

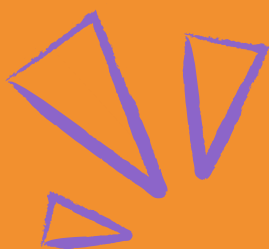


Co-funded by
the European Union



Jaunatnes starptautisko
programmu aģentūra

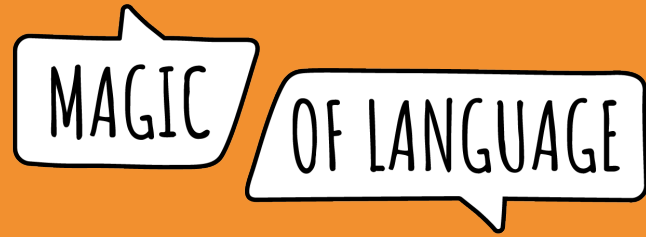
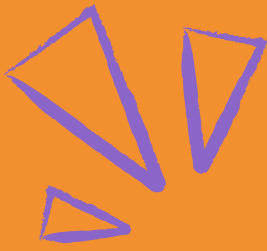
MAGIC OF LANGUAGE



MAGIC OF LANGUAGE



Teacher guide



CHAPTER 1

Insights from research

Insights from Research

Understanding the Barriers in language learning for young generations

- 1. Difficulty in understanding language concepts-** many NEETs and migrants struggle with grasping fundamental language concepts. This difficulty is often due to insufficient foundational knowledge and the complexity of the language learning process.
- 2. Lack of time and resources** - a significant barrier is the lack of time to dedicate to language learning due to personal, professional, or familial responsibilities. Additionally, limited access to quality resources, such as textbooks, online tools, and language courses, hampers progress.
- 3. Inadequate consideration of individual learning style** - traditional language courses often fail to accommodate the diverse learning styles of NEETs and migrants. This one-size-fits-all approach results in disengagement and frustration among learners who do not fit the conventional mold.

Preferred Learning Methods

1. Practical application through real-life engagements - learners show a strong preference for practical, hands-on learning experiences. Activities that involve real-life scenarios, such as role-playing in everyday situations, help learners apply language skills in meaningful contexts.

2. Immersive learning methods - Immersive techniques, such as watching movies, reading books, and participating in discussions in the target language, are highly favored. These methods enhance language acquisition by providing rich, contextual learning experiences.

3. Personalized learning experiences - tailored learning plans that consider individual preferences, strengths, and weaknesses are crucial. Personalization helps maintain learner interest and motivation by addressing specific needs and goals.

1.2 Importance of language skills for young NEETs

Enhancement of job opportunities - a majority of NEETs and migrants believe that improved language skills directly correlate with better job prospects. Proficiency in languages, particularly English and other widely spoken tongues, is seen as a key to unlocking employment opportunities.



Value of multilingual skills - multilingualism is highly valued in the global job market. Employers seek candidates who can communicate effectively with diverse teams and clients, making multilingual skills a significant asset.

1.3 Motivation and environment:

Supportive learning environment - a positive and encouraging learning environment is essential for effective language acquisition. Learners thrive when they feel supported by their instructors and peers, and when their progress is recognized and celebrated.

Role of gamification - integrating gamification into language learning can significantly boost motivation and engagement. Elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards create a fun and competitive atmosphere that encourages continuous learning and effort.



Part 2: Methods and Activities

This section outlines effective methods and activities for language learning tailored to NEETs and migrants, emphasizing practical, immersive, and personalized approaches. Incorporating project-based and inquiry-based learning methods, Suggestopedia, and activities related to personal and professional development can significantly enhance language acquisition.

2.1 Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional method where learners gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period on a project that investigates and responds to complex questions, problems, or challenges. PBL fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving skills. This approach correlates with the need of young people for real-life engagement.

Implementation ideas:

Group Projects - assign learners to work in groups to research and present on a topic related to their interests or career goals. For example, a project could involve creating a business plan, organizing a community event, or developing a marketing campaign.



