

Sustainability Dimension in Language Learning:
Resource Centres in Implementing the EU Language Policies

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Abstract

The concept of sustainability has been applied to a wide range of areas, education being one of them. The recent boost in foreign language learning in the common European socio-economic and cultural environment has raised a pressing need for foreign languages within the social group of not “active” learners: adults from various areas of professional occupation are exposed to extensive international contacts, they have to read, write or speak in one or more foreign languages. In Lithuania these people constitute the core of qualified work force, they are attractive for potential employment by international businesses or public sector. Acquisition and maintaining foreign language skills have become an indispensable factor of sustainability of human resources: language skills ensure efficient engagement in multilingual and multicultural European environment, facilitate international co-operation and add to the mutual feeling of trust and partnership. The current situation in teaching foreign languages in Lithuania and the services provided by language resource centres reflect specific needs and peculiarities of working with adult learners of foreign languages. The focus of teaching has shifted to exploring and developing the aspects which are less relevant to learners of other ages or of other social groups: extensive exploitation of the learner’s previous experience, related both to learning languages and to professional development, teaching self-assessing and self-correcting techniques, selection and critical approach to the subject matter and learning procedures, developing communication skills irrespective of the language of communication, raising intercultural awareness as an important factor of effective international communication. These considerations require certain modification of teaching methods, in drawing up the content of a language course and in choosing the appropriate teaching aids. The EC Socrates programme projects: Euro Languages Net Plus, Lingua Connections, LinguaPeace Europe, Lingu@net EuropaPlus, Join the Club, eEuroInclusion offer new perspectives and innovative methods of acquiring foreign language skills, contribute to the professional development of the language resource centre staff.