist solely of fill-in-the-gap, transformation, translation exercises etc., they do not provide learners with the opportunity to **personalise** grammar – that is to say, to use grammar to say what they think or feel – and to rehearse grammar in actual contexts. Teachers regularly complain that students are able to fill in the correct forms in gapped tests, but they do not use the same forms in their free production. If our goal is performance in real-life situations, we must make sure that the

students practice grammar in such contexts. For this purpose, we need specific types of 'communicative' activities – see, for example, Ur (2009).

'…**correct, meaningful** …' The main purpose of all language use is to express meanings. Clearly, there is a close relationship between formal correctness and grammatical meaning. Some grammatical mistakes may even obscure the message or lead to misunderstandings. While traditional grammar has always paid attention to grammatical meaning, it has not given it the prominence that it is assigned in a communicative grammar approach, where grammatical meaning is at the centre of objective setting and activity design.

'**Appropriate**' grammar is an aspect which is often ignored in grammar teaching and refers to register or style. When teaching vocabulary or speaking skills, teachers often distinguish between formal and informal language – e.g., *get/receive, good morning/hi* etc. This distinction also applies to grammar usage: *My colleague and I attended a conference* (formal) vs. *Philip and me went to a football match* (informal).

Grammar and grammar rules: what are they?

One way of defining language is that it is a system for providing information about the things and events in the world and for expressing what we think and what we experience in our daily lives. Different aspects of language play different roles in this 'information' process. Vocabulary expresses the various concepts we talk about – things (nouns), properties (adjectives, adverbs), actions (verbs etc.) – and grammar provides more detailed information about *how* the speaker perceives these things, properties and events. For example, whether the things are general or specific (articles), how we can compare properties (e.g., comparative/superlative), when an event occurred/will occur (tenses etc.). It follows from this view that a communicative approach sees grammar as a **meaning-carrying system** which provides important information.

As far as grammar rules are concerned, rules simply mean 'regularities'. The term should not be confused with the 'you must/mustn't do this!' meaning of rules in general English. Acquiring grammar rules means internalising a systematic relationship between meanings and forms of grammar - in short, learning grammar means making **meaning-form connections**.

Differences between traditional and communicative grammar

It should be stressed that many practices commonly applied in grammar teaching are not based on specific theories of language or language acquisition. Rather, they

have established themselves over centuries and in many cases have not been questioned or put under the microscope to examine how effectively they support the learning of grammar. That is to say, teaching grammar tends to be the result of tradition rather than of any coherent theories. Added to this is the problem that very few researchers and methodologists have come up with plausible alternatives to traditional grammar teaching practices which can be implemented in everyday classroom teaching. The main differences between traditional and communicative approaches to teaching grammar are listed in figure 1.

Category	Traditional grammar	Communicative grammar
Objectives	Formal teaching objectives	Meaning-based objectives
Rules	Teaching through explanation → Learning by understanding	Teaching through activities → Learning by using, discovery etc.
Exercises	Exercises which test knowledge	Exercises which support learning
	Exercises which restrict use (fill-in-the-gap etc.)	Exercises which encourage use (open-ended, games etc.)
Aims	Grammar is an end in itself	Grammar is a means to an end

Figure 1: Traditional and communicative grammar

The purpose in comparing the two grammatical orientations is not to *reject* traditional teaching entirely but to recognise its shortcomings. For example, we are not suggesting that 'teaching through explanation' or fill-in-the-gap exercises have no place in grammar teaching. Rather, such practices need to be evaluated by teachers according to specific criteria and replaced or supplemented by communicative pedagogical practices when it is felt that these will provide better support for learning.

Notional grammar: setting objectives

In teaching an area of grammar such as tenses, traditional approaches have designed curricula and specified teaching objectives in terms of grammatical forms – present simple, past progressive, *going to* future etc. The problem here is that these forms express quite different meanings so that it is often not clear to teachers and learners what exactly it is that is being taught and learnt. Placing meaning rather than form at the centre of grammar enables us to take a **notional approach** to specifying objectives. A **grammatical notion** can be defined as a single meaning of a grammatical form. Examples of grammatical notions can be found in figure 2.

Notional objective	Utterance	Formal objective
[referring to a present activity]	You'*re being* stupid!	present progressive
[arranged activity]	I'*m playing* tennis tonight.	present progressive
[expressing intention]	I'*m going to use* my new racket.	'going to' future
[interpreting signs]	It'*s going to be* a tough match.	'going to' future
[reporting experiences]	*Have* you ever *been* to France?	present perfect
[expressing duration]	She'*s been* away for hours.	present perfect
[making an assumption]	I think they *must* be Irish.	modal - 'must'
[expressing compulsion]	You *must* go to bed now.	modal - 'must'
[reporting compulsion]	I *have to* do my homework.	modal – 'have to'

Figure 2: Notional objectives

It can be seen that the notional objectives are far more specific and informative since they express what a speaker wants to communicate, whereas the formal objectives merely relate to a grammatical category that is often abstract and difficult to grasp for learners. In school textbooks it is gradually becoming more common to adopt notional specifications of objectives; for example, several Austrian coursebooks formulate grammatical objectives as 'intentions and plans' rather than 'the *will* future'.

A further objectives-related consideration is how teaching/learning objectives can be made as transparent as possible to learners: it is important that learners know, on the one hand, what they are learning and on the other, whether they have achieved their learning aim. One big advantage of a communicative/notional approach is that notional objectives can be expressed in terms of '*I can*' descriptors to be found in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) and in the various versions of the *European Language Portfolio* (Council of Europe, 2001):

✓ I can *express an intention* using '*going to*'

✓ I can talk about an *arranged activity* using the present + *-ing*

✓ I can talk about my *experiences* using the *present perfect*.

Notional grammar: dealing with grammar rules

There are two general issues relating to grammar rules:

a) How should they be *formulated*? This relates to the *explanation* of how a piece of grammar works; rules are expressed in metalanguage by the teacher, coursebook or grammar reference book, or by the learners themselves if discovery approaches are applied.

b) How are rules best *acquired* by learners? The question of whether grammar rules should be made explicit at all is a matter of controversy among methodologists. However, most teachers – and the authors of this chapter – believe that explanations of grammar can serve a useful purpose as part of a framework of pedagogical activities.

As far as a) is concerned, the **meaning-based formulations of notional grammar** will provide more specific and simpler rules than the complex and highly abstract rules often found in reference books based on grammatical forms. The rules of notional grammar describe clear meaning-form connections. In the following two examples, the form is the same, but the notion is different.

Notion: Experience, Form: Present perfect

Utterances:

A: *What's the most dangerous thing you've done in your life?*

B: *Oh, that's hard to say. I've done lots of dangerous things. I've climbed several mountains. I've ridden on a tiger. I've held poisonous snakes in my hands.*

Rule: I am relating what I have done or experienced at some point in my life. I'm only interested in whether something has happened, not when it happened.

Notion: Changes and completion, Form: Present perfect

Utterances:

A: *Hello, Lizzie. My goodness! I hardly recognised you. You have grown! Your hair's different too!*

B: *Yes, I've had it cut short.*

A: *How are your parents?*

B: *Dad's in hospital. He's broken his leg.*

Rule: I am reporting on a new or changed situation.

(adapted from Newby, 1989, pp. 84-85)

Concerning b), of course, simply being told the rule is only one element of acquiring a rule. An explanation also needs to be embedded in clear contextualised examples of use, as in the above dialogues. In addition, the process of acquisition needs to be supported by various types of activities. And this leads us to the next issue: what types of grammatical exercises best support grammar acquisition?

Learning stages

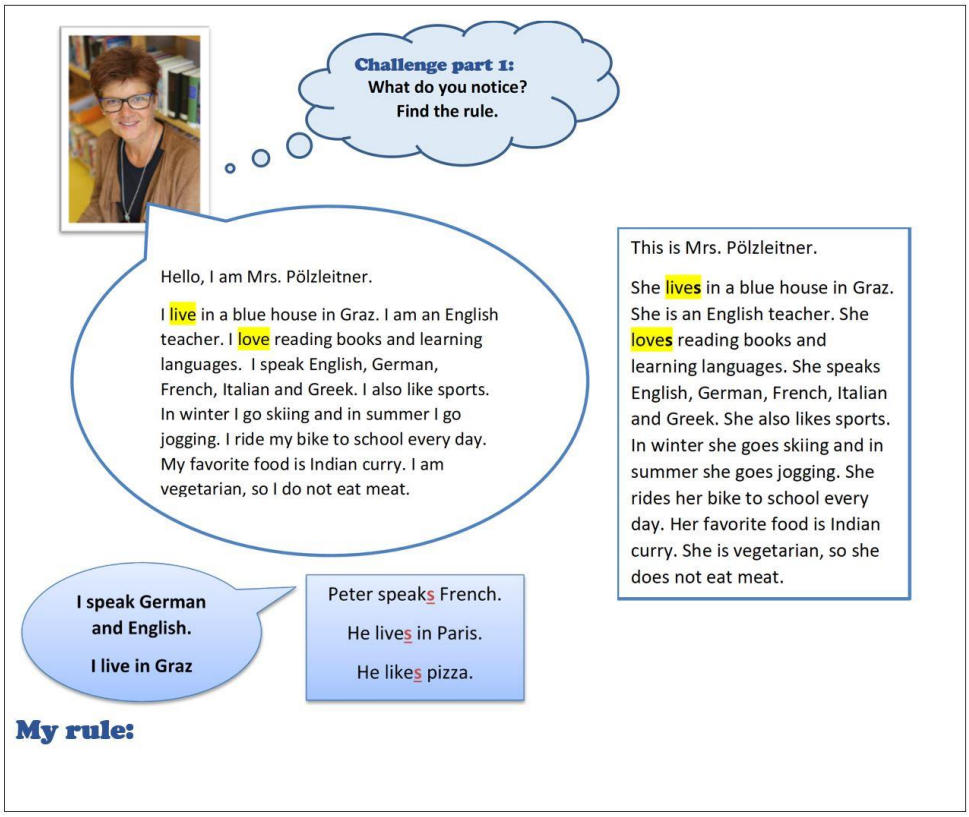
Virtually all learning theories see learning as taking place in a series of stages, which will guide learners from initial awareness of a new item of grammar through to the skill of using grammar freely in oral and written use. Traditional grammar, which sees stages largely in terms of the teacher, is based on a so-called PPP approach: Presentation-Practice-Production. According to this, the teacher first presents the new grammar and gives a rule; the grammar point is then practised and finally the learner should be able to produce, or use, grammar. There are various problems with this model: it neither specifies what form this 'practice' should take, nor does it explain how practice will lead to production.

If the quality of learning is to be improved, a stage model that is focused not on teaching, as is PPP, but on learning is required. Moreover, this model needs to be rooted in valid learning theory. The model presented in this section is based on theories deriving from so-called Cognitive Linguistics and related learning theories (see Newby, 2015, for full version). It is closely linked to theories of memory and skill acquisition and aims to help teachers to understand how learners register new information and store it in long-term memory so that it is available for use. This stage model includes the following four stages:

- **Awareness** – learners notice, make sense of and register new grammar
- **Conceptualisation** – learners understand or 'internalise' the rule and begin to store it in their minds
- **Proceduralisation** – learners rehearse the use of grammar so that it is gradually transformed from knowledge into a skill
- **Performance** – learners are able to use grammar automatically without a conscious focus

The following activities represent **the four stages**.

Example 1:



Example 1 represents the **awareness stage**. Its aim is to make learners aware of the 3rd person -s that is used to talk about another person. At this level and age, hardly any grammatical meta-knowledge can be expected from learners. Adding an -s in the third person would not be a problem if learners had a concept of the 'third person'. By exploring the speech bubble and the text in the box, learners realize that talking about themselves is different from talking about someone else and a different form is needed. This may seem very basic to adults, but children need to develop such basic concepts of meaning in order to form reliable meaning-form connections that will lead to automatic use of correct language.

Example 2:

Now it's your turn

Step 1: Draw a large speech bubble and write a text about yourself. Hand it in to your teacher.

Step2: Correct your speech bubble and put it on the pin board.

Step 3: Find a speech bubble from a classmate on the pin board or get one from your teacher. Then draw a box ☐ and write about your classmate. Hand your text in to your teacher. (Don't forget to write YOUR NAME on the sheet.)

Example 2 takes this exploration a step further. Learners produce two short text samples based on the given models: one about themselves and one about a classmate. This **stage of conceptualisation** is scaffolded by two factors: formatting (speech bubble versus box) helps the learners understand the idea of 'self' versus 'other'. In addition, the exercise is strongly personalized and allows learners to talk about their real self and a classmate, representing the 'other'. This links these abstract concepts to learners' personal experiences and thus makes them more tangible.

Example 3:

Present a classmate:

Work with a partner. Record a short video where you present your classmate. Tell us everything that you know about your friend.

In example 3, learners practice the new language. At the **proceduralisation stage**, the meaning-form connections become stronger and more automatic. Ideally, this activity consists of several short tasks where learners speak or write about people or animals around them. They might be asked to present a classmate, a family member and/or a pet. Both speaking and writing activities should be included in this stage.

Example 4:

WRITE ABOUT LAUREN

Where does she live? Where does she come from? What languages does she speak in school and at home? What are her hobbies? What are her likes and dislikes? What can you say about her family? Use all the information from the pictures. Then invent more details. Write as much as you can.

London
from:
Bosnia
E and Bos.







all images: pixabay CC0

Example 4 represents the **performance stage**, during which learners use the new rule in order to write about a fictitious person. This is slightly more abstract than talking about someone they really know. The differences between the task(s) in examples 3 and 4 are minimal and the activities could be used interchangeably. At this stage, the learners are ready to use the new language in unrehearsed situations. This last example would therefore be suitable for an exam.

Advantages of a stage model

A stage model has important applications for teaching grammar. First, we can locate a specific exercise or activity within a particular learning stage; thus, when giving students a grammar activity, we can be clear about which learning stage or stages this activity supports. Second, we can analyse sequences of exercises in a school coursebook or grammar practice book that deal with an area of grammar to determine if there are exercises that lead the learner from initial awareness through internalisation and proceduralisation to the stage of performance. Many coursebooks and reference grammars provide few exercises which go beyond the conceptualisation stage. If this is the case, the teacher will need to look for or design additional grammar activities to cover other learning stages.

Designing an effective grammar exercise

In order to make optimum use of the learning stage model to analyse grammar activities, teachers should apply two additional categories. In a previous section, we discussed the importance of identifying grammatical objectives; in addition, we also need to identify the **learning aim** of an activity – that is to say, what we expect the activity to achieve in terms of learning outcomes. For example, the central learning aim of a fill-in-the-gap exercise is to test the learner's understanding of a rule; whereas learning aims of more open-ended proceduralisation stage activities will be to gain confidence in using grammar and to rehearse using an item of grammar to generate ideas. Having established the learning aim, we then need to find criteria to judge how well an activity supports this aim. These will be of a cognitive, affective and communicative nature. **Cognitive criteria** will be concerned with how well learners make use of their innate mental resources; **affective criteria** will be concerned with how willing learners are to engage with activities; and **communicative criteria** will be concerned with how closely grammar activities correspond to real-life language use. By applying these criteria, we can evaluate the quality and effectiveness of exercises. The following list focuses on some of the principal factors which optimise learning:

1. Repetition. Learners need multiple opportunities to engage with the new grammar. However, quantity alone is not a sufficient criterion: the quality of the contact is a crucial factor.

2. Depth of processing. The extent to which grammar becomes internalised is partly dependent on how mentally active learners are and how intensively they make use of their cognitive resources. In a nutshell, more intense brain activity means more learning.

3. Commitment filter. Learners are more likely to engage with the grammar being learnt if they have positive feelings towards the activities they are carrying out. Problem solving, enjoyment, success, having fun, being creative and humour will all positively influence their degree of engagement, and higher engagement leads to stronger connections in the neural networks of the brain.

4. Personalisation. Learners have the opportunity to draw on their personal experiences and express their own thoughts, wishes and ideas. These personal connections will have two main effects: firstly, they will make the learning of a new grammatical item more meaningful and relevant and will thus raise learners' engagement level. Secondly, personalized activities allow learners to make strong links between existing concepts and memories in their brains and the new grammar.

5. Peer interaction. In pair- and groupwork oral activities, learners share ideas and cooperate on performing tasks. This provides learning support in a relaxed environment and gives them feedback on their and their peers' language. Oral activities have the extra advantage of using several senses (hearing, speaking, movement) and thus lead to activity in several parts of the brain.

6. Contextualisation. This means that grammar is embedded in a clear context, or learners can easily imagine a context. Similar to personalisation, contextualisation plays an important role in linking the new language to existing networks in learners' brains. By recalling and visualizing typical situations where the new language naturally occurs, learners make multidimensional meaning-form connections.

7. Authenticity of process. Learners use grammar in natural, 'language-like' ways, rather than just manipulating forms. Inauthentic exercises (e.g., put active into passive) do not lock into natural language acquisition processes.

8. Task-based. When using grammar, learners also fulfil a purposeful task that will have an outcome or end product. Task-based activities tend to be more engaging, and the results or products are often perceived as achievements by the learners.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed and illustrated how grammar materials and practices can, on the one hand, be embedded within principles of the communicative approach and, on the other, support the learning of grammar by following insights into language learning provided by cognitive linguists and learning psychologists. This combination of insights from language description and learning theory provides clear guidelines for teachers in selecting and designing grammar materials. Taking a communicative approach to grammar requires teachers to take a critical

view of traditional grammar practices and to be willing to explore and experiment with new ways of teaching. At the same time, teachers need to monitor their learners' affective and cognitive development and to understand the learning processes that support this development. In this way, they can assess the efficiency of their grammar teaching.

Practical applications and questions for reflection

Analyse the following activities according to the above criteria. How efficient do you think they are? Which of the learning stages do they support? What pedagogical considerations are involved?

Example 1
Complete the sentences. Use the going to future.

1. He ..... a letter to his friend. (to write)
2. We .....pizza tonight. (have)
3. Our neighbors .....away. (move)
4. Thomas ..... football in the afternoon. (play)

Example 2
Complete the text.

I have lots of plans for the upcoming weekend. On Saturday I ..... my grandparents in Vienna. We ..... to the Prater. There we ..... on all the cool roller-coasters and we ..... in my favourite restaurant. I ..... a big Cheeseburger with fries. It ..... a great weekend.

Example 3 Survey: What are your plans for the upcoming weekend?

Ask your classmates what they are going to do on the weekend. Who is going to do the most exciting things? Make a list, then present the three most interesting plans to the class.

Example 4 Solve the puzzle

1. Match the pictures and the sentences.
2. Now it's your turn: Draw your own puzzle.
Choose an animal or a person and a thing that they own.
Draw 5 pictures and write 5 sentences. Write your sentences in the wrong order.
Ask your teacher to check.
Then ask a friend to solve your puzzle.

Example 5 Experiences

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This chapter provides a fuller account of the theories and principles discussed here.

Norrington-Davies, D. (2016). *From Rules to Reasons: Practical ideas and advice for working with grammar in the English language classroom*. Pavilion Publishing.

This book provides useful resources and examples for teachers who want to explore cognitive approaches to grammar with their learners.

Herrmann, U. (Ed.). (2009). *Neurodidaktik*. Beltz.

This book presents important findings of the neurosciences in easily readable chapters. It gives practical examples that will raise teachers' awareness of important aspects of efficient teaching and learning.

Ur, P. (2009). *Grammar Practice Activities* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

This book provides a large collection of communicative grammar activities, as well as a helpful introduction to communicative grammar teaching.

Commentary on practical applications and reflection questions

Examples 1 & 2

Learning stages: example 1, conceptualisation; example 2, proceduralisation

Pedagogical principles:

The two examples look fairly similar at first sight. Both are gap filling activities. However, example 1 uses decontextualized sentences where learners only have to put the given verbs in the correct form. Hardly any mental processing is needed to fulfil this task.

Example 2 offers a coherent text, and learners have to process the meaning and fill in a fitting verb and its correct form. For beginners, whose active vocabulary is still very limited, the teacher might provide a box of verbs to choose from. This makes it easier for the learners, but still demands some active processing of meaning.

Neither of the examples is personalized or highly engaging and they do not involve any peer interaction. Filling in given words in a sentence is not an authentic process; filling gaps in a coherent text comes a little closer, since it involves reconstructing a meaningful story.

Example 3

Learning stage: proceduralisation or performance

Pedagogical principles:

The example is authentic and engaging, learners interact with their peers and find out about each other's real personal plans. They process language actively; moreover, several senses are involved. When speaking, learners will not only show increased brain activity in the areas that are typically responsible for language, but also in the parts of the brain responsible for hearing and movement of the mouth and tongue. This increased brain activity leads to more intensive learning, since wider neural networks are involved. For further information, see Herrmann (2009) and Macedonia et al. (2011).