Project ideas for the language classrooms:

1. Think of a business based on your interests and passion.
Describe it in 4-5 sentences. Then develop a value proposition canvas and a business model canvas for it. PICTURES
2. Make a plan for your graduation event.
3. Write an ad to sell your house and create a role play with your partner to discuss the price.
4. Write your Resume and role play job-interviews.
5. Create a family tree and present it to the class,

Ensure that projects require the use of the target language for all communications, presentations, and written reports. This immersion helps learners practice language skills in meaningful contexts.

2.2 Inquiry-based learning (IBL)

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) is a student-centered method that encourages learners to ask questions, conduct research, and explore subjects deeply. This approach promotes curiosity, autonomy, and active engagement and resonates with the learner's need for personalization and engagement.



Implementation ideas:

Question-driven lessons - start lessons with open-ended questions related to the language topic. Encourage learners to research answers and present their findings.

Exploration activities - design activities that require learners to investigate real-world issues or problems using the target language.

Example Activities:

Investigate local culture - learners explore local cultural practices and traditions by interviewing community members, visiting cultural sites, and presenting their findings through a multimedia presentation.

2.3 Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is a Bulgarian method of learning that uses a relaxed, non-threatening environment, incorporating music, art, and positive suggestions to enhance learning.

It focuses on creating a comfortable learning atmosphere and reducing learners' psychological barriers.



Some key components of the method are:

- Using real-life scenario dialogues and role plays with costumes, making the situation real, or theatrical and not so school-like and disconnected with real context. For example, dialogues related to restaurants usually include food, waiters and a real-life scenario. Prompts like costumes, objects and puppets are used widely, proven to be effective with all ages, including adults.
- Using classical music while learning the lesson - classical music is played while some dialogues are rehearsed improving the mood and decreasing stress.
- A lot of real-life visuals and posters are used on the walls - painting reproductions with words on them and posters with major language structures are on the walls at all times.

Implementation ideas:

1. **Relaxed environment** - arrange the classroom with comfortable seating, soft lighting, and background music to create a calming atmosphere.
2. **Positive reinforcement** - use encouraging language and positive reinforcement to build learners' confidence and reduce anxiety.
3. **Use of role plays with prompts** - develop dialogues in a certain setting (e.g. at work, on the street, in the mall) with respective costumes and prompts.
4. **Use of posters on the walls** - while teaching certain concepts, ensure you have plenty of simple and attractive posters on the wall which display them.



Example activity:

Musical language learning - incorporate background music during lessons and use songs in the target language as a learning tool. Learners can sing along, analyse lyrics, and discuss themes.

2.4 Activities for Personal and Professional Development

Research in neuroscience has demonstrated that self-reflection, planning, and thinking positively about the future have significant benefits on overall confidence, resilience, and the openness of individuals' minds. NEET youth and disadvantaged youth often struggle with low confidence, self-esteem, and harbour regrets or negative emotions.

Engaging in these reflective and future-oriented activities can have therapeutic benefits and provide valuable insights. These activities are particularly beneficial in language learning, as language plays a crucial role in constructing and articulating our thoughts. Studies show that structured self-reflection and positive future planning can activate brain regions associated with cognitive control, emotional regulation, and reward processing, thereby enhancing mental well-being and cognitive flexibility.

Consequently, incorporating these practices into educational and developmental programs can significantly aid in the personal and academic growth of disadvantaged youth.



Examples activities:

Activity:

Self-description exercise (describing qualities with adjectives) - learners write and present a paragraph describing themselves using a variety of adjectives. This helps build vocabulary related to personal qualities and boosts self-awareness.

Activity:

Skill Inventory (learning "can" and "able to" concepts) - learners list their skills using "can" and "able to" structures. For example, "I can speak English fluently," or "I am able to solve complex problems." This activity emphasises their abilities and helps in job interviews.

Activity:

Goal-Setting Workshop (using coaching questions for goal setting and decision making) - Use coaching questions to guide learners in setting personal and professional goals.

