

## 12A Background text

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### 1. Introduction

Europe is a multilingual continent, and it is a declared goal of its states to maintain and preserve the cultural and linguistic diversity as a precious asset. (see chapter 13). To translate this into practice is a challenge, however. In fact, individual countries have chosen different ways of implementing the promotion of multilingualism. What all states have in common is that the public schools are central to this effort: their core mandate comprises, among others, the teaching of the school language with the objective of equal opportunity participation in education for all students - including second language learners. The mandate further comprises mediating a certain number of foreign languages, which may include migration languages in certain countries.

The integration of HLT in the state education system and governmental support of HLT by European countries is regulated in different ways – partially within these countries on a regional or local basis. Depending on their place of work, HLT instructors may thus encounter different requirements for teaching and for their cooperation with the public schools.

#### Acquire orientation knowledge

The A and O for newly-minted HLT instructors is to first acquire orientation knowledge.

Access to online information about European educational systems, such as EURYPEDIA: [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Main\\_Page](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Main_Page) (Stand 20.10.2014), may be helpful in this effort.

Certain countries publish specific information for HLT instructors on their educational servers or the website of their education authorities. The educational authorities frequently have contact persons who are available for information and advice.

The collaboration between all instructors is a central requirement for comprehensive multilingual education and to ensure a coherent promotion of language training for students. From this perspective, HLT instructors are vitally important partners of the public schools. For a more exhaustive discussion of multilingual didactics and integrative/integrated language education respectively, see Hutterli 2012, page 64. Many public school teachers are open to collaboration with HLT instructors, e.g., for the exchange of information about students' language skills or for collective planning of particular themes or instructional sequences. Even in schools where the collaboration with HLT instructors has not been sufficiently established, there are possibilities of initiating the cooperation.

To this end, the following examples should serve as an encouragement.

### 2. Areas of cooperation

1. Encounter is the first step

2. Active involvement in school and teaching

3. Learning and support plans

4. Collaboration with parents



## 1. Encounter is the first step

The foundation of all collaboration is that the parties know and understand each other. This requires openness on both sides and the readiness to learn from and with one another. Moreover, cooperation presupposes agreements. For this to occur, a common language – literally as well as figuratively – must be found.

**Good competences in the local language (at least level B1 of the European reference framework for languages) are indispensable for HLT instructors in order to successfully collaborate with the public school teachers in terms of pedagogy and didactics. For this reason, certain education authorities require that HLT instructors have either prior knowledge of the local language or possess certain minimal language skills. The timely investment in learning the local language is, in any case, well worthwhile!**

### Establish professional contacts

The first step to a collaboration is approaching one another: teaching is a demanding task, and it is helpful to exchange professional ideas and questions. HLT sponsorships often offer formal settings for this purpose, e.g. regular exchange meetings, other meetings or professional development opportunities for their teachers. Even when sponsorship connections and formal exchange venues are lacking, other possibilities – even informal ones – may be available.

- Are there teachers in my surroundings who may be interested in a professional exchange or mutual coaching?
- Do local educational authorities organize exchange opportunities, e.g., regular conferences, where I might be able to participate?
- Are there teachers' associations or unions where I might be able to initiate the desired exchanges?
- Are there professional development opportunities in teacher education institutions (teacher education colleges, etc.) for the purpose of networking and professional exchanges between instructors?

### Get to know the local schools

HLT instructors who are new to their assignment in a school should first and foremost inquire about the contact person for general issues who can facilitate their access to the school's infrastructure and provide important general information, e.g. school management, administration and secretariat (see also Tips in chapter 1 B.5).

- Does the school provide informative materials which may be of interest for me (directories, address lists of teachers and students, appointment calendars, etc.)?
- Are there (multilingual) material and book collections which I can use for HLT instruction?
- What is available to me in terms of school infrastructure (copier, internet, mailbox in the teachers' room, etc.)?
- Does the school or the local school administration offer support, e.g. provide information to parents about HLT class offerings or assist with the application procedure?
- Are there previous experiences in terms of the collaboration between regular classroom teachers and HLT instructors?

HLT instructors often work in several school buildings, each of which has its own (unwritten) norms and "laws". Moreover, the facilities are being used by many people and groups. The coexistence is much easier if everyone adheres to certain rules – but these must be known, of course!

