

PALM Tree – not only a motto but an amazing program for this year's International week

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1 Instead of an Introduction

Receiving E-mails after the International Week such as the following one is more than an evaluation, it is a great pleasure for me:

Dear Kurt,
I want to thank you for your hospitality and friendship this past week at the conference. The entire experience was socially and professionally fruitful, as I very much enjoyed meeting and connecting with new colleagues and learning about the issues facing the EU. The world just became a little smaller for me!
Our Fellows, Duane and Alexandra, were honored to join us and really benefitted from the professional and cultural experiences, as well.

Thanks for everything!
Best regards,
Amanda

After reading this mail, I knew that not only the professional goals of the project were achieved but also the cultural and social experiences were fruitful for the participants. Palm Tree: Promoting authentic language acquisition in multilingual contexts Teaching, Research, Education and Evaluation. Palm Tree was a complete success.

2 Five interesting days

2.1 Monday 28 May

In the afternoon, Rector **Erwin Rauscher** addressed his words of welcome to the participants from Germany, England, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Hungary, the United States and Cyprus. He took up the symbol of the palm tree and designed a metaphorical message: Use the leaves and branches of the tree as roofs to protect those who promote freedom and dialogue, but also as vessels for tolerance and good neighborliness and as brooms against National Socialism.

Regarding the organization of the workshop, I gave a short overview of the week: On Tuesday morning, we will start with the TREE program in the hall. TREE is for Teaching, Research, Education & Evaluation. There are amazing presentations about great teaching from the Long Island University and Hungarian. In the afternoon, we will have the so called "Inclusion day" and we are excited to hear about the cooperation with the Long Island University.

Wednesday is "PALM day" and Claudia Mewald will introduce the amazing project on language acquisition with authentic texts created by learners.

Thursday is the culture day and the participants have a lot of possibilities to discover Baden. In the afternoon, we will meet in front of the Wiener Secession and we will have a guided tour in English. In the evening, we have

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the possibility to visit the Summer Night Concert in the park of Schönbrunn and hear Anna Netrebko sing Verdi, Puccini, Rossini & Tchaikowsky.

Friday we will climb up the TREE of knowledge again and the conference will end with the lunch in our cafe. I ended my address on organization with the words of Duke Ellington, who said 50 years ago: Jazz is the freedom to have many types of music. As Teaching is the freedom to have many types of fostering methods to promote our students and prepare them for all the challenges they may have to cope with in their future career.

The musical performance for this year's concert and colloquium series, "Music & People", sponsored by the College of Education of the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland FHNW in cooperation with **Hubert Gruber** from the PH Lower Austria was based on the annual theme "Verrückungen". The music-crazy Moritz Weiß Klezmer Trio invited us on a musical journey reaching from klezmer and jazz to classical music. Furthermore, they performed their own compositions and improvisations that picked up everyday life themes. They provided us with timeless sound spaces: music full of life, a highly rhythmic and virtuoso performance that lets you sit still for a moment, and then invites you to think again - music that is thrilling and crazy, one way or the other!

2.2 Tuesday 29 May

Alfred Posamentier from the Long Island University, Brooklyn talked about: *Responsibilities in teaching Mathematics: Motivation, Enrichment and Great Teaching!* The prime purpose of this presentation was to impress upon all those who are in any way responsible for teaching mathematics that there are important considerations beyond merely addressing the items curriculum. Motivating students to the subject matter, providing enrichment beyond the curriculum and simply offering outstanding teaching are the key factors for successful learning.

The topic of **Kathleen Keefe-Cooperman** who came with the Fullbright program from Long Island University, Brooklyn was: *Training teachers in digital literacy*. Children are digital natives who have never known life without technology, while many teachers never experienced digital environments as young learners in the classroom. This presentation identified characteristics necessary for successful integration of technology and pedagogy in the classroom setting. Attendees learned to identify the key characteristics blended within technology and pedagogy to support communication, interaction and learning. Understanding factors of digital competence facilitates greater success in the classroom setting.

