

Tema

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An Integrative Approach to

“QualiTraining”

An Integrative Approach to “QualiTraining” is based on the ECML project “QualiTraining – A Training Guide for Quality Assurance”, co-ordinated by Laura Muresan, Frank Heyworth, Galya Mateva and Mary Rose. The main project outcome is a guide for trainers and multiliers, in the form of a book and a CD ROM with additional resources, accessible also on-line on the ECML web site.

The article aims to show how the setting up of systems for improving quality is important not only for institutions but also for teachers and learners. The “Training Guide for Quality Assurance in Language Education” was designed so as to make concepts and terminology used in quality management more transparent and relevant to teacher trainers and language educators. To illustrate the approach adopted in producing the Guide, the article comprises an overview of some of the key aspects dealt with in the Guide and a selection of activities, prompting the readers to reflect on how quality assurance principles can be applied to concrete language teaching and learning contexts. Thus the readers can experience the integrative approach proposed throughout the “QualiTraining Guide”: All those involved in the educational process need to be aware of the institutional goals and of the systems existing in the institution for monitoring and improving quality. More importantly, they all – management, teachers, learners, the administrative team and other ‘actors’ – have a role to play in the quality management process, to the benefit of learners, teachers and the entire institution as a “learning organisation”.

Le projet CELV «QualiFormation – Assurance de qualité et autoévaluation pour les établissements scolaires et les enseignants» a été mené sous la coordination de Laura Muresan, Frank Heyworth, Galya Mateva et Mary Rose. L’élaboration d’un guide pour les formateurs et les multiplicateurs sous la forme d’un livre, d’un CD ROM et de ressources annexes est le résultat de ce projet.

Le présent article explicite l’importance de la mise en place d’un système d’«assurance qualité» pour les établissements scolaires, mais aussi pour les enseignants et les apprenants. Comme l’indique la désignation de «guide de formation à l’assurance qualité», il s’agit de familiariser les enseignants et les formateurs en langues avec la terminologie de la gestion de la qualité. Une présentation générale des aspects-clés traités dans le guide ainsi qu’une sélection d’activités ont pour objectif d’amener le lecteur à s’interroger sur la manière dont les principes de l’assurance qualité peuvent être appliqués concrètement dans l’enseignement des langues.

En effet, il est nécessaire de sensibiliser tous ceux qui sont impliqués dans le milieu éducatif aux objectifs institutionnels et aux systèmes existants sur le suivi et la gestion de la qualité: tout un chacun a un rôle à jouer en faveur des apprenants, des enseignants et de l’institution dans son ensemble en tant qu’«organisation d’apprentissage».

Why “QualiTraining – A Training Guide for Quality Assurance in Language Education”? Why would it be relevant for classroom teaching? How could it influence our learners’ learning?

This article aims to show how the setting up of systems for improving quality is important not only for institutions but also for teachers and learners. After a brief description of the “QualiTraining” project and the approach adopted in producing the “Training Guide for Quality Assurance in Language

Education”, there is a selection of activities prompting the readers to reflect on how quality assurance principles can be applied to concrete language teaching and learning contexts.

The “QualiTraining” project

“QualiTraining – A Training Guide for Quality Assurance in Language Education” has been a three-year project within the medium-term programme of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz (2004 – 2007). It was intended as a follow-up to the ECML project on “Quality Assurance and Self-assessment for Schools and Teachers” (2000 – 2003), which had been finalised with a CD ROM on “Quality Management in Language Education”, addressing generic aspects of quality management and, at the same time, including a variety of case studies and practical examples from 22 countries from all over Europe. (Muresan, Heyworth, Matheidesz & Rose, 2003).

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learn more words when using their preferred learning styles (5% increase compared to control group), a finding which has important implications for teachers.

Nicole Taylor (Spain) investigated teachers’ attitudes towards the use of mother tongue in L2 classes. She also looked at when and for what purposes a group of 11–12-yearold Spanish- and Catalan-speaking students were using their L1 in class. The teachers questioned in this study reported that they used the L1 mostly for affective reasons and classroom management but they felt that they should insist on students speaking only English in class. Taylor investigated use of the L1 during pair work and found that students would differentiate between the content of the discourse – which they thought should be in the L2 – and conversational discourse strategies (e.g. asking for help, moving the conversation on), which they carried out in the L1. The L1 was also used to compensate for gaps in the L2. The researcher intervened by raising awareness of this issue and providing language input which catered to the students’ observed needs.

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The European Centre for Modern Languages: Recent projects

The hallmark of the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) is the organisation of international language education projects within four-year programmes.

Coordinated by European teams, these projects primarily target language experts involved in national and international developments, in associations and in institutions working to enhance standards in language education.

Based on the underlying values of the Council of Europe and its pioneering work in cultural cooperation and language education, the ECML works in cooperation with the Council's Language Policy Division, which develops tools and standards for transparent and coherent language policies. In contrast, and complementary to this, the ECML concentrates on the level of educational practice.