



VIRTEACH

*A Virtual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated
training for Foreign Language Teachers in Europe*

TOOLKIT



VIRTEACH

TOOLKIT

2018-1-ES01-KA203-050045

EUROPEAN FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME
AN INTERACTIVE TOOLKIT

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VIRTEACH

This Toolkit offers a compendium of good practices and resources for trainee-teachers with an innovative approach. The contents of this toolkit fall within the frame of the Erasmus+ VIRTEACH Project, A VIRtual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language TEACHers in Europe (Project Reference: 2018-1-ES01-KA203-050045). In general terms, VIRTEACH is an Erasmus+ funded project to create a digital tool to improve the postgraduate certificates on Masters on Education (Foreign Languages) and to provide teachers, researchers, student teachers and policy-makers with open-source tools and resources.

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INDEX

1. Introduction	8
2. Vir-Teach: A Project to Improve Language Teacher Training	10
3. Foreign Language Teacher: Training in Europe	14
3.1. Current Situation	15
4. Consultation and Report	18
4.1. Objectives	19
4.1.1. Characteristics	20
4.1.2. Participation and Scope	20
4.1.3. Results	22
4.2. Virtual Learning Environment: An Optimal tool for Language Teacher Training	24
5. A European Language Teacher Training Programme: Methodological Guidelines	28
6. Course Structure: A Proposal	34
6.1 Pre-service Phase	35
6.2. Teaching Practice Phase	45
6.3 Student e-Portfolio	46

01

INTRODUCTION

VIRTEACH

This toolkit provides a comprehensive collection of learning materials, open education resources, methodological guidelines and examples of best practices for the construction of a foreign language teacher training model at European level. This initiative falls within the frame of the VIRTEACH Erasmus+ project, A VIRtual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language TEACHERs in Europe. This toolkit is mainly aimed at lecturers, professors, teachers and researchers in the field of Higher Education. It is freely available and hosted in the project website:

www.virteachproject.eu

The partners of the VIRTEACH project have joined efforts to collect materials, resources and best practices to offer an innovative teacher training approach. The materials included in this toolkit have been selected attending to relevance, adequateness and consistency with the current curricula. In addition, this toolkit includes methodological guidelines, evaluation rubrics, recommended literature and research papers for further reading. Based on existing knowledge and partners' expertise and collaboration, this interactive toolkit comprises a collection of resources, practices and guidelines for foreign language teachers. To this aim, this toolkit includes a systematic literature and research review, with examples of good practices for implementation in foreign language teaching programmes and Master Degrees.



02

VIR-TEACH

A PROJECT TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING

VIRTEACH

Mobility has been a key and central concept for the Bologna Process (Zgaga, 2008). Labour mobility of the teaching and learning community within the European borders is in continuous growth, a fact well documented by Official European reports (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015: 12-13).

Several factors contribute to this situation, namely, a constant increase in opportunities for university study abroad, combined with the increasing internationalisation of teacher training (Martínez-Rodríguez, 2004: 238-240), and a static labour market resulting from consecutive years of economic crisis (ET2020, 2015: 10-11). Alongside, mobility entails the implementation of information and communication technologies (ICT) that facilitate communication across linguistic and cultural borders, never forgetting that European educational policy interplays with a shared understanding of practice (Schatz 2014).



But so far, despite this dynamic reality, there has been no unified format for teacher training at a European level, as national agencies tend to work in each country separately. In general terms, Initial Teacher Education (hereinafter ITE) in Europe, suffers from an excessively local projection that limits the future teaching practice exercise of teacher students beyond their borders.

So, when graduated students and senior teachers develop their teaching practice abroad, they suffer the absence of curricula convergence. A more unified and coherent set of principles shared in the teacher training programmes of the different European countries, particularly in terms of curricular content and experiences of internships, becomes urgent.



In the light of these evidences, the Erasmus+ VIRTEACH project, A VIRtual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language TEACHERs in Europe, seeks to create a digital tool to improve the postgraduate certificates on Masters on Education (Foreign Languages), and to provide teachers, researchers, student teachers and policy-makers with open-source tools and resources.

According to recent studies developed by the European Commission, there is an urgent need to improve ITE to make it more attractive, collaborative and system-wide focused. Some of the detected shortcomings are poor competencies and selection, short-term vision and poor evaluation system performance. Foreign language teacher training and procedures for accessing the teaching profession are key factors to ensure that the formal education systems follow the highest quality standards in convergence with other European countries.

VIRTEACH aims to raise and homogenise the required competencies for an efficient and high-quality teaching labour at Secondary Education stages, developing methodologies and systematic analysis of the current situation in the EU and deploying a set of resources for taking the right steps and progress steadily in the right direction.



In the pursuit of these goals, VIRTEACH works, step by step, for the following aims:

- The implementation of language training activities at a pre-service stage.
- The convergence of curricular formats at a European level.
- The creation of a digital platform, a virtual learning environment (VLE) that includes a design of a friendly and easy-to-use digital tool for monitoring student teachers during their internship at their in-service stage.
- The design of a White Paper for a comprehensive Language Teachers Training at a European scale where coordinated policy actions and a strategy for engaging policy makers and public administrators are suggested.

All in all, this project promotes long-term cooperation in joint programs for teacher training, creating an international network of excellence in the field of foreign language teacher training.

VIRTEACH is a consortium of five higher education institutions in Europe. The project is coordinated by Prof. María Amor Barros del Río, from the University of Burgos, Spain. The consortium is also formed by other partners UC Leuven Limburg, Belgium, Szczecinska Szkoła Wyzsza, Poland, Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University, Romania, and Universidade Lusófona, Portugal. VIRTEACH is running from 2018-2021 and it has been allocated a total budget of 410.705€.

More information can be found at
www.virteachproject.eu

03

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER
TRAINING IN EUROPE**

VIRTEACH

3.1 CURRENT SITUATION



Labour mobility within the teaching and learning collectives is in continuous growth within the European borders. This fact is clearly detected in the Eurydice report on teacher mobility which states that:

In half of the education systems surveyed, less than a third of all teachers appear to be transnationally mobile. In the EU, Executive Summary 13 12.4 % of respondents reported that they had gone abroad solely when they were already practising teachers, whereas 5.9 % had done so only during their Initial Teacher Training, and 3.6 % only in both cases. In all countries surveyed except Iceland, modern foreign language teachers are the most transnationally mobile, compared to teachers of four other main subjects. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 12-13)

Many factors contribute to this situation, among which we can point to a constant increase in opportunities for university study abroad (Martínez-Rodríguez), which favours the internationalisation of teacher training, and a static labour market resulting from the last years of economic crisis (ET2020), which impels graduated students to seek jobs beyond their frontiers.

Despite these trends, there is no unified format for teacher training at a European level. Added to that, university trainers do not usually have a space where they can share their worries and advances in their education practice. This lack of common environments also affects teacher students who miss unified digital tools that cover their supervision and tutoring needs, especially during their internship phase.

In terms of educational policy, national agencies tend to design and develop their lines of work on teacher training in each country separately.



The evident unbalance between nationally-oriented training and international practice demands urgent action towards the internationalization of the teaching profession as a whole. Within the European Higher Education Area, this may be facilitated thanks to the possibility of homologation of university degrees.

However, so far there is no unified format for teacher training at the international level. At the level of educational policies, there is also a need to converge towards a more unified and coherent set of principles among the different European countries, particularly in terms of curricular content and experiences of internships. In general terms, ITE in Europe, suffers from an excessively local projection that limits the future teaching exercise of teacher students beyond their borders. Hence, a greater degree of internationalization and convergence of the training of future language teachers is an urgent need within European borders.