Example 4

Learning stage: conceptualisation

Pedagogical principles:

The task in example 4 can be very demanding for learners. In order to match the sentences and the pictures they need to understand that the different forms (spellings) refer to singular and plural meanings and thus tell them whether there is one owner and one object or several owners and objects. For most students this is a major new realisation that makes them aware of the different meanings that the letter 's' can have in the English language.

The matching task demands deep processing on the meaning level. Creating a puzzle of their own demands a high degree of processing. Solving and creating a puzzle are engaging activities and language is used in authentic ways, even if no wider context is given. In step two learners interact with a peer who must solve their puzzle. This is usually followed by some peer discussion or explanations of the correct solutions.

Example 5

Learning stage: proceduralisation

Pedagogical principles:

In example 5, the learners write about their own experiences and have to distinguish between the two concepts of [general experience] and [specific events / details]. Peer and social learning are not yet included here but can be easily implemented in a follow-up activity, e.g., Find the person who has done the coolest, most interesting things.

12 Global skills and ELT: Moving beyond 21st century skills

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Key words

21st century skills

Global skills

Integrating global skills in education

Dual-strand approach to teaching English

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What are global skills?

What global skills are represented in the Austrian EFL curriculum?

Why should we integrate global skills into education?

To what extent are global skills represented in national curricula?

Why is the language classroom especially suited to teaching global skills?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

In the current Austrian general curriculum, schools have the responsibility to educate learners about topics that are not assigned to specific subjects. These transversal educational principles refer explicitly to the following life skills: the 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication), interpersonal skills, global citizenship, sustainable living, health literacy, and social responsibility (RIS, 2020a, 2020b). Further, the curriculum states that the overarching goal of the transversal educational principles is to help students develop a positive perspective on their future and to support students in finding meaning in their lives. Particular emphasis appears to be placed on citizenship and social responsibility as well as sociocultural competence. In language education, many of these competences (such as socio-cultural competence, collaboration and cooperation) are often already covered as they are relevant to aspects of communicative competence. However, incorporating other competences into classroom teaching may require more of a conscious effort by language teachers to ensure that they are addressed. The following section provides more insight into what is meant by global skills and why they represent an important part of language teaching.

Defining global skills

Global skills is a term that is used to describe those competences previously referred to as 21st century skills. As we are already well into the 21st century, there has been a shift in terminology and conceptualisations of what these skills are, and the term '21st century skills' is being replaced by a range of other terms. For example, scholars are now talking about 'life skills', which are defined as a range of "cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills" (United Nations Children's Fund, 2003), 'global competency', which is considered a multidimensional capacity to "examine local, global and intercultural issues, understand and appreciate different perspectives and world views, interact successfully and respectfully with others, and take responsible action toward sustainability and collective well-being" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018, p. 4) and 'global skills', which are defined as "the skills which people are acknowledged to need in order to flourish in their professional and personal lives" (Mercer et al., 2019, p. 10).

Previously, such competences were typically defined in terms of the 4Cs (e.g., Common Core Standards, 2019) plus digital literacy. However, such frameworks were criticised for being too narrowly defined and focusing too much on the workplace with little to no consideration of life more globally conceived (Brewer, 2013; Hilton & Pellegrino, 2012). A change in thinking about what life skills should include began most notably in education with the introduction of UNESCO's four pillars of education (Delors, 1996). Here the focus shifted from an emphasis on the content of subjects to a broader conceptualisation of education concentrating on what learners need for coping in life more generally. The four UNESCO pillars are: learning to know; learning to do; learning to be; learning to live together. The latter two pillars are those which clearly foreground the importance of skills for learners' broader lives and not only for their roles in their future workplace.

In the meantime, the notion of life skills has thus been expanded to include a range of competences. These include aspects such as emotional regulation, wellbeing literacy, citizenship competences and ecoliteracy or sustainable living, among others. This broader conceptualisation is reflected in a number of international educational frameworks for life skills (such as, ATC21S, n.d.; British Council, 2017) as well as PISA's global competence (OECD, 2018) and UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017). The common ground uniting these frameworks is that they are explicitly relevant to general education, viewing learners as active change-makers and thinkers, with a participatory role to play in shaping life in their local, national,

and global communities. The frameworks encourage educators to empower learners with the skills to cope and succeed as individuals and members of social groups within and beyond the school or workplace.

Reasons for integrating global skills into education

Contemporary society is characterised by a rapid pace of technological advancement, increased global mobility and a range of economic, social and environmental challenges. In order to succeed and flourish in such societies, people need to be equipped with a set of skills designed to meet these challenges. Traditionally, schools have focused on academic success in narrowly defined and discretely bound school subjects, such as mathematics, geography, and history. However, that model of schooling is now being challenged in diverse ways. Wyse et al. (2018), for example, argue against the traditional school subject-based curriculum as, in their view, "thinking is more theme-focussed, drawing across multiple subjects, disciplines and areas of knowledge, in seeking understanding of any aspect that is the focus for learning" (p. 295). Along with the discourse critical of teaching in discretely bound school subjects, many are rethinking the purposes of education. It is now widely recognised that traditional subject knowledge acquisition alone is insufficient to prepare children and adolescents for the 21st century society's opportunities and challenges (White & Murray, 2015). Instead, education systems are increasingly teaching competences aimed to equip students with the skills needed to succeed in dynamic, complex, global societies. These include skills to think creatively and critically, work independently, collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds, be socially and emotionally literate and be able to use technological resources to grow personally and function effectively as an active, engaged citizen in local and global communities. In the classroom, this can be realised, for example, through projects cooperating with other countries and schools, through problem-based learning tasks or through genius-hour type projects where students work together to research issues in their local or global community, potentially also with a service-learning element.

At present, the integration of reformulated 21st century life skills into schooling at all levels is the largest ongoing educational reform taking place globally. Currently, most countries worldwide implement some form of life skills as part of their national school curriculum. Nowadays, the question is no longer ***whether*** we should be teaching 21st century skills, but rather what we think those skills are and ***how*** we should be doing this (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Indeed, a number of national education ministries have already incorporated broadly defined global skills into their curricula, including Australia, Bhutan, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Japan,

New Zealand, Norway and Scotland. The intention in most of these cases is that teachers of all subjects share responsibility for teaching these global skills. In other words, every teacher of every subject is expected to try to find ways to integrate such skills into their regular subject teaching. For example, in Canada, Alberta has developed their curriculum to explicitly include skills needed by learners for success in school as well as for being able to build their careers and lead fulfilling lives. Such skills are: critical thinking, problem solving, managing information, creativity and innovation, communication, collaboration, cultural and global citizenship, and personal growth and wellbeing (Lamb et al., 2017).

A practical example of this type of integration could be a sequence of lessons in which the teacher helps their learners to improve their ecoliteracy by exploring the topic of pollution in rivers and the environmental issues around this topic. By collaborating with each other in group work, learners get the chance to improve their collaboration skills. Learners could also be asked to research the issue of river pollution in their own local community either through interviews within the local community, thereby enhancing their interpersonal skills, or by researching the topic online and thus developing their digital literacy. Learners could search for an example of a river renaturation success story online where a river has been transformed after positive community action. They could compare their local situation to international examples of good practice and reflect on whether and what action could be taken. Thus, students would not only acquire ecoliteracy, but would also enhance their digital literacy as well as communication and collaboration skills.

However, for any teaching approach of global skills to succeed, it needs to be manageable and sustainable for teachers to integrate into their regular practice. Anything that is considered an additional add-on is unlikely to be taken up by educators who are often already under considerable curricular and time constraints and so could potentially resist the notion of teaching global skills as part of their regular practice. Yet, the adjustments required may be relatively minor. In most language curricula and coursebooks, topics such as the environment (see the example above), globalisation, and consumerism are already covered and thus it is easy to connect and extend work on these issues from other perspectives. Teaching with global skills in mind can simply be a way of becoming conscious of the range of additional skills we can integrate in various forms into our regular practice. Global skills teaching can be realised on a broad range from large-scale projects (such as a project week for a whole class) to simple adjustments to existent tasks in individual lessons.

Language teaching and global skills

Language teaching might be particularly well suited to integrating global skills alongside language goals, especially in contexts which are typically communicative in character, as is the case in Austrian schools following the national language curriculum which is underpinned by the methodology of communicative language teaching (see chapter 1 in this volume). CLT also serves as the framework for the 2018 companion volume to the CEFR (see chapter 5 in this volume) in which the shift towards a dual-strand approach in language education becomes even more apparent. Indeed, it now includes a number of descriptors which also reflect global skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, interpretation, synthesizing information, research skills and practices, leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, and multicultural literacy (Council of Europe, 2018). Language educators working within a CLT framework are possibly already incorporating certain global skills into their language teaching as a more broadly conceived notion of communicative competence in the classroom goes beyond "transactional, oral, face-to-face interaction" and should actually entail "aspects of intercultural as well as mediated communication" (Dalton-Puffer, 2009, p. 200). As such, it is likely that many language teachers already see some of these global skills as part of their regular language teaching practice. This means that it may be easier for language teachers than for teachers of other subjects to envisage expanding their roles and responsibilities to include a fuller, more complete range of global skills alongside linguistic skills.

Essentially, teaching with a dual-strand approach in mind (i.e., combining English language and global skills) is already happening in many places in Austria, for example, in Content and Language Integrated Learning (see Chapter 17 in this volume). CLIL is an integrative approach to teaching and learning both content and language. Coyle et al. (2010) explain that in CLIL both content and language are "interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time" (p. 1). Such an approach is ideally suited to interweaving language teaching and global skills. There are lessons to be learned from experiences with CLIL about what works well and how teachers can vary the ways in which and the degree to which the two learning goals are integrated together into one lesson. As with CLIL, lesson planning would thus involve an explicit articulation of the language and global skills aims and objectives at each stage. In this way, teachers can look for meaningful connections and opportunities to explore how to bring the global skills into regular practice without having to neglect their language learning aims. How this happens in practice will, as with CLIL, depend on the aims of teaching and level of proficiency of the learners. For some teachers, integrating global skills may begin with

small steps such as merely including explicit reflective questions for learners on one single skill area; for others, teaching could involve larger projects taking inquiry-based approaches to foster multiple global skills simultaneously.

To give an example, a starting point for including global skills in the EFL classroom could be to view topics such as food or natural disasters (which are typically covered in coursebooks) as opportunities for integrating global skills alongside language objectives. The teacher could, for example, foster their learners' citizenship competence and social responsibility by triggering a discussion about local problems when working through a topic that lends itself well to such a discussion. They could ask their learners to think of ideas for how loneliness among the elderly or digital literacy among adults (e.g., their grandparents, parents and neighbours) could be improved, how the local community's attractivity as a working and living space could be ensured in the future, depending on the local context, of course. Doing such service-learning activities in the language classroom can last for anywhere from ten minutes up to a sequence of lessons, depending on the amount of time the teacher feels able to invest. Additionally, the potential to include creative tasks such as writing stories, songs, and poetry is always possible in respect to any topic in the ELT classroom. Thus, teaching with global skills in mind requires teachers to reflect on these as an equally important goal in every lesson and every task. In other words, educators can merely examine their existent teaching and tasks through the lens of global skills, thinking where and in what ways tasks could be expanded or adapted so as to not only teach language but also a range of global skills.

The call for a dual-strand approach to teaching English and global skills has already been taken up by several publishing houses, which have made this a key theme in recent years. For example, two of the most notable publishing houses, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge University Press, 2019) and Oxford University Press (Mercer et al., 2019), have both published position papers on the need to integrate global skills broadly conceived into language teaching:

- The Cambridge Life Competences Framework (CUP, 2019) was created by Cambridge Language and Pedagogy Research to provide descriptors of key life skills in practice and help language educators make life skills part of their language courses. The framework covers collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, emotional development, learning to learn and social responsibilities.
- Oxford University Press (OUP) published a comprehensive framework (Mercer et al., 2019) which centres on a cluster of five global skills (communication and collaboration; creativity and critical thinking; intercultural

competence and citizenship; emotional regulation and wellbeing; digital literacy). The OUP framework also proposes practical suggestions for how to teach English and global skills, ideas for how to assess the development of these skills and an outline of the kinds of environmental support needed for facilitating such teaching.

In terms of teaching materials, major publishing houses have also begun to respond to the need for relevant materials for teaching English and global skills in an integrated way. An increasing selection of coursebooks exist which provide support for English teachers aiming to integrate at least some global skills, although the emphasis tends to still remain on the traditional notion of the 4Cs. Some examples include, for example, *Gateway* and *Beyond* by Macmillan; *Talent* and *Think!* by Cambridge University Press; and *Together* by Oxford University Press. The Austrian schoolbook publishers also touch in part on the topic of life skills (e.g., *Prime Time* by ÖBV). From experiences with CLIL, it is clear that the existence of relevant materials and effective pedagogical ideas which can be employed in sustainable ways is one vital step for teachers being able to move forward and take on dual roles (Banegas, 2013; Kiely, 2011).

Challenges of teaching global skills

Regardless of the increase in relevant materials being made available, a number of obstacles still remain which hinder the teaching of global skills. At present, such skills are often only taught explicitly if an individual teacher has a particular interest in the topic or skill. Teachers may lack confidence in how to teach global skills due to an absence of explicit training or support. Chu et al. (2017) explain that although 21st century skills frameworks name specific learning goals, these models are limited in their applicability because they do not provide educators with the necessary tools by which to reach these global skills goals. Yet, interestingly, research has also shown that teaching 21st century skills can be motivating for both teachers and learners as it further broadens the relevance and meaning of what is done in class (Rueda, 2013). A further obstacle can be that some stakeholders such as parents or administrators/head teachers may believe that teaching global skills detracts from the traditional academic subjects and takes valuable time away from the supposed 'real' business of schools (Durlak et al., 2011; Lamb et al., 2017). However, this is not the case. In fact, evidence suggests that teaching these skills is likely to be beneficial for learners in their academic lives in the present as well as their lives more broadly defined in the future (Norrish et al., 2013; Suldo et al., 2011; White & Murray, 2015). In other words, developing these global skills now helps learners succeed better in the traditional school subjects.

To conclude, there no longer seems to be any debate about the necessity to teach global skills alongside all school subjects. Language teaching in particular may represent an ideal context in which to integrate and further promote such competences. It is likely that many individual language teachers are already working on some elements of global skills with their learners, but often this is done ad hoc and depends on individual teachers, their confidence, and specific interests. At present, there is no systematic approach preparing language teachers for how to teach all global skills and language in a sustainable and integrated way as part of their regular everyday practice. Although the power of motivated teachers who are eager to equip their learners with skills they need in order to flourish in their lives should not be underestimated, more systemic support is needed to help teachers in terms of materials and education.

Teaching global skills has been part of the Austrian curriculum for some years now and it is every teacher's responsibility to prepare today's learners for the life and the challenges ahead of them. Teaching with global skills in mind can empower them to lead happier and more successful lives in and beyond the workplace now and in the future. It is time for global skills to be made an integral part of language teaching, as opposed to an optional add-on.

Practical Applications

In this section, we consider possible approaches to integrating global skills into English language teaching. Teaching approaches can be imagined as stretching along a continuum from weak to strong forms. For example, it is possible to do short, one-off activities, longer activities that cover one or two lessons or even larger projects which are engaged with over a number of weeks. Alternatively, teaching global skills can simply be the teacher's way of being in class so that every single lesson and every task is considered through the lens of what global skills could be drawn out explicitly or implicitly. If teaching global skills is entirely new to the teacher, they might wish to begin merely by posing divergent types of questions or prompting learners to reflect on specific issues or perspectives. In the following, we offer some illustrative examples of the kinds of activities that teachers could consider including in their English language teaching (see also Mercer et al., 2019, for further examples of ideas).

Example 1

Goals

Language learning objectives: learners will develop vocabulary to describe emotions; learners will practise past tenses for describing a situation in the past

Global skill objectives: learners will learn to recognise, identify and understand the function of emotions, to empathise with others, to use digital technologies to communicate visually with others and to critically think using comparative and selection strategies

Activity: 'show and tell' - talking about a photograph

Rationale: An important part of socio-emotional competences is becoming aware of one's own feelings and what triggers them. Understanding one's own emotions is the first step in being able to empathise with others and appreciate what emotions they may be experiencing too. A sensitivity to one's surroundings is also an important part of citizenship.

Pre-knowledge: adjectives to describe emotions; past tenses; ability to take digital pictures and bring them to class to share (e.g., smartphone, tablet, digital camera etc.)

Language level: CEFR A2 and above

Procedure:

1. The teacher asks learners to photograph something that they see on their way to or back home from school that elicits a powerful emotion in them.

2. In the English lesson, learners get together in groups of four. They show these pictures to their peers and describe them: what happened, where the photograph was taken and what emotion it triggers in them and why.

3. Learners are then asked to compare their visuals, stories, and emotions to consider in what ways their choices were similar or different from each other. They should try to find at least one thing they all have in common.

4. Learners decide what was the most interesting insight from their group discussion to share with the whole class. They can also consider whether any of the photographs inspire them to want to take action and if so, what next steps they could take.

5. An optional homework task is to have learners write a blog post about their photograph and any action it might inspire to support others or maybe make a change

in their community or for themselves. An example might be a photograph of litter by the bus stop or graffiti on a church.

Example 2

Goals

Language learning objective: learners will practise expressing opinions

Global skill objective: learners will learn to empathise with someone from a different culture; learners will demonstrate openness and curiosity about diverse cultures; learners will reflect on global citizen responsibilities; learners will communicate appropriately using digital media in a range of cultural contexts

Activity: Dollar Street

Rationale: To develop intercultural competence, it is important to learn to empathise with people from other cultures. Being open and curious about ways of living in other countries and cultures is the foundation for intercultural competence. When comparing one's own lifestyle with that of other people, similarities as well as differences become apparent. Becoming aware of these differences can foster learners' readiness to take on global citizen responsibilities. This task uses the language context and includes an opportunity to promote global citizenship as well as socio-emotional competence, digital literacy, and communication.

Pre-knowledge: language, style and layout of an email

Language level: CEFR B1 and above

Procedure

1. In the first lesson, learners form three groups and sit together at islands of tables. Without saying anything, the teacher distributes different proportions of items (Legos, pieces of coloured card, marbles, or sweets) on the table of each group. Group one receives a large amount. Group two receives approximately half or less and group 3 only receives one or two items. It is important that one group has a lot, one group has notably less and another group has nearly nothing.

2. Then, the teacher asks how they feel about the distribution of the items and what they think they could represent. It is worthwhile not confirming or disconfirming their ideas but asking them to brainstorm as many as possible. They can then be guided towards discussing the notion of fairness in respect to the global distribution of wealth.

3. Using the projector, the teacher opens the website https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street on the computer. If the resources are available, learners can each open this website individually or in their groups on their laptops or tablets. The tool Dollar Street is designed to represent 300 families and their homes in 56 countries. Through photos, the living standards of families from three different income groups are introduced. The teacher outlines the main features of the website.

4. In class or at home, learners explore the website and research different families' home lives. Learners should pick a country and an income-level to explore in more depth. They should examine other websites to understand more about one family's life and social context. Learners should consider what they have in common with this family and how their lives differ.

5. In the second lesson, learners get together with a partner and outline the family they have chosen while doing their online search (we will call it CF from now on, meaning case family), reflecting on how they are similar or different to them. After each partner has presented their CF, the learners then consider similarities and differences across all four families (the two learners' families and each CF).

6. The whole class discusses the notion of global diversity and wealth distribution. Depending on the age of the learners, they can be given single word prompts but it can be left open for them to form their own discussions and opinions; or this can be facilitated by the teacher (e.g., intercultural competence, diversity, social justice, peace, poverty, inequality, workplace, infrastructure). Alternatively, learners can be presented with the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a visual and asked to reflect on how this task has prompted them to think about the SDGs.

7. Finally, learners can be asked to write an e-mail to their CF.

Task: Your CF wants to get in contact with students from all over the world in order to share insights into their way of life and their culture. You decide to contact this family and write them an email of at least 150 words. Think carefully how to find out about their lives respectfully and share appropriate insights into your own life. Some ideas to help you:

What do you find most interesting about their way of life?

What do you have in common?

What differs in their way of living that you would like to learn more about?

What might they find interesting about your own life and culture?

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Examine the coursebook you currently work with and check to what extent global skills are included.

2. Design a lesson plan with two columns of teaching aims: language learning goals and global skills goals. Try to articulate a goal or objective for both in the overall lesson aims as well as for each activity you plan.

3. To what extent do you already integrate global skills into your language teaching?

4. What kinds of support exist for teaching global skills in your educational context?

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Suggestions for further reading

Bryson, E. (2019). *Fifty ways to teach life skills: Tips for ESL/EFL teachers*. Wayzgoose Press.