Questions might include, "What do you want to achieve in the next six months?" or "What steps will you take to reach your goal?"

Learners discuss their goals in pairs or small groups, providing mutual support and accountability.



2.6 Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a communication method that emphasises empathy, compassion, and understanding. It helps learners express their feelings and needs without conflict, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

Using Nonviolent Communication (NVC) in the language classroom fosters a positive and supportive learning environment by emphasising empathy, compassion, and understanding. This method helps learners express their feelings and needs without resorting to conflict, which is essential in building effective communication skills.

Using Nonviolent Communication (NVC) in the language classroom is particularly effective because it directly relates to the core purposes of language: expressing thoughts, feelings, and needs clearly and constructively.

Language is not just about grammar and vocabulary; it is fundamentally about communication and connection. By incorporating NVC, students practise using language to articulate their emotions and desires in a respectful and empathetic manner, which enhances their overall communication skills.



The Four Components of NVC:

- **Observations** - encourage learners to make neutral observations without judgement.
- **Feelings** -teach learners to express their feelings honestly.
- **Needs** - help learners identify their needs underlying their feelings.
- **Requests** -guide learners to make clear, positive requests to meet their needs.

Example Activity

Empathy circles:

Learners form small groups and practise NVC by sharing their observations, feelings, needs, and requests about a particular topic. This activity promotes active listening, empathy, and respectful communication.



Part 3: Recommendations for Language Teachers and Centers

3.1 Tailoring to individual needs

Assessment - to create an effective and personalised language learning experience, begin with a comprehensive assessment of each learner's current language skills, learning style, and goals. This assessment should cover:

1. Language proficiency - use standardised tests or diagnostic assessments to determine the learner's proficiency level in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Conduct oral interviews and written tests to gauge their practical use of the language.

2. Learning style - identify whether learners prefer visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or reading/writing-based learning. Use tools like learning style inventories or questionnaires. Observe learners during initial sessions to notice their engagement patterns and preferences.

3. Goals - discuss with learners their personal and professional goals related to language learning. Understanding their motivation (e.g., career advancement, academic success, social integration) will help tailor the learning experience. Set short-term and long-term goals in collaboration with learners to ensure they have clear, achievable milestones.

Personalised learning paths -based on the assessment, develop personalised learning paths that cater to each learner's specific needs and preferences.

This involves:

1. Customised curriculum - design a curriculum that includes materials and activities relevant to the learner's interests and goals. For example, a learner aiming to work in a medical field should have access to medical terminology and scenarios. Incorporate various types of content (videos, articles, interactive exercises) to cater to different learning styles.

2. Flexible pacing - allow learners to progress at their own pace. Some may need more time on certain topics, while others might advance quickly. Use adaptive learning technologies that adjust the difficulty based on learner performance. Schedule regular reviews and assessments to ensure learners are on track and adjust the pacing as needed.

3. Goal-oriented projects - integrate projects that align with learners' personal and professional aspirations. For instance, a project for a learner interested in hospitality could involve planning and presenting a tour itinerary in the target language.

4. Feedback and adaptation -provide ongoing feedback and be ready to adapt teaching methods based on learner progress. Key strategies include:



Regular feedback - conduct regular check-ins to discuss progress, challenges, and achievements. Use both formative (ongoing) and summative (end of unit) assessments.

Provide constructive feedback that highlights strengths and areas for improvement. Encourage self-assessment and peer feedback as well.

Adapting methods - be flexible and willing to modify teaching strategies if certain methods are not effective. For example, if a learner struggles with traditional grammar exercises, try using gamified grammar drills or contextual learning.

Incorporate learner feedback into lesson planning. If learners express a preference for certain activities or topics, try to include these more frequently.

3.2 Creating a supportive environment

Encouragement and motivation -fostering a supportive and motivating environment is crucial for language learning success. Strategies include:

1. **Positive Reinforcement** - celebrate achievements, no matter how small, to build confidence and motivation. Use verbal praise, certificates, or progress badges.

