

## Austria

**Goethe-Gymnasium**

*This academic secondary school uses different self-developed forms of assessment to document student progress and to monitor educational quality, including cooperation with a school in St. Petersburg for external evaluation, (repeated) screenings of the students' reading skills, repeated questionnaires for first-year students to document their transfer from primary to secondary school, and surveys for graduates. The school also employs various multi-media and IT resources for e-learning, as it participates in a nation-wide project to pilot possibilities of e-learning in schools (the "eLSA" project), including extensive teacher training for ICT use, laptops for all students, and online learning platforms for communication. Other innovative features of this school are personal training diary for sports education, interdisciplinary approaches in science teaching, and a business English course.*

**Main Focus of Innovation:** TEACHERS, CONTENT, RESOURCES, ORGANISATION

**Other Keywords:** technology-rich

**General Information**

**Name of the ILE:** Goethe-Gymnasium

**Location/Address:** Astgasse 3, 1140 Wien, Österreich

**Website:** [www.goethegymnasium.at](http://www.goethegymnasium.at)

**ILE submitted by:** Vienna Municipal School Board

**Rationale**

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

We are developing special focus areas in all of our four school types:

**ELSA: eLearning in daily school business**

This project launched by the Federal Ministry of Education has been applied at Goethe Gymnasium since 2005. Starting this year, one or more eLearning units per semester are held in all lower-cycle classes. In parallel, teachers receive pedagogical, didactic and technical training through programmes offered by the Vienna University College of Teacher Education. Within the scope of this project, our school's IT infrastructure has been and still is being improved on an ongoing basis. eLSA constitutes a major contribution to school development.

Following a certification process where 43 students from 15 different forms presented 21 projects in 11 different subjects, Goethe-Gymnasium was the first school in Vienna to be awarded eLSA certification in 2008. Excellent teacher teamwork as well as interdisciplinary projects were given special mention in this context. In 2008, one of these projects also won the first prize in an environmental projects competition ("Our city, our environment, our ideas").

**Individualised learning based on e-learning tools**

We use new **multi-media learning programmes**, e.g. in preparation for the European Business Competence License (EBC\*L). Learning outcomes are documented through the international certificate for business competence, and students can boast an additional qualification.

Individualised learning is encouraged through the use of **learning units** created, for instance, with the help of the **eXe-Learning** programme. Students can choose their own pace, draw on additional explanations where necessary and find their own approach within a given learning unit. Teachers can provide answers to individual questions, thus offering the best possible encouragement and support to students.

**Transfer made easy – VOGY project**

In a cooperative venture with a primary school, we are trying to ease the transfer from primary to academic secondary school. The programme includes meetings of primary and secondary school teachers, visits by year-4 pupils from the primary school to our school to sit in on lessons, technical IT support, eLearning training for all involved teachers (learning platform, eLearning tools), jointly conducted projects (reading project, presentations).

**Public relations**

**Goethiade:** An age-relevant exhibition geared to the geographically relevant target groups (primary schools in the vicinity) offers future students a first glimpse of what secondary school life is like. Stations developed specifically to meet the interests of these young visitors play quite a significant role in the upcoming school career decision, with different focal points on show making it easier to choose the most suitable path from the different branches we offer.

**Open day:** Comprehensive information offering (very high number of visitors as compared to the national average).

**School show**

A complex annual project with lots of participants (encourages identification with the school, helps to become aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses, promotes vertical and horizontal contacts among students as well as social skills, boosts self-confidence, etc.)

**Evidence**

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

**eLSA certificate**

In November 2008, Goethe-Gymnasium was the first school in Vienna to be granted eLSA certification. This means the school is now entitled to take part in the eLSA advanced project where the focus is on cooperation with other schools in Austria and abroad, also with respect to offering support to other schools on their way towards eLSA.

**In-house verification of standards**

In our **information technology branch**, we started two years ago to conduct a verification of learning standards for all IT students in year 8. This verification not only provides students with orientation for their further school careers, but also gives teachers feedback on their work.

**Evalumeter**

To be able to respond promptly to the manifold problems that present themselves in the context of the transfer from primary school to academic secondary school, Goethe-Gymnasium conducts a multi-stage survey among all first-year students. This survey, which was developed in-house, documents the changes in the way students perceive themselves during the transition period and, based on statistical evaluation, makes it possible to quickly identify problematic developments. On the basis of form-specific survey data, form heads are better able to offer adequate support and assistance (mediation, counselling, talks with parents, etc.), while whole-year statistics also highlight interesting trends in the different branches and make it possible to further improve the profiles of each of the four branches.

