

Austria

Europäische Volksschule Dr. Leopold Zechner

This primary school (students aged 6-10) has a special program to work with students from multi-ethnic/migration backgrounds, fostering their German (national language) proficiency and using the linguistic diversity of its students in language and culture workshops for all students. Parents and community members are involved in the classes, for example, non-native speaking student mothers participate in German courses, learning with and from their children, and daily English lessons are supported by a native speaker teaming with the form teacher. English is used as language of instruction in subjects like sports and arts. In addition to the emphasis on language learning, there is a focus on elements of progressive pedagogy, with students working independently, in flexible groupings with week plans. The school uses a European studies curriculum that was developed in cooperation with colleagues from other countries. A school development team of teachers works on new ideas and evaluates current practice.

Main focus of Innovation: CONTENT, RESOURCES, ORGANISATION

Other keywords: equity

General Information

Name of the ILE: Europäische Volksschule Dr. Leopold Zechner

Location/Address: Goldschlagstrasse 14-16, 1150 Vienna

Website: www.evsgoldschlagstrasse.at

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

We see ourselves as a “school of diversity“, the significance which we attribute to the languages spoken at our school is an expression of our diversity.

Characteristically, our school environment allows all players to achieve excellence. Our work is leading to good results as illustrated by feedback from the secondary schools to which our pupils transfer. In these first years of schooling, we lay a foundation for lifelong learning. We perceive ourselves as a “good” school and would willingly subject our outcomes to external evaluation.

Our challenges:

- Prepare pupils for the challenges of a global environment
- Convey a European citizenship (preparation for life in the European Union to the shaping of which our pupils should contribute as responsible citizens)
- Handling diversity (27 languages at our school, pupils from different cultural backgrounds)
- Prepare pupils for transition to secondary schools

Our response (laid down in our guiding principles):

- An affectionate and appreciative attitude gives children a sense of security and belongingness.
- Our lively team is open to development and progress and encourages and challenges the talents of children.
- Our learning culture is based on respectful interaction.
- Openness vis-à-vis other awakens curiosity for life and learning, and such also for the language and culture of others.
- A positive outlook on life and learning lead to better performance.
- Our creativity and diversity is marked by an acknowledgement of individuality and the opportunities this brings!

Our main priorities are:

- Team teaching
- Languages (language workshops, English gradually becoming a working language – with native speakers)
- Individual learning culture (variety of different reform pedagogical approaches)
- Individualisation
- Stirring curiosity
- Keeping the fun of learning alive
- Fostering creativity
- Living diversity

- Transmission of key skills (social skills, language(s) skills) through respect, leading by example, parental work, prevention work, language and cultural awareness

Evidence

Is there any evidence or indications showing that this initiative achieves the outcomes that it is aiming at?

Internal evaluation in various areas:

- Semi-annual interim and final reports of the individual forms and language teachers within the framework of the site-specific development concept
- Development Programme 25+ of the Federal Ministry of Education
- Regular school development meetings of the school development team (planning, reflection and self-evaluation)
- Evaluation of the language workshops by the project team (with teacher feedback), a survey of parents and pupils is being planned
- Feedback from parents, the pedagogic environment and higher-level schools

External evaluation:

- Informally by visitors, students, project partners
- Studies at university level
- Expectations on CERI (reason for intended participation in this survey)

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

- Language skills (and language performance) in the first and second language(s)
- Raise interest in foreign language learning
- Respect and esteem for oneself and others
- Attainment of the educational standards.

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

We are a public primary school, our target group is grade 1-4 (learners aged 6-10).

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

The teachers at our school hold a teaching diploma that entitles them to teach at primary school.

Additional qualifications and training:

- New primary school
- Course on intercultural learning
- Remedial teacher training
- Training in reform pedagogy (Montessori, Freinet, ...)
- Graduation from teacher training studies in information technology (implementing new technologies)
- Remedial teacher training for languages
- European teacher training
- Leadership Academy (school head, deputy is currently being trained)
- EOS certification (school head)
- University degree at Magister/Master level (languages, educational science)

Based on this wealth of different qualifications, expert knowledge is being exchanged and shared. The teachers therefore act as multipliers for the entire staff. Latest findings from initial and in-service education and training are being shared among colleagues, and the knowledge is also available for peer coaching.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

The teachers see themselves as facilitators. They assist and guide pupils in self-organising their learning process and becoming self-reliant. Didactically, the teachers use elements from different reform-pedagogy and learning-theory approaches which they apply depending on the requirements within a given class. In the Europe classes, we moreover follow the European Studies curriculum which teachers of our school developed at the commission of the European Office of the Vienna Municipal School Board in cooperation with colleagues from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Our special offer consists in so called “Language Workshops”, open for all pupils of the school, not only for the students attending Europe Classes. For a period of six weeks, the pupils may attend a workshop for one or two hours a week where they can familiarise themselves with a given language and culture. After that, they can either transfer, or study the language at greater depth.