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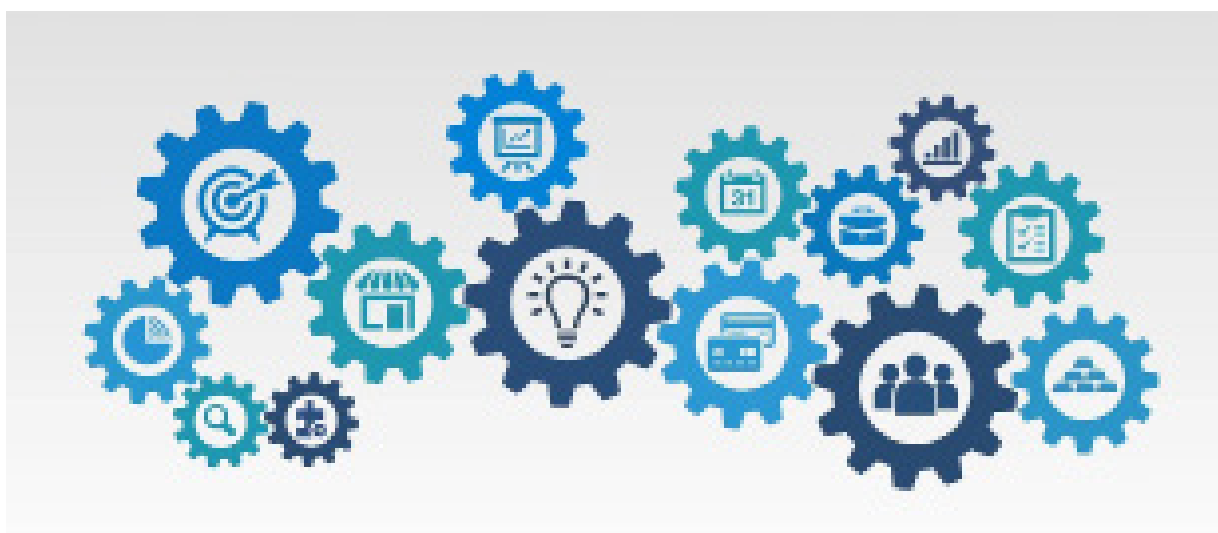
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CONSULTATION AND REPORT¹

As Freeman et al. affirmed in the prologue of their famous volume *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching* (1996), “in order to better understand language teaching, we need to know more about language teachers” (1). Hence, before addressing the construction of a coherent proposal for foreign language teacher training, we deemed necessary to collect the opinions and experiences of the stakeholders involved in the matter. Help build consensus on the lacks and needs of current foreign language training programmes, and improve them coherently at a European scale.

For these purposes, in October-November 2019, a survey was passed among stakeholders to test the perception of language teacher training in Europe.

4.1 OBJECTIVES



The main objectives of this survey were to detect current weak aspects regarding language teacher training and to implement positive measures for the advancement of foreign language teacher education in Europe. In particular, this survey sought to:

- Collect comparative data.
- Build consensus during the project.
- Fix potential issues.
- Improve methodological approaches, materials and resources.
- Prioritise intellectual outputs, contents and events' main topics.

¹ An extended version of the results of this survey can be accessed at the project website: www.virteachproject.eu. A more complete explanation of this consultation and its results was published by Barros-del Rio and Mediavilla Martínez in 2019.

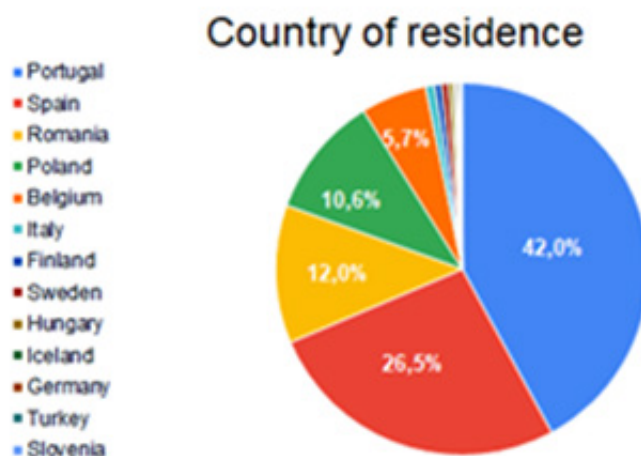
4.1.1 CHARACTERISTICS

The survey was anonymous and disseminated among the main stakeholders involved in the language teacher training process, namely, teacher students and graduated as teachers of foreign languages, foreign language teachers and researchers, and policy makers.

4.1.2 PARTICIPATION AND SCOPE

The survey was launched in November 2019 and was open for 3 weeks. It reached a total of 508 participants from different gender, ages, countries of residence and profiles, which ensured the heterogeneity of the sample.

The survey was intended to offer a national and international picture of the current situation of foreign language teacher training in Europe. For this purpose, the survey was conducted in several European countries. At this point, it is essential to bear in mind that VIRTEACH is an international project that counts with the collaboration of partners from five European countries, namely Portugal, Spain, Romania, Poland and Belgium. Hence, the countries of residence of the participants were closely related to this fact, with 41,6% of respondents living in Portugal, 27,0% from Spain, 12,0% from Romania, 10,5% from Poland and 5,6% from Belgium. Other countries of residence such as Finland, Iceland, Germany and Turkey, also participated in the survey but with a much smaller percentage (less than 4% in total).

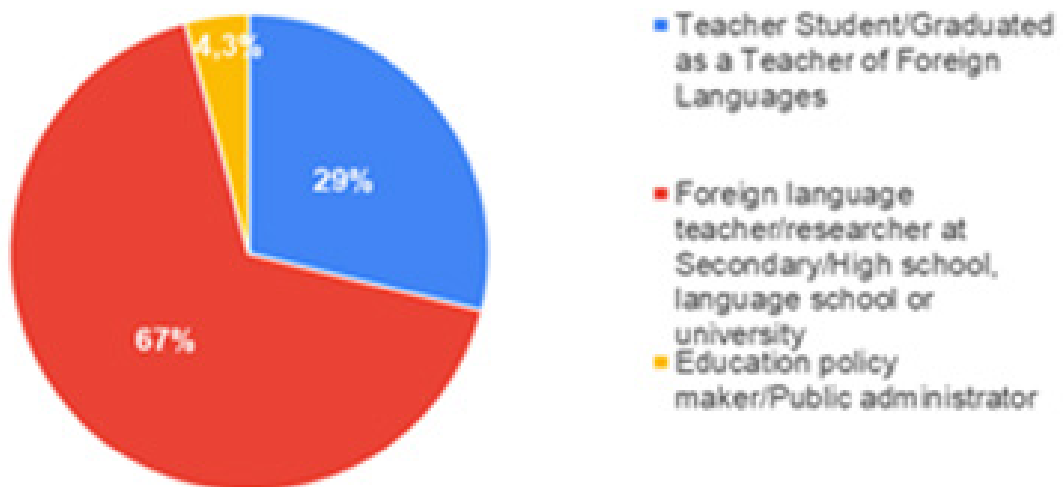


The proportion of female respondents (84,9%) was significantly higher than that of male participants (14,6%). Special attention must be given to the fact that most of the male respondents belonged to the students' group. As expected, the average age of participants ranged from 39 to 58 years old (59,4%), followed by a group ranging 18 to 38 years old (32,2%).



Regarding the profile of participants, the vast majority of respondents were teachers of foreign languages (66,8%). On their side, 28,7% of the respondents were teacher students. Among them, 68,2% held a Bachelors degree foreign language teaching and 31,8% held a Masters degree in foreign language teaching. Only 4,5% of respondents identified themselves as policy makers. Difficulties in reaching this group of stakeholders account for these low numbers.

Status of the respondents



4.1.3 RESULTS

According to the choices, the results gathered from this survey, several conclusions can be drawn and grouped in the following five items:



First, a move towards homogenization of teacher training is necessary. All stakeholders showed a positive attitude towards mobility and interculturality. But implementation of these possibilities beyond national frontiers implies a curricular convergence that favours international dialogue and training experiences.

