

## **A new approach to Business & Tourism The experiences of four Austrian language teachers**

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### **Abstract**

We are teachers of English in four Austrian vocational schools. We use a software program that we find extremely effective and which really motivates our students. We use it for English, whilst some of our colleagues use it for teaching French, Italian and Spanish – and for helping with German.

### **About the software**

We use the software mainly for Business and Tourism, though the DVD offers another 20 programs – for telephone, email, job-search, shopping and so on. We now have the latest version, called Tick-Tack TT2009. It has recently been much enhanced, and now offers some of the programs in Chinese, Japanese and Arabic as well as many other languages.

### **Why we find it so useful**

Later in this article you will find detailed descriptions of some of the popular tasks and exercises provided in the program. They have proved highly motivating and the students really enjoy doing them.

In addition to the benefits for our students, we teachers particularly appreciate a number of features offered by the programs. These include:

- a wide range of ready-made tasks and exercises ideal for our needs
- students have to work on their own, thus allowing the teacher freedom to concentrate on students that need attention or help
- students can check their own work against model answers, thus relieving the teacher of constant correcting
- students not only learn specific vocabulary but they learn it "in context"
- the tasks can be further developed by teachers
- authentic case-studies simulate life in a busy office and a lively hotel
- detailed lesson plans enable teachers can get started straightaway
- each task is given the appropriate grade of the Common European Framework.

### **How we use it**

We use the programs about three times a week, mainly with the older students, in our "Notebook classes". They all have laptops which they bring to school each day. They all have a copy of the DVD since they also need to use the programs for homework. Having the software at home gives their families a chance to use the programs for brushing up their language skills.

In Austria we have many immigrant students. They and their families find the software valuable for improving their German as well as helping with their mother tongue. They find the shopping program especially useful.

### **The practical tasks - the feature of special interest to us**

For business and for tourism we like the wide range of tasks. It is these tasks that make Tick-Tack so useful. They are based on a virtual enterprise: an International Trading Group that manufactures and markets sports goods. It has companies in London, Paris, Munich, Madrid and Florence.

The student takes the part of a trainee working in the company whose language he or she is studying. They work in each of the main departments such as Sales, Buying, Marketing, Management, Personnel, and so on. In the travel tasks the student works partly in the company's Travel Department and partly in a hotel with close links to the sports company. The trainee has to deal with the multiplicity of problems that arise in a busy office, or busy hotel, every day. [Screen-shot]

Examples of the tasks then follow.