Set up a reward system where learners earn points or rewards for completing tasks, participating in class, or reaching milestones.



2. Intrinsic motivation - help learners find personal meaning in their language learning journey. Discuss how language skills can enhance their personal and professional lives.

Use real-life applications and scenarios that are relevant to learners' lives to keep them engaged and motivated.

Community building - creating a sense of community among learners encourages collaboration and support. Techniques include:

1. Group activities - organise group projects, discussions, and games that require learners to interact and collaborate. This not only improves language skills but also builds relationships.

Create a classroom culture where learners feel comfortable sharing their ideas and experiences.

2. Collaborative Projects - assign projects that require teamwork, such as creating a group presentation or participating in a debate. These activities foster a sense of belonging and teamwork.

Use online platforms to facilitate collaboration among learners, especially if they cannot meet in person.



Mentorship - pairing learners with mentors or language buddies provides additional support and practice opportunities. Approaches include:

1. **Mentor matching** - match learners with more experienced peers or fluent speakers who can provide guidance, practise conversations, and offer feedback.

Consider learners' goals and personalities when pairing them to ensure a good fit.

2. **Regular meetings** - encourage mentors and mentees to meet regularly, either in person or virtually. These meetings can focus on specific language skills, cultural exchange, or discussing progress and challenges.

Provide mentors with guidelines and resources to help them support their mentees effectively.

3. **Peer Support groups** - form small peer support groups where learners can practise together, share experiences, and help each other overcome challenges.

Rotate group members periodically to allow learners to interact with different peers and expand their learning network.



Part 4: Using Gamification to Enhance Learning

Gamification is a powerful tool for enhancing engagement and motivation in language learning.

By applying the Octalysis framework, educators can create a balanced and effective gamified learning experience.

The Octalysis framework consists of eight core drives that influence human motivation. Here's how each drive can be integrated into language learning activities:



1. Epic Meaning and Calling

Activity: Language Ambassadors

Objective -assign students roles as ambassadors of the target language, where they promote cultural understanding and language use within the school community.

Implementation -create missions for students to complete, such as organising a cultural event, presenting a traditional story, or teaching basic phrases to peers. Recognize and celebrate their efforts with certificates or badges.

2. Development and Accomplishment

Activity: Language Mastery Badges

Objective -reward students for achieving language milestones.

Implementation - set up a system of badges for different levels of proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Students can earn badges by completing quizzes, participating in discussions, or writing essays. Display progress on a class leaderboard.



3. Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback

Activity: Language Projects

Objective -encourage creativity through projects that require the use of the target language.

Implementation - assign projects such as creating a short film, designing a travel brochure, or developing a comic strip. Provide continuous feedback and opportunities for peer review to enhance learning and creativity.

4. Ownership and Possession

Activity: Digital Language Portfolios

Objective -allow students to take ownership of their learning journey.

Implementation - have students create and maintain digital portfolios that showcase their work, achievements, and reflections. Include assignments, audio recordings, and videos. Portfolios can be shared with parents and peers.



5. Social Influence and Relatedness

Activity: Language Learning Circles

Objective - foster a sense of community and peer support.

Implementation - organise students into small learning circles where they can collaborate on tasks, practise conversation, and support each other's progress. Use social media groups or online forums for additional interaction and collaboration.



6. Scarcity and Impatience

Activity: Limited-Time Challenges

Objective - create urgency and excitement around learning tasks.

Implementation - introduce weekly language challenges that are only available for a limited time, such as vocabulary bees, grammar sprints, or speaking marathons. Offer rewards for top performers or those who complete the challenges within the time frame.

7. Unpredictability and Curiosity

Activity: Mystery Language Boxes

Objective - spark curiosity and keep students engaged.

Implementation - use mystery boxes containing language-related tasks or cultural artefacts. Students must complete the tasks to reveal the contents of the next box. Tasks could include solving riddles, translating phrases, or exploring cultural traditions..