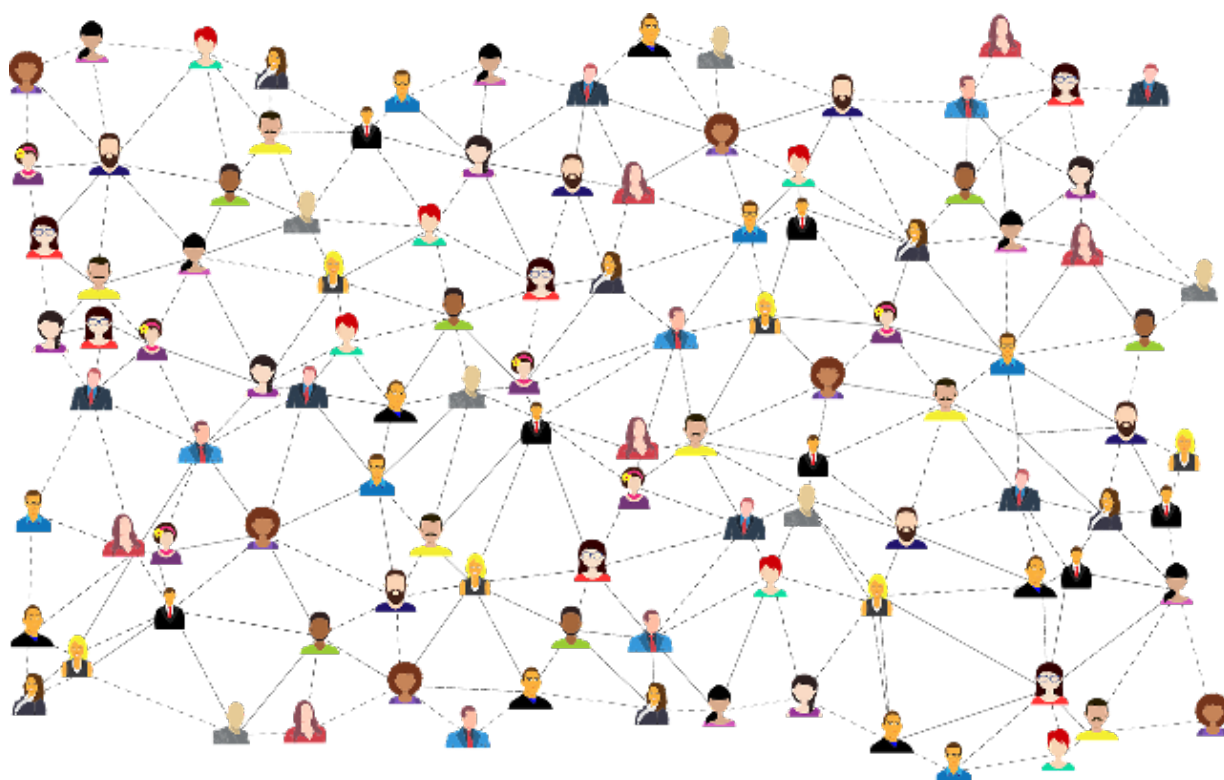
Second, for the internationalisation of foreign language teacher training, digital platforms seem to be particularly useful tools. They facilitate sharing and learning formulas that can be oriented to this specific field of higher education. Furthermore, cultural diversity and geographical distance are obstacles that can be overcome if a multi-national alliance of higher institutions materialises. Added to that, an online tool would facilitate cultural adaptation and favour international communication, two essential elements detected by teacher students, graduated students, senior teachers and policy makers.

Third, the contents of the training programmes need modernisation and upgrading. 21st century ITE programmes should provide tools, skills and resources to help professionals adapt to the continuous transformations taking place in a changing and dynamic society, with complex, multicultural, and socially diverse learning scenarios.

Fourth, it is necessary to invest economically in ITE, particularly in the financing of student and teacher mobility, as well as in a greater diversity and quality of human resources. Life-long learning is a defining element of 21st century education.

Fifth, feminisation of the teaching practice is related to a low status of the profession and unappealing salaries. As Dru- dy (2008) has suggested, to combat this unfair situation gender needs to be embedded in policy thinking on teaching and teacher education. Governing bodies and universities should invest in attracting high quality people into the profession, irrespective of their sex/gender. In the medium term, these measures should impact on gender balance in teaching and learning.

In sum, ITE is an essential step for language education in Europe and it needs urgent improvement from several fronts. There is still a long way to go before a coherent, balanced, fair and excellent format for foreign language teacher training is built and displayed. Through the VIRTEACH project, some steps are being taken so that this relevant field of education improves and outstands as a useful and necessary tool for the benefit of all Europeans.



4.2 VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: AN OPTIMAL TOOL FOR LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING



In order to move towards language teacher training homogenization, virtual learning environments seem to be particularly useful tools for sharing and learning successful teaching formulas specific to this field of higher education. This way, cultural diversity and geographical distance could be overcome by a multi-national alliance of higher institutions. Moreover, this solution would facilitate cultural adaptation and favour international communication, two essential elements for teaching at an international level. However, a lack of coherence between teaching digital platforms that promote mobility and digital tools that guide the needs of students in their training and internship phases is problematic. As pointed out by Townsend and Bates, it is a set of tensions and pressures, inherent in an unstoppable process of globalization that makes a dent in the quality of teaching. This issue becomes more acute, if possible, in the training of language teachers, whose orientation towards communicative teaching requires the implementation of a series of strategies and predisposition to interaction and mutual understanding.

It is necessary, therefore, the development of a multinational dynamic and lasting over time environment that offers useful tools for the training of future teachers of languages. In the light of these reflections, a communicative approach seems a mandatory element to infuse in the training of 21st century language teachers. For this to happen, prospective teachers must acquire a reflective and critical training (Barros-del Río), oriented towards social commitment (Yogev and Michaeli). This implies the construction of a critical teaching identity among the candidates during their training process (Dvir and Avissar). Added to that, the critical pedagogy received must be closely linked to a culturally receptive teaching practice (Abednia; Jiménez and Rose), especially in the multinational contexts in which future professionals of the teaching of languages will have to move. Finally, in a changing and global reality, future language teachers must know how to manage and apply to their teaching the digital technologies that best adapt to their teaching-learning objectives. In the same way, teachers that had been exposed to a learning process through MOOCs “expressed positive attitudes towards their learning experience and a desire to participate in more courses in the future” (Donitsa-Schmidt, 2018) showing not only gains in content knowledge but also in pedagogical knowledge, which is fundamental not only to the MOOC course design, but also to the overall future teacher’s learning process.

All these issues point to a need for a digital space that promotes the internationalization and convergence of national educational formats, the exchange of methodologies and good practices, and the improvement of coherence between the training and practical phases in the education of future language teachers.

When making a choice of technology platforms, it is equally important to analyze the general functional features of the platform as the more technical aspects. Sanz-Santamaría et al. 2014 provide a comparative analysis of the major open source MOOC platforms, providing insights to assist those responsible for educational institutions that will develop their own massive courses to make educated decisions on the platform to use. In this work are studied the following platforms: edX, Course Builder, OpenMOOC Lernanta. edX is highlighted as one of the best learning platform. edX is an open source learning platform with Affero GPLv3 license.

This license requires anyone who modifies the code and uses it to publish its contents online, to share the source code of the changes made.



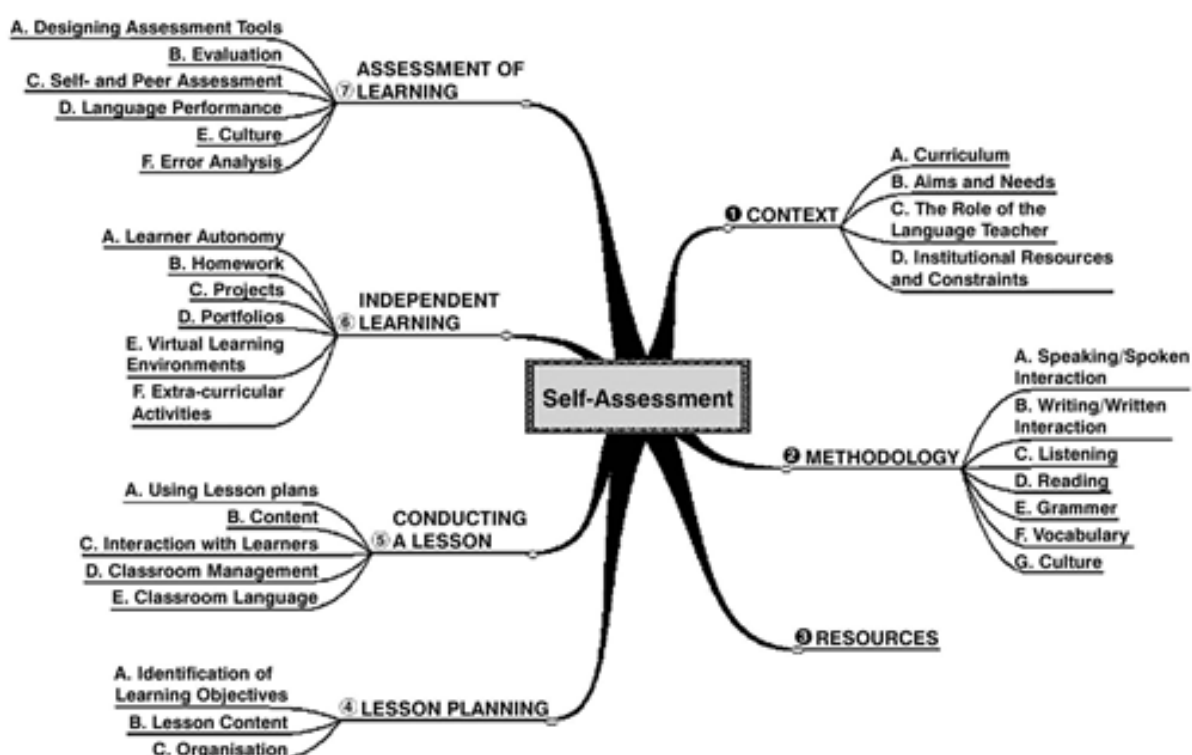
The public development repository is hosted at GitHub
github.com/edx/edx-platform