Vilmos Vass from the Budapest Metropolitan University presented: *The Impact of Professional Learning Community and Collaboration in Higher Education*. The lecture introduced the concept of Professional Learning Community (PLC), especially focusing on the different types and levels of collaboration in higher education. Based on the conceptual changes and some models of PLC, two parts were built in the lecture. The first part described some phenomena of PLC, especially change management and collaboration. The second part analyzed some features of team creative problem solving. The lecture concluded with some dilemmas and questions for understanding the impact of PLC and collaboration in higher education.

Bojana Beric, Leeja Carter, Jessica Rosenberg from the Long Island University, Brooklyn and **Karl Zarhuber** from PH NÖ supported by **Eva Hiegesberger** and **Brigitta Schnaubelt** introduced their project: *The pathways of young migrants in the education system of Lower Austria and NYC: Development of new approaches and exchange of practical pedagogical models*. This joint research project is a comparative study (NYC and Lower Austria) and aimed at designing new approaches to promote educational success among young migrants. Methods employed include qualitative semi structured interviews with students and focus groups with headmasters, educational directors, teachers, and parents. Outcomes include a Toolkit for all stakeholders in youth education, with ideas, suggestions, case studies, strategies, resources, and advocacy tools.

Amanda Gunning and **Peter Hillman** from the Mercy College, New York, showed us the process of: *Supporting the Development of K-12 Science Teacher High Impact Practices: Perspectives from Program Implementation and Research in the Field*. They presented an overview of their work in the field of science teacher development and support and they discussed several projects that are in progress, some of their research findings to date, the future direction of their work and implications for the field of science education.

Alexandra Danz (Mercy College, New York) brought *A Breath of Fresh Air* with her *Refreshing Initiative for Outdoor Learning in the Science Curriculum* in the International Week. As an earth science teacher, she told us that it makes sense to teach about the Earth, with the Earth. As a previous fellow of WIPRO Science Education Fellowship, she executed a year-long project on outdoor learning. Her message was: There are many benefits to outdoor learning. Unfortunately, there is a lack of outdoor learning in school science curriculums due to time constraints and lack of teacher confidence. Part of her action project included creating in-district professional

development programs to increase the presence of outdoor learning on school campuses. Outdoor learning pairs well with the Next Generation Science Standards as they both suggest student driven and inquiry learning. Through outdoor learning, students learn to become critical thinkers, confident risk takers, and lifelong learners.

2.3 Wednesday 30 May

Maria Heron (NILE, Norwich) told us about: *Creating impact through affectively engaging texts*. Her session drew on the presenter's experiences of working with course books where learners' reactions have varied from partial engagement to total disengagement, both with the topics and the materials. This hands-on workshop explored using emotionally charged texts to achieve impact and promote language development.

The presentation of **Eva Gröstenberger** (PH Burgenland): *Promoting and preserving multilingualism in the digital age* looked at the potential of interactive multimedia learning materials to promote less commonly taught languages and thus preserve multilingualism in schools. A project run at the PH Burgenland in the context of teaching the minority language Burgenland Croatian was presented. The aim of the research project was the evaluation of a digital textbook supplement.

The topic of **Bernadette Kövérné Nagyházi's** (University of Kaposvár, Hungary) presentation was: *Attitude towards bilingual education on primary level – an experiential survey among parents and pedagogues*. The first bilingual English-Hungarian language class at primary level in Kaposvár was enrolled in the academic year 2008-2009. After a ten years period there was the point when it would be worth studying the attitude towards bilingual education on primary level among parents and pedagogues. This survey-based study showed which expectations and experiences have been formed by parents and pedagogues towards bilingual education during the last decade.

Zsuzsanna Szilvási from the University of Kaposvár presented the topic: *Place and assessment of foreign language education and knowledge*. She discussed students' thoughts on foreign language learning and language knowledge and analyzed the reasons they gave for their answers. Besides, she showed the significance of foreign language education in the context of different opinions and education policy conceptions.