- Are there house rules where my rights and obligations are described? What rules apply for the use of rooms (e.g. classrooms) and infrastructure?
- Do I have access to the teachers' room, the school library, computer room, etc? Must or can I participate in team conferences?

**The pertinent educational authorities sometimes publish guidelines with the rights and obligations of HLT instructors, or they make written information materials and forms for HLT instruction available. These are sometimes translated into various migration languages.**

## Establish contact with (classroom) teachers

The concrete collaboration occurs primarily between HLT instructors and the relevant teachers in the public schools (particularly classroom teachers and language teachers). The main purpose is the collective support of student learning. There are many possibilities for cooperation. If the initial step is not undertaken on the part of the school, it will be well worthwhile if HLT instructors actively seek the contact themselves.

- If possible, introduce yourself personally to the classroom instructors of your students.
- Create a short personal profile and present it to the teachers whose classes your students attend. The profile should minimally include your name, your coordinates (phone, e-mail) and an indication when and where you can be reached as HLT instructor in the school building. Possible additional information: your education and continuing education activities, earlier and/or other areas of activity and specific interests. Complement your profile with a personal picture, and your future colleagues will receive a first personal image of yourself.

### Profile of Gordana Todorova

HLT instructor for Macedonian



Dear teachers

I have recently begun my assignment as HLT instructor for Macedonian in your school. I am happy with my new assignment and look forward to actively support the children in your classes and to collaborate with you in the school's activities.

Here is the most important information about myself, as well as my contact information.

I am looking forward to a great collaboration!

*G. Todorova*

#### My education and further training:

I was born and reared in Macedonia. After high school, I studied Macedonian and German at the University of Skopje in addition to teacher education. From 2002 until 2008, I taught in a secondary school in Skopje. In 2009, I emigrated to Germany, together with my husband who found a position as a concert musician, and our two children, Elisabeta and Zoran. I have been working as HLT instructor for Macedonian since 2011 in various schools, including yours. I am taking professional development courses and would like to begin a masters program in Psychology. In my spare time, I like to play music and read.

#### My language skills

- Macedonian (first language)
- German (GER C2), English (GER C1)
- Albanian (GER B2)
- Turkish (orally GER A2)

#### My work schedule

Currently, I work as HLT instructor in the following school buildings:

- Monday 16.30–18.00: Anne-Frank-Grundschule
- Tues. 16.30–18.00: Grundschule Großendorf
- Wed. 14.00–16.00: Eva-Ries-Grundschule

#### My coordinates

Telephone: 0049 123 456 789  
E-mail: gordana@dmil.mk  
Address: Alban-Berg-Straße 77

## 2. Active involvement in schools and teaching

In some countries, e.g. in Sweden or in the German state of North-Rhine-Westphalia, active involvement in and shaping of school life and classroom instruction is well established and a matter of course. However, in other countries and regions, steps in this direction are relatively new and, if anything, must first be initiated. HLT instructors can find out what the situation is like in the workplace, either from colleagues or the responsible educational authorities: it is worthwhile to build on experience gained. If possible!

### Teachers' conferences and team sessions

In the schools, discussions are conducted and decisions are made which concern the full range of school activities including classroom instruction – e.g. the planning of school events and projects or discussion of pedagogical-didactic concerns about furthering of the students. Which aspects the school itself can influence and who ultimately the decision-makers are depends according to the country or region. Here again, you must question the colleagues in the field.

Teacher conferences and team meetings are important meeting points where HLT instructors can (or perhaps must) participate in a more or less institutionalized fashion:

- Is my participation in teachers' conferences and/or team sessions mandatory (= part of my work contract as an HLT instructor)?
- Is it customary that HLT instructors participate in teachers' conferences and/or team sessions in the schools where I teach? If not, could I initiate a participation?

As HLT instructors, you frequently teach in various schools and your resources are limited. In terms of voluntary engagements, ask yourselves the following questions:

- As an HLT instructor, which engagement is important for me? Which priorities do I set?
- Are there possibilities of compensation for my engagement (e.g. from an internal school budget or a discretionary special budget of the responsible educational authorities)?

### School events and project weeks

School events that involve the entire building are generally good opportunities for getting to know each other and to present the accomplished work in HLT.