Last, but not least, the year-on-year comparison of results shows how successfully our intentions have been put into practice.

**School partnerships**

In 2007, Goethe-Gymnasium took part in the Twinning Vienna-St. Petersburg project (see also Twinningpartnerschaft Wien - St. Petersburg' published by the Vienna Municipal School Board (Dr. Karl Blüml)).

The purpose of this project was to define educational quality in order to be able to present schools –and our school in particular – as "good" schools.

The initiative for this project came from our school head, Dr. Kopeszki, and the teaching staff soon realised that it is a sine-qua-non in the 21st century to compare oneself with other goods schools, thus defining the targets for further development.

The underlying question was how our future "clients" and the school authorities can recognise educational quality, how such quality can be made amenable to objective measurement. This is all the more important as the school system in Austria is subject to a lot of media attention and on the receiving end of more or less well-meaning advice from various political groupings. As we lacked at least some of the instruments and tools needed for this purpose, we set about developing our own, as for instance, the "evalumeter".

### **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)*

#### **Individualised learning based on e-learning tools**

- Using the computer and the Internet as learning and communication tools should become a matter of course
- Students should become familiar with copyright issues, security on the net, behaviour in Internet forums, etc.
- Students should get to know the possibilities offered by features such as e-mail, learning platforms, chat rooms, sharing and collaboration in various Web 2.0 applications (wikis, project planners, shared documents, social bookmarks, etc.).

#### **Standards**

As Austria is currently preparing statutory testing of educational standards, we have been conducting such tests on a voluntary basis at our school since the school year 2007/2008 in all fourth-grade (year 8) classes, initially only with respect to listening and reading comprehension. In the respective classes, these tests are being enhanced and practiced (beyond the level prescribed by law) and will be introduced also in other years starting in the spring of 2009. The teachers of English, mathematics and German meet up to discuss the testing process and coordinate the materials to be used, while the results are evaluated in talks with the school head.

#### **Reading skills screening**

At the beginning of the school year, we carry out a reading test in all first-year classes (based on the "Salzburger Lesescreening" method) to assess basic reading skills and detect reading problems among students early on. Following up on the screening, we have various remedial offers during the course of the school year aimed at improving reading skills and encouraging students' motivation to read. A second screening round towards the end of the second semester shows students, parents and teachers what progress has been achieved.

#### **Evalumeter**

The form-specific statistics show the basic strengths and weaknesses in the given branch. Significant statistical "deviations" may indicate individual problems caused by having opted for the wrong branch and the need for counselling.

#### **"Home-room"**

The transfer to academic secondary school constitutes a major challenge for primary school children. Potential problems include the transition from one teacher for all subjects to many different subject-specific teachers, new classmates in an unfamiliar environment, or the wealth of new learning contents that have to be coordinated and organised.

Primary school children have to take a big step out of a more or less protected environment and become young people able to work independently and show a critical mind.

The "home room" is there to address and deal with the problems arising at this "interface".

#### **Mediation**

Conflict facilitation provided by specifically trained students and teachers.

**Tutoring**

We would like to initiate an in-house network of tutors available to help lower-ability students, with excellent upper-cycle students being able to offer low-cost tutoring directly in the school building.

**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?*

**eLSA**

All lower-cycle classes take part in the eLSA project. From years 5 to 8, students have at least two, in most cases more; eLearning phases in each school year. eLSA lays the foundations for expanding eLearning in the upper cycle.

**Evalumeter**

All first-year classes

**EBC\*L**

Currently as a non-compulsory exercise in years 11 and 12, approx. 10 to 15 students per year.

**Vocational orientation**

In the upper cycle, one week in all year-11 classes. Students can work as trainees in a vocational environment of their choice.

**Facilitators**

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

**eLSA**

Since the year 2000 (this is when proper documentation started), 164 hours of in-service teacher training were provided at the school by in-house lecturers, which were attended by a total of 140 persons. Courses cover the use of new media, basic training for Internet and Office products (e.g. **e-fit** Intel training, teaching for the future), training for the Moodle learning platform, learning sequences workshops, eLearning tools, e-Buddy, e-Trainer.

In addition, staff members attended didactical subject-specific training for eLearning outside the school as well as cooperative online seminars organised by the **e-Lisa Academy**. Training was also provided within the scope of the AIMS project, in which Goethe-Gymnasium participated.

In-house subject-matter didactics for teacher trainees: nationwide transfer of innovative concepts to colleagues

**New school-leaving examination** (nationwide standardised examination): One of our teachers is on the planning team, which gives our school a head start in terms of information and an opportunity to comment on government decisions.