edX implements a set of basic functionalities present in most platforms: the possibility of using videos with subtitles and their indexing for later searches, the option of creating different types of online exercises (unique response, multiple response, fill gaps, essay), discussion forums and a wiki for collaborative editing. In addition, edX has peer-to-peer assessment and self-assessment systems for the tasks students perform on the platform. Another advanced functionality, closely related to assess, since it can be used to complement and improve the overall learning process of the student, is the use of an integrated subsystem for the analysis of learning data generated by students interacting in the platform.

edX has developed an architecture of ad hoc components, called XBlock as a solution to the problems of interoperability and reuse of resources. XBlocks are an extensibility mechanism allows to include a new functionality in edX instance to make it easier to create new online educational experiences. There is a list of XBlocks defined. For example, in the context of language teaching, can be interested use voice recognizer XBlock. This XBlock allows students to recognize their voice and can see what they spoken in text format. It supports multiple languages.

From the point of view of pedagogical design, edX can implement two interesting learning proposals: EPOSTL (David Newby et al., 2007) and Language learning with technology (Stanley, Graham 2013).

The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) takes into account 193 descriptors of competences related to language. These descriptors may be regarded as a set of core competences, which language teachers should strive to attain.



Language learning with technology (Stanley, Graham 2013) provides a wide range of interesting and useful activities, shows how any teacher can use technology, and offers a reserve of activities, which are suitable for all levels of proficiency to both novice and experienced.

05

**A EUROPEAN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING
PROGRAMME: METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES**

In response to the needs found, it is imperative to develop a digital tool that offers advances in the improvement of postgraduate studies for future language teachers. Likewise, it is necessary to offer researchers, students, teachers and educational policy makers, tools and open source resources organized in a coherent, integrated and effective manner. In addition, and taking as a starting point the growing internationalization of the teaching profession, it is necessary to increase and standardize the skills required for this work environment in terms of efficiency and quality, developing appropriate methodologies and deploying a series of resources that will allow progress in the direction of convergence and quality.

As a result of the above-mentioned needs, the VIRTEACH project, “A Virtual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language TEACHERs in Europe”, co-financed by the Erasmus + program of the European Union. Led by the University of Burgos, Spain, this initiative is developed by an international team that also includes other higher education entities from Belgium, Poland, Romania and Portugal.

Due to its strong European character, the VIRTEACH project seeks to create a virtual tool that facilitates the coordinated and comprehensive training of future language teachers in Europe through the following lines of teaching innovation:

The creation of an open digital space to promote the exchange of methodologies and good practices that inspire a common, comprehensive and effective training of future professionals of language teaching at European level. This idea must be reflected in the design and development of a platform for online courses, the development of coherent levels of competence at the international level and the advancement of methodologies for better regulation in education policy. In addition, it must promote a greater degree of transparency of the training processes and the creation of a series of digital tools that favour the convergence of educational systems and the exchange of good practices.



Likewise, it must offer a consistent functionality in progressive, significant and cumulative learning sequences developed through a wide variety of learning resources. These

must incorporate in turn the diversity that new technologies offer today. Therefore, these resources will have multiple formats, among which videos, readings, infographics, discussion forums, and so on, can be counted. Besides, the design of the exercises will seek to prioritize the interaction through formulas such as multiple choice, open questions with peer review, drag and drop, etc.

The implementation of digital tools that facilitate coherence and follow-up between the phases of training and practice in the education of future language teachers. This measure should include a common protocol and interactive communication spaces. In addition, as indicated by the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, the training of future language teachers should contemplate competences related to pedagogical, communicative and reflection skills.

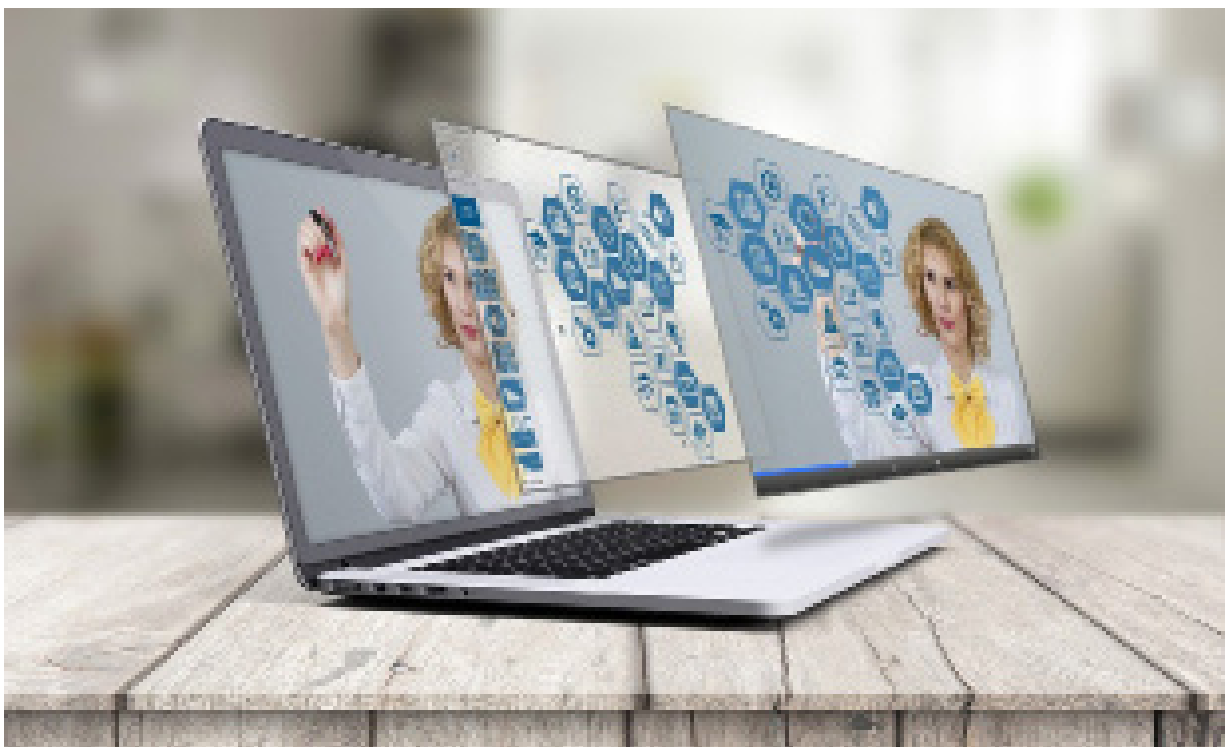
Furthermore, attention to diversity and collaboration with colleagues and peers should be contemplated too. Therefore, the practical phase, or Practicum, must be oriented towards a reflection on the action that the future teachers carry out in the classroom (Manso-Ayuso and Martín-Ortega, 2013). For this purpose, it is appropriate to incorporate a digital tool that, based on a predetermined protocol, allows to monitor the internship period and to facilitate communication between the different agents involved: the teacher students, their respective mentors from the educational centre, and their academic tutors.