This book is a hands-on guide for teaching life skills in the EFL classroom and is a good starting point for first ideas for activities that integrate various life skills. Very accessible.

Maley, A., & Peachey, N. (Eds.). (2017). *Teaching English. Integrating global issues in the creative English language classroom*. British Council.

For English teachers who wish to integrate global skills into their teaching this publication is a must read. Practical examples are provided for classroom use.

Mercer, S., Hockly, N., Stobart, G., & Lorenzo, N. (2019). *Global skills in ELT*. Oxford University Press.

To date, the most comprehensive document on global skills in an EFL context. Contains clear descriptions of global skills (learner profiles), gives suggestions for how to teach and how to assess global skills.

Trilling, B., & Fadel C. (2009). *21st century skills: Learning for life in our times*. Jossey-Bass.

This book started the discussion surrounding 21st century skills and later on, global skills. An indispensable read for those who wish to gain a holistic understanding of this movement.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **2.** Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on including global skills in your teaching.

3. We suspect that many language teachers already integrate some degree of global skills into their teaching such as collaboration, intercultural competence, digital literacy, critical thinking skills, or citizenship. This is a positive sign as it suggests teachers can easily expand what they are probably already doing by consciously

reflecting on other global skills and thinking of ways to perhaps integrate these too without it requiring a substantial shift in practice.

4. The extent to which global skills are integrated into people's teaching often depends on the culture and ethos of the school they work at and how much this is supported. It is also influenced by how much support in terms of pre-service and in-service training there is on this topic. The most notable support can come from access to teaching resources, coursebooks or materials for this kind of teaching. One effective way to become a global skills language educator is to find a colleague to buddy up with and share ideas and inspiration with.

13 Intercultural competence and literature

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Key words

Culture

Intercultural competence (IC)

Literature

Young adult literature (YAL)

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is the present status of intercultural education in Austria's school curricula?

How has the shift towards emphasizing IC affected language teaching?

How can teachers promote IC?

What role can literature play in enhancing learners' IC?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Austria has a greater cultural diversity today than ever before, and, as a result, teachers often find themselves facing increasingly multicultural, multilingual classes, which can sometimes be challenging and need to be managed proactively in order to create an atmosphere of equality and respect within the classroom. If addressed actively, this cultural diversity can be a real asset for all stakeholders as it offers everyone involved opportunities to learn to interact in a global, diverse and ever-changing world. With this in mind, the need for intercultural learning in the EFL classroom could never be more crucial and relevant.

Since 1992, intercultural education has been included in Austria's school curricula as a transversal educational principle, which should be taught across the curriculum, thus showing its relevance and interdisciplinary nature. More recently, curricular guidelines concerning intercultural education were revised in the 'Interkulturelle Bildung – Grundsatzerlass 2017' (BMBWF, 2017). While the formal status of intercultural education remains the same within these new curriculum guidelines, the updated understanding of the concept reflects recent research as well as contemporary pedagogical classroom practices. This includes an acknowledgement of debates surrounding various terminology such as interculturality, transculturality and multiculturality, which fall under the umbrella term of intercultural education.

Its main goal is to help learners develop an open-minded attitude towards otherness, to raise their awareness of Eurocentric and ethnocentric beliefs and to provide them with the skills to explore different perspectives in today's open, heterogeneous societies.

When discussing intercultural learning in foreign language education, reference must be made to the role of the Council of Europe (CoE) and CEFR (see chapter 5 in this volume). In addition to providing descriptors of the four language skills, namely, speaking, listening, reading and writing, the CEFR "was the first major European policy document to give significant emphasis to the intercultural nature of language learning" (Kelly, 2012, p. 411). In this way, the CEFR made a policy shift from language teaching being about communicative competence to an emphasis on the development of intercultural competence (IC). The CEFR describes the language learner as follows:

> The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes ***plurilingual*** and develops ***interculturality***. The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how. They enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43; italics and bold print in the original).

The CEFR also provides teachers with a set of useful descriptors to speak about the IC of their learners. These include the areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes. More recently another skill area has been included in the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR-CV), namely, mediation, which highlights the collaborative processes of meaning-making (Council of Europe, 2018). Mediation refers to certain characteristics that can enable communication and "is also used to describe a social and cultural process of creating conditions for communication and cooperation, facing and hopefully defusing any delicate situations and tensions that may arise" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 106).

Concerning Austria's school curricula, the CEFR's understanding of IC has served as the basis for how the concept is seen in the country's current language education policies (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2019). However, regardless of the emphasis placed on the importance of intercultural learning in educational documents such as the

CEFR, Dalton-Puffer et al. (2019) suggest that in everyday practice in EFL classes in Austrian schools, cultural topics and related areas like literature are given less precedence. They attribute this to factors such as the increased heterogeneity of classrooms, which, interestingly, reduces some foreign language teachers' perceived need to spend class time dealing with cultural issues as pupils are experiencing cross-cultural exchanges on a daily basis. Another reason that is often mentioned is the standardized Matura, since many teachers feel pressured to use their class time for developing the competences required to pass the exam (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2019).

Culture in the foreign language classroom

The understanding of culture in language teaching has changed considerably over the years. Viewed historically, Kramsch (2009) suggests that culture has evolved from being seen as a very static concept primarily focusing on the characteristics of nationality to a more flexible understanding of the concept which acknowledges that culture is no longer defined by national borders and history. Regardless of this shift in perspective, Kramsch (2009) also recognizes that these various understandings of culture all have their place in language teaching. For teachers, this means that talking about cultural artefacts, beliefs, values and behaviours of English-speaking countries is still relevant in the language classroom. This understanding of culture can make the complex concept of culture more accessible, especially for younger learners. Knowledge of cultures where English is predominantly spoken is one way of bringing the language experience to life.

However, the shift in perspective also means that teachers need to go beyond the knowledge level and consider the role of English as a global lingua franca in today's world. In other words, teachers need to consider more than a fixed language and cultural context if they want their language learners to succeed in the various communicative situations they may find themselves in. This viewpoint is also reflected in the CEFR-CV's recent inclusion of mediation, which addresses skills such as facilitating pluricultural space, acting as an intermediary in informal situations and adapting language accordingly.

IC in the foreign language classroom

When considering the intercultural dimension of language teaching, teachers can refer to the CEFR descriptors as well as to a wide selection of models designed to help educators in setting their teaching objectives. Perhaps the most widely used and accessible model at the moment is the one proposed by Byram (1997) which he

revisited in 2021 by providing a more geo-political understanding of intercultural competence. Byram's (1997) model of IC was designed primarily for classroom use and refers specifically to the CEFR. It includes five main competences and more detailed sub-competences. The latter describe and clarify the main competences for both teachers and learners, thus allowing teachers to focus on individual aspects of intercultural learning. In addition, the model can be used as a tool for assessment where progress in individual competences and their sub-competences can be evaluated. For a list of sub-competences see Byram's (1997) seminal work: *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*.

Below is a list of the five main components of IC:

- Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own;
- Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction;
- Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own;
- Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices, and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction;
- Critical cultural awareness/political education: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 2000, p. 9).

An advantage of working with Byram's (1997) model in the language classroom is that it provides language teachers with a set of teaching objectives which can inform their teaching and guide their assessment of learners' IC. One criticism of Byram's model is that its focus is more on national cultures in contrast to a more transcultural and global understanding of culture. However, it was designed for language teachers who, in many cases, are still "working within a tradition that focuses on national cultures" (Byram, 2009, p. 330). When looking at many foreign language coursebooks, it becomes clear that emphasis is often placed on certain aspects of the target culture language or even the given culture, whereas there is less focus on facilitating skills that learners will need when communicating cross-

culturally. This is where teachers will need to supplement teaching materials in order to provide their learners with strategies required when using English in various settings.

Another model worth mentioning which advances the CoE's plurilingual agenda is *FREPA: A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures. Competences and Resources* (Candelier et al., 2012). FREPA was designed to further the language education policies of the CoE as it considers the development of language learners' plurilingualism and IC as its main aims. Like the CEFR and Byram's (1997) model, it is composed of a number of competences and descriptors and can be used to inform teaching objectives as well as materials design. An advantage of the framework is that it is very comprehensive and covers global competences (see chapter 12 in this volume) as well as the dimensions of knowledge, attitudes and skills, taking both plurilingual and intercultural competence of language learners into account. A complete list of the descriptors for the respective resources presented in the FREPA framework can be found at: http://www.ecml.at/tabid/277/PublicationID/82/Default.aspx.

Admittedly, the descriptors are quite detailed in order to ensure comprehensiveness; however, their explicitness can help teachers and teacher educators formulate their objectives for both curriculum design and classroom use. For example, the section 'attitudes' is subdivided into six sections which are further organized into additional sub-sections. One subsection under attitudes is 'curiosity' which has four subsections such as curiosity about a multilingual/multicultural environment, curiosity about discovering how one's own language(s) and culture(s) work, interest in discovering other perspectives of interpretation of familiar / unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own culture (language) and in other cultures (languages) / cultural (linguistic) practices and interest in understanding what happens in intercultural and plurilingual interactions. Therefore, it almost goes without saying that teachers working with the FREPA framework will have to choose a limited number of descriptors that seem to be relevant for their specific classrooms.

In addition to considering which intercultural competences teachers want to develop in their learners, they also need to take into consideration that intercultural learning is a process that each learner will experience differently. Like in language learning, learners will most likely work at their own pace and may require more time to understand and acquire certain aspects of IC. These aspects are reflected in the learning aims of teaching resources available for developing IC which offer a wide selection of activities that appeal to different learners' needs and styles of

learning (see suggestions for further reading at the end of this chapter). The selection of activities includes icebreakers, games, ranking tasks, experiential activities, case studies, critical incidents, role plays, various forms of media and simulations which can be done with different age groups and group sizes in order to cater to learners' individual needs. Interestingly, one point that they all have in common is that the activities end by giving learners the opportunity to reflect on what they take away from the tasks. This final step is crucial, as learners are required to reflect on what they have learned and thus become more aware of cultural aspects in their lives.

Using Literature to enhance IC in the foreign language classroom

There are many reasons to incorporate literature into the language classroom. Literature

- helps to develop the skill of reading,
- is a comprehensible form of input for language acquisition,
- can be used to provide good models for written English (genre/text type),
- can serve as a source for teachers to focus on language in context (grammar, vocabulary, paragraphing, cohesion, etc.),
- can be used to introduce topics and themes and
- can contribute to forming a community of learning in which learners share their reading experiences and thus together discover the pleasure of reading.

While this list is by no means exhaustive, it does show the potential that literature has in language learning as it can be used by teachers to achieve many teaching objectives.

Another reason for using literature in the language classroom is that it can also help to develop learners' IC. Literary texts can provide learners with knowledge about other cultures. Additionally, working with literature can help learners gain insights into their own culture(s) by reflecting on aspects presented in the texts and referring them back to the learners' own culture(s). Discussing different viewpoints with others who have read the same text can help learners call into question beliefs and assumptions they unconsciously hold. Helping learners to reflect on their world views is an important step in developing IC. Learners can also experience another world vicariously which otherwise might remain remote for them. Finally, reading literature in a foreign language can help facilitate learners' interpretative skills when they are required to relay what a text means to them, thus enhancing their mediation skills.

Various types of literature can be used for the purpose of promoting intercultural learning, including poems, short stories and novels. The same can be said for the type of genre. Teachers' decisions will be made primarily based on the objectives they want to achieve as well as learners' language level and interests, amongst other points to consider. However, one type of literature has proven to be very suitable in connection with developing the IC of learners in the EFL classroom, namely, multi-cultural literature. More specifically, multi-cultural literature that deals with the immigrant experience is recommended as the characters often face challenges when interacting with members of the new culture they are living in and/or members of different cultures who they come in contact with. For this reason, this type of multi-cultural literature can provide contextual situations in which learners can become aware of and analyse cultural diversity. While such literature may lead to highlighting more differences and misunderstandings between people with different cultural backgrounds, which teachers need to consider in order to avoid reinforcing stereotypes, it also provides a voice to the people who are represented in it. Thus, it gives learners insights into situations they may not be familiar with. For an example of a multi-cultural reading project designed for classroom use, see Practical Applications at the end of this chapter.

When choosing multi-cultural literature for classroom use, teachers will have to consider the complexity and language level of the books. In most cases, books which are defined as Young Adult Literature (YAL) will be more appropriate. For Blasingame (2007), YAL has four main characteristics; it

- has characters and issues young readers can identify with; those issues and characters are treated in a way that does not invalidate, minimize, or devalue them.
- is framed in language that young readers can understand.
- emphasizes plot above everything else.
- is written for an audience of young adults (p. 11).

Blasingame's (2007) definition of YAL presents the main features of this type of literature and at the same time also highlights its merits for classroom use. In most cases, it can be seen as literature that speaks to young adult learners as it presents their worlds in a mode of communication they understand and with them as the target audience in mind. For this reason, actions, experiences and views presented in the literature will most likely not seem remote to learners, but be perceived as something they can identify with on at least one level. Perhaps most importantly, YAL may be a way to show learners that reading and literature can be pleasurable.

Concerning multi-cultural YAL, a wide selection of excellent books has been published in more recent years so that teachers will easily find appropriate books for any age group and reading level.

As addressed above, using multi-cultural YAL can be an ideal way to develop learners' awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity and thus develop an atmosphere of respect and appreciation towards other cultures. When reading this type of literature, learners dive into an unknown world where they can identify with characters and walk in their shoes for a while. Thus, a reading project involving multi-cultural literature gives them the opportunity to learn to switch perspectives and look at the world from a different point of view. By decentering their own perspectives, learners can slowly allow themselves to challenge their beliefs, develop more open-minded attitudes, and thus develop a space of interculturality in their minds.

The following steps should be considered when developing a reading project to promote learners' IC.

1. Choosing the books:

When choosing books for an intercultural reading project, learners' age, reading level and previous reading experiences need to be considered. The novels should not be too challenging on the language level and not too long. Offering a choice of books rather than one class reader, which all learners have to read, usually improves learners' motivation and gives them a sense of empowerment. In addition, it will give them the opportunity to compare the different experiences and perspectives presented in the books and thus widen their horizons. Working with one book only does not allow this. Examples of popular multicultural YAL can be found online. A good source to start with is: https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/ya-multicultural.

The choice of books should also include a diverse range of protagonists. This will make it easier for the learners to identify with the main characters and their problems. If the learners can really identify with the main characters and feel their pain and pleasure, this will enhance intercultural learning.

2. Timeframe:

A typical timeframe for an intercultural reading project is two to three weeks, including a session of presentations. Unfortunately, some teachers may feel that they cannot afford to spend time on reading projects because they have to cover all the units in the coursebook. Knowing how much students can learn from a reading project can help teachers put the coursebook aside for a while and spend time on an intercultural reading project instead.

3. Choosing a focus:

In order to get the most from an intercultural reading project, it is necessary to focus on two to three main teaching objectives. Byram's (1997) model or FREPA are excellent starting points where teachers can find appropriate objectives for their target group. With a clear goal in mind, teachers can then start planning a number of pre-, while- and post-reading tasks that will guide learners in their reading and help them reach these objectives.

Practical applications

The following two examples of intercultural reading projects show a variety of tasks that can easily be modified for different books and target groups.

Example 1:

Goals: learners will acquire knowledge of the lifestyles, issues and practices of the social groups represented in the books; learners' attitudes including their preconceived notions and stereotypes will be challenged; learners' curiosity about new cultures and experiences as well as about their own will be developed and learners' empathy towards others will be promoted

Activity: Crossing Borders – intercultural reading project based on a set of young adult novels (Schumm Fauster & Pölzleitner, 2013)

Literary input:

In the project, learners choose from a selection of young adult novels in which at least two cultures are represented by the protagonists. In all of these novels the protagonists have to cross borders on their journey to discovering their cultural identity. They cross borders, such as national, cultural, racial, religious, gender, social and/or ethnic borders, and in the process share their experiences with the readers.

Here is a selection of books that are appropriate for an intercultural reading project:

Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Linda Crew, *Children of the River*

Marina Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*

Sharon Flake, *The Skin I'm In*

Moritz Gleitzman, *Boy Overboard*

Ann Jaramillo, *La Linea*

Gloria Miklowitz, *The War Between the Classes*

Abdel-Fattah Randa, *The Lines We Cross*

Melissa Schorr, *Goy Crazy*

Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give*

Jacqueline Woodson, *If you Come Softly*

Rationale: Learners compare their own experiences and practices with those of the protagonists and explore differences and similarities between their cultures, thus giving learners new insights not only into other cultures but also into their own as they are required to reflect on both. In the process, learners' openness towards others may also be promoted.

Pre-knowledge: some understanding of various aspects of culture

Level: Learners should have at least CEFR B1 in order to be able to read and enjoy the books chosen.

Procedure

After choosing one of the novels the students receive a package of pre-, while-, and post-reading tasks that guide them through the project.

Below is a selection of tasks that can be used with any book in order to enhance intercultural learning:

1. Learners compare their hopes and dreams with those of the main characters by filling out a chart in which they note how they view life and how the main characters do. This activity can help learners to realize that young people all over the world share very similar dreams of being safe, having a loving family and friends they can trust.

2. Learners collect all the stereotypes about the protagonists' cultures that they have come across while reading their respective novel. After reading their chosen book, they compare their own list with the stereotypes mentioned in the novels and discuss these with the class. This task can help learners to question their own stereotypes and encourages them to focus on similarities rather than differences.

3. Venn diagrams are often used for comparison as they allow learners to note similarities as well as differences. In this reading project, Venn diagrams are used to help learner compare their local culture with the protagonists' cultural practices. What is interesting about this activity is that learners often note that they have many

important aspects in common with the protagonists (e.g., the importance of family) and aspects of their life that are less important (e.g., dinner times) are the ones that are placed in the spaces that they do not share.

4. Towards the end of the project, learners can work with discussion prompt cards and short role-plays where they explore the protagonists' perspectives more intimately. In the role-play situations learners put themselves in someone else's shoes and experience the situations from a different perspective. For example, learners imagine that one of the protagonists has moved to their town and joined their class. The learners wonder how these new students would be accepted and integrated – or what it would be like to invite one of them to their family as an exchange student. In all these cases the students are personally and emotionally involved and have the chance to consider these situations in a safe environment.

5. At the end of the reading project, each reading group presents their novel to the class. The main aim of these group presentations is to help learners to see the wider picture by comparing and discussing the different characters' experiences. Moreover, these presentations can motivate learners to read another book that seems interesting to them.

A more detailed description of the project has been published in *Modern English Teacher* (Schumm Fauster & Pölzleitner, 2013). The project materials and steps can also be downloaded from www.epep.at/crossing-borders.

Example 2:

Goals: learners will be prepared for an exchange trip abroad at every stage of the experience; learners' awareness of cultural differences between their home culture and the culture in their host country and host family will be enhanced; learners' understanding of the various layers of 'culture' (surface culture, deep culture) and their influence on human behaviour (universal / cultural / personal dimensions of behaviour) will be developed

Activity: intercultural reading project – Eric's intercultural experiences (Pölzleitner & Schumm Fauster, 2017)

Literary Input:

The project is based on the picture book *Eric* by Shaun Tan (2010). In Tan's story an extra-terrestrial exchange student visits a family and surprises them with his unexpected behavior and questions. He seems very inquisitive, asking questions which may seem odd to those who have become blind to the patterns of everyday life. Tan's stories do not usually give any answers, but they encourage the readers to ask

lots of questions. The story of Eric raises the question of how culture shapes our perception and our behaviour. It encourages us to reflect on our everyday practices and redefine what is 'normal'. Tan invites the reader to explore the area of 'deep culture', the invisible strings that guide us.

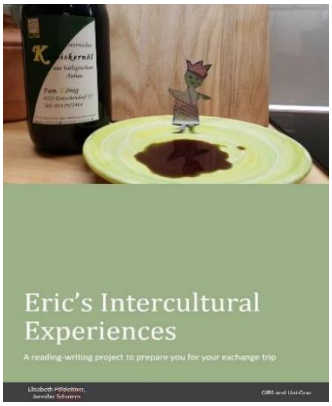

Figure 1: Student tasks for the project

Rationale: Class trips abroad are very popular in Austria and have a fixed place in most schools. Even if it is not realistic to believe that a 10-day trip will dramatically improve learners' language skills, these trips can be highly motivating for learners and they can contribute strongly to promoting their IC. This reading project helps facilitate learners' IC.

Pre-knowledge: basic knowledge of cultures included in project; at least CEFR A2/B1 in the language which is spoken in the host country of the class trip

Level: CEFR A2/B1 and above. The project can be used for any international class trip, irrespective of the target language. In our example the students went to Spain, France and Russia. Most tasks were completed in English (a language in which learners are highly proficient), some basic tasks were done in the target language (the language spoken in the host country).