2.4 Thursday 31 May. Location: Vienna

This day was the Feast of Corpus Christi and the participants enjoyed Baden. Some of them visited the St. Stephen's parish church with the famous baroque organ recalling Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his 'Ave Verum', which was composed in Baden and premiered in this church in 1791. On this day they listened to the Missa brevis in G-Dur by Giovanni Battista Casali and the Ave Verum. The others took a bath in the Thermal outdoor lido or the Roman thermal baths.

In the afternoon we met at Vienna Secession and had a really interesting guided tour. The secession is an exhibition space that occupies a unique position in the history of modern art, combining a contemporary, forward-looking program with a building whose architecture is an icon of the spirit of impending change around 1900. The secession was founded in 1897 by a group of artists led by Gustav Klimt who had split with the conservative Künstlerhaus. The most amazing artwork is the so-called Beethoven Frieze which takes its theme from Richard Wagner's interpretation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and depicts humankind's search for happiness.

Later, we heard that Vienna was a laboratory for Modernism at the turn of the 20th century. In arts, literature, music, architecture, product design, the sciences and psychology; some of the main protagonists were Otto Wagner, Egon Schiele, Kolo Moser, Gustav Mahler, Sigmund Freud and Arthur Schnitzler. The year 1918 proved to be a watershed. This year didn't just see the end of the First World War but also a transformation of Vienna from the royal seat of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire into the capital of small German-Austrian Republic – it was also when four of the artists shaped the Vienna of 1900 – Schiele, Klimt, Wagner and Moser – passed away. When we left the building, we saw the motto that adorns its facade: *For every time its art. For art its freedom*. And we remembered the first day of this International Week.

In the evening we visited the world famous Summer Night Concert in the Schönbrunn Palace Gardens which highlighted this year the world of opera and ballet with a wide ranging program under the motto "Italian Night". The Vienna philharmonic under the baton of Valery Gergiev presented together with the amazing soloist Anna Netrebko singing Verdi, Puccini, Rossini & Tschaikowsky. There could be no more festive prelude to the summer season and cultural highlight of this International Week than this concert, which transformed one of the internationally best-known baroque settings into the venue for an unforgettable musical experience.

2.5 Friday 01 June

Maria Theodoropoulou from the University of Patras in Greece introduced a European Science and Art Project. Students (aged 16 - 18) and teachers involved came from Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal and Greece. The basic idea of the project was to find new and different ways of teaching/studying art through gaining scientific knowledge and also studying science through artistic ways of thinking.

Edda Polz (PH NÖ) discussed the challenge of *Implementing GK2/GK4 as an instrument for evaluation in English at primary school*: She explained that GK2 (Grundkompetenzen Lebende Fremdsprache 2. Schulstufe), the “year-two competencies” and GK4, the “year-four-competencies” have been developed to supply teachers with a frame of reference regarding skills every learner should attain within their first two and four years of education in English. Her study was directed on giving an insight into how GK2/GK4 may be used as an instrument for evaluating teaching and learning English at primary school. It focused on taking a closer look on pedagogues’ attitudes towards GK2/GK4 and on the way in which certain teachers describe to apply them in every-day-practice in primary schools in Austria. In this connection, it targeted on giving an overview on the challenges of teaching and learning EFL at primary school in Austria and on outlining the value of using GK2/GK4 within the teaching process.

Duane Stillwell (Mercy College New York) showed us in his presentation *Tools and Resources to Meet the Needs of New Language Learners in the Science Classroom*. His interesting message was: The world today is in the midst of an unprecedented level of human migration, with about 66 million refugees currently displaced from their homes (comparable to the entire population of France or the UK). Of these, about 25 million are seeking asylum in other countries (about the entire population of Australia). If we add to this all other forms of migration, it is not hard to see why second language acquisition is becoming a pressing issue in schools across the globe. For these and other reasons, content teachers in many countries are already seeing growing numbers of students in their classrooms who are also beginning to learn the language of instruction. Fortunately, research in the field of second language acquisition is also burgeoning, and there are many valuable lessons that can be used to leverage content instruction and language acquisition in a symbiotic way.