The “Language Workshops” are seen in the overall context of the understanding of teaching and learning at the EVS.

In the EVS model, different pedagogical approaches are implemented and put together in an eclectic way. These are prominent within the meaning of diversity, depending on the personality of individual teachers. Children are free to organise their classroom work by weekly plans or daily plans, and a strong focus on team work addresses the learning needs of each child.

Projects that are initiated either together with the students (subjects that interest them which they choose themselves), or participation in projects from outside the school (such as "Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008), allow the formulation of learning aims in cooperation with the children and as well their evaluation in the form of presentations, portfolios and, in the context of performance assessment, "direct performance documentation".

According to the principle of political education, students also take an active part in participating at the district level (proposals for the design of the school forecourt).

The integration of native speaker teachers and support teachers in lesson planning and the coordination of remedial programmes result in a complete image that brings in everyone's strength.

For this school year, the following languages are offered: Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, French, Portuguese, Czech/Slovak, Turkish and Hungarian.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

Our school building reflects the pleasant work climate. The school bell has been abolished. In addition to the classrooms, several group and working rooms ("oasis of peace", learning workshop, creativity room etc.) have been installed. The hallway has been integrated as a learning space. We have therefore created open space and time; structures have given way to sequences (language workshops, remedial classes etc.). The optimum use of space and learning opportunities across age groups creates a dynamic learning environment that promotes a shift of perspective as well as movement. The school yard serves as a space for learning and physical activity in between learning phases. The class structure, however, gives the children a sense of security and belongingness, so that all children feel included and can find their place.

Our learning environment is completed by outings and outdoor learning.

Joint projects and visits of our partner school in Bratislava offer an opportunity for learning "across national borders". At the international football tournament which the school organises annually with the small town of Oberschützen in Austria's southeast, pupils from Vienna meet pupils from all over the world in a sports competition (most recently with 9 participating nations) and can experience the practical implementation of our school philosophy hands-on.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

The school is located in Vienna's 15th district, close to the *Guertel*. This area has a large population with a migration background whose language of origin is not German. Therefore, we see a high share of children with a mother tongue other than German in our classes. 10 years ago, dissatisfaction among the staff started to mount because of the teaching situation, as the composition of classes did not reflect the overall social mix. This gave rise to the urge to deal with diversity and heterogeneity explicitly. As a consequence, the European Primary School Model was developed as an appealing offer to parents (one daily English lesson with a native speaker teaming with the form teacher according to the CLIL model, following the European Studies curriculum, leading pupils to European Citizenship, language focus for Slovak, Czech and Hungarian, to address these ethnic groups). Children with a German mother tongue wanting to learn those languages were equally to benefit from the language offer, so as to achieve a better mix of classes.

The parents readily responded to this offer (some are even prepared to send their children across the entire city from other districts). Migrant and socially deprived children were also able to benefit from this offer (English classes and various sports and games activities in the afternoon), something which is generally reserved to children attending private schools.

Success has proven us right. With a new school head, and the need to draft a site-specific development plan, languages, creativity and team emerged as priorities. The school development team meetings discussed the efficient use of the school's own resources, and the project team then developed the language workshop model so as to optimally integrate native speakers (in 8 different languages) as a new quality into the learning process and to make visible and implement the school's language diversity in the school programme.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

We are a state school that is funded by the municipality of Vienna as school provider (construction measures are funded from the district budget). Recently we received a number of grants (e.g. Kulturkontakt). Our projects are also sponsored by the district administration and the parental association through voluntary contributions. Mobility (exchanges and visitors from our partner school in Kasarnou, Bratislava) are eligible for funding from the European Office under the Interreg IIIA programme.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

- According to the education standards (planned)
- Team inspection by district school inspectors
- Performance assessed by alternative assessment forms (commented direct presentation of work, verbal assessment), self-evaluation and pupils' catalogue of learning aims
- Reading pass
- Reading screening in year 3
- Feedback from visiting institutions
- European Office of the Vienna Municipal School Board

Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE

Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

- Interim and final reports of classes and language groups
- School development programme
- Folders
- Class folders
- Website (see question 1)
- Articles published in , *Erziehung und Unterricht*“, *ZV Perspektiven*, district journal
- Reports by students sitting in from the university college of teacher education and Vienna university
- Reports by visiting institutions

Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE

We believe that our school is a good example of how linguistic diversity and innovative learning can be adequately implemented.