At the Beda Weber language Gymnasium in Merano, South Tyrol, Italy, the Collaborative Language Teaching Methodology project is being developed and implemented at the first stage of secondary school (secondary level I). The project focuses on cross-linguistic didactic approaches to word formation and text types in descriptions and précis-writing in six languages.

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'Schools on the way to a whole-language policy' – the Collaborative Language Teaching Methodology project at Beda Weber language Gymnasium in Merano, Italy

1. About the project

The Collaborative Language Teaching Methodology project was developed at Beda Weber language Gymnasium in Merano, Italy. The project has been tested in the classroom and the languages involved are German, Italian, English, Latin, French and Spanish.

2. Project goal

The goal of this project is to work across languages in various classes and compare languages in order to identify differences and similarities, practise language transfer and teach pupils to think in a way that capitalises on links between languages.

The teachers involved in the project have established the following objectives around the subject of word formation and text genres 'descriptions' and 'précis-writing':

The objective of the part of the project relating to word formation is:
  – for pupils to recognise word formation characteristics in different languages and transfer what they have learned to all the languages they learn.

The objectives of the part of the project relating to descriptions are:
  – for pupils to develop a capacity for observation and perception, and to be able to demonstrate these skills using appropriate language tools.
  – for pupils to be able to distinguish between explicit and implicit descriptions, and to be able to formulate them.

The objectives of the part of the project relating to précis-writing are:
  – for pupils to be able to define précis-writing while keeping in mind the similarities and differences between different languages, and to be able to differentiate précis-writing from summary and retelling texts.
  – for pupils to be able to understand the content of a source text and reproduce it in outline form.
  – for pupils to be able to distinguish important content from unimportant content.
  – for pupils to be able to use the correct tense.
  – for pupils to be able to use appropriate connectors to demonstrate the logical cohesion of a plot.
  – for pupils to be able to formulate sentences without help and write in an objective reporting style.

– for pupils to be able to report direct speech in indirect speech.

3. Target group

The target group is a "combination class" of 14-year-old pupils in the first grade of this language Gymnasium. The "combination class" comprises one group of pupils that has selected Spanish as their second foreign language and another group that has chosen French. The project was implemented in class 1B during the 2013-2014 school year.

4. Project description

Planning of the teaching units began in spring 2013. The teachers decided on the topics and, over several planning sessions, defined the specific content in the respective language subjects, as well as the timetable.

The topic of beauty was selected as the framework theme. The teaching units were implemented during the 2013-2014 school year. After collaborative planning across the six languages, the goals of the project were pursued in the respective subjects. In some cases, the content was also taught in teams. The participating teachers drew up a glossary of linguistic terms, approved it and shared it with pupils. The participating teachers set up a regular folder and a Dropbox folder for documentation and materials suitable for cross-language teaching.

In the section below, excerpts from the planning table are presented in order to provide insight into the work in the classroom. Due to space constraints, the planning table cannot be presented in its entirety.

	Competencies (Objectives)	Content (Materials)	Methodological instructions
German	**TU: Précis-writing** • Name the characteristics of a précis • Write a précis according to the rules • Introduction to the function of introductory sentences; evaluate and revise defined introductory sentences • Distinguish between important and unimportant information • Reproduce content in outline form • Improve or revise incomplete précis • Demonstrate the logical causal cohesion in the plot • Use your own formulations when writing a précis • Rewrite the salient part of a short story using objective reporting language; use different language and style from the sample précis • Rewrite utterances and thoughts that are in direct speech in indirect speech • Use correct tenses • Avoid using slang expressions and forms (...)	Max von Grün, Masken ('Masks', short story)	Work through a text critically: delete, add to, reformulate content

	Competencies (Objectives)	Content (Materials)	Methodological instructions
Italian	Descrivere persone Individuare caratteristiche fisiche e psicologiche legati alla propria idea di bellezza Confrontare il proprio ideale di bellezza con quello di un compagno/a Trovare punti in comune. Confrontare i personaggi della favola Capire quali caratteristiche fisiche e psicologiche catturano la simpatia del lettore Individuare le belle e i belli in alcune favole (...)	Aggettivi qualificativi (passato remoto) Immagini tratte da riviste. Testi di alcune favole	Osservare Trovare nuovi aggettivi Lavoro a coppie Leggere Ascoltare descrivere

	Competencies (Objectives)	Content (Materials)	Methodological instructions
English	Systematically expand vocabulary (people, things, emotions) Develop the ability for differentiated observation and perception, and expressing this using adequate language tools Create suspense and emotions through language Recognise cultural/intercultural aspects and relate them to one's own reality Recognise and understand text structure and use it for writing one's own text Rewrite, adapt and vary the source text Become aware of similarities, differences and relationships between languages and use them for one's own learning Develop awareness of language, also in exchange with other languages (...)	<u>Uncovering similes</u> <u>Song:</u> Lenka *"Everything at once"* - worksheet: similes and descriptive writing <u>Describing people</u> Different texts <u>Describing space/objects</u> Different texts	Song completion (gapped text) Simile workshop: how to write creatively (worksheet) Worksheet – vocabulary Gapped text Adapting model text and using vocabulary Reading comprehension (various tasks) Transfer – speaking EA – story writing (vocabulary and text structure) Peer/teacher feedback Reading comprehension and vocabulary work (describing feelings, emotions, events – paint pictures with words) Read and give feedback on one another's stories (see learning products)