Training as EBCL project manager. Our teachers see themselves as coaches for business competencies.

## **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?*

### **eLSA project**

First of all, a survey of students' home access to the internet is carried out. The school offers internet workspaces that are accessible all day. The teacher team of any given form coordinates eLearning phases for the students. Communication and planning take place on the Moodle platform, and interdisciplinary projects rely on blended learning.

Feedback to the students is provided via the learning platform. Various trials have already been made with independent learning at home instead of presence learning at school. Students are trained as coaches and facilitators in Moodle courses and as IT coaches in their classes, also with the aim to provide support to teachers (lower-cycle and upper-cycle networks).

### **Twinning Vienna – St. Petersburg**

Following long considerations and discussions concerning internal evaluation, we also started on external evaluation within the scope of the twinning project.

Critics of mutual external evaluation with St. Petersburg might argue that the circumstances in these two cities do not always lend themselves to comparison.

However, an outside angle always makes for a sharper focus in the perception of one's own situation. In any case, there are similarities, for instance where issues arising from a large percentage of students with a migration background are concerned – in St. Petersburg, these are members of ethnic minorities from former Soviet republics, while in Vienna we have to deal with the children of migrant workers and refugees.

A list of issues was drawn up within the scope of the twinning project, from which Goethe-Gymnasium, along with its Russian partner school, chose to work primarily on 2 sets of criteria: support and assistance to low-ability students and to socially deprived children, as these two issues are particularly relevant in day-to-day school life.

We also revised the list of criteria as some of the questions it contained are no longer considered issues in a 21st century school, but have become a matter of course – be it an elected students' representation, assistance provided by the school in resolving conflicts among students (for instance, our mediation group), psycho-hygienic counselling, drug prevention, vocational counselling, etc.

### **Evalumeter**

As the transfer from primary school to academic secondary school is a major step, newcomers at our school receive not only a lot of help and support, but also a questionnaire to fill in. The same questionnaire is re-submitted every semester. Comparing the data thus collected, which are provided in a measurable format in the so-called Evalumeter table, makes it possible to draw conclusions about how the students see themselves, how they feel and what their emotional situation is like. In the event of dramatic changes in the data, we can respond promptly and take individualised measures, of course with due consideration of data protection and privacy regulations and family situations, but also of students' special abilities or problems. In concluding, we would like to underline that the most sophisticated rules, the best measuring methods and the most perfect organisation in the world will show little positive effect if we lose focus of the child as an individual, with all its social, inter- and intrapersonal, cognitive and meta-cognitive characteristics.

### **Sparkling Science – “Fit, Not Fat”**

In the school year 2008 / 2009, Goethe-Gymnasium, in collaboration with a Viennese hospital, submitted a project called "Fit, Not Fat" under the "Sparkling Science" programme hosted by the Federal Ministry of Science and Research and the Federal Ministry of Education. The aim of the project is to guide students, step by step, towards working on a scientific basis and to raise and encourage their health awareness.

Project website: [http://www.goethegym.asn-wien.ac.at/projekte/sparkling\\_science.html](http://www.goethegym.asn-wien.ac.at/projekte/sparkling_science.html)

## **Proteome**

“Protein and proteome research (proteomics)”

During the period from March 2006 to March 2007, the school organised an interdisciplinary project dedicated to protein and proteome research (proteomics) where students tried to find out more about cellular metabolism and how it is controlled. The purpose of the project was to improve communications culture and information management at the school and to foster school development in the sciences. Following a short preparatory phase, students developed learning objects and ultimately a whole learning sequence for the topic on their own, true to the motto "from students for students".

Project website: <http://www.goethegym.asn-wien.ac.at/projekte/proteom/index.html>

## **“Inspire”**

In the school year 2008 / 2009, Goethe-Gymnasium takes part in the EU project "Inspire", an evaluation project where new forms of teaching in mathematics, science and technology are to be developed and tested in order to counteract the dwindling interest in science education.

The research focus is on the influence of new teaching methods on student ability and motivation levels. We are already seeing first positive effects on the number of students registering for the science branch.

Inspire website: <http://de.inspire.eun.org>

## **Check your LimitZ**

Since 2005, Goethe-Gymnasium has also regularly participated in the “Check your limitz” test series carried out by ASKÖ, the Austrian umbrella organisation of sports clubs and associations. This test series, which was developed in cooperation with the institute for medical and sports consulting (IMSB), is to provide information on students’ motor activity status.