Procedure

In part 1, learners read the very short picture book *Eric* and then work with a project booklet containing about 15 tasks. These tasks encourage the learners to look at their own everyday practices and compare them to the practices of their host family. The learners are introduced to the concept of the 'cultural iceberg' (the idea that only certain aspects of a given culture are visible, e.g., artifacts, while the majority

are invisible, e.g., beliefs) and explore different levels of culture by filling in their personal cultural iceberg as well as the cultural iceberg based on their experiences in their host country. In a further step, learners compare these experiences with their classmates and learn to understand the personal, cultural and universal dimensions of human behaviour. Thus, several stereotypes can be discussed and resolved.

Figure 2: Cultural Iceberg for Spain

Part 2 of the project consists of a story writing activity where the learners create their own Eric figure and take photos of Eric in interesting 'cultural' situations, both at home and in the host country. The learners then write a sequel to the original storybook where they describe Eric's cultural experiences in both places.

The project has been tried out in several classes and has always led to very interesting discussions about culture and cultural identity. All project materials including the handouts for the learners and examples of learner products can be downloaded from: www.epep.at/eric and are free for classroom use.

Figure 3: Eric drinking his morning coffee

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Look at a chapter in a coursebook that you are using now or have used. What aspects of culture are addressed? How are they addressed? Is there anything that you would add in order to develop these aspects further?

2. Refer to Byram's model or FREPA and design a lesson plan in which your objective is to enhance learners' intercultural competence. What are your objectives? What classroom activities will you use to achieve them?

3. To what extent do you already integrate dimensions of intercultural competence into your language teaching?

4. Make a list of books or other literary texts (e.g., poems, short stories, picture books) that you use with your learners. Reflect on what aspects of intercultural competence can be addressed when working with those literary texts.

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Suggestions for further reading:

Berardo, K., & Deardorff, K. D. (Eds.). (2012). *Building Cultural Competence: Innovative Activities and Models*. Stylus.

This is a hands-on book that provides teachers with a selection of activities as well as models which they can take into the language classroom. Each activity is designed to develop a number of intercultural competences.

Duff, A., & Maley, A. (2007). *Literature*. Oxford University Press.

This is a practical book that provides teachers with various ideas on how they can incorporate all types of literature into the language classroom. It has a strong language focus.

Paran, A., & Robinson, P. (2016). *Literature*. Oxford University Press.

This book considers various literary genres and provides teachers with insights into how to incorporate them into the language classroom.

Wintergerst, A., & McVeigh, J. (2011). *Tips for teaching culture. Practical Approaches to Intercultural Communication*. Pearson Longman.

This book provides a good overview of different ways teachers can address cultural issues in the classroom. It provides copiable materials as well as short theoretical explanations which support the practical nature of the book.

This link provides a list of the descriptors used in FREPA: http://carap.ecml.at/Components/2Listsofdescriptors/tabid/2662/language/en-GB/Default.aspx

Commentary on reflection questions

1. Depending on the chapter/book teachers look at, this question will have different answers. This question should, however, prompt teachers to think about what aspects of culture/IC are actually covered in the coursebooks they work with and where they might see the need to supplement them with additional materials.

2. As with the question above, this one will be answered differently by different teachers. What is important is that teachers familiarize themselves with both models and consider how they might help them in integrating the intercultural dimension into their classrooms. The models also show how many activities that teachers already do with their pupils can be slightly modified to allow for opportunities of intercultural learning.

3. to **4.** Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on including IC in your teaching.

14 Open Learning

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Key words

Open Learning (OL)

Individualisation and openness

Student-centered learning

OL in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Assessment in an OL context

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

How can individualisation and student-centered learning be applied in teaching?

What role can OL play in a CLIL setting or classroom?

What are some skills conducive to individualised, student-oriented learning?

How can those skills be assessed in a transparent way in an OL context?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Open learning (OL) and open instruction derive from reform pedagogy, for example, the methods of Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator, Peter Petersen, the founder of the Jenaplan schools in Germany, Helen Parkhurst, an American educator and founder of the Dalton-Plan, and Célestin Freinet, who started to reform the French school system in 1920, just to name a few. Reform pedagogy sees learning as a process in which learners are actively involved by exploring and understanding content with all their senses. Instead of learning just facts, learners should acquire skills and competences. They are also required to take over responsibility for their own learning while the teacher becomes a mentor who supports the learning process (Grass, 2011).

In Austria, schools that are run according to the principles of OL are usually non-confessional, private schools, although certain aspects of reform pedagogy can be found in 'regular' public schools as well (ORF, 2017). Some aspects of reform pedagogy such as 'explorative learning', 'project-oriented learning' and 'open learning' also appear in the Austrian curriculum for elementary schools (RIS, 2012). The curriculum for secondary schools in Austria has a stronger focus on learning objectives in the various subjects and leaves it up to the teachers to decide on the methodology needed to reach them. However, it does suggest that an open form of teaching and

learning that involves learner participation regarding organization, methodology, content and social form results in feelings of increased self-efficacy and personal responsibility (RIS, 2020b). In the curriculum for *allgemein bildende höhere Schulen (AHS)*, academic secondary schools, OL is mentioned in the context of student-centered teaching and learning and of learning strategies and methodology, but it is not elaborated on in detail (RIS, 2020a).

Definitions of OL

Although various attempts have been made to define the term 'open learning', there is no uniform understanding of this concept in the Austrian school context. The term has been widely used for all forms of teaching and learning that are student-centered and allow learners to have a certain degree of autonomy, which enables them to decide what, how, when and where learning takes place and who they want to learn with (Juen-Kretschmer, 2017).

Peschel (2002) claims that OL enables learners to acquire knowledge and skills in a setting in which they can freely choose their location, time (and pace) and the social dimensions they want to work/study in (i.e., in a group, with a partner or by themselves). The learners can decide on the content they want to engage with, and they do so in a methodologically individual way. Furthermore, according to Peschel (2002), OL fosters social aspects such as a high degree of learner participation and co-responsibility in terms of class infrastructure and community rules.

Individualisation and openness in OL

OL includes various dimensions of 'openness', in which individualisation is possible. These are:

- organizational openness, which enables learners to choose the setting, i.e., the time, place and social form in which their learning process should take place;
- methodological openness, which leaves it up to learners to decide how they want to acquire new skills and knowledge;
- and openness in terms of content, which allows learners to decide on the topic (or subtopic) they want to focus on.

In addition to the aspects listed above, Peschel (2002) describes two more forms of 'openness', which are social openness and personal openness. While social openness encourages learners to decide on social settings and rules, personal openness

refers to the relationship between teachers and learners as well as to that of learners among each other (Peschel, 2002).

Reasons for OL

Munser-Kiefer (2014) regards OL as an essential concept in the school context due to the heterogeneity of learners in contemporary classrooms. Since learners come from various different backgrounds and have a variety of different skills, interests and needs, uniform lessons do not result in uniform learning outcomes. Therefore, an individualisation of learning processes is called for. Munser-Kiefer (2014) lists four reasons for open learning:

- To begin with, learning is an active, constructive and self-regulated process, in which content is acquired in real-life situations and knowledge is constructed through social interactions. OL can offer a setting which fosters active involvement in the re-construction of content in a self-regulated manner.
- The learner's intrinsic motivation increases with the ability to make choices; hence, learner autonomy is a key element in any learning process and OL offers many opportunities for autonomous learning.
- Younger learners generally have limited learning experiences and approaches. For this reason, it is important for them to engage in concrete and activity-oriented learning processes, which OL can offer them.
- Lastly, intensive social interactions during the open learning process encourage personal development. OL should leave space for individual interests, which are a crucial part of learners' identities. In OL, learners take over responsibility for their learning and develop autonomy and social competences.

General and subject-specific skills required for an OL context

Salner-Gridling (2009) lists the following general skills learners need to have for this form of individualised, student-oriented learning:

- being able to activate one's personal excitement for and interest in a topic
- being able to ask questions
- having time and using it efficiently
- focusing on learning objectives
- dealing with frustration
- exploring individual learning paths and strategies and choosing between different forms of learning

- including all senses in the learning process
- choosing one's own learning companions and being able to learn together in a team
- being a team leader as well as a team player
- being able to listen actively
- knowing what is important to oneself
- reflecting on one's own learning processes

In addition to these general skills, learners also need to acquire specific competences associated with the respective subject in which OL is being applied. For example, in the subject of geography and economics, these might include map-reading skills; the ability to read, interpret and draw diagrams; research using online as well as print sources; filtering and summarizing information; conducting surveys and analysing data, just to name a few.

However, it is not just the learner who is required to have certain skills. The role of the teacher changes in an OL setting, and teachers need to be aware of a partial shift of responsibility towards the learners. Thus, the role of the teacher turns into that of a mentor who guides the learners in their learning processes. However, there are several aspects of OL the teacher is still accountable for. These are the preparation and the supply of suitable lesson materials, the training of learners' basic competences, skillful classroom management as well as efficient use of methodologies and the creation of reliable structures which enhance learning in an open setting (Salner-Gridling, 2009).

OL in a CLIL setting in an Austrian AHS

Since OL is an individualised, student-centered form of learning, it gives learners the opportunity to grasp a concept with all their senses and at their individual language levels. Learners can choose what topic they want to work on as well as the 'amount' and level of language involved in their learning process. Driven by their motivation to explore and understand, learners acquire new vocabulary and grammatical structures without conscious effort. They interact with their teachers and classmates in English, discussing their work and outcomes. When doing research, for example, learners read about their chosen topics, look at pictures and watch videos and summarize their findings. All these activities allow learners to develop their proficiency in English at their own pace and personal level.

The context

Graz International Bilingual School (GIBS) is a public Austrian *AHS* where both authors of this chapter teach. We have two languages of instruction, English and German, with English being the dominant one, resulting in a clear CLIL setting (see chapter 17 in this volume) and, in relation to this, a stronger language awareness in all the subjects taught at our school.

The motivation to introduce OL in geography and economics

When teaching geography and economics in English to learners with a different L1, the teachers at GIBS are aware of the fact that we teach subject matter and language at the same time and that our materials and learning environments have to be adapted to this situation. As a result, learner differentiation has to be catered for on two levels: knowledge of our subject topics ***and*** language proficiency. Inspired by the pedagogy of Maria Montessori and the Jenaplan Schools, we developed a new form of learning – 'Open Learning' – as a way of revising and consolidating subject matter while giving learners the opportunity to take charge of their learning concerning both subject matter and language.

The basic structure of OL

At the beginning of the school year, we provide learners with a so-called Skills Sheet (see figure 1 below), which lists both the main topics of the year and the three to four skills which learners are supposed to acquire or practice. We explain both the topics and required skills to the class in some detail. Each learner is encouraged to choose their two to three favourite topics ('hit list') and two skills which they want to put their main focus on in the upcoming school year. By the end of the year, they will, however, be required to have worked on all of the topics and skills.

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Geography and Economics
In Year 2...

... I am going to learn about the following topics:	... I am going to acquire the following skills:	
Cities	⇨participate actively in the lessons	
Egypt, an LEDC	⇨keep my notebook well organized and tidy	
Maps	⇨highlight the key facts in the basic information texts	
Economic Sectors	⇨note taking: write down one interesting fact about my class mates' talks	
Primary Industries	⇨work actively with our co-teacher and get their signature afterwards	
Manufacturing Industries	In the Open Learning phases:	Finished ☑
Service Industries	⇨make a "*Ten Facts about:...*"- sheet, add pictures and list the sources	☐
Water	⇨make a study help (*handwritten*)	☐
	⇨give a short talk (3 minutes) that is supported by a visual aid (poster, flash-cards, ...) including the sources	☐
	⇨draw a bar graph	☐

Sec.* Open Learning* Booklet

Figure 1: Skills Sheet of Year 2

Almost all of the topics of the school year are worked on in individualised OL phases in the following order:

1. Pre-OL – acquisition of the basic subject matter. Learners acquire the main contents of the topic in various forms (e.g., lecture by the teacher, expert groups, short practical work). This information is summarised in the so-called Basic Information Text (BIT), with which we provide learners. Since we do not use geography coursebooks, the BITs are a few sheets of paper which comprise the most important information on a given topic. They are given to the students prior to the OL phase and the information on these sheets is discussed and acquired in different ways, as mentioned above. Then the OL phase starts.

2. The OL process – selection of the learning objectives. Assisted by their teachers, each learner finds an additional aspect of the topic which they want to focus on during the OL phase. They also decide which skill they want to tackle during this OL phase. If a learner cannot find an interesting aspect of the topic or they think that the acquisition and presentation of a new topic in English is still too challenging for them, they are also free to prepare a study help sheet of the basic information, which will help them revise the subject matter for the test later on. Learners enter their choices in a list provided by their teachers, which constitutes a kind of target agreement or commitment. Teachers then briefly discuss a work plan with each learner, specify the tasks and the learning objectives involved and set deadlines. The selection of the learning objectives takes up to one period.

3. The OL process – focus on topics and skills. In the following three to four periods, the learners focus on their chosen topics and skills. Together with an English language assistant teacher, learners are guided and supported where necessary. In the last lesson of OL, learners submit their work, which teachers assess according to the aspects and skills mentioned in the learners' target commitment.

4. Assessment and feedback. As OL is regarded as an ongoing learning process, learners can correct and improve their work if they are not content with the initial assessment and hand it in again. The final version of the work and/or – depending on the type of work – ideas and thoughts during the development of the work are collected in the Open Learning Booklet, a kind of portfolio of each learner's open learning work, which also supplements the traditional grading (see figure 2 below).

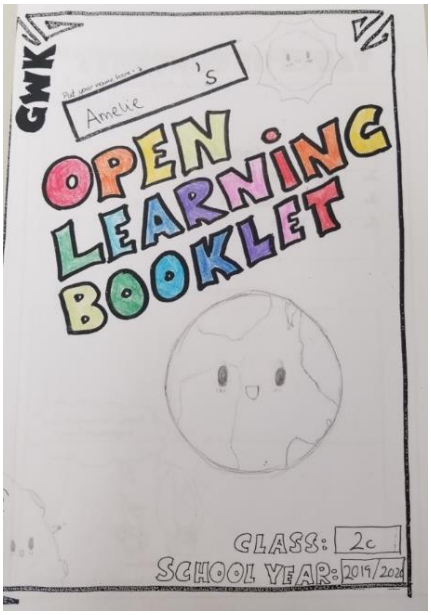

Figure 2: An Open Learning Booklet

In a feedback round after the last OL lesson, learners are encouraged to assess their work and to discuss strategies to improve it if necessary. After most OL phases, there is a test to determine learners' growth in knowledge and skills. The focus of the test lies on the contents of the BIT; additional aspects which the learner acquired individually can be added in either open questions ('Write down five facts about…') or in extra credit tasks in the test.

OL tasks and skills

In the eight years in which we have been practicing OL at GIBS, we have tried out a variety of tasks to foster the development of essential skills. We decided to include subject-related skills (e.g., cartographic work or using graphs in geography) in OL as well as general ones like designing a study help, giving a presentation or writing a newspaper commentary. We base our selection also on skills that support the acquisition and consolidation of new language. Some of the tasks described below can be used with all age groups; others can only be included in the upper levels. The following list provides a short description of some of the tasks we have used so far:

1. Study help

The study help (see figure 3 below) is a piece of work which contains the most important information of our basic BIT. We encourage learners to organise and present the information in the way in which they can best understand and memorise it. At the beginning of Year 2, we do short learner type tests with the learners to help them find out what learner types they are and what exercises best support their preferred way of learning. We consider a handwritten task a very valuable activity in a child's development and therefore we do not allow study helps which were made on the computer. The most commonly produced study helps are question-answer cards (also used in combination with elaborate board games), gapped texts, crosswords, word searches, mind maps, real maps and colourful summaries. We have also received posters with flaps, comics, memory games and even a rap. Before the test, learners sometimes bring their study helps to class and work with them (especially board games).

Figure 3: An example of a study help

2. 'Ten-facts-about' sheet

For this task, learners need to go beyond what they learned in the BIT. They are encouraged to find supplementary aspects of the basic information or work on new, related topics. They are allowed to find information on the internet, and especially in Year 2 it is necessary to guide them towards reliable sources, which are also appropriate for the age of learners and their level of English. In the first few OL phases, we even suggest the use of German websites designed for children to make

sure that learners fully understand the texts and find facts which are interesting to children at their age.

In this context, we emphasize the importance of academic honesty and the correct citation of sources. As the name of the task suggests, learners must find and list ten interesting facts about their chosen aspect in their own words. In at least half of the OL lessons, a language assistant teacher is present to also support the learners in this task. At the end of the OL phase, learners write the facts neatly in their OL Booklet and add a relevant picture (with caption) and all the sources. What we like about this task is that it works well for all the age groups – the facts simply become longer and more elaborate as learners progress.

3. Presentation

What has been stated for the 'Ten-facts-about' sheet above is also true for the short presentation (three to eight minutes, depending on learners' ages), which we consider an important skill at all of the levels we teach. We strongly recommend that the presentations should be completed during the OL phase - not at home - and that they should be handed in right at the end of the OL phase. Teachers normally correct them and give feedback before learners give their actual talks to avoid mistakes being passed on to classmates, who are supposed to take notes during each presentation.

4. Maps and graphs folder

The use of data and graphs as well as of maps is vital to the teaching of geography and economics (see figure 4 for a checklist of learners' handmade maps and graphs). In both years one and two, we therefore collaborate with arts and mathematics teachers to support our learners in drawing their first simple graphs and (fantasy) maps and plans. Some graphs are drawn during the regular geography and mathematics lessons; others are made during OL phases as part of learners' study help or as an additional activity (if learners finish their other tasks early during an OL phase). A special focus is placed on the interpretation and critical assessment of the data presented in maps and graphs. These aspects are introduced in the regular lessons preceding the OL phases.

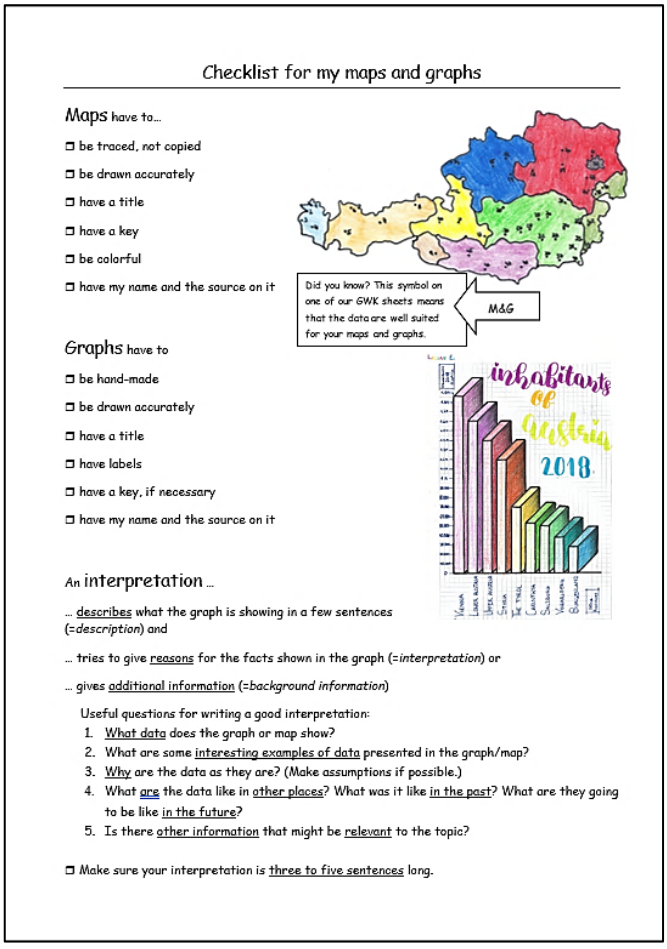

Figure 4: Checklist for learners' handmade maps and graphs

5. Newspaper commentary

Concerning this task, learners are required to find a current article which deals with aspects related to the topic of the OL phase. They then summarise the article and analyse and assess its contents and main statements, relating them to the theories and aspects which we covered in the regular lessons. Our main intention behind this task is obviously to allow our learners to build a strong, visible link between theory (our subject matter) and practice (the real world) and to encourage them to take an interest in current issues. Furthermore, it is a good way to revise the main aspects of the topic as presented in the BIT.

Reflection on applying OL in a CLIL setting

OL has proven to be an attractive and effective form of individualised student-oriented learning in a CLIL setting. It clearly serves the purpose of simultaneous acquisition and consolidation of subject matter and language for each individual learners' level. At the end of the school year, learners have compiled a learner portfolio which reflects the completion of the tasks as required on the Skills Sheet. This allows for a transparent form of grading supplementing the traditional forms of formative and summative assessment. Assessment is based on a discussion of the required skills and competences at the beginning of the school year, which makes the expectations clear to learners, and it takes the portfolio work into consideration, which includes personal feedback from the teacher on all the pieces of work in the learner portfolio (see chapters 9 and 10 in this volume).