Frequently, schools already have institutionalized events, such as end-of-year graduation parties, (multilingual) reading nights in school or neighborhood libraries, project weeks where students work on specific themes across classes, or events within the scope of national or international days or years (example: September 26th: European Day of Languages). Such events present great opportunities for meeting people, networking, as well as volunteering, help organize or actively participate.

- What kinds of events, such as these exist already in my school(s), and who is responsible for the organization? Incidentally, extra-curricular activities are sometimes organized by other entities, such as community libraries or parents' organizations.
- Does the event offer a platform to present the HLT? Can my class make a contribution, e.g. greet the audience in various languages, present a short poem or read and/or stage a short fairy tale in our language? Perhaps the parents of HLT students could be persuaded to take part in the event.
- Is there a possibility of proposing an event, e.g., propose a thematic focus for a project week and help organize and co-design it?

### Reciprocal classroom visits/shadowing by instructors

Classroom instruction in the public schools and HLT could be described as two "alien" worlds, depending on the context, in short: you do not know each other or not enough. This is due to various reasons, which could have a cumulative effect: weak institutional integration of HLT into the public education system in general, the public education teachers are not or poorly informed about HLT, the HLT instructor is hardly present or only present at off-peak hours, the language requirements for an exchange with colleagues are not optimal, etc. Such premises can render collaboration more difficult.

Nevertheless, getting to know each other builds mutual trust! Therefore, take the first step, if necessary, and invite your public school colleagues to a visit in your HLT class, for example. Ask if you might also visit their classes – no matter in which language: a way to communicate can (almost) always be found.

Here are a few suggestions of HLT themes that you could present and more deeply explore with your public school colleagues during a class visit:

- Working with heterogeneous classes: HLT means, for instance, to teach a heterogeneous class of year and multi-age, overlapping groups with very different, unequal levels of language competency, the adaptation of different learning objectives from the country of origin and the host country, etc.
- Working with students in a transcultural situation: where do they feel at home? What do they like particularly about their culture of origin, and what do they like about the culture of their new home country? What kinds of expectations by family and society are placed upon them?
- Working with the parents: What kinds of obstacles do parents with a migrant background encounter in their contacts with the public school?

### Joint classroom instruction

There are various models of how HLT instructors and public school teachers can create common teaching sequences. For some of these models, there are materials. Here are three interesting approaches:

- EOLE/ELBE (used, among others in Switzerland): The approach "Eveil aux langues/Language awareness/ Encounter with languages" originated in British language education and aims to strengthen the general language awareness. It is therefore very suitable for working jointly with multilingual students. This is done in Switzerland in various contexts (see Giudici and Bühlmann 2014, Saudan et al. 2005, Schader 2010 (DVD) and 2012).
- Koala (most commonly used in Germany): the approach was developed within the scope of a project for fostering Turkish-speaking children "coordinated literacy German/ Turkish in elementary instruction", and refers to the importance of coordinating content and methodology. The authors not only offer teaching materials, they also show ways to simplify the coordination between the various teaching units. ([www.koala-projekt.de](http://www.koala-projekt.de); Stand 11.11.2014).

- "Cross curricular" links and primary languages (from Great Britain): within the framework of a national campaign for language development, models were developed in Great Britain in order to coordinate the curricula of the public schools with HLT. The results are publicly available today and offer exciting information, tips and materials in order to support the fostering of languages of origin in the various subjects of public school instruction. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primarylanguages>; Stand 12.11.2015).

### Joint library visits

Narratives and stories play an important role in school. For this reason they are very well suited for joint activities of HLT and regular classroom instruction. Larger schools may even have their own libraries, or the teachers may refer to the collections in the neighborhood libraries. So-called intercultural libraries are specialized in multilingual book collections and therefore especially interesting for HLT (in Switzerland, for instance, there is a network of intercultural libraries, called Interbiblio, [www.interbiblio.ch](http://www.interbiblio.ch)): Look around in your surroundings!

- Is there a school library or a library near the school which lends out books in various languages of origin? Is there an interlibrary loan service for books in various languages of origin? Or is there a loan service for schools that carries bilingual class readings?
- Could I organize a joint library visit with a regular public school teacher or implement a bilingual reading project with him or her?
- Could the school library be furnished with multilingual books? If finances won't allow it, perhaps the parents of HLT students could help out by donating books from their holdings that have already been read for this purpose.