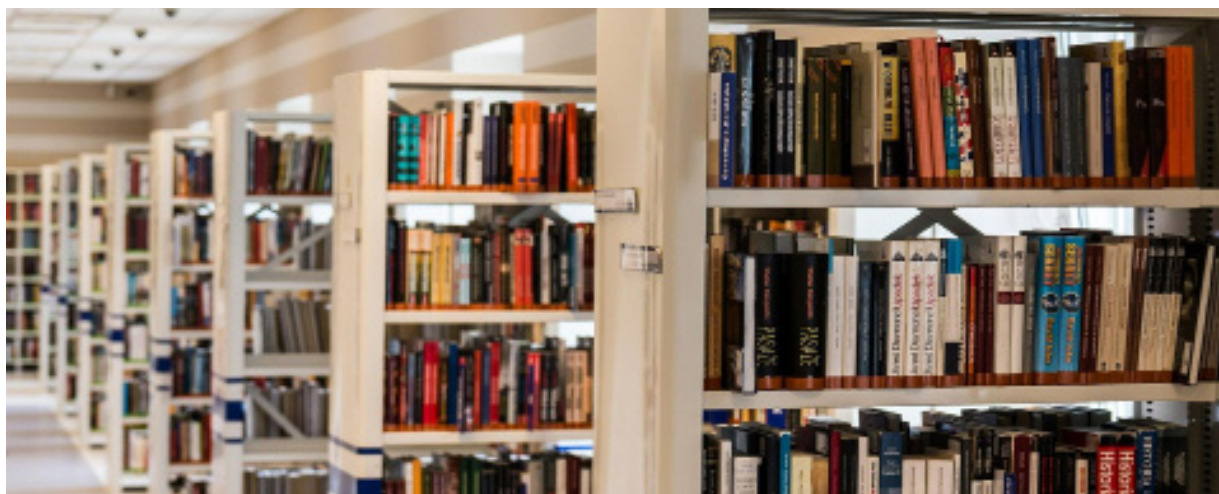
As a result, the role of the mentors is expected to acquire more relevance and professionalism in the learning process, a concern addressed in numerous studies (Andreucci 2013; Sepúlveda-Ruiz 2005). Besides, this tool will allow the establishment of more intense interaction and support among the participants, an issue that brings positive outcomes according to Tomaš, Farrelly and Haslam (2008). Particularly, this virtuous communicative triangle will greatly facilitate the interaction between the aforementioned stakeholders, displaying a reflective, dynamic and enriching learning experience for all parties.

The establishment of international networks that facilitate mobility and exchange among future teachers in training. Although there are previous experiences of networks that have been pursuing the internationalization of educational practice, such as the Thematic Network on Teaching Education (TN-TEE) and the Policy of Teaching Education in Europe (TEPE), one of the main challenges has been the lack of communication, cooperation and collaboration between the actors of the different countries. The VIRTEACH project tries to fill these gaps through the establishment of organized professional groups and networks of teacher educators.



At the same time, this question poses an enormous challenge that goes beyond the purely academic sphere, bringing into play factors such as intercultural communication or the development of the ability to adapt. As demonstrated by He, Lundgren and Pynes (2017), the integration of teaching-learning experiences of languages abroad, included within a study program, offers future teachers a unique opportunity to develop empathy and innovative strategies for instruction. In order to collect the best results from this type of experience, it is advisable to follow up through open reflection journals, in which teaching beliefs and previous intercultural experiences are included, as well as the development of individual goals (He, Levin and Li 2011). For these purposes, the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) is an adequate tool for reflection and self-assessment of the knowledge and didactic skills necessary to teach languages (Newby et al. 2007). It is an instrument that takes as reference the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and that allows future teachers to connect their experiences with their teaching practices, so that these same reflections serve as evaluation and self-assessment tools. With permission already granted by the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, VIRTEACH will adapt EPOSTL to the requirements of the virtual environment to maximize its functionality.





The design of protocols and lines of action common to the European Higher Education Area in relation to the training of future language teachers. In this respect, it is necessary to point out the necessary collaboration of the political institutions with competences in educational matters. From the universities themselves, which are the immediate training entities, to the competent councils and governmental delegations, it is necessary to work on the convergence and coherence of curricula for the training of future language teachers with an international perspective, oriented to intercultural communication and that promote a collaborative, empathetic and reflective learning. The national and international recognition of this training is essential and can be an interesting pilot project that ultimately would result in good teaching professionals who are dynamic and capable of adaptation and improvement.

In the light of the results obtained through the previous consultation, a series of methodological guidelines should pervade the definition and construction of the foreign language teacher training course. To start with, all materials must have a communicative approach. Communicative language teaching is “an approach that understands language to be inseparable from individual identity and social behaviour (Savignon, 2018: 5). This is a paramount foundation of foreign language teacher training not only conceptually but also practically as the results of the VIRTEACH consultation attest. Added to this, contents must incorporate the following approaches: a reflective and critical approach to language teaching and training, intercultural awareness and the use of ICT for pedagogical use in the language classroom.

06

**COURSE STRUCTURE
A PROPOSAL**

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As stated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, one of the goals agreed by the Second Summit of Heads of State in Europe was to develop “methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgement and action, combined with social skills and responsibility”(Council of Europe, 2001: 4). Following these criteria, a comprehensive and updated course structure for foreign language teacher training should consider both the pre-service and the teaching practice phases. It should also include training materials in the following aspects:

6.1 PRE-SERVICE PHASE

This section concentrates on how to teach essential components of language teaching using communicative competence, which include linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects. Written and oral skills must undergo a practice based on interaction. The essential components of a comprehensive foreign language teacher training course must be oriented towards teaching future professionals how to teach grammar, oral performance, vocabulary and discourse and pragmatics. Added to those contents, other additional topics, such as the use of literature in the classroom, intercultural communication, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) become essential issues to explore for a foreign language training of excellence.



All these topics are presented and detailed as follows:

a) How to teach grammar effectively

Introduction

Teaching grammar has posed dilemmas to linguists and teachers for a long time. Many questions have been raised as to how grammar should be approached - should it be addressed in a traditional way, where the main focus was placed on the knowledge of concepts and rules which associated grammar with syntax and morphology, while meaning was attached to a completely different linguistic level. Communicative approach, known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), on the other hand, is based on the idea that learning language successfully is achieved by having to communicate the real meaning and the main objective is to demonstrate the topic in context in the most natural way possible.

General Objectives and Methodology

Bearing all this in mind, the main objective of this module is to make the students – the prospective teachers of English, realize that teaching grammar does not have to be based on a traditional way of instruction, not giving them any scope for flexibility. On the contrary, grammar may be approached in a more relaxed, communicative way, which makes it more friendly, as well as easy to comprehend and remember as this is done through a selection of carefully chosen tasks, allowing them to freely communicate in English while their knowledge of grammar will not impede task realization.

The idea that the learned language should be adapted to a particular situation, the role of the participants and the type of register used (formal and informal style) was present throughout the whole module. Consequently, the methodologies employed in this unit included mainly the listening tasks where the users were expected to base their understanding of the text without resorting to a typescript, and to complete the subsequent tasks appropriately.

The methodologies used with reference to the exemplary lesson consisted in the demonstration of a given grammatical problem, discussion regarding the structures covered previously and encouraging the students to conduct partly guided dialogues (with the use of the prompts) and a free exchange of opinions where

students' ability to communicate was assessed. What is more, during the activity the students would be asked to produce samples of written forms, thus complying with the standard objectives of the every course, which is using all forms of linguistic production (listening, writing, reading the prepared content and verbal presentation).

Expected Results

The expected result of completing this module would include getting familiar with the issues of what the communicative approach to grammar means, and being able to reflect on the ideas provided in the videos which in turn should also enable the course user to practice his/her listening comprehension, especially with reference to the video discussing the relevance of teaching grammar and its aspects, as well as learning some useful strategies to employ.

Another result of completing the module would involve the practical knowledge on how to conduct a lesson with a specific grammar issue, which might suggest the course taker some other ideas which he/she would implement in the forthcoming teaching career.

b) How to teach oral performance effectively

Introduction

Oral interaction is the most used skill in the implementation of a language. For this reason, it should be the one that receives the most attention within a process of teaching and learning a foreign language. Until the appearance of the communicative approach in the late twentieth century, this skill did not receive the attention it deserved. Since then, it has become the main focus of any kind of foreign language or second language.

General Objectives and Methodology

In this course, we will offer guidelines and advice for teaching foreign languages to non-native students. We will try to define exhaustively what the oral interaction consists of distinguishing it from the rest of the skills.

We will also give suggestions as to their way of implementing in the classroom, based on a varied typology of activities, so that the future teacher can choose among a wide range of exercises during his future teaching experience.

The best way to act as an examiner of oral tests will be explained in detail. The prospective teachers will be given different activities for this purpose. In addition to this, they will be guided in order to obtain high quality samples. Moreover, we will present different ways to rate this skill by offering scales already validated by institutions (ALTE for instance), within the European space. Likewise, prospective teachers will be offered general guidelines for the design of scales used in specific courses of a foreign or second language.