Practical Applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will revise and acquire vocabulary and phrases relevant to the topic

Activity: preparing a presentation on slums in Cairo (the topic has been chosen by the student, not by the teacher)

Rationale: learners use vocabulary they already know from class discussions as a starting point for their research, but they also come across new words and phrases

Pre-knowledge: introduction of the topic 'Modern Egypt' in previous lessons, reading and discussing the information in the Basic Information Texts (BITs).

Level: CEFR A2

Procedure

1. The learner does research on the topic of 'slums in Cairo'. This is usually done online, but print sources can be used as well. While researching and reading about the topic, the learner takes notes, asks questions and discusses the topic with classmates.

2. The learner creates a poster or a PowerPoint presentation, using the notes and adding pictures, maps and videos to explain concepts such as population density, roof-top housing, poverty, homelessness, unemployment and similar topics. By doing so, new vocabulary is used in context and explained in the learners' own words.

3. The learner receives feedback on the first draft of the presentation and uses it to make improvements.

4. The learner then writes note cards to prepare for the presentation and practices the presentation several times, ideally with a language assistant. During this step, the learner revises new vocabulary and phrases, practices pronunciation and uses the newly acquired language in an authentic situation (i.e., conversation with a speaker of the target language).

5. Finally, the learner presents the topic to their classmates. At this point, the learner is able to use the new vocabulary in a confident way.

Example 2

Goal: learners will practise new vocabulary from the BIT

Activity: learners create a study help about the topic of service industries

Rationale: learners revise vocabulary and phrases from the BIT

Pre-knowledge: information on the BIT has been discussed in previous lessons, with the help of a PowerPoint presentation on service industries and several other activities

Level: CEFR A2

Procedure

1. The learner thinks about how the information on the BIT can be summarized and presented in a way that supports them in preparing for the next geography test. Possible ideas are creating a mind-map, a memory game, any type of board game that involves questions and answer cards, flash cards with sketches, a poster with drawings and descriptions, a song or rap that summarizes the topic, a comic or a cartoon, just to list a few.

2. The learner spends several geography lessons on the creation of the study help. By doing so, essential vocabulary is revised in various ways.

3. Once the study help is completed, the learner submits it to the teacher and receives feedback on it.

4. The learner might make some minor changes to the study help (usually to increase accuracy and to add more details).

5. If the study help is a game, the learner has the opportunity to play it with several classmates. Usually, there are about four to six different 'study help games', so it is easy to split the class into small groups and give them the chance to play their games. At this stage, learners use newly acquired vocabulary actively in their groups.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Consider some of the examples provided in this chapter. Could you apply any of them in your own teaching?

2. Design a lesson plan in which you consider some of the principles of OL.

3. Brainstorm the responsibilities you have as a teacher in an OL setting. What would you have to prepare before you start, during the various stages and at the end of the OL phase?

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Suggestions for further reading

Salner-Gridling, I. (2009). *Querfeldein: individuell lernen – differenziert lehren*. Österreichisches Zentrum für Persönlichkeitsbildung und soziales Lernen. https://www.oezeps.at/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Onlineversion_Querfeldein.pdf [21 November 2020]

This book offers a good mixture of pedagogic theory and practical examples.

Juen-Kretschmer, C. (2017). Offenes Lernen - Offener Unterricht. https://docplayer.org/11646830-Offenes-lernen-offener-unterricht.html [22 November 2020]

This resource provides practical examples of different forms of open learning and discusses the new role of the teacher in this setting.

Peschel, F. (2002). Qualitätsmaßstäbe - Hilfen zur Beurteilung der Offenheit von Unterricht. In U. Drews & W. Wallrabenstein (Eds.), *Freiarbeit in der Grundschule. Offener Unterricht in Theorie, Forschung und Praxis* (pp. 160-171). Grundschulverband – Arbeitskreis Grundschule e.V. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:17637

This is a good source for definitions and the theoretical background and pedagogical principles of OL.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **2.** Your answers to these reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience and context. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection on including OL in your teaching.

3. Below are some possible responses:

Before teachers begin the OL phase, they need to consider the OL objectives, prepare the BITs, think about possible tasks that learners could do to develop the required skills, reflect on any difficulties learners might have and prepare for them (e.g., necessary vocabulary, how to research their topic).

During the various stages of OL, teachers need to present the topic and purpose of OL, discuss the required skills and competences, help learners find an interesting topic, support learners in their choice of activities, provide constructive feedback on learners' work, make sure pupils stay on target and meet deadlines.

At the end of the OL phase, teachers discuss learners' work and assess it.

15 Differentiation at the lower secondary level in Austrian schools

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Key words

Concepts of differentiation

Differentiated instruction in lower secondary

Forms of differentiation

Instructional strategies

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

How was and is differentiation represented in Austrian schools at the lower secondary level?

What types of differentiation are there?

What is differentiated instruction?

What practical strategies and forms of organising differentiation in the EFL classroom exist?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Since the mid-19th century, learners' age and achievement have been the main criteria used to organize schools into grades or classes in many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (Faubert, 2012). This also applies to Austria with the exception of single *Mehrstufenklassen* in rural areas and school pilot projects, in which learners of different ages are intentionally grouped.

In Austria, learners can choose between attending schools that are *allgemein bildende Schulen*, which focus on general education, or *berufsbildende Schulen*, which have an emphasis on vocational training. At the lower secondary level, two types of *allgemein bildende Schulen* can be selected. One of the schools is a four-year comprehensive school called the *Mittelschule (MS)*, formally known as the *Neue Mittelschule (NMS)*. The other choice is to attend the lower secondary level of an *allgemein bildende höhere Schule (AHS)*, also called *Gymnasium*, which is an academic secondary school.

Despite promising research results in favour of a comprehensive school (see e.g., Schmid, 2014), segregation at the lower secondary level has been maintained in Austria and is the subject of ongoing political controversy. Among the OECD coun-

tries, Austria is one of the few European countries that still refrains from implementing a comprehensive schooling approach for lower and upper secondary schooling, which means that learners' educational careers are decided at a very early age.

Concerning differentiation, there have been various attempts to achieve it in lower secondary schools. For example, the predecessor of the *NMS*, namely the *Hauptschule*, consisted of ascending grades and was usually divided into two *Klassenzüge*, in which learners were streamed according to their abilities. This was expanded in 1985, when a system based on *Leistungsgruppen* was introduced (Seebauer, 2004a). In this new system, ability grouping/tracking was implemented, which included three ability levels for German, maths and foreign languages, respectively.

In 2012, the *Hauptschule* was replaced by the *NMS*. In contrast to its predecessor, the *NMS* introduced a concept of internal differentiation, i.e., the adaptation of contents, processes, products and environment according to learners' readiness, interests and learning preferences (Tomlinson, 2014). A co-teaching system was also established in German, maths and foreign languages for the majority of these lessons. In these subjects, lessons were taught in *vertiefte* and *grundlegende Bildung*. In other words, emphasis was placed on in-depth and fundamental knowledge, respectively.

At the moment of this publication, changes to the comprehensive middle school (*MS*) are taking place again, and this time they rely on a type of external differentiation based on learners' achievements. In this two-tiered school system, learners are assigned to Standard and *AHS* Standard groups for German, English and maths (RIS, 2020a). The *AHS* Standard mark reflects college preparatory schoolwork; anything below that is considered a standard grade. Based on this two-tiered system, a learner can be taught at a Standard level in maths but at an *AHS* Standard level in English, for example. The assignment to groups is flexible.

Differentiation and school types – terminology and concepts

In general, definitions of the term 'differentiation' either relate to external categorisation by achievement (i.e., *MS* or *AHS*; or labels such as *Klassenzüge*, *Leistungsgruppen* or *Standards*), or internal differentiation within the single classroom (i.e., choices concerning task difficulty, amount of support for managing the assignments, basic and enriched content made available to learners). Regarding internal differentiation, it may be based on ability (see Harmer, 2015) or learners' readiness (see Tomlinson, 2014). Internal differentiation by ability usually "refers to a wide

variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educators use to instruct a diverse group of students, with diverse learning needs" (Differentiation, 2013).

Internal differentiation is an essential requirement in the curricula of both *MS* (RIS, 2020a) and the lower level of *AHS* (RIS, 2020b). Attending the lower level of *AHS* entails proving a certain entry level of grades. If learners are not admitted to *AHS* based on their grades, they must attend an *MS*. As a result, the heterogeneity in *MS* classrooms is considerably higher. However, each class, regardless of the type of school, is heterogeneous. Therefore, teachers should acknowledge and cater to their individual learners' different interests, needs and abilities if they want them to thrive.

In contrast to internal differentiation, differentiated instruction is based on readiness and considers the individual learner's access point in relation to specific knowledge or skills. Tomlinson (2014) emphatically states that "[r]eadiness is *not* a synonym for ability" (p. 18, emphasis in original). In other words, from Tomlinson's point of view, readiness is not static as every learner will face challenges or make quick progress at some point. In practice, this can be achieved by offering students choice on their assignments. These tasks can vary regarding, e.g., the topic and the level of difficulty including specific criteria such as complexity.

Differentiated instruction at lower secondary schools in Austria

Internal differentiation in lower secondary schools strongly relies on Tomlinson's concept of responding proactively to learners' needs and providing differentiated instruction. Thus, the teacher's task is to modify content, process and product in line with learners' readiness, interests and learning profile (Tomlinson, 2014).

In differentiated classrooms, teachers are attentive to learner differences and they must be flexible when it comes to adapting to the situation at hand. For learners to work effectively, it is essential that the content to be taught is organised in a way that sustains learning, which means that a learner-centred approach should be taken. In addition, ongoing formative as well as summative assessment and differentiated instruction are inextricably intertwined to evaluate learners' progress (see chapter 8 in this volume). There are countless ways to judge learners' readiness in order to plan and conduct informed, learner-centred teaching. Some of these are: discussions with learners, portfolio work, orientation exercises, learning logs, competence checklists, surveys ascertaining interests or opinions, skills records, homework and observation.

According to Tomlinson (2014), differentiation in the classroom can be achieved in these different areas:

- content
- process
- product
- environment

The term 'content' refers to the topics that are set in the curriculum and the educational standards. In practice, this means that overall goals are set for each lesson. In the following, we will look at how the topic of shopping, and more specifically taking part in a shopping conversation, can be differentiated in the classroom. In this case the learning goals may include widening the range of topic-related vocabulary, implementing specific grammar structures and improving communication skills (e.g., asking and responding to questions or using singular and plural forms).

'Process' is another area in which classroom instruction can be differentiated. It relates to tasks that are designed to support learners in understanding concepts, transferring information and applying knowledge. When preparing a lesson on taking part in a shopping dialogue, teachers need to consider the various levels of learners in their classroom. Teachers can differentiate a shopping dialogue by creating prompt cards with sentence starters or gapped texts to guide the lower-attaining learners. Those learners who do not need the prompt cards could adapt the dialogue individually by coming up with their own ideas.

Another way that the classroom can be differentiated is by having learners create 'products'. By creating products, learners exhibit what they have learned and elaborate on it. With reference to the shopping example given above, the product could be a dialogue learners practise and act out.

'Environment' refers to the working conditions including the organisation and arrangement of the classroom and the learning atmosphere. Thus, the classroom could be turned into a shop or a market for the activity described above.

Forms of differentiation: learning styles, preferences and task complexity

As has already been stated, differentiated instruction takes learners' readiness, but also their interests and learning profiles into account. The term learning profiles comprises individual learners' approaches to studying (e.g., analytical, creative), strategies and preferences appropriate for single subjects or topics (Tomlinson, 2014).

There are numerous theories on learning styles and preferences (see Oxford, 1989; Purpura, 2014), some of which will be briefly referenced below. Based on our experience in EFL classes, teachers should consider these concepts when designing tasks because this enriches perspectives and ensures that different levels of complexity are included. These theories contribute to designing a variety of tasks as teachers strive to provide manifold ways of challenging and fostering learners.

Typically, learning styles describe a person's individual combination of strategies and perceptual preferences. These include:

- sensory input (e.g., visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory)
- personality (e.g., introverted, extroverted)
- differences in processing information (e.g., inductive or deductive among others)
- the possession of different types of intelligences (e.g., musical-rhythmical, logical-mathematical or naturalistic)

These variables are distinctively different in each person and should be taken into account when designing tasks to cater to diverse learners' needs. (For a more detailed overview, see Harmer, 2015, pp. 86-89.)

Another way to differentiate tasks is to consider the complexity of tasks. In 1956, Bloom published his taxonomy of complexity levels of thinking. In 2001, it was revised by a group of researchers taking a more dynamic approach that resulted in a change of order of the two highest levels (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). This new taxonomy consists of the following levels: remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create. At each level, different thinking processes take place. The model can be used to add complexity to tasks and to challenge learners in terms of critical thinking. Thus, differentiation is achieved. We recommend using a tool such as the Bloom's Taxonomy Teacher Planning Kit when differentiating the complexity of a task (see suggestions for further reading at the end of this chapter). It is not only helpful for designing challenging tasks but can also be used as a checklist for lesson plans to avoid imbalance of complexity in task development.

The many faces of differentiation: Instructional strategies in practice

There is a broad range of strategies and organisational forms teachers can implement in their classes in order to differentiate tasks. Strategies comprise providing visualizations and graphic organisers, scaffolding in skills work (e.g., differentiated listening or writing tasks that are broken down into manageable, progressing

stages), tiered (slightly adjusted) assignments (e.g., in terms of complexity, material or pace), learning contracts with checklists and small-group instruction (see Cowley, 2018; Dodge, 2005; Dudley & Osváth, 2015 for countless practical ideas). Below we will address some of the more often used ways to differentiate classroom learning.

Contrary to popular belief, differentiation does not require special materials. There are numerous strategies for breaking typical coursebook exercises into doable chunks or stages (see chapter 6 in this volume). For example, reading and listening exercises in coursebooks can be adapted by:

- giving options for re-reading and re-listening
- adding a picture to the gap to be filled
- giving the initial letter in gap-fill exercises
- providing a word box with the words for the gap-fill exercise (adding a few surplus words for more challenge)
- deleting halves of words to be completed

Open formats is another approach that can be utilized to challenge learners. For example, when working on developing learners' language skills, teachers can apply open formats. One way to do this is require learners to finish a sentence according to their preference or expand from skinny (skimming, scanning, content-based) to fat questions (inferencing, predicting, evaluating) (see Dale & Tanner, 2012/2018). In addition, structured guidelines for listening and reading comprehension can be offered. These can include graphic organizers, profiles and structures for filtering the most important information, e.g., reasons for or types / symptoms / appearance of something. For writing and speaking, teachers may opt for word boxes which can be used to differentiate a task. The word boxes can include help cards with adjectives or verbs that enrich the learners' vocabulary; help cards with text structure or a model text; or help cards that provide sentence starters or transition words as well as useful phrases (e.g., for an opinion discussion). See Fields (2017) for more practical ideas including scaffolding techniques for videos.

There are some task formats that lend themselves particularly to differentiation. For example, language learning can be organised utilizing interest or learning centres (also called station or centre work), choice boards, or RAFTs (Role-Audience-Format-Topic). These strategies are introduced below in more detail.

For learning or interest centres, tasks and/or materials are usually provided by the teacher. Often task sheets that function as checklists, project folders or logs are also provided by the teacher to help learners to keep track of their progress. Among various ways of organising these centres, there is grouping of learners with time limits

per station followed by rotation, a combination of compulsory and optional tasks, or task selection that is exclusively subject to learners' choices. Depending on the given time frame and products to be worked on, learners are encouraged to add to the materials provided and bring books, props, pictures, research results, etc.

Choice boards, also called Think-Tac-Toe, "are menus of learning tasks that provide multiple options for student learning or assessment" (Dodge, 2005, p. 65; see Example 2 in Practical Applications below). These boards can be structured in different fashions. One possibility is to have the learners choose a certain number of tasks from all options given, e.g., five out of nine. Another idea is to design tasks with a certain focus per row and let the learners make one choice per row. For example, the first row may contain three tasks resulting in visualizations (e.g., an ad, a poster, a graphic organizer and a photo journal); the second one in oral products (e.g., an interview, a short radio program and a speech) and the third one in written outcomes (e.g., a short newspaper article, rap lyrics and a poem).

RAFTs are instructions for learners to create a product about a topic by taking on a certain role for a particular audience in a specific format (see Buehl, 2017). As far as working with RAFTs, either the teacher can provide a selection of possibilities for learners to choose from or learners can create their own. With regard to the second option, it is very helpful to give learners some guidance about what to choose for their own RAFTs in the form of a simple table (see figure 1 below).

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
People, objects etc.	People, animals, objects…	Type of text or product	Subject of the piece of work displaying learners' knowledge of a topic
Scientist, journalist, witness, soldier, inventor, film critic, human heart, statue…	Friend, politician, character from a book, museum; readers of a newspaper, pet…	Radio programme, leaflet, news report, diary entry, blurb, short story, cartoon, vlog, ad, email …	Any topic

Examples			
Travel blogger/vlogger	Tourists	Blog entry or vlog: Top ten list of sights with short information	Inform tourists about interesting places in a city, country, etc.
From a pet's perspective	The owner	Giving a talk	What I like/do not like about my life

Figure 1: RAFT

Practical applications

This section provides ideas for differentiating all four skills (see chapter 10 in this volume). These strategies have been tried out in numerous lower secondary level EFL classes. Teachers should choose according to their learners' readiness and interests as well as the teachers' objectives.

Example 1:

Goals: learners will expand their vocabulary; learners will engage with the content of texts

Activity: differentiating reading

Rationale: to work with texts in a meaningful way

Pre-knowledge: depends on the respective content

Level: CEFR A1+ and above

Lead-in and pre-work phase

1. Pictures, single words from the text, the headline, a (jumbled) sentence, a diagram etc. from the text are utilized for either introducing or predicting the topic. Here, learners' readiness, pre-knowledge and interests are taken into consideration to promote critical thinking skills.

2. In groups or pairs, learners are encouraged to play with words, make connections or devise definitions for vocabulary or explanations of concepts. The teacher adds new vocabulary that will be needed for understanding the text in this step or the following one.

3. If applicable, sentences from the text to be read (and additional ones that are not in it) may be employed for a whole-class exercise: Learners are asked if the sentences, which are displayed somewhere in the classroom, are true or false or, alternatively, if they are part of the text or not. Individual opinions may be indicated by thumbs up/down or red and green cards. Learners are asked to give reasons for their decisions.

4. Depending on the complexity of the text, challenging or new vocabulary is introduced by providing pictures, synonyms, or a glossary that are embedded in a matching exercise.

5. Subheadings (added by the teacher) are presented to assist learners in being able to grasp the structure of the text. In pairs, learners are encouraged to write down information they think will be found in the respective paragraphs of the text. These expectations are checked with the original later on.

While-reading phase

6. Teachers may want to consider a tool such as rewordify.com with its 'text with vocabulary' option to create a text version with synonyms in the margin.

7. Learners are encouraged to visualize content by completing time- or storylines, family trees, tables, charts, diagrams, adding drawings or mind maps etc. Adaptable online tools such as Holt Interactive Graphic Organizers are useful for such tasks (see suggestions for further reading at the end of this chapter).

8. If texts contain charts or info boxes, these might be converted into fill-in exercises for the learners to complete.

Post-reading phase

9. Alternatively, longer texts can be split into paragraphs. In groups, each learner is assigned a paragraph that is studied individually. Together learners work on determining the correct sequence of the text and give reasons for their choices.

10. Learners can also be asked to contribute to joint problem-solving when a task requires every single person's knowledge of a certain paragraph or when learners are provided with different texts for individual study first. This creates the necessity for learners to co-operate but also to support each other if re-reading of passages is necessary for finding solutions.

11. Questions of varying complexity levels, e.g., based on Bloom's Taxonomy Teacher Planning Kit, demand lower and higher order thinking skills. These questions can be deployed in manifold ways: in board games, pair work, quizzes or as a basis for 'expert interviews' on the topic of the text, as a selection to choose a certain number from individually, a whole-class check-up – with the possibility of re-reading the information and thus giving the learners ample opportunity for studying the text several times.

12. Learners are provided with sentence starters that challenge them to re-read and make use of the information in the text to be completed individually.

13. Learners are encouraged to identify, e.g., five new words in the text, write them on a vocabulary card or chart, deduce the meaning from the context, write down their ideas and finally check with a(n) (online) dictionary or glossary. If applicable, a sketch may support the learners in remembering the new word or concept.