### 3. Planning of learning and support

HLT students alternate between two different academic contexts: the context of public school classes, and the one of HLT classes. HLT instructors have a distinctive view of their students which offers a valuable complement to the perspective of the public school teachers. This represents a chance for comprehensive educational planning in terms of learning and support for children who grow up multilingually.

#### Joint support planning for multilingual students

As experiences can be exchanged, HLT instructors and public school teachers can reflect and complete their assessments of a student and plan adequate support measures.

- Establish contact with the public school teachers of your students and ask whether an exchange among experts is expected or desired.
- Introduce your observations about the students and suggest joint support planning.

#### Meeting points in the planning of lesson themes and contents

If an HLT instructor teaches a group of children from the same public school class, it can be worthwhile if the teachers from both classes collaborate in joint planning of certain contents. Topics in language instruction (e.g. vocabulary building for a common theme, syntax exercises), and themes for subjects like mankind and the environment would work well in this case.

- Inform the public school teacher about the topics you intend to cover in HLT. Ask if there are possibilities for thematic intersections or meeting points. For good suggestions, consult the brochure "multilingual and intercultural", published by the Education Department of the Canton of Zurich (Öndül and Sträuli 2011, page 25–28), in Schader 2010 and 2013 and in the booklets "Didactic suggestions" of the present series.

### Cooperation in assessing student performance

The area of formalized performance assessment is precisely regulated in all countries. It is therefore essential to know the norms in the immigration country:

- Do I issue grades to my students for their performance in HLT or not? Which guidelines do I have to follow? Are there templates for assessment and entering grades? To whom and until when do I have to turn in my grades?
- Does the immigration country accept an attendance confirmation or an assessment for HLT in the official school report card or not?
- Clarify also if the students' performance in HLT will be considered formally or informally in transfer decisions or not.

### 4. Collaboration with parents

In the European education systems, the collaboration between school and parents plays an important role. The instructors expect from the parents an active interest in school issues and support in career planning of their children. For some newly arrived parents this is rather unusual and can be difficult as well, e.g. if they are unable or barely able to understand the local language and do not know the structures and practices of the school. This is where HLT instructors can assume a supportive and mediating function.

#### Important: security within your role

HLT instructors generally have a pedagogic-didactic education that qualifies them for teaching in a classroom. Additionally, there may be further qualifications from continuing training and practice.

As HLT instructor, you are a key person between the school and parents with a migration background. Further tasks, as for example intercultural interpretation or mediation are generally not part of your area of responsibility. Moreover, in many countries, schools can rely on intercultural interpretation and mediation services which offer professional support for the collaboration with parents (in Switzerland, for instance, these services are organized under the umbrella organization Interpret [www.inter-pret.ch](http://www.inter-pret.ch)). See also chapter 2 A.4.

## Participation in parents' evenings

Parents' evenings are generally institutionalized; they take place once or twice per school year, organized and conducted by the classroom instructor, and all parents are invited. Among other things, they offer HLT instructors a welcome opportunity to introduce themselves and the HLT concept.

- Consider if it would be interesting for you to participate in a parents' evening (e. g., if you have several HLT students from the same regular school class) and discuss your potential participation with the public school teacher.

## Participation in discussions with parents

Parent-teacher conversations are individual talks between teachers and parents and often deal with pending transfer decisions. They also serve to discuss individual problems of the students or to find a common approach to promote the students' success. Conducting these parent conversations as well as the organization of parents' evenings is the responsibility of the public schools. Depending on the employment contract, the HLT instructors' participation in parents' evenings and/or parent-teacher conversations may be an optional additional contribution and should be compensated accordingly, if at all possible.

- You may perhaps be asked by the public school teacher to participate in a specific parents' conversation. Clarify what is expected of you and consider what you can and cannot contribute personally.
- You may perhaps be asked by the parents (or you yourself may consider it meaningful) to participate in a conversation. It is very important that you clarify the roles beforehand, however. The decision as to who participates lies with the inviting public school teacher. You are of course free to conduct talks with the parents of your students on your own.

## 3. Closing word

The selected fields of cooperation and suggestions in chapter 12 are, of course, not all comprehensive, as the contexts that you will find in your workplace, as well as your personal requirements are too different (e. g. if you are new to teaching in a certain location or if you have taught there for some time). However, it is essential that you do not lose the energy and your willingness to cooperate, in spite of all kinds of difficulties.

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