Expected Results

This module seeks to encourage the training of prospective teachers of foreign or second language in such a way as to stimulate more communicative approach. In addition, more attention will be paid to oral interaction about it through the learning of basic contents on how to teach oral competence combined with a practical and decisive methodology.

c) How to teach vocabulary effectively

Introduction

This module addresses the relation between vocabulary and language acquisition, communication and instruction. It is fair to say that each of us starts learning a new language with a few words, from the very simple and day-to-day use ones and little by little add to them.

General Objectives and Methodology

Teaching vocabulary is as important as teaching grammar, as they are ineffective one without another. Instruction methods attach importance to explicit and multidimensional vocabulary teaching since it would promote reading and writing autonomy, apart from facilitating the communication. Increasing the students' number of words must be a fundamental goal for every teacher because once our students have more information connected with the new words, he or she would better embody the words kept in memory, and recognize them more easily during reading, writing, and speaking tasks.

Teaching effectively requires preparation and planning and teaching vocabulary suppose helping our students to use words in a natural and accurate way, improving vocabulary knowledge by widening the area with additional meanings, collocation, phrases, idioms. We must make sure that students put time and effort into acquiring new words and we can achieve that by means of clear goals for vocabulary learning during the course, doubled by respective exercises and targeted assessment.

Expected Results

This section will provide different vocabulary teaching methods and examine the definition of vocabulary and its role in foreign language acquisition. It will also explain how we acquire vocabulary and refine it over time, and what methods to use for different vocabulary items: new words, phrases, and idioms.

d) How to teach discourse and pragmatics effectively

Introduction

Teaching how to write and speak in a second language is a major concern among teachers. Both writing and speaking accurately are active skills that require a certain degree of autonomy, coherence and interaction. Thus, teaching discourse and pragmatics involves the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts). Creativity and autonomy in speech production are at the core of teaching discourse and pragmatics.

General Objectives and Methodology

Through the communicative approach, students learn to work with language at a suprasentential or discourse level and learn about cohesion and coherence (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This means that the process goes beyond learning vocabulary and grammar, and it encourages students to communicate at a more sophisticated level. When we communicate, we implicitly express a purpose. When we ask our students to create a piece of writing or a speech act, we should reflect that too. According to the functions of language, some of the most common purposes of communicative acts are: description, narration, explanation, instruction, persuasion and information. Thus, when teaching discourse and pragmatics, three general principles should be taken into account:

- a. Students must learn how to communicate.
- b. Tasks and activities must be engaging and, ideally, they should be problem-solving oriented.
- c. The teacher must work as a facilitator, giving support through the process.

In learning a foreign language, a learner is likely to start with short turns, usually of single sentence length. At higher levels of proficiency, the development of discourse competence becomes of increasing importance.

A module on how to teach discourse and pragmatics should combine theoretical contents on discourse and pragmatics with practical tasks that the students can perform. Model activities can be presented so that participants are able to reflect critically on how to teach discourse and pragmatics in the classroom. The role of the trainer is to conduct the students' process of reflection, critical awareness and autonomy while they are reviewing/learning concepts. Motivation and autonomy must be underlined as essential elements in discourse creation. Relevant topics for the students must be considered. Suggested sources and ideas for autonomous material creation must be included.

Expected Results

After completion of this module, participants are expected to have acquired a fair degree of autonomy in the design of classroom intervention for teaching discourse and pragmatics.

e) How to teach literature and media in the classroom effectively

Introduction

Learners often see literature as something unimportant to them, not realizing that they are very often exposed to literary texts and products. It is difficult to establish for learners what exactly literature is. This first session explores this idea by showing the learners the vast and broad spectrum that literature can entail.

General Objectives and Methodology

In this module, learners learn that literature can appear in all different kinds of forms. They realize that the different functions of language help them sensitize to the nature of literary language. They understand some of the most important literary elements that can be found in literature. Learners need to master these elements in order to be able to teach literature efficiently and correctly. Once they are aware of the different types of literature and types of text and language, they can start thinking about how to teach literature in the classroom in a way that inspires and motivates young learners.

Expected Results

Participants are expected to be able to detect the main characteristics of literary texts and how to use them in order to create their own lesson plans. Literature must be seen as an authentic material subtle to classroom exploitation. Furthermore, literature is a means to foster creativity for independent text production.

f) How to teach intercultural communication effectively

Introduction

The present course intends to make the students familiar with differences and similarities of pluralism and individualism of the people belonging to a wide range of cultural backgrounds, taking into account the values provided by anthropology, high and popular culture, sociology, business, and international relations.

General Objectives and Methodology

The lectures will identify the ways that people behave in terms of individualism and collectivism in multilingual and multicultural societies, the activities of the art, literature, music, theatre created by culture versus the contemporary trends of popular culture. The course also analyses the cultural stereotypes from ancient myths to contemporary visions, appealing to the imagery for determining how national stereotypes are influenced by historical, social, and ideological conventions.

Expected Results

Students are expected to develop a realist approach to interpersonal contacts, by acquiring the communication habits and

behaviours as the present course offers information on communication theory, organizational and business communication, mass communication. In a globalized world, the students should be efficient and competent in communicating in different environments of their future careers, with a special focus on education and culture.

g) How to teach English for Specific Purposes effectively

Introduction

This module is designed to teach the basics of ESP to future language teachers. It is divided into four sections: Introduction to ESP; Specificities of Teaching ESP; Methods and Approaches for Teaching ESP; and examples in ESP Teaching (i.e., English for Hospitality).

General Objectives and Methodology

This module's main objective is to present an overview of English for Specific Purposes. It should combine theory and practice to train future ESP teachers, who must understand the importance of needs analysis to course design.

Each lesson should present an overview of the topic in a simple and didactic way, providing clear examples, mentioning important authors in the field, and always suggesting further readings. Once the explanation is over, students should be able to complete a set of exercises to test what they have learnt.

All lessons, exercises and discussions should prepare students for two main deliverables: the creation of a concept map, which would help them to organize the concepts taught in the module; and the writing of a lesson plan, which would give them the opportunity to apply the theory when teaching ESP.

Regarding topics, general aspects of ESP and the main differences between teaching English for Specific Purposes and teaching English for General Purposes should be included. After that, the specificities of ESP, such as the main types of purposes (academic, occupational and individual) and the three steps which characterize ESP: needs analysis; the analysis of genres and language related to these needs; and the analysis of the best suited methods for each area, should be presented.

It would be essential to underline the importance of analysis and course design before focusing on different methods and approaches for teaching ESP. Also, description of four language teaching approaches: the grammar-translation approach; the audiolingual approach; the natural approach; and the communicative approach can be helpful. Finally, a last section would demonstrate how to teach English for Specific Purposes using an authentic lesson plan for teaching English and giving some practical examples of experiential language learning activities.

Expected Results

When students complete the module, they should know the concepts of ESP and the steps they should follow in their practice as ESP teachers. Students should be able to use different approaches when teaching ESP. The focus should be on recognizing the importance of learners' needs for ESP teachers' decisions. The lessons and activities planned must be oriented to achieve this main goal.

h) Understanding Second Language Acquisition

Introduction

Teaching and learning a foreign language may be viewed as a cumbersome and quite difficult process based on the idea that it is mainly hard work and perseverance that counts in acquiring a foreign language. Hence the common belief that second language should be learned at a very young age since this makes the process of adopting a foreign language much easier and faster has been upheld for some time. Consequently this process should not be carried out in isolation from L1 that is the mother tongue, which in many cases may become very helpful. Yet, according to many researchers, there are other more effective factors influencing learning the second language and this is what this module is about.

General Objectives and Methodology

The objective of this module is to make the students aware of which scientific disciplines SLA draws from as well as which aspects play a decisive role in second language acquisition. Factors such as age, gender, social class, ethnic identity as well as personality and motivation are cited as those that have great influence on the pace at which learners of foreign

languages learn them and how easily they can achieve that.

The carefully selected videos provide information on the process of how languages are learned and each of them is followed by a set of exercises that test students' understanding of the discussed issue. In the tasks the students are tested on the ability to diversify between the true and false answers, while the more advanced activities require thorough listening in order to prove exact understanding of the listened to text.