14. Several post-reading tasks based on the text can be added to contribute to processing and transferring new language and content. Thus, the latter may be consolidated in another medium such as a comic strip, a leaflet, a newspaper report, rap lyrics, an interview, a roleplay or a radio/news programme. Learners can select from a range of options here. Furthermore, students are encouraged to think outside of the box and broaden their knowledge by doing additional research or devising creative products.

Example 2

Goal: learners will visualise content and work creatively focussing on speaking and writing skills

Activity: post-work based on a film (also adaptable for: TV programme, YouTube clip, etc.)

Rationale: to understand real-life language use and be able to use it in various contexts

Pre-knowledge: having watched the film; knowledge about basic visualization techniques (otherwise examples can be provided); basic structure of a letter/longer email, an oral review (provide samples); vocabulary relevant to the topic

Level: CEFR A2 and above

Procedure

1. The first time a teacher introduces the types of tasks in the choice board, the learners need to see actual samples before they can choose the tasks. This means for the following task that sample visualizations (for tasks in row one) and model texts, help cards with useful phrases, etc., for written and oral tasks (rows 2 and 3) must be provided.

2. The teacher provides learners with the choice board, asks learners to select one task per row and gives them instructions when (in class or as homework assignments) and how to hand in their work (e.g., as a portfolio, on a learning platform such as Moodle, in their exercise/homework book).

Draw a cluster including all the characters in the film. Draw them and describe how they are linked.	Make a collage (words and pictures) about the film. It can be a summary or describe the locations, feelings and/or characters.	Draw a story-/timeline with the most important scenes of the film.
Pick a scene you liked/did not like. Write an email to the director telling him/her your opinion about the film. (150-200 words)	Invent a new character for the film. Think of a name. What is the character's role? Describe what he/she/it looks like. Does the story change in any way? (150-200 words)	Imagine you are the director of the film. Which actors, locations and music would you choose? Would you change the story? How would your film end? (150-200 words)
Individual work: You are a film critic. Prepare a review for a radio program. (2 minutes; audio recording)	Group work: In groups of three or four, select a scene from the film, make some changes and act it out. (2 minutes; video recording)	Pair work: A journalist is interviewing someone for a radio or TV programme about the film. (2 minutes; audio/video recording)

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Analyse one of your lesson plans and check in which ways differentiation is included. If you have never written a lesson plan, go online and find examples of lesson plans that are designed to differentiate the classroom.

2. Select a topic based on a coursebook unit. Create a choice board consisting of at least 9 options for learners to choose from. Reflect on the tasks which you devised. Why did you create them in this specific way?

3. Design a lesson plan with options for differentiation in line with the content and objectives of your lesson.

4. Is there any area of language teaching or skill that you find particularly challenging to differentiate? Why? Research sources (e.g. books, articles, links) that provide teaching tips for the respective area and list three to five practical ideas.

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Bartosch, R., & Rohde, A. (2014). *Im Dialog der Disziplinen. Englischdidaktik – Förderpädagogik – Inklusion*. Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

The articles in this book address challenges of and chances for teaching English as a Foreign Language in inclusive settings from a transdisciplinary perspective. Approaches, concepts and experiences are discussed and shine light on current practices.

Brassell, D. (2011). *Dare to Differentiate. Vocabulary Strategies for All Students* (3rd ed.). Guildford Press.

25 strategies for differentiating vocabulary are introduced and explained in several steps with examples. Worksheet templates as well as word play activities are provided. Text and website resources add to the practical usefulness.

Fields, D. L. (2017). *101 Scaffolding Techniques for Language Teaching and Learning*. Octraedo.

Primarily scaffolding techniques for reading are at the centre of this book. Teachers are guided step-by-step through the single techniques, and sample materials supports readers' understanding of how the ideas can be put into practice.

Haß, F., & Kieweg, W. (2013). *I can make it! Englischunterricht für Schülerinnen und Schüler mit Lernschwierigkeiten*. Klett/Kallmeyer Verlag.

This book provides a wide range of practical teaching ideas and specific examples for teaching in the heterogeneous EFL classroom.

The following websites provide information and useful tools for differentiating your teaching:

Bloom's Taxonomy Teacher Planning Kit: http://techinfusedlessons.weebly.com/blooms-taxonomy-teacher-planning-kit.html

Holt Interactive Graphic Organizers:
https://my.hrw.com/nsmedia/intgos/html/igo.htm

Rewordify: https://rewordify.com/

The website of Zentrum für lernende Schulen (ZLS), which was launched when the NMS in Austria came into being, provides numerous resources and materials that support schools' development in terms of organisation and in designing learning arrangements that cater for the needs of all learners: https://www.lernende-schulen.at/

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **4.** Your answers to the reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection in the area of differentiation.

16 A process approach to English for Specific Purposes

Petra Kletzenbauer and Alia Moser

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Key words

Roles of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) practitioner

Needs Analysis (NA)

Course design

Task design

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

How is ESP different from General English (GE)?

What are the various roles an ESP teacher has to tackle, and how are they different from the role of a GE teacher?

Why is a needs analysis essential when planning an ESP course?

What should teachers consider when designing courses and tasks?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

Revisiting the English Language Teaching (ELT) tree which Hutchinson and Water used to illustrate the many branches of ELT in 1987, it is clear that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become one of the most prominent areas of English foreign language teaching and learning in the decades since its publication (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This development is particularly linked with phenomena such as globalization, internationalization, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and the growing demands of a global labour market. ESP focuses on language areas required to meet the immediate professional and/or academic demands of specific fields (e.g., Business English, English for Engineering, English for Medical Purposes). This strong focus on the target situation makes ESP a special case in foreign language teaching.

The most commonly accepted definition of ESP is provided by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), who propose absolute and variable characteristics of ESP. Absolute characteristics are always present in ESP, while variable characteristics may be, but are not necessarily, part of ESP:

Absolute characteristics of ESP

- ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner.
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline that it serves.
- ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse, and genre.

Variable characteristics of ESP

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines.
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English.
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be designed for learners at secondary school level.
- ESP is generally taught to intermediate or advanced learners.
- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the general language system.
  (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, pp. 4-5)

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the difference between ESP and GE in theory is minor, but there is a great deal of difference in practice. In ESP teaching, learner-centredness is foregrounded. This means that learners' needs and goals have to be considered above all else. GE, on the other hand, is language-centred and focuses "on learning language from a broad perception covering all the language skills and the cultural aspects of the English- speaking community in which the language itself is the subject matter and the purpose of the course" (Robinson, 1980, p. 6).

Based on a hands-on communicative approach, ESP tasks and curricula are designed in such a way that they meet the needs of learners' academic and/or professional environments. This is in line with Hutchinson & Waters (1987), who argue that "ESP should properly be seen not as any particular language product but as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" (p. 19). Teaching ESP thus requires an in-depth understanding of specific language needs, excellent pedagogical skills and profound knowledge of learners' specific professional contexts. Together, these elements form the foundation of any ESP course.

As language specialists, ESP teachers sometimes lack sufficient background knowledge of the technical areas their learners are involved in. They may therefore

struggle to discuss highly complex subject matter in very specific professional contexts in English, even though they are proficient speakers of (general) English. In order to meet the challenges posed by a specific ESP context, teachers must have several key competences in areas such as needs analysis, lesson planning and materials design.

ESP in Austrian settings: *Handelsakademie (HAK)* and *Fachhochschule (FH)*

ESP has been well established in secondary commercial and technical schools and tertiary education in Austria for a long time. This chapter focuses on ESP at *HAKs* and *FHs* (see below) as each of the authors of this chapter teaches at one of these institutions.

The so-called *BHS (Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen)* sector in Austria is very diverse, comprising many different school types. For example, there is *HAK*, which focuses on subjects such as Accounting, Business Studies, and Controlling. Another type is *HLW (Höhere Lehranstalt für Wirtschafltiche Berufe)* where these subjects are also taught, but, depending on the school's specialisation, subjects such as catering and hotel business or project and event management are an essential part of the learners' education as well. *HTL (Höhere Technische Lehranstalt)*, on the other hand, specialises in technology and engineering subjects which can range from IT to mechanical or industrial engineering. *BHS* schools design their English classes with a more specific focus on professional communication than *AHS* in order to better prepare their learners for the world of work.

Usually, novice Austrian English teachers are well-equipped with all the necessary skills and tools required to teach general language aspects (e.g., grammar and pronunciation) or prepare communicative tasks (see chapter 11 in this volume). Therefore, they have little trouble teaching topics from both private and public life, such as school, family and friends, media or entertainment in a *BHS* setting. However, there are some areas where teachers definitely have to face challenges when teaching at a *BHS*, as some areas of the *BHS* curriculum differ dramatically from that of the *AHS*, for example, the focus on business-related topics in *HAK*.

General topics are, of course, part of the *HAK* curriculum as well, but there is a strong focus on business-related topics, such as the world of work, office equipment, jobs, forms of enterprise, trade fairs, corporate social responsibility and marketing (tools). For example, the subject of Business Behaviour (BB) is taught in English in one grade (each school can decide individually whether BB is taught in Eng-

lish in grade 11 or 12). The topics that are addressed in BB are intercultural competence, conflict management, dealing with customer complaints, giving product presentations, customer service and working abroad, to name just a few. Approaches to BB course design differ from school to school, ranging from using coursebooks or designing course materials to a combination of coursebooks and individually designed course materials. All of these options can be challenging for English teachers who do not have a background in business.

The so-called *Übungsfirmen* (classroom-based models of companies that allow learners to participate in business processes) are another feature of *HAK* which presents challenges to teachers who are trained to teach GE and have little previous experience of ESP. Each *HAK* has several *Übungsfirmen* where learners in their fourth year usually work in one of the departments, e.g., the sales, purchasing, or marketing department, and even do business with *Übungsfirmen* from other schools. This may be unfamiliar territory for many English teachers.

Similarly, written business communication is a vital part of teaching English at *BHS*. In addition to preparing learners for the different text types which are relevant for the *schriftliche Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (sRDP, equivalent to *Matura* in *AHS*), which include blog posts and reports, the *BHS* curriculum requires teachers to include other writing skills, such as taking notes, creating brochures, writing job ads, writing memos, business e-mails and letters (e.g., enquiry, offer, complaint, reminder), and analysing graphs. Either coursebooks are used for this or the materials are designed by the respective teachers (see chapter 6 in this volume). This decision is normally in the hands of the English teachers at each school. Designing ESP materials is an unfamiliar task for many teachers with a background in GE and can therefore be rather time-consuming.

In order to effectively support their learners in the business-related subjects that are typical of *HAK*, teachers need thorough knowledge of subject-specific vocabulary and discourse, which novice teachers often lack. Thus, teachers have to invest a significant amount of time at the beginning of their teaching career in familiarising themselves not only with these terms, but also with the concepts related to these topics.

Like *BHS*, tertiary education has also recently seen an enormous increase in ESP classes, predominately at *FHs*. *Fachhochschulen (FHs)*, commonly called Universities of Applied Sciences in English, are institutions of higher education which focus on vocational and professional degrees, especially in engineering, business, and health professions. Many of the degree programmes at *FHs* include mandatory English lessons that focus on the language demands of the learners' field of study, with

a view to enhancing graduates' employability on the global job market. *FH* graduates often have to function in an international workplace in which subject-specific communication skills are required. Because of this, most Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes include language components which have a strong ESP focus. Courses such as English for Aviation, IT Industry English, English for Scientific Purposes or Counselling Skills & Practices have found their places within the respective degree programmes (i.e., Aviation, Computer Sciences, Social Work etc.) and aim to prepare *FH* graduates for their professional lives.

ESP teachers operating in a specific department – whether it be automotive engineering or management – have to understand the needs of their learners in order to improve their international prospects and employability. This requires a certain commitment to the content of the degree programme and the willingness to remain in constant dialogue with faculty members, the industry and the learners, in order to meet an "ever-diversifying and expanding range of purposes" (Belcher, 2006, p.134). It is the ESP teacher's responsibility to enable learners to stay up to date and follow language-related trends later in their jobs.

Teaching ESP at *BHS* or *FHs* is a complex task that requires a lot of flexibility and willingness to engage with different content areas (see chapter 18 in this volume). It is therefore helpful to look at different aspects of the work of the ESP teacher.

Teacher roles in ESP

Working in an ESP classroom profoundly affects the teacher's role in terms of beliefs about teaching, content development and syllabus design. According to a popular model proposed by Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998), the true ESP teacher or ESP practitioner has to fulfil five key roles: teacher, collaborator, course designer/materials provider (see the section on approaches to course and task design below), researcher and evaluator. While the 'teacher' role is quite similar to what is found in the General English setting, the other four roles are significantly different in ESP.

The role of the collaborator is central to the work of an ESP teacher. After all, it is often the case that learners know more about a specific field or discipline than the ESP practitioner, which generates ample opportunities to collaborate and draw on the knowledge of the learners to enhance the learning experience within the classroom. By contrast, when writing a report, for example, the teacher is the expert, but their role should be that of the facilitator. Ideally, the learners should ask the questions and the teacher should then be guided by these questions in their teaching. This ensures that learners get the information they need.

ESP teachers often collaborate not only with their learners, but with experts in a specific field as well. This is especially important in their role as course designer/materials provider, to make sure that the materials provided by the teacher are relevant to learners and reflect the current reality in their field. Forms of collaboration range from jointly designing tasks to exchanging information on specialist activities and language. One of the best options would be for a subject expert and a language teacher to team-teach (which is sometimes the case at *FHs*), so that they can benefit from each other's knowledge and expertise.

Course and materials design also requires ESP practitioners to take on the role of a researcher and make sure that they are up-to-date on developments in the relevant subject area. Studying specialist publications and current research facilitates the ESP practitioner's understanding of the underlying concepts which learners need to assimilate.

Finally, the ESP practitioner must also play the role of an evaluator. This includes not only the testing of learners, but also the evaluation of courses and teaching materials. Materials should be adapted regularly to reflect the latest developments in the field, which can be quite a challenge, as many teachers struggle with a heavy workload. As a result, investing time in evaluation and research is often not given the priority it deserves.

The role of a Needs Analysis (NA)

NA is considered to be a cornerstone of ESP (see for example Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). As Hyland (2006) explains:

> [a] needs analysis refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design: it is the means of establishing the how and what of a course. It is a continuous process, since we modify our teaching as we come to learn more about our learners [...]. Needs is actually an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learners' goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in. Needs can involve what learners know, do not know or want to know, and can be collected and analyzed in a variety of ways (p. 73-74).

In other words, in order to determine the proper content, methods and materials for an ESP course, it is not only the teaching environment that has to be analysed, but the teaching / learning objectives and the target situation as well. A NA can take

many forms and needs to be adjusted depending on the specific situation. Language tests, observations, questionnaires, surveys and interviews are just a few examples of tools used to conduct a NA.

In addition to an initial NA, further analyses can be conducted during and even after a period of instruction, in order to gain an even clearer picture of learners' specific needs. In fact, such an ongoing needs analysis is of utmost importance, since it "is the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of learners within the context of the particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation" (Brown, 1995, as cited in Brown, 2016, p. 4). The aim of a NA is not only to determine the current situation, but also to identify tasks that learners might one day perform in the L2.

After it has been decided what information should be gathered and why, the ESP teacher has to decide when, from whom and how this should be done. Once all the information has been collected, the teacher has to analyse the data. Belcher (2006) explains that an ongoing NA process yields various kinds of data which, when interpreted properly, allow the teacher to meet the needs of learners. The findings have to be converted into communicative events by designing appropriate teaching units and activities. Finally, the efficacy of the ESP instruction has to be evaluated and changes have to be made in order to optimize the processes and approaches used.

For example, a teacher might hand out a questionnaire to gather information on their learners' interests and goals at the beginning of an ESP course. At various points during the course, this could be followed by observations that help the teacher to determine learners' level of English and/or interviews about the situations in which learners are likely to use English in their professional lives. The information gathered in these ways is then used to design tasks that meet learners' needs. For example, if the teacher finds out that learners have trouble expressing themselves spontaneously, but their goals include making small talk with business partners, it is clear that learners need help developing their oral fluency. Thus, once enough relevant data has been gathered, the ESP teacher can start developing effective activities and tasks.

Approaches to course and task design

Course design is based on the results of the NA, the ESP teacher's approach to the syllabus and methodology, and the use of existing and new materials. It is a dynamic process, as the course needs to respond to developments in research and feedback from learners.

Richards (2001) establishes the different steps of this process: developing a course rationale; describing entry and exit levels; and choosing course content. Having outlined the ESP course objectives, the teacher then designs specific tasks. This can be quite time-consuming due to the complexity of the subject matter and the lack of proper materials in the form of coursebooks and pre-defined chapters. As Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) explain: "ESP practitioners often have to plan the course they teach and provide the materials for it. It is rarely possible to use a particular textbook without the need for supplementary material, and sometimes no really suitable published material exists for certain of the identified needs" (p. 14).

Designing tasks usually involves three stages: choosing suitable published materials, adapting these to the specific courses taught and writing new materials when nothing suitable exists (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). At *FHs*, more often than not, the latter is the case, whereas for *BHS* many coursebooks are available for teaching English and Business English (e.g., *Focus on Modern Business, Focus on Modern Business Communication, Business in Context, Focus on Farm Management and Home Economics, Context@HTL, Best Shots, English Unlimited*). However, based on our experience, we have observed that even those teachers who use coursebooks supplement them with articles, short texts and video clips to enrich the learning experience for their learners. When choosing appropriate visual or written material, it is essential to keep learners' level of English in mind. If the materials are too difficult, some learners will definitely feel lost or frustrated and sometimes even withdraw from doing the task.

According to Widdowson (1984), ESP courses should be planned with a process-oriented approach in mind. Such an approach

> accepts from the outset that the language data given to the learner will not be preserved in stone intact but will be used as grist to the mental mill. Hence the language content of the course should be selected not because it is representative of what the learner will have to deal with after the course is over, but because it is likely to activate strategies for learning while the course is in progress (Widdowson, 1984, p. 198).

For example, learners should not be presented with ready-made lists of subject-specific vocabulary in an ESP course. Instead, they should be given the opportunity to practice the skills they will need to find relevant vocabulary when they need it once they use English in their professional lives.

Another consideration which is of utmost importance, especially at the secondary level, is to design tasks that relate to learners' everyday lives. This is particularly tricky in the area of business communication because the experience of writing an enquiry, a reminder or a complaint is often alien to learners, who are still in full-time education. One way to spark their interest in such writing tasks is to design tasks around products they are interested in, such as the newest iPhone model, headphones or video games.

All in all, for the ESP practitioner, learning along with learners is essential, as increasing their knowledge in the subject matter is crucial for the success of their courses. If learners' needs are met and their interests are taken into account, this increases their motivation and willingness to participate actively when doing the tasks and activities.

Practical applications

Example 1 – *BHS*

Goal: learners will invent a product; learners will use subject-specific language; learners will present their product; learners will give feedback on presentations; learners will become aware of Dos and Don'ts for presentations

Activity: product presentation

Rationale: to prepare learners for real-life presentations in their future professional careers

Pre-knowledge: presentation phrases, as required for the sustained monologue part of the mRDP (*mündliche Reife- und Diplomprüfung*)

Level: CEFR B1+ and above

Procedure

1. The teacher tells learners to get into small groups (three or four learners in each).

2. Learners are asked to invent a product of their choice.

3. The teacher instructs learners to think about the target group, size, shape, features, colour, price of their product.

4. In their small groups, learners decide if they want to use PowerPoint, Prezi, a poster, etc. to give their 3-5 minute presentation.

5. During the presentation, each group has to take notes on the presentation of another group.

6. In their small groups, learners write a comment about the presentation (length, use of presentation phrases, content and one useful tip for future presentations).

7. Learners post comments for each group on a learning platform for the whole class to read.

8. Every learner must read all comments on the respective presentations to gather ideas for Dos and Don'ts for giving presentations.

9. In the next class, the teacher or a learner collects Dos and Don'ts on the board (or alternatively, in a Word document using a data projector).

10. Lists of Dos and Don'ts are posted on a learning platform for the whole class to access.

This activity could also be done with prompt cards depicting various products that are handed out to the small groups.

Example 2 – *FH*

Goal: learners will read articles from their field of study; learners will summarize articles orally based on notes; learners will write and perform a podcast; learners will revise important vocabulary and expressions in the context of their study programme; learners will give feedback to their peers

Activity: creating a podcast

Rationale: to reflect real-life language use in the context of learners' field of study

Pre-knowledge: advanced reading skills; familiarity with podcasts

Level: CEFR B2+ and above

Procedure

1. Learners should pick one article (related to their field of study) from a list and read it carefully. Then learners have to summarize the article.

2. Once step one is completed, learners form groups of max. 3 people (who have chosen different topics) and discuss briefly the most interesting issues in their articles and their relevance for society as a whole or for themselves.

