

Welcome to Graz

The European Centre For Modern Languages, Graz, Austria

by Stasė Skapienė

The following workshop took place at the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, 17-21 June 1997.

Content Design And Methodology Of Seminars and Workshops

I suggest a brief insight into some organisational forms and frameworks, presenters' interests and participants' needs. If the participants' needs are not complementary to the presenters' interests and objectives the event is sure to fail. So what are the possible forms of organisation?

The **plenary lecture** is a well known form where the presenter is interested in presenting his / her ideas, but not interested in getting audience feedback. A **presentation with discussion** gives the possibility for the presenter to get this feedback, to have ideas examined critically, etc. It enables participants to be active, to check the validity of their ideas. **Symposiums**, meanwhile, are coherent sequences of presentations. The presenters are often convened by a single member or group who work together on a certain theme. A **panel discussion** is usually an expert discussion where the participants' activities are mainly restricted to asking questions. A **video presentation** usually starts with the presenter's introduction. It is mostly a receptive activity for the participants with possible comments and questions.

Show and tell is an informal meeting in which everyone is offered space and time



The Mozarthof, an elegant villa where the Centre is housed.

to invite other participants and show (explain) something to them. A **round table discussion** is usually chaired by the person who should not impose his / her ideas, but give equal possibilities for all participants. A **poster presentation** has a visual display usually giving a schematic overview or presenting graphs and illustrations which summarise the presenter's contributions. The presenter need not always be available. **Debates** are events mostly on political issues and there are equal possibilities for all debaters. The **swap-shop** is where teachers bring their teaching materials and exchange them. There can also be other forms like a theme-related excursion, a thematic meeting of colleagues, exhibitions, hands-on computer work, questionnaires, etc.

Usually one form of organisation cannot satisfy the needs of all participants and these forms can be used in one common framework. Frameworks usually cover bigger events. **Conventions** have divergent, often political, content. There could be hundreds or even thousands of partici-

The aim of this Centre is to offer a platform and a meeting place for officials responsible for language policy, teacher trainers, textbook authors and others working in the area of modern languages. Its activities cover all levels of education from primary to higher, and it is open to the European cultural and language education networks of Europe.

The Centre's activities focus on the following themes: autonomous learning and training in the field of modern languages; implementation of information and communication technology, and the themes "learning to learn" and lifelong education; culture and authenticity; aspects of lan-

guage policy in Europe; teacher training and curriculum reform; dissemination of good practices in workshop management and delivery; dissemination of results and management of effective networking and follow-up activities.

Applications from potential participants are welcome at this address:

Vida Bėkštienė
Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija
A. Volano 2/7
2691 Vilnius

You should indicate your spheres of interest. If you have already visited the Graz workshop, please write to *School Magazine* to share your ideas.

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pants. The **congress** is usually professional or scientific, with two or three hundred participants. **Conferences** are smaller events with up to a hundred taking part. The content is usually rather specific, to discuss problems or to get an overview of something. **Seminars** are learner-oriented, meant for learning and practice, and have limited numbers of participants. **Workshops** have 15 - 20 taking part and are something we do not seem to have yet in Lithuania. We often tend to call them seminars. But the difference is that during the workshop something is usually produced that has not existed before. The **colloquy** has ten to 20 participants. Equal input comes from each person, with possible discussions.

At different events, presenters may have different interests and objectives. What are they? Well, there are the wishes to disseminate ideas, results or products, receive feedback, gather and generate ideas, demonstrate processes and products, help participants improve their skills, find partners for projects, etc. Or there can be some personal interests like the wish to be considered important, imposing one's own ideas while gathering credits for one's career.

These all can be successfully used and exploited if they are accompanied by the complementary needs of the participants. If participants are happy to meet important people, if they like admiring celebrities, then the presenter's wish to be considered important will match the participants' needs and the event can be successful. But if needs include giving feedback, checking the validity and exchange of ideas, and the presenter's interests are restricted only to disseminating ideas then the event is not going to be successful. So when organising any event remember that not only logistical problems count. The presenter's aims and objectives and the needs of the participants should also be central issues.

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Pro Memorium



Eugenija Pūrienė
(1928-1997),
Teacher of English

Eugenija Pūrienė worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius Technological College and, from 1961 to 1988, she taught English at S.Nėris Secondary School in Vilnius.

The start of the new academic year at N this September was filled with sorrow and sympathy as colleagues and students paid tribute to Mrs. Pūrienė. She was an exceptional personality, a devoted and skilled teacher and a mother to all. Her memory lives on in the minds of all those who learned English under her supervision and who worked together with her.