	Competencies (Objectives)	Content (Materials)	Methodological instructions
French	Draw up vocabulary and grammatical structures Recognise similarities and differences in the languages Compare languages	1) les adjectifs, les adjectifs de couleur : en repérer dans des textes :	Partner work
	Describe ideal beauty in our time	2) la publicité : dégager l'idéal de beauté de nos jours	Partner work (2 pupils work together on 1 advert from a French magazine)
	Intercultural comparison: Recognise cultural differences and similarities in the analysis of country-specific fashion adverts	3) publicités de maisons de couture du monde entier	Partner work, discussion
	Draw up vocabulary related to the topic of clothing/ fashion and use it in practice; Word formation in the area of clothing Determine the etymology of the word 'robe' Produce a voice over for a fashion show; Write simple texts and read them aloud (...)	4) textes écrits et audiovisuels	Partner work, discussion Creative writing; Presentation

	Competencies (Objectives)	Content (Materials)	Methodological instructions
Spanish	Speak about various aspects of a city or place; be able to appreciate the beauty of a place or one's place of origin/residence, and be able to describe it. Urban-rural problems (adjectives for describing cities); Repeating: agreement of article, noun and adjective; ser/estar/hay)	Protagonistas 1, Unidad 3 Letter to the editor (carta al director): texto	Comprensión lectora (verdadero-falso) Comprensión lectora (preguntas de comprensión) presentación: hablar en forma de monólogo un diálogo en una agencia de viajes
	Indicate ownership or possession (the verb *tener*, possessive adjectives and pronouns) (...)	texto de un guía de Granada Letter to the editor (carta al director): texto -	texto – la gramática se aprende del método „aprender descubriendo" escribir (crear una carta al director)

	Competencies (Objectives)	Content (Materials)	Methodological instructions
Latin	Master the appropriate basic word formation rules	Various worksheets, chapter from 'Prima'	Exercises with word formation elements
	Adjectives: recognise characteristics and composites, and distinguish adjectives from other parts of speech		Matching loan and foreign words
			Using visualisation techniques to emphasise detailed analysis of linguistic structures
	Understand the function of the adjective in the sentence		
			Gapped texts
	Relate Latin vocabulary to other languages		Textual analysis: marking, completion, matching
	By comparing languages, recognise and name initial similarities and differences between Latin and modern languages		
	Expand the ability to reflect on language (...)		

The content is supplemented by a cross-linguistic teaching unit on terminology used for grammatical structures. A worksheet is used to draw up the terminology used in all languages. The terminology is displayed in the classroom on a poster.

The purpose of this task is to provide insight into the different languages. Pupils use a worksheet to identify the interrogatory pronouns and question structure across the languages. An excerpt from the worksheet is presented below.

Insight into different languages: Questions worksheet 2

Deutsch	Italiano	English	Français	Español	Lingua latina	Other languages
	Chi?					
		Why?				
			Quand?			
					Ubi?	
				¿Qué?		
Wessen?						
			Comment?			
Wohin?					Quo?	
		How much/ many?				
				¿Cuánto tiempo?		

In order to raise pupils' awareness and to motivate them, a launch event and an excursion are planned. In addition, two workshops are conducted in collaboration with the European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano's (EURAC) Institute for Specialised Communication and Multilingualism and Ms Dana Engel: one on the topic of language families and another on the topic of language careers. The teaching units planned by the teachers are defined more precisely below.

Launch event

This event comprises three 50-minute periods at the start of the programme and aims to present the project and raise pupils' awareness of its cross-linguistic work. At least three teachers are always present in the classroom.

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1. Language biographies

- Pupils place languages on the body of a drawing of a person: they name their 'heart', 'head' and 'foot' languages. In so doing, existing languages represent the actual state and the languages to be learned are considered expectations.
- Pupils present their biography and explain their selection.
- Pupils expand their biography by adding the languages spoken in their family environment (discussion in Italian).

2. Family (added over the course of the school year)

The topic of the language biography is supplemented by a teaching unit on family over the course of the school year.

- Pupils study the Latin etymology of the vocabulary used to describe family members and using a diagram, compare with other Romance languages and English.
- Pupils create family biographies in their respective native languages (in this case, Latin and Dutch) or in languages taught at school.

3. Names

- Starting with the longest names in the class, pupils create a poster in which all of the names intersect.
- With the help of teachers, pupils discuss the origin of their names.
- Teachers show how names are given in different languages and their special features.
- Using their names, pupils write a diamond poem in English.

4. Language folder

- Pupils design a folder that they use to store their papers.

Looking for languages in the city of Merano

Pupils are divided into nine groups of three and draw lots for the languages Latin, English, French, Italian and Spanish. The groups are assigned the task of looking for traces of these languages in the city of Merano and taking pictures of them. The groups present the results of their research in a PowerPoint presentation and by creating a poster for their classroom. The goal is to raise pupils' awareness and to keep them alert as they walk through the city. They need to recognise and categorise the traces of their respective language and present them in a way that is appealing and creative. Again the goal is for pupils to reflect on language.

5.   Conditions and prerequisites

Most of the basic conditions required for implementing this project are in place. Due to the constraints of the school timetable, it is difficult to arrange for a colleague who can team teach to be present during teaching units involving several languages. It would be very helpful to have the resources to team teach for one hour a week.

As mentioned above, two workshops are conducted in collaboration with EURAC's Institute for Specialised Communication and Multilingualism, and Ms Dana Engel.

6.   Taking the project mainstream at the school

The teachers involved in the project have set up a working group that meets regularly and collaborates with the coordinator for curriculum development. The head of the working group communicates with their superiors on a regular basis. The project has been implemented as a pilot project and therefore is currently limited to one class.

Keywords: *plurilingualism; whole-language policy; secondary level I; Gymnasium; collaborative language teaching methodology; comparing languages; transfer*