3. In the respective groups, learners decide on the article they found most interesting and prepare to create a podcast session on it. They have to take the chosen article as a starting point. (Podcast requirements: length 4-6 minutes, learners are asked to make use of the vocabulary revised in the current semester and are further encouraged to have a lively discussion in their podcast.)

4. Every group member should now read the article chosen by the group to get more insight into the topic.

5. In the next step, learners have to decide on the points they want to make and the topics they want to address in their podcast.

6. In addition, learners have to consult the guidelines for creating podcasts (materials to be found on the learning platform). In their groups, learners have to assign roles: host, special guest etc. They also have to determine the interviewees who they want to invite onto their podcast. Finally, learners are asked to give their podcast series a name.

7. Once the set-up is clear, learners are invited to prepare their text for the podcast session.

8. Before finalising their texts for the podcast, learners are asked to pick 5 words / phrases / collocations they find especially useful in their article. These words form the basis for a 'Words of the Day' activity on the learning platform.

9. As a follow-up assignment, learners should record their podcast at home (e.g., on a smartphone) and should upload their file to the learning platform

Follow-up activity:

Learners listen to at least 3 podcast sessions created by their classmates and post one forum entry on "Words of the Day" or the content of the podcast session.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Which of the roles of the ESP practitioner would you personally find most challenging? Why?

2. Design a Needs Analysis (NA) task for an ESP course in a content area of your choice.

3. Are there any aspects of course and task design for ESP that you consider particularly challenging?

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Suggestions for further reading

Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.

This book is essential reading for both pre-service and in-service teachers as it provides a theoretical and practical guide for curriculum development in ESP. Personal reflection exercises and examples of real-world applications of needs analysis in ESP can be found as well.

Hafner, C. A., & Miller, L. (2018). *English in the Disciplines: A Multidimensional Model for ESP Course Design*. Routledge.

This book shows how fundamental principles of ESP can be adapted to new contexts of learning in the digital age. Examples of teaching materials and learning activities are provided. A new model for ESP course design concludes the book.

Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (Eds.). (2013). *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*. Wiley-Blackwell.

This handbook gives a comprehensive overview of the history and different areas of ESP research, ESP and language skills, ESP pedagogy and methodologies.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **3.** Your answers to the reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection in the area of ESP.

17 Teaching across academic disciplines: CLIL

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Key words

Dual focus of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

4Cs (Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture)

Benefits and challenges of CLIL

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What is the situation regarding CLIL in Austria?

What different versions of CLIL exist?

What theoretical models of teaching CLIL exist?

What are the benefits and challenges of CLIL?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

In the last two decades, the concept of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has become a fixture in the Austrian educational system. Since the implementation of the pilot project "*Englisch als Arbeitssprache*" (EAA, i.e., English as a medium of instruction) in secondary schools in 1992 by the *ÖSZ* (Austrian Centre for Language Competence), the country has seen a continuous development of the programme, leading to its nation-wide implementation across all educational sectors (Wilding et al., 2009). This development is based on the European language policy of promoting multilingualism by – amongst other measures – "increasing the efficiency of teaching through Content and Language Integrated Learning" (The European Commission, n.d.).

It is important to note that no uniform model of CLIL exists. Indeed, as Coonan (2003) points out, the implementation of CLIL responds "to local conditions and desires" (p. 27). Thus, CLIL may be defined as an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of educational approaches to learning and teaching non-language subjects through a foreign language. This means that the implementation of CLIL in Austria and elsewhere does not follow a uniform pattern but is shaped by a number of different factors, such as school type, location, resources, administration and teachers.

Hence, to better understand the nature and organisation of CLIL in Austria, it is important to place it within the context of the complex Austrian school system where CLIL can be found at all levels. In this chapter, we will focus on the secondary level. In Austria, secondary education encompasses a variety of different school types and curricula, and a range of school-specific curricula have been developed, each of which has different guidelines regarding CLIL.

The actual implementation of CLIL in schools is thus diverse, owing not only to different curricula but also to the principle of school autonomy, which has become even more pronounced over the last few years. School autonomy in Austria is regulated by educational law, in which the national curriculum provides a compulsory frame of reference but leaves ample space for school-specific as well as location and focus-specific adaptation (RIS, 2017). This means that CLIL may be adapted and integrated into a school's educational profile in a way that best suits the school rather than the requirements of the CLIL programme, which has certainly contributed to a proliferation of terms describing different models of CLIL that are used interchangeably, such as EAA, bilingual education, or English as a medium of instruction (Nezbeda, 2005). An exception to this rather loose regulation is the curriculum for *HTLs*, secondary schools with a technical focus, which specifically states that – starting with year eleven (year three in *HTL*) – all syllabi must include a minimum of 72 hours of CLIL teaching per academic year. However, even here, lawmakers have provided room for autonomous adaptation of the programme with regards to distribution of hours and subject choice (RIS, 2017).

The implementation of CLIL on the level of individual schools is as diverse as the terms used to describe it: complying with the loosely framed curriculum and regulations on autonomy as described above, Austrian schools may not only choose the general scope of their CLIL programmes, but also regulate funding, select target groups, set teaching materials and decide on the overall design of the lessons themselves. This results in a variety of CLIL-based programmes including so-called school pilot projects (RIS, 2017), mini-projects, and "*Europa Klassen*", which are classes with a distinct intercultural focus that often have English as a working language. The scope of these approaches includes short- and long-term exposure and high- and low-intensity exposure to foreign language input, independent of duration. Furthermore, CLIL in Austria may serve as a supplement to or a substitute for either content or foreign language subjects or both. Since there are no legal regulations regarding the qualifications of CLIL teachers, CLIL teachers in Austria may be foreign language or language teachers, content teachers without a teaching degree in language education and teachers of both (foreign) language subjects and content

subjects. Scenarios of CLIL in Austria may also involve team teaching and/or cross-curricular teaching.

Theories of teaching CLIL

The following section attempts to provide a brief overview of CLIL theories. The core concern of most CLIL theories is the dual-focused approach of teaching both content and language as a unified concept. However, modern CLIL theories attempt to reflect the multi-faceted nature of CLIL by providing even more intricate theories, "connecting different goals within the same conceptualization" (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2016, p. 4). Providing a concise theory that fuses the different aspects of CLIL into a practical classroom approach that may apply to all settings, however, has proven difficult considering the complexity of the concept as well as its implementation. In Austria, for instance, CLIL programmes often fall short in terms of providing a holistic approach, owing to the fact that the set timetable which schools have to follow simply does not allow for enough time to focus on both language and content equally. Therefore, content often takes precedence over language. Teachers' choice of topics is also considerably limited by the framework of the standardised Matura which sets goals that all learners have to achieve, regardless of the teaching approaches chosen by individual schools.

As maintained by Ruiz de Zarobe (2016), at the basis of any successful CLIL teaching approach are good practice theories that apply to teaching in general, such as scaffolding and alternative, goal-oriented means of assessment (see Example 1 in Practical Applications below). Pavón and Ellison (2013) argue that content teachers and language teachers should develop theories by learning from each other as "[g]ood CLIL teaching is a fusion of what is best practice in each of these areas" (p. 76).

Some of the more prominent theories that have influenced models of practical approaches for CLIL teachers are, for instance, Cummins' (2008) theory on differentiating between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) as different types of language learning: the two concepts unite the language-learning aspect with the topic-driven content of CLIL by focusing both on the language that is necessary for authentic everyday situations (i.e., talking to friends, interacting in informal settings, etc.) and the language that is necessary to understand and relay topical content in the classroom. Another comprehensive theory of teaching CLIL has been developed by Coyle (2008), who devised the 4Cs Framework (Content, Cognition, Communication, Culture). This framework is supposed to provide learners with concepts that not only incorporate but surpass content and language, creating a more profound learning experience

that includes cultural awareness, the construction of knowledge, the development of communication skills and higher-order thinking processes which foster learner autonomy. More specifically, **Content** describes the subject matter or 'knowledge' which learners acquire through higher-order thinking processes (**Cognition**). These thinking processes require language as a tool to relay ideas and formulate thoughts by means of **Communication**. In order to create contextual understanding of content, it must be placed within a wider, intercultural frame (**Culture**). In other words, "CLIL involves learning to use language appropriately whilst using language to learn effectively" (Coyle, 2006, p. 9). This theory is also exemplified in the "language Triptych", which proposes a reconceptualization of foreign language learning that incorporates three components: the language of learning (vocabulary), the language for learning (discourse strategies), and the language through learning (the ultimate success) (Coyle et al., 2010).

Benefits of CLIL

While there is an ongoing debate on the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL, there is evidence to suggest that CLIL classes offer a variety of benefits for learners and teachers, as well as schools in general (see Hofstadler et al., 2020; Nikula, 2017). According to Mehisto et al. (2008), CLIL can provide a quicker, more immersed approach to language learning that allows students to use the foreign language in an authentic and meaningful way, relaying and processing authentic information with the primary goal of communicating a concept or idea, rather than communicating merely for the sake of using the language. In fact, research suggests that CLIL directly influences student motivation and performance with regards to language learning (Doiz et al., 2014) and fosters critical thinking, intercultural competence and metalinguistic awareness (Mehisto et al., 2008).

Although the Austrian school system has been criticized for being resistant to change, CLIL is generally viewed as an asset for both learners and schools. As explained by Hüttner et al. (2013), in "the Austrian context, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as well as many other forms of, especially early, bilingual education fall into the [...] category of easy acceptance" (p. 267). In addition, growing school autonomy as well as a certain degree of competition for student enrolment both foster a demand to set oneself apart. All of this might contribute to the bottom-up or grassroots character of the processes that are often involved in Austrian CLIL implementation (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Shepherded by teachers and often parents, these processes regularly result in an ad-hoc adoption of CLIL which is one reason for the diversified CLIL landscape in Austrian schools. This readiness of schools to integrate CLIL into their curriculum may also be a result of system-

related advantages. Owing to the specific structure of teacher education in Austria, which requires university students to choose any combination of two or more subjects, secondary school teachers are frequently trained in various combinations of language and content subjects, which makes it easier to implement CLIL.

Challenges of CLIL

Regardless of the many positive aspects of CLIL classes, there is also a number of challenges that must be considered. As stated by Hofstadler et al. (2021), teachers may face an increased level of stress due to the implementation of CLIL, owing to the added workload of procuring and often creating useful materials. Additionally, teachers might feel insecure about their language skills as well as their ability to design lessons in a foreign language that compare to the level of teaching in their regular classes (Hofstadler et al., 2021). Furthermore, outside factors, such as parents who are concerned that learners might gain less factual knowledge in CLIL classes, or even learners who fear that their lack of language skills might negatively influence their grades, must be considered (Mehisto et al., 2008).

Practical applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will produce a magazine focusing on a topic

Activity: class/group magazine

Rationale: to apply the 4C framework to this task: learners engage with the topic (content) and their research in a creative way and with a high degree of learner autonomy (cognition); they collaborate and communicate in groups and/or as a whole class (communication) and create a final product which they learn to place in a wider context (culture)

Pre-knowledge: it is helpful to have some experience with magazine article writing, word formatting or a design programme, basic knowledge of the subject area the magazine focuses on (e.g., Middle Ages, renewable energy, human rights, travelling/dream destinations, 'Roaring Twenties'/Jazz Age, art and architecture from a certain time period, water, climate change)

Level: CEFR A2 and above

Procedure:

1. Before starting the magazine work, the topic can be discussed to ensure the learners have some knowledge of the subject matter.

2. Learners look at sample magazines, brainstorm what parts (such as titles, texts, comparisons, pictures and puzzles) are included in a magazine and discuss who should be their target readership.

3. Learners either work in groups to produce shorter magazines or together as a whole class to produce a class magazine.

4. Different roles (e.g., editor, graphic designer) and topics are distributed.

5. Learners choose what they will write or which part of the magazine they will produce.

6. Learners then work on their texts, which are later peer-reviewed.

7. Finally, the different parts of the magazine are put together (for example, title page, contents page, pictures, articles, caricatures, Agony Aunt letters, recipes, puzzles, comparisons, letters to the editor, weather, horoscope, announcements, questionnaires and interviews), the layout is finalised, and the magazine is printed (and maybe distributed in school).

Assessment:

One way of assessing CLIL projects is with an evaluation rubric. Depending on the nature of the project, teachers can assess the various content and language related competences and skills the students worked on and developed throughout the project. This can include specific language skills, as well as teamwork, IT skills or presentation skills, for example. Four- to five-point scales are recommended. The scale on the following page (developed by one of the authors based on relevant B2 scales) is an example of how to assess magazine work.

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Needs improvement
Range and accuracy of vocabulary and grammar	Accurate use of language, hardly any errors, wide range of vocabulary and structures	Mostly accurate use of language, very few errors present, very good range of vocabulary and structures	Mostly accurate use of language, some errors present, good range of vocabulary and structures	Errors present that impede communication, range of vocabulary and structures limited
Use of subject specific vocabulary	Subject specific vocabulary is used accurately and idiomatically	Subject specific vocabulary is used mostly accurately and idiomatically	Some subject specific vocabulary is used	Very little evidence of subject specific vocabulary being used
Suitable texts for target readership	Text is appropriate and interesting for target readership	Text is mostly appropriate and interesting for target readership	Some aspects of the text are appropriate and interesting for target readership	Text as a whole is not appropriate or interesting for target readership
Accurate information	Text is based on accurate scientific/ academic information	Text is mostly based on accurate scientific/ academic information	Text is partly based on accurate scientific/ academic information, some misinformation occurs	Text contains content that is not based on accurate scientific/ academic information
Cooperation during group work (especially peer review)	Student works excellently in a group, is a responsible team member who stays focused on the task and includes other team members	Student mostly works very well in a group, is a responsible team member who often stays focused on the task and tries to include other team members	Student mainly works well in a group, is a responsible team member who sometimes stays focused on the task and tries to include other team members	Student does not work well in a group and does not include other team members
Layout of magazine texts	Layout of the text (headline, body, pictures) is creative, interesting and consistent with a magazine layout	Layout of the text (headline, body, pictures) is consistent with a magazine layout	Layout of the text (headline, body, pictures) is mostly consistent with a magazine layout	Layout of the text (headline, body, pictures) does not match a magazine layout

Example 2

Goal: learners will read a text for understanding; they will communicate their knowledge to other students and receive new knowledge from other members of their group; they will work on topic-related vocabulary and relevant language functions (e.g., expressing an opinion)

Activity: expert groups – gaining and sharing knowledge through group work

Rationale: to practise understanding a text and communicating information to others

Pre-knowledge: reading skills for an informative text

Level: CEFR A2 and above

Procedure:

1. Learners work in groups and receive one part of an informative text (e.g., how did peasants, nobles, craftsmen, merchants, clergy live in the Middle Ages).

2. Learners read through their text in groups and either answer questions (scaffolding) or take notes of what they consider the most important points. In this way, learners become experts on their part of the information.

3. Learners form new groups, with one learner from each original former group, so that four to five experts now sit together and explain their part to the others who take notes. They take turns sharing their knowledge.

4. After all of the groups are finished, a whole class revision exercise can be done to ensure all main points were discussed (e.g., a quiz).

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Think of a topic you would like to work on as a CLIL project and after considering the goals of your project, design a lesson plan.

2. Research sample evaluation rubrics for CLIL projects online and adapt one to fit your project.

3. What challenges might you face when implementing a CLIL project at an Austrian school and how can you overcome them?

4. Which subjects could you most easily collaborate with in a CLIL project and why?

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Suggestions for further reading

Ball, P., Kelly, K., & Clegg, J. (2015). *Putting CLIL into Practice*. Oxford University Press.

This book provides a theoretical framework as well as sample tasks. In addition, it focuses on assessment, creating materials and considering the input and output related to the CLIL activities.

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

This book provides an in-depth summary of the main concepts of CLIL as well as a theoretical framework.

Dale, L., & Tanner, R. (2012). *CLIL Activities. A resource for subject and language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.

This book offers a theoretical introduction as well as an analysis of the language needed in different subjects. Its main focus, however, is to provide a number of different CLIL activities to be used for a range of subjects and topics.

Mehisto, P., & Ting, Y. L. T. (2017). *CLIL essentials for secondary school teachers*. Cambridge University Press.

This book outlines the principles of CLIL from both the content and language teachers' perspectives and provides a number of scaffolding techniques that help learners to learn content as well as language. Furthermore, the book provides practical strategies on how to administer formative assessment in CLIL.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. to **2.** Your answers to the reflection questions will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of these questions is to encourage reflection in the area of CLIL.

3. Challenges might include:

Finding time in an increasingly busy school year to plan and implement a project or a CLIL class is difficult → start small, assess the outcome and then develop further.

Resistance from parents, who are worried that the students will gain less factual knowledge of the content matter → inform the parents early about the plans and communicate frequently, provide studies and analyses of the benefits of CLIL.

Resistance from students, who are worried that because of their lacking language competence their grade in the other subject will drop as well → focus on the benefits of CLIL for the students in the future and point out that during CLIL lessons the language skills also profit.

Finding teachers who are both educated in a language and the content matter or finding teachers who are willing to cooperate → discuss plans and ideas with colleagues from the very beginning and find one or two colleagues who will work together with you on the first CLIL project.

4. This depends on your personal interests, on the subjects you teach and on the school you work at. The topics can range from the Middle Ages (history and social studies) to trees (biology) or money (geography and economics).

18 Adult education: Meeting learners' language needs

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Key words

EFL employment opportunities

Teaching challenges

Managing heterogeneity

Power dynamics

In this chapter, we ask the following questions:

What employment opportunities are there for EFL teachers in Austria beyond the secondary level?

What are some of the distinguishing characteristics of adult learners as opposed to younger learners? What specific challenges do these create for the teacher, and how can teachers handle these challenges?

How do power relationships differ in an adult education setting, and what can teachers do to manage these relationships effectively?

Theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context

In the 21st century, there has been a steadily growing emphasis on the importance of language skills in the EU marketplace. For example, the 2008 Council Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism labelled multilingualism "a factor in the European economy's competitiveness and people's mobility and employability" and highlighted the need to "promote language skills in career development" and to "provide job-specific language courses in vocational education and training (VET)" (2008/C 320/01). Similarly, a 2012 European Commission staff working document titled *Language competences for employability, mobility and growth* stated that

> [l]anguage competences should be useful in real life and match, in particular, labour market needs. This applies for national and European labour markets, and the work of EU enterprises operating on an international scale. Poor language skills are a serious obstacle to seizing professional opportunities abroad and in enterprises or organisations active at international level (European Commission, 2012a, p. 1).

In 2020, the EU's *Languages for Jobs* report stated that "English is clearly an extremely important language for international exchange. [...] In large parts of Europe and beyond, English is already considered more as a basic skill than a foreign language" (p. 15).

Indeed, a growing body of research has shown that proficiency in a foreign language is viewed as an asset, which is linked to increased employability and higher income (e.g., Araújo, et al., 2015; Gazzola, 2016). While 2016 Eurostat statistics showed that 99.9% of Austrian learners at the upper secondary level have received training in English (EUROSTAT, 2016), there remains a need for continued EFL training outside of school. A wide variety of EFL training opportunities for adults are available across Austria. This chapter focuses on three primary settings.

Teaching opportunities in the Austrian adult EFL market

The first EFL learning setting is the Austrian tertiary education system, which features a variety of different training programmes for EFL learners. For example, most Austrian *Fachhochschulen* (FH) feature English courses integrated into the curricula of the individual study programmes, with emphases ranging widely from field-specific English (i.e., English for specific purposes (ESP)) to more general business or professional English (see chapter 16 in this volume). In contrast, the university sector generally features affiliated language centres or institutes (e.g., Treffpunktsprachen at the University of Graz), which offer classes across the university population (i.e., students and staff) and even to the general public. Here again, a wide variety of topics can be seen, ranging from general language courses (sometimes in connection with certificates such as TOEFL/ IELTS, which are often pre-requisites for studying or teaching abroad) to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and courses in key competencies (e.g., presentation skills, job applications, scientific writing).

The second broad category of EFL adult learning consists of courses and other EFL training and support activities offered under the auspices of a language teaching organization. This includes organisations such as *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut (WIFI)*, which is a further education institution with a focus on current and future qualification requirements of companies and their employees, *Berufsförderungsinstitut (BFI)*, which provides vocational qualification and personal development for employed and unemployed people, and the *Volkshochschule (VHS)*, which is an independent adult education system open to all age groups, on the public side and companies such as Berlitz or the Cambridge Institute in the private sector. The latter generally feature a blend of in-house courses offered to the general public while

the former provide more customised training programmes or individualized language coaching services offered to companies and other organisations.

The final category consists of adult EFL teaching opportunities available to individual teachers acting as freelance private contractors. While such individuals often offer similar services to those available from language schools (e.g., company courses, personal English 'coaching'), this form of employment presents several special challenges and demands different skills from practitioners.