The test setting comprises 8 different stations:

- 1) 20m sprint with electronic timekeeping after 5 m, 10 m and 20 m
- 2) Complex IT-assisted response test (eye-foot, eye-hand coordination)
- 3) Medicine ball throwing from a kneeling position
- 4) Standing long-jump
- 5) Balancing on a 2.5 cm wide beam on one leg
- 6) Obstacle course
- 7) Bending from the hip in a sitting position (mobility)
- 8) 2000 metres (optional)

The results, once evaluated and analysed, serve to motivate students and are used both in sports classes and in a personal training diary.

Website: [http://www.askoe.or.at/de/menu\\_2/jugendsport/check-your-limitz](http://www.askoe.or.at/de/menu_2/jugendsport/check-your-limitz)

## **Wholesome snacks**

Since June 2007, Goethe-Gymnasium has been taking part in the “Wholesome snacks” project run by SIPCAN, the Special Institute for Preventive Cardiology And Nutrition. The aim of the project is to optimise school buffet offerings in a sustainable manner by including all stakeholders in the process (students, teachers, school head, school physician, parents, and, of course, buffet operator).

In the past school year, the opinions of the first-year students, their parents and teachers were surveyed. On the basis of these results, small, gradual improvements are to be implemented, both with respect to student eating habits and school buffet product range.

In January 2008, June 2008 and November 2008, students organised stations focusing on tasting with all the senses, on food constituents, and on the necessary elements of healthy meals.

Subsequently, a special school break-snack was developed and offered by the school buffet, with students designing advertising posters. The aim is to optimise the product range offered by the school buffet on a step-by-step basis.

In this spirit, information events were organised and nutrition incorporated into teaching contents in the past two semesters.

The project will continue until the spring of 2009 when a final evaluation is to assess the success of the measures taken.

Website: <http://www.sipcan.at/index.php?id=105>

### **Special curricula**

Four branches with a special school-autonomous focus

Humanities: French as compulsory second modern language from the first year.

Science: A specific curriculum has been developed for the natural sciences lab for years 11 and 12 (interdisciplinary approach for biology, physics and chemistry).

Science and IT: Special curriculum with an information and communication technology focus relevant for the school-leaving or matriculation exam.

Another curriculum was developed for the school-specific subject of project management.

### **EBC\*L, ECDL**

The special feature here is **blended learning** where eLearning is combined with presence teaching. An internationally standardised curriculum with an internationally applicable list of learning aims defines the topics and contents relevant for ECB\*L exams.

### **Business English**

We offer Business English as an elective compulsory subject developed specifically at our school. Subject-matter contents cover a wide range: dialogue exercises on business topics, CVs, different types of economies, etc. The highlight is a week spent working with real-life companies in Norwich / UK. An extensive report is compiled on this project.

### **Science and sports branch**

We have developed a training diary to document progress in sports performance.

### **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?*

Students have laptops at their disposal and work in rooms equipped with WLAN.

Learning platforms are used to make communication easier (barrier-free access).

**History of ILE**

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

Four branches – we have reinforced diversity instead of narrowing down our offering.

Four different types in one and the same building means a wider choice.

Ongoing school development is accompanied by evaluation measures.

**Funding of the ILE**

*How is it funded?*

Goethe-Gymnasium is a state school, so it does not receive any special funding except to some extent for projects.

**Learning Outcomes**

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

**St. Petersburg**

Following long considerations and discussions concerning internal evaluation, we also started on external evaluation within the scope of the twinning project.

**Questionnaire for graduates**

Survey of experiences after 1 year of university studies.

**How is learning assessed?**

Assessment of learning outcomes by external EBC\*L examiners.

Assessment of learning outcomes by external ECDL examiners.

**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)*

**Website**

The school's website is a platform for documenting a diverse range of projects.

We also have an extensive offer of information material (announcements, flyers, folders, downloads) to enable parents to find out everything they want to know about the school's development and orientation.

Project website: <http://www.goethegym.asn-wien.ac.at/projekte/proteom/index.html>

Preliminary information: [http://www.goethegym.asn-wien.ac.at/projekte/sparkling\\_science.html](http://www.goethegym.asn-wien.ac.at/projekte/sparkling_science.html)

Inspire website: <http://de.inspire.eun.org>

Website: <http://www.sipcan.at/index.php?id=105>

Website: [http://www.askoe.or.at/de/menu\\_2/jugendsport/check-your-limitz](http://www.askoe.or.at/de/menu_2/jugendsport/check-your-limitz)

Learning platform: <http://learn.ice-vienna.at/>