Another worth mentioning strategy that is employed in the module is an example of the lesson plan which in this particular case uses a storytelling technique to practice a selected grammar structure. This technique fits very well into the idea of second language acquisition since this specific method of teaching an aspect of grammar will be a good tool for students of various nationalities, gender, age and what counts most - the motivation. When executed properly by a teacher or a student teacher, this lesson can demonstrate that language acquisition vary according to the above mentioned factors and it is mainly up to the instructor to use them to advantage exploiting learners' natural willingness to learn while mitigating those facets of their characters or nationality that might impede active participation in the activity.

Expected Results

Like other modules, this one also assumes particular results to be accomplished. Naturally, first and foremost the main outcome is learners' understanding of the material provided in the videos which would be exemplified in their ability to deal with the subsequent tasks after each listening section. Furthermore, the provided Interactive Notepad would be a perfect opportunity for them to interact with the author of the module should they have any queries regarding the content of the material.

Finally, it is necessary to underline that all modules would include effective teaching strategies and learning assessment procedures to facilitate an appropriate evaluation of the training process.

6.2 TEACHING PRACTICE PHASE

Too frequently, the teaching practice phase lacks appropriate coordination among the different stakeholders. Clear objectives and assessment are not always present and work against the progress and empowerment of teacher students. On the contrary, more intense interaction and support among the participants of the training programmes brings positive outcomes (Tomaš, Farrelly and Haslam 2008). A sound and progressive plan of communication between teacher student, university tutor and school mentor must be designed so that interaction is facilitated and the teaching practice becomes a reflective, dynamic and enriching learning experience for all parties. For this purpose, an interactive Notepad to collect data and assess the experience of the student teachers during their internship/practicum in Secondary/High and Language Schools is advisable. This electronic tool may become the core of this phase and serve to establish goals, monitor progress and assess achievement.

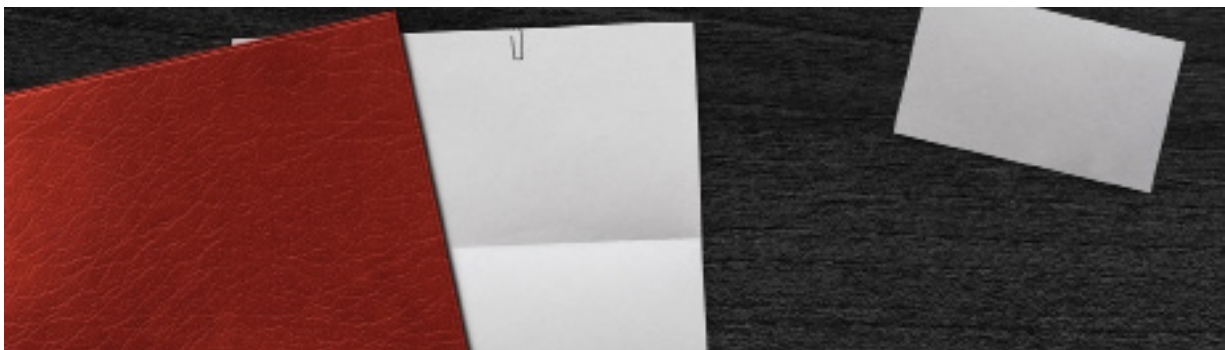
Added to this, the establishment of international networks that facilitate mobility and exchange among future teachers in training is paramount. Although there are previous experiences of networks that have been pursuing the internationalization of educational practice, such as the Thematic Network on Teaching Education (TNTEE) and the Policy of Teaching Education in Europe (TEPE), one of the main challenges has been the lack of communication, cooperation and collaboration between the actors of the different countries. As recent studies have demonstrated (Larsen and Searle 2017; Poole and Russell 2015; Smolcic and Katunich 2017), cross-cultural experiences help student teachers shape their view of themselves as global citizens and critical global educators.

In the light of this, the VIRTEACH project seeks to establish solid networks of collaboration among partners so that teacher students can participate in cross-cultural experiences and subsequently develop a significant positive global perspective.

6.3 STUDENT E-PORTFOLIO

Finally, added to the course contents, and to ensure a critical and conscious training process on the part of the trainees, the course would include an effective self-assessment tool. The EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) is a tool for reflection and self-assessment of the didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages (Newby et al. 2007; Newby 2015). EPOSTL helps student teachers reflect on and assess their developing knowledge, skills and values in a systematic and comprehensive way. Prior studies have addressed the selection of key teaching competences for pre-service English language teachers (Haggag 2018; Hoxha and Tafani 2015), but never to be applied electronically for a whole teacher training course (pre-service and practice phases). In this sense, the adaptation and use of EPOSTL embedded in a virtual learning environment would foster teacher student autonomy, support reflection, underpin of rationales and approaches to learning and teaching, make the scope and aims of teaching education transparent, help to make competences explicit, provide a tool for self-assessment and support coherence in teaching practice. In sum, the use of an electronic EPOSTL would encourage self-reflection, autonomy, teacher identity and engagement. EPOSTL adaptation for this course would ensure an adequate preparation of student teachers of modern languages for their future profession.²

Finally, a selection of best practices of classroom techniques and activities are presented in this toolkit. They serve as models for language teacher trainers and are arranged according to the most relevant language teaching methodologies from an international perspective to ensure a high quality teacher training program.



² The copyright of the original material of EPOSTL belongs to © Council of Europe (ECML, European Centre for Modern Languages). The VirTeach team is granted authorisation by the ECML to use parts of EPOSTL or adapt it for the purpose of this project.

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07

GOOD PRACTICES

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Good practices in classroom affect teachers and learners alike. We can affirm that “Best Practices are the practical teaching, techniques, tips, strategies, methods, and exercises that result in excellent product for program delivery” (Perry 2003: 1). The following good practices are open source links that will inspire practitioners with problematic issues concerning teaching techniques and professional development, classroom management, and teacher care:

7.1 TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching English – The British Council’s website for teaching English

The website Teaching English introduces many teaching resources as well as online training courses. It is free and users don’t have to create an account to have access to it. However, registration, which is totally free, gives access to more resources. Within teaching resources, there are lesson plans for different group of learners, ideas of class activities and materials. Teachers can take online training courses, webinars and seminars, and there are publications about English teaching available for download.

Available at www.teachingenglish.org.uk

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A Student-Centered Model of Blended Learning: how to devise a self-paced blended learning model.

www.edutopia.org/video/student-centered-model-blended-learning

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Learning Walks: Structured Observation for Teachers: You can learn from your peers. Brief visits to several classrooms give teachers a chance to reflect on a variety of practices.

www.edutopia.org/video/learning-walks-structured-observation-teachers

Language Learning & Technology – An open access journal for language teachers

The website Language Learning & Technology is one of the most relevant open journals for language teachers. It is published exclusively online and users don't register nor pay to read or download papers. It publishes articles that report original research, shorter articles that present a reflection on pedagogical practices and commentaries that discuss teaching materials. The journal focuses on language learning and teaching practices based on technology.

Available at www.lltjournal.org

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Using Video for Professional Development: When teachers film themselves in the classroom, it helps them reflect on and improve their teaching practice.

www.edutopia.org/video/using-video-professional-development

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How to create a lesson plan

Free lesson plans according to levels

www.education.com/lesson-plans

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Using current events for reading comprehension: Newspaper articles: Authentic materials about current issues can be found at the following sites, to name a few:

www.standard.uk

www.theguardian.com

Sounds of Speech – The University of Iowa’s website for English phonetics. The website Sounds of Speech demonstrates how each of the speech sounds of English are produced. It is free and users don’t have to create an account to have access to it. The resource divides vowels in monophthongs and diphthongs and divides consonants based on their manner, place and voice of production. It presents the International Phonetic Alphabet symbols for each speech sound and presents animations, videos and audio samples to demonstrate how to pronounce them.

www.soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/main/english

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Using current events for listening comprehension. BBC News – Top stories

www.fluentu.com/blog/educator/authentic-materials-in-language-teaching
www.bbc.com

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Use short English comedies to practice specific vocabulary / grammar structures. We propose the following BBC Comedy Sketch: My Blackberry Is Not Working!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1NJ3NOqVC8

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Literary texts in teaching grammar

Using Literary Texts to Teach Grammar in Foreign Language Classroom

www.researchgate.net/publication/311843882

Self-assessment for autonomous language learners: An article for review

www.researchgate.net/publication/28057303

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Identity Theft. Chain story:

