

## Learning and Teaching Languages – a Connecting Link for a Better Understanding in the World

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### Abstract

Learning one or more foreign languages is for many people not only necessary for job-related reasons. In order to support this longlife learning a friendly environment for languages has to be created, which supports to acquire a foreign language in a practice-oriented manner. The traditional language training is in many cases dominated by cognitive aspects and provides too little possibilities to gain experience in pronunciation and intonation of the foreign language as well as to practice communication within a contingency approach.

To reach the important aims the University of Education in Baden Austria will explain two different approaches. First an auditive project and second a social-multi-tasking project.

The language-learning and teaching project of the University of Education Baden contributes to improving the student's hearing abilities. Using the "Electronic Voice & Ear-Trainer" we are able to provide the students a native language level. The elaborated teaching units and the produced auditory material afford a native-near level regarding pronunciation, melody and intonation as well as with the view on updated use in the country of the target language. Therefore the project adds to the creation of a language friendly environment within Europe; it supports the variety of languages and makes easier to acquire language competence in the course of lifelong learning. The system provides the basis for building up a system of eLearning.

The benefits for the students and universities are immense. The students gain more language competence in a shorter time and the students get a better inside into cultures and ways of life and promote in this way the intercultural dialogue. The universities get access to many more language learning modules providing a wide variety of languages to choose from. The universities get a new approach to build up a network and cooperation in language training.

The jigsaw classroom is a cooperative learning technique with a three-decade track record of successfully reducing racial conflict and increasing positive educational outcomes. Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, each piece--each student's part--is essential for the completion and full understanding of the final product. If each student's part is essential, then each student is essential; and that is precisely what makes this strategy so effective.

What is the benefit of the jigsaw classroom? First and foremost, it is a remarkably efficient way to learn the material. But even more important, the jigsaw process encourages listening, engagement, and empathy by giving each member of the group an essential part to play in the academic activity. Group members must work together as a team to accomplish a common goal; each person depends on all the others. No student can succeed completely unless everyone works well together as a team. This "cooperation by design" facilitates interaction among all students in the class, leading them to value each other as contributors to their common task.