In fact, as in many other fields, the various EFL teaching settings correspond to essentially different job profiles. Just as a corporate lawyer and a divorce lawyer perform fundamentally different tasks that draw on different skill sets, teaching a General English (GE) course at a language institute differs significantly from teaching an ESP course at a technical research firm as a private contractor. The variety of teaching opportunities is one of the essential challenges facing Austrian adult EFL teachers. While some people may find a niche in one of these areas and then spend their careers in it, many EFL teachers end up moving between these different contexts as their careers progress, or even find themselves working in different ones simultaneously.

Due to this extreme diversity, adult EFL teachers must be able to perform a variety of tasks that go well beyond classroom teaching. Unlike many primary or secondary teaching positions, an adult EFL teacher rarely encounters a structured environment with set curricula and clearly established learning goals and procedures. For example, while some *FH Studiengänge* (degree programmes) may feature English courses with detailed syllabi and existing learning materials, many have far less clearly defined goals and content areas and may offer no teaching materials at all. Similarly, while some private language institutions feature their own proprietary teaching methods and materials, the majority of such institutions give instructors wide latitude to devise their own approaches. Thus, even within a single job position, adult EFL teachers must often play a wide variety of roles beyond instructing, such as needs assessors, course designers and materials developers (Belcher, 2006).

This wide variety of demands is particularly daunting when considering the level of training adult EFL practitioners often possess when they begin working. Whereas Austrian regulations require teachers at the primary and secondary levels to complete rigorous teacher training degree programmes, no such requirement exists for teachers at the tertiary level or in the private adult EFL sector. Although recent times have seen an increase in efforts to address this didactic gap by introducing higher education didactics training programmes (particularly at FHs and universities), not all aspiring EFL adult educators have access to these programmes.

The challenges of adult education

Before addressing the specific characteristics and needs of adult learners, it is important to dispel the common assumption that there is a negative correlation between age and language learning ability. Certainly, the physiological advantage quite young learners have in terms of developing proper pronunciation has been well established, and of course it is nearly impossible for adult learning scenarios to match the learning performance characteristic of young children growing up in an immersive linguistic environment. However, in more formal classroom learning situations, adult learners actually have an edge due to their greater general cognitive capabilities and enhanced ability to engage with conceptual complexity and abstract thought (Harmer, 2007). This means the potential for rich and effective language learning experiences is every bit as present in adult learners as in their younger counterparts.

In order to realize this potential, it is important to understand the distinctive characteristics of adult learners. To this end, we will draw on the work of Malcolm Knowles, perhaps the most well-known and influential andragogy theorist. Knowles et al. (2005) formulated six assumptions about adult learners, which are useful for understanding both learners themselves and the potential learning process. Four of the assumptions focus on adult learners' motivation and contain the unifying theme of 'real-world applicability'. That is, for learning to take place, adult learners must feel a "need to know" the skills or information offered, a desire which most often arises when they perceive the content as "things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with real-life situations" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 67). It follows that their "orientation to learning" is "life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered)" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 67). Furthermore, since the main goal is to acquire practical knowledge and skills, intrinsic motivational factors, such as "the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like", are of primary importance (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 68). Adult EFL teachers should bear these attitudes and goals in mind when trying to achieve learner buy-in to their courses.

Knowles' remaining two assumptions highlight some important challenges for adult EFL teachers. First, in describing the "learners' self-concept", Knowles et al. (2005) emphasize that most adults "develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction" (p. 65). Adults possess a strong desire for autonomy, as well as the corresponding resistance to being compelled by others, which can complicate learner-teacher relationships. Finally, perhaps the broadest assumption deals with the "role of the learners' experiences" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 65). Adults, by definition, have more experience than

younger people, which can influence the learning process in various ways. On the positive side, this richer experience can serve as a valuable resource for certain forms of learning that are designed to mobilize and incorporate this experience.

However, Knowles et al. (2005) emphasize that this previous experience also brings some potential pitfalls. For example, accumulated experience can lead to "mental habits, biases, and presuppositions that tend to cause us to close our minds to new ideas, fresh perceptions, and alternative ways of thinking" (Knowles et al., 2005, p.66). In the context of EFL learning, many learners may have had negative experiences in previous courses or other EFL environments (e.g., with instructional methods, assessment). This can give rise to negative feelings towards the language and even feelings of learned helplessness, which conflict directly with the aforementioned desire for autonomy and can generate tension in an EFL learning setting. Beyond the fact that adult learners have *more* experience than their younger counterparts, their experiences are generally far more *diverse* as well. For this reason, a group of adult learners "will be more heterogeneous in terms of background, learning style, motivation, needs, interests, and goals" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 66). In the EFL context, the heterogeneity of learners' educational experiences often leads to a corresponding diversity of English language ability levels beyond that faced by EFL teachers of younger students. In fact, this diversity in ability levels is one of the most difficult challenges faced by adult EFL teachers.

Recommended approaches

Managing heterogeneity

There are several ways to manage heterogeneity in adult education contexts. In some cases, EFL teachers of adults can mitigate this problem by forming multiple classes for people at different ability levels. For example, language institutes offering GE courses to a wider audience often create multiple classes for different levels (e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced). However, based on our experience, this is rarely possible. For example, due to educational and resource purposes, FH study programme directors generally want all students to receive the same training, and companies investing in language training often lack the number of employees or the financial resources to support multiple classes. Thus, adult EFL teachers must be able to manage the disparity in English abilities they are likely to encounter within a course.

To this end, the first important step is to conduct some type of assessment at the beginning of the class, in order to gain a sense of learners' different levels. We will

cover assessment in more detail below, but here we will just emphasise that this is less about formal placement tests and more about deploying an activity that gives the teacher a chance to hear learners speak or yields a sample of their writing (depending on the goals of the class). For example, simple ice-breaker activities in which learners introduce themselves are normally enough to get an initial impression of learners' existing language abilities.

This knowledge will aid teachers in individualizing the teaching and learning strategies deployed for a course, with the goal of keeping the more advanced English users challenged without overwhelming the less advanced ones. While the less advanced English users normally require more attention in the classroom, in the course planning phase we recommend a particular focus on creating roles for the stronger English performers. Our experience has shown that the attitudes and behaviours of the stronger performers can have a significant influence on the overall tone of the class. Whereas a detached or even condescending stronger performer will tend to decrease the willingness of the weaker performers to participate, stronger performers who are engaged or supportive can help support the learning of those less advanced. To motivate stronger English users, it is important to remember Knowles' et al. (2005) "need-to-know" principle. In EFL teaching situations, it is common to have some learners who believe (sometimes rightly) that they already possess the English skills they need to survive in their daily lives. In our experience, providing such learners opportunities to develop additional skills (e.g., organization, leadership) in the context of learning activities normally makes them more likely to contribute positively to the overall learning experience, thereby serving as positive role models for the less developed English users.

Since many EFL learning activities involve dividing a class into smaller groups, in some cases it may make sense to form groups based on ability levels and then adjust the difficulty levels of the tasks assigned to each group. However, we usually find it more effective to form groups of people with varying levels of existing English ability and then assign some extra task or responsibility to the more advanced English users in each group. For example, if the class is divided into small groups to conduct a meeting simulation, one of the stronger learners could be placed in each group and then assigned the task of running the meeting or monitoring the group dynamics and providing feedback at the end of the activity. Through such approaches, teachers can promote maximum engagement among learners across all different levels of English ability within a group.

Designing courses for success

This leads us to the EFL teacher's role as course designer. While the situation will dictate how much course design is required, experience has shown that a high degree of flexibility in terms of course design is the norm. As mentioned above, the first step to designing a course is to perform some type of a needs assessment, which then serves as the basis for other decisions (Belcher, 2006). The literature on conducting a needs assessment features a wide variety of methods, most of which involve several stages and include extensive data collection and analysis, all performed well in advance of the time when the course actually takes place.

However, in reality, the Austrian adult EFL teaching market rarely presents the opportunity for such a thorough and deliberate approach. Thus, teachers need to be more creative in their efforts to gather information about current language ability (as mentioned above), learning objectives, and learning/teaching preferences. While this information can sometimes be gathered beforehand via discussions with human resources managers or programme directors who hire teachers, often it is more useful to get this information from the learners themselves in the initial session via questionnaires or, ideally, in-class activities designed to elicit this information. Using this information to tailor the course to learners' needs and preferences plays into Knowles's et al. (2005) second assumption about learner autonomy. That is, involving the learners in the course design gives them a sense of ownership of the learning process and helps democratise the classroom, which promotes engagement.

On the subject of how to incorporate learners' needs and preferences, we can refer again to the theme of real-world usefulness. As Knowles et al. (2005) suggest, adults "learn new knowledge, understandings, skills, values, and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations" (p. 67). This means expanding our conception of our mission as EFL teachers beyond teaching the nuts and bolts of the English language into helping learners obtain a powerful customised communication tool. Once an assessment has revealed the real-world situations in which learners need to use English, activities should be designed or adjusted to simulate these situations and prepare learners to handle them more effectively. For example, GE learners might want to do role plays about travel situations (e.g., complaining about an unsatisfactory hotel room); sample job interviews or simulated meetings might suit business English (BE) learners; and learners of English for Engineering Purposes may need to work on technical presentations they plan to give at international conferences or at a client site.

This last example points to another challenge of ESP teaching, where learners' knowledge of field-specific terminology and concepts often exceeds that of the teacher. This can be particularly daunting for younger teachers, who may have learners in class who are older than they are. In such cases, authenticity plays a key role. While teachers need to invest time in familiarising themselves with field-specific information, it is not recommended to pretend to be an expert in the field. Rather, this can be viewed as an opportunity to make use of learners' knowledge and experiences. For example, on the content level, teachers can collaborate with learners in selecting topics to be covered. In addition, teachers can use peer feedback in the classroom and other activities as a way of using learners' knowledge to monitor the topic-specific aspects of learner-produced content (see Example 1 in Practical Applications below).

Beyond the learner benefits, expanding our perceived mission to embrace diverse communication tasks benefits adult EFL teachers as well. While terminology and register vary greatly across fields, fundamental communication functions remain broadly similar in many cases. Developing our own knowledge of essential skills (e.g., critically evaluating information, working effectively in a team, presenting information to an audience, communicating across cultural barriers) allows us as adult EFL teachers to devise learning activities for these valuable real-world skills, which can then be adapted for a variety of settings. Thus, lessons designed to train general skills can then be augmented with field-specific case studies or simulations, which can provide learners an opportunity to practice important skills while simultaneously building their knowledge of the relevant field-specific language and concepts. This approach helps situate language learning in the wider context of acquiring practical skills that learners can deploy in their real lives, regardless of what language they may be speaking. It also creates a win-win situation: the teacher's burden of preparing courses for different settings is somewhat lightened, and learner engagement increases due to the opportunity to gain additional practical skills.

Power dynamics in adult education

This vision of empowered learners and engaged teachers collaborating eagerly in the pursuit of knowledge and skills is a worthwhile goal for adult EFL teachers. And indeed, particularly in situations where adult learners have voluntarily registered for a class, one encounters many motivated learners. However, even in classes where adults voluntarily take part, we cannot forget that most of them must often balance an array of family and occupational demands, which may leave even the best-intentioned learners with little energy to focus on learning a foreign language.

Furthermore, the reality is that many adult education activities in Austria exist because someone from 'upstairs' (e.g., an FH curriculum developer, a member of corporate upper management) decided they were necessary, a decision with which the actual learners may not be in complete agreement. Therefore, adult education practitioners may also confront the same issues evident at earlier educational levels, such as learner apathy, resistance, non-compliance and disruptive behaviour.

Thus, as with every learning experience, adult education involves some level of power dynamics. Brookfield (2013), who has written extensively about the issues of power in teaching, argues that teachers must sometimes "insist and coerce, [...] stand our ground, and not give in to students' demands" (p. 10). He goes on to point out that "being adult-centred does not absolve me of making value-based choices. Sometimes it means trying to find out as much as I can about how my students are experiencing their learning and then using what I have discovered to help them engage with material I feel is worth the effort" (Brookfield, 2013, p. 11). Thus, it is important to recognise that teaching adults is emphatically not about ceding all power to the learners.

At the content level, this means that teachers must sometimes dictate what topics are to be covered. In the case of EFL teaching, one common example is grammar. While perfect grammar is not a requirement for most EFL professional situations, communicating effectively and maintaining credibility (an important aspect of communication in the professional world) require a solid grasp of grammar, and in many situations, the learners need to have grammar concepts explained or refreshed. In addition, there may be other topics that must be covered, regardless of learners' and/or teachers' wishes.

In order to ensure a responsible and effective use of the power inherent in a teacher's role, Brookfield (2013) offers some fundamental guidelines. The first, already mentioned in the quote above, is to remain aware of how adult learners "are experiencing their learning" (Brookfield, 2013, p. 11). In essence, needs assessment is an ongoing process. Teachers must constantly seek information about learners' evolving needs and be willing to adjust as much as possible to these needs. Another principle Brookfield (2013) advocates is maintaining transparency when exercising power. He points out that research has consistently identified two behaviours learners look for in teachers: "(1) regular and full disclosure of the expectations, criteria, and agendas that teachers hold, and (2) teachers laying out the rationale behind their actions and decisions" (Brookfield, 2013, p. 26). Thus, honest, open communication can help mitigate the negative impact of a teacher's actions being at odds

with learners' needs for autonomy. This can be done by making the rules and expectations clear and granting learners the right to exercise the maximum amount of autonomy possible within the conditions of the activity or class at hand. One final practice Brookfield (2013) emphasises concerning how to deal with power issues is modelling, whereby teachers serve as role models for the attitudes and behaviours they are asking learners to practise. As an example, he mentions that teachers can help teach learners how to challenge their own assumptions and see issues from different angles by "model[ing] a self-critical analysis of one's own ideas in front of students" (Brookfield, 2013, p. 24).

The mention of critical thinking brings us to one final related point we would like to make about adult EFL education in Austria. While the diversity of the field can be challenging at times, it also represents an outstanding opportunity for teachers, if approached with the proper mindset. This means embracing the challenge of teaching on a topic on which a teacher is not an expert and cultivating the same open and curious mind towards these unfamiliar topics that we hope to see our learners demonstrate towards English. In fact, when granted the opportunity to teach in a particular ESP setting for an extended time, many EFL teachers find that they can soon achieve a level of fluency on the topic that allows them to function even more effectively, leading to more job enjoyment and satisfaction.

Practical applications

Example 1

Goal: learners will devise arguments to convince others of their position; learners will listen to other viewpoints and try to find ways to refute them

Activity: critical debate

Rationale: to train critical thinking and perspective taking; to train effective communication styles and techniques for disagreeing constructively in difficult situations

Pre-knowledge: knowledge of diplomatic English and appropriate register in heated debates

Level: CEFR B2 and above

Procedure

1. The teacher chooses an issue on which opinion is divided among learners (e.g., inheritance tax, plastic surgery, smoking in public places)

2. Learners are asked for a show of hands either in support or opposition to the issue, and two teams are formed.

3. The teacher announces that each team must now devise arguments for the side that they do NOT support. [Note: The teacher points out that no one has to change their personal viewpoint, but that learners have to pretend to have the opposite viewpoint for the duration of the activity.]

4. The two teams spend 15 to 20 minutes developing their respective arguments.

5. The teams form one large circle with two chairs in the centre. Each team chooses one person to make their case in the debate, with the other team members observing the debate. In larger groups, the debate may be held with four people (i.e., two per team). The debate goes on for about 3 to 5 minutes or until one of the two (or four) chooses a replacement from the outer circle.

6. The debate goes on for several more rounds until everyone has had a chance to participate in the debate or until no new ideas and arguments are brought forth.

7. In the debriefing, the teacher asks the learners what it was like to argue against their personal positions. Have they discovered any new avenues for thinking about the issue? Were any blind spots uncovered? Were any assumptions confirmed or challenged?

Example 2

Goal: learners will read for meaning; learners will summarise findings in an oral presentation using topic-specific language; learners will practise listening comprehension and asking questions; learners will practise providing feedback in a sensitive manner

Activity: holding presentations

Rationale: to prepare learners for real-life professional presentations, both as presenters and audience members; to sensitise learners to the importance of diplomatic language when providing feedback

Pre-knowledge: topic-specific knowledge; effective presentation language and skills; language and techniques for effective feedback

Level: CEFR B2+ and above

Procedure

1. The teacher assigns related texts on a selected topic, or learners can be instructed to select a topic/reading from their own fields.

2. Learners prepare a presentation of the core information from their assigned text or their selected topic (optionally with PowerPoint). [Note: The number of presenters per topic and presentation length can be adjusted based on class size and available time.]

3. Learners prepare three True/False or multiple-choice comprehension questions, which they submit in advance to the teacher. The teacher compiles these questions into a comprehension test for all presentations.

4. Learners also prepare three open-ended discussion questions on the content of their presentation.

5. Before in-class presentations, the teacher designates three (or more) learners to ask difficult, topic-related questions after the presentation, as well as individual students to provide oral and/or written feedback on specific aspects of the presentation (e.g., body language, voice control, signposting, structure).

6. Learners deliver their presentations, followed by questions from the designated questioners and a discussion of the presenters' prepared discussion questions.

7. One round of oral presentation feedback is conducted, with the assigned learners taking the lead for each presentation aspect.

8. Learners take the comprehension test compiled by the teacher. This can be done in class on paper or using an appropriate digital tool (e.g., Quizlet), or it can be done digitally after class via a learning platform (e.g., Moodle).

9.The results of this test can be used to give presenters feedback on the effectiveness of their presentations. That is, the number of people who get the questions from a certain presentation correct can serve as a rough indicator of the effectiveness of the presentation or help identify areas for improvement. In a subsequent class session, learners can discuss why they got questions wrong and help devise strategies that would have made the presentation more effective.

Activities and questions for reflection

1. Design an ice-breaker activity for day 1 of an adult education class that would help the learners get to know each other but also allow you to begin to assess their level of proficiency.

2. Based on your own experience, what is your personal philosophy of adult learning and the teacher's role? How might this role differ in different settings where you hope to teach?

3. What strategies could you use to prevent learner resistance (e.g., apathy, hostility towards teacher or fellow learners) in an adult EFL setting? How would you deal with these situations if they arise in class?

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Suggestions for further reading

Brookfield, S. (2013). *Powerful Techniques for Teaching Adults*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

In this book, Brookfield draws on both theory and his own extensive teaching experience to provide insights into the dynamics of power in adult teaching, as well as practical tips for teachers for engaging and empowering learners.

Rocco, T. S., Smith, M. C., Mizzi, R. C., Merriweather, L. R., & Hawley, J. D. (2020). *The handbook of adult and continuing education*. Stylus Publishing.

This book features a collection of concise, comprehensible chapters that provides valuable information on current issues and trends in adult and continuing education.

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*. Josey Bass.

This book offers an overview of the most important theories and research in adult learning, including recent studies from the field of neuroscience and insights into the pervasive influence of technology on adult learning.

Commentary on reflection questions

1. Your answer to this reflection question will depend on your personal teaching experience. The point of this question is to encourage reflection on teaching English in adult education.

2. Obviously, answers will vary widely, but the important thing is that teachers and prospective teachers should take time to consider their own beliefs about this issue and how those beliefs will inform their teaching practice in the future. They also need to be prepared to articulate these ideas in potential job application situations (e.g., interviews, teaching portfolios). Specific areas to consider include the teacher's self-concept, teacher-learner relationships, communication styles, personal motivations and career goals.

3. There are many possible answers to this question. With regard to prevention, we mentioned earlier the importance of effectively handling the stronger learners in a class, but there are many other possible techniques (e.g., collectively establishing communication and behavioural norms at the outset of class). With regard to handling these issues when they arise in class, this is largely dependent on the individual's personality and style, including such issues as desired level of formality in the classroom and comfort level with confrontation. The point of this question is to en-

courage prospective teachers to reflect on their own personalities and begin to devise appropriate strategies for preventing and managing problem situations that may arise.

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Katharina Platzer studied German and English in the teacher education programme at the University of Graz. Since then, she has been teaching those subjects in a secondary school. After one and a half years of teaching practice, she enrolled in the Ph.D. programme at the Doctoral School for Educational Research and Methodology of the University Graz and researches Language Integrated Global Skills teaching in the EFL classroom. Her interests lie in the integration of global skills alongside traditional subject teaching and the psychology of language learning and teaching.

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English Language Teaching (ELT) has become an integral part of the Austrian education system and as such comes with its own demands and challenges. This book is intended as a practical guide and reference for pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, language teacher educators as well as academics working in the area of ELT. It addresses a range of topics in ELT with a special focus on Austria. Written collaboratively by practitioners and researchers in the field, it combines theory and practice.

Each chapter includes:

- questions about chapter content
- a section on theoretical perspectives and the Austrian context
- practical applications
- questions for reflection and
- suggestions for further reading

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