During the activity the students practice using modals of probability in speaking by working together in creating a story. The students practice the modals of past probability and produce a spoken and written account of what might have happened. They demonstrate the ability to talk freely and creatively about the possible effect of the past event.

www.speakspeak.com/resources/english-grammar-rules/modal-verbs/past-probability-must-have-cant-have-couldnt-have

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Modals – deductions about the past: The students become familiar with more stative and non-stative (active) verbs. The activity helps them get more confident in using them in a spontaneous speech exploring their own ideas.

www.learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/intermediate-grammar/modals-deduction-past

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First impressions. Chain story: During this activity, various cards with examples of sentences including stative verbs are used to provoke responses involving non-stative verbs. This makes the students work creatively on the appropriate responses.

www.grammarling.com/state-verbs-and-action-verbs
www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2MbvSq0BLU

Technology in Society: Unscramble. Practicing prepositions and transitions connecting information to recreate a story. Working on the text and connecting pieces of advance information with the view to developing it into a complex text. Feel free to explore the following links:

www.grammarist.com/grammar/prepositions

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsDR3XEv50E

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL05g8eW10s

7.2 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Making Sure Each Child Is Known: Learn simple strategies to build deeper connections between teachers and students.

www.edutopia.org/video/making-sure-each-child-known

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Demonstrating Self-Regulation With Tone of Voice: When teachers model self-regulation by using a voice that is calm, neutral, and assertive, they help students feel cared for and ready to learn.

www.edutopia.org/video/demonstrating-self-regulation-tone-voice

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Edmodo – A global education network. The website Edmodo is a global education network that allows teachers to create online classrooms and to share them with their students. It is free and users need a register to use it. It is possible to share materials, to create quizzes and assignments and to talk to other users. There is also a community online where teachers can interact with each other and have access to different classes.

Available at www.new.edmodo.com

7.3 TEACHER CARE

60-Second Strategy: Stand-Up Meetings: exchange of ideas, problems and challenges among staff at school.

www.edutopia.org/video/60-second-strategy-stand-meetings

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Teacher Self-Care: Teachers text a colleague to cover their class for a minute when they need to de-escalate and recharge.

www.edutopia.org/video/prioritizing-teacher-self-care

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08

**LEARNING MATERIALS AND OPEN
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

A comprehensive collection of learning materials is essential to establish the state-of-the-art in the field of foreign language teacher education. Learning materials and open educational resources are relevant landmarks that help practitioners go beyond their daily tasks and venture into innovative and challenging paths.

A selection of outstanding resources is presented below to inspire lecturers, professors, teachers, researchers, and policy makers. These resources have been selected attending to relevance, adequateness and consistency. The resources have been arranged in alphabetical order and grouped according to their main areas of interest.

8.1. TEACHER EDUCATION/TRAINING

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Akkari, A., Sultana, R. G., & Gurtner, J.-L. (2001). *Politiques Et Stratégies Éducatives: Termes de l'Échange Et Nouveaux Enjeux Nord-Sud*. Berne: Peter Lang.

Andreucci, P. (2013). La supervisión de prácticas docentes: una deuda pendiente de la formación inicial de profesores. *Estudios pedagógicos*, 39 (1), 7-26.

Andrew, M.D. (1990). Differences between graduates of 4-year and 5-year teacher preparation programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 41, 45-51.

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Caena, F., y Margiotta, U. (2010). European Teacher Education: a fractal perspective tackling complexity. *European Educational Research Journal*, 9 (3), 317-331.

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Dall'Alba, G. (2009). *Learning to be Professionals (Innovation and Change in Professional Education, Vol. 4)*. New York: Springer Science+Business Media.

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Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (2007). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. John Wiley & Sons.

Duru-Bellat, M. (2001). Effets-maîtres, effets-établissements: quelle responsabilité pour l'école? *Revue suisse des sciences de l'éducation*, 2, 321-335.

Esquieu, N. (2001). De l'IUFM à la classe. *Note d'information*, 01 (56), 1-8.

European Commission; EACEA; Eurydice. (2015). *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

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Eurydice. (1999). Chiffres clés de l'éducation dans l'Union Européenne. Bruxelles: Publications de l'Union Européenne.

Ferguson, P. & Womack, S.T. (1993). The impact of subject matter and education coursework on teaching performance. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 44 (1), 55-63.

Franquiz, M., Green, J., & Craviotto, E. (1993). What is meant by quality of teaching? Toward a social constructivist perspective on teacher education. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 20 (1), 24-38.

Glass, G. V. (2002). Teacher characteristics. In A. Molnar, *School Reform Proposals: The Research Evidence* (pp. 155-174). Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.

Goldhaber, D.D. & Brewer, D.J. (2000). Does teacher certification matter? High school teacher certification status and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 22, 129-145.

Gómez, A. & Pérez, I. (2010) Aprender a educar: nuevos desafíos para la formación de docentes. *Revista interuniversitaria de formación del profesorado*, 68, 37-60.

Grossman, P. L. & Richert, A. E. (1988). Unacknowledged knowledge growth: A re-examination of the effects of teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 4, 53-62.

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Monk, D. H., & A., K. J. (1994). Multilevel teacher resource effects in pupil performance in secondary mathematics and science: the case of teacher subject matter preparation. In R. Ehrenberg, *Choices and Consequences: Contemporary Policy Issues in Education* (pp. 29-58). Ithaca, New York: ILR Press Books.

Press. National Research Council. (2001). *Scientific Inquiry in Education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

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Prestine, N. A. (1991). Political system theory as an explanatory paradigm for teacher education reform. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28, 237-274.

Sanders, W. L. & Horn, S. P. (1994). The Tennessee Value-Added assessment system (TVAAS): Mixed model methodology in educational assessment. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 8, 299-311.

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Yogev, E. y Michaelim, N. (2011). Teachers as society-involved 'organic intellectuals': training teachers in a political context. *Journal of Teacher Education* 62 (3), 312-32.

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Abednia, A. (2012). Teachers' professional identity: Contributions of a critical EFL teacher education course in Iran. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 28 (5), 706-717.

Buckingham-Lyndsay, R. (2019). Speaking in the EFL classroom. In C. Segade-Alonso, *EFL Teaching and Learning I* (p. 55-74). Madrid: Centro de Estudios Financieros.

Burns, A. (2009). *Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Colombo, M. W. (2002). English language literacy: Motivating culturally diverse students to improve reading and writing skills. *The NERA Journal*, 38(3), 10-14.

Dvir, N. & Avissar, I. (2014). Constructing a critical professional identity among teacher candidates during service-learning. *Professional Development in Education*, 40 (3), 398-415.

Freeman, D. (2016). *Educating second language teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Gregersen, T. S. & MacIntyre P. D. (2017). *Innovative Practices in Language Teacher Education: Spanning the Spectrum from Intra to Inter-personal Professional Development*. Cham: Springer.

Grez, D. (2010). Peer assessment of oral presentation skills. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2 (2), 1776-1780.

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Matsuda, A. (2017). *Preparing teachers to teach English as an international language*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Nguyen, H. T. M. (2017). *Models of mentoring in language teacher education*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.

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Tomaš, Z., Farrelly, R. & Haslam, M. (2008). Designing and implementing the TESOL teaching practicum abroad: Focus on interaction. *TESOL Quarterly* 42(4), 660-664.

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VIRTEACH

09

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

VIRTEACH

The main objective of the VIRTEACH project is to create a network that facilitates ITE in the foreign language field at the international level and with the support of a knowledge transfer platform and a virtual learning environment.

Through this toolkit, promoted by several European universities, the VIRTEACH consortium offers a battery of open resources to foster the implementation of best practices and innovative methodologies in the training of language teachers. As a consequence, these proposals facilitate European integration and teacher mobility. Added to that, these measures are expected to improve the quality of teacher training programs and the coordination among the different stakeholders, through the design of comprehensive but coherent and converging curricula for ITE for language teachers in the Member States of the European Union. The combination of open courses and teaching practices of a transnational nature must be combined with a personalized orientation of the learning process. Coherence between theoretical and practical training and the exchange of good practices are the hallmarks of this project. Finally, the convergence of training programs should ideally involve the agents of administration and educational management, without whom a project of such magnitude would not be possible.

In sum, the main purpose is to foster a more exigent training and selection of future educators of languages at an international level, to raise the quality of language teaching programs within the European Union, and to strengthen and unify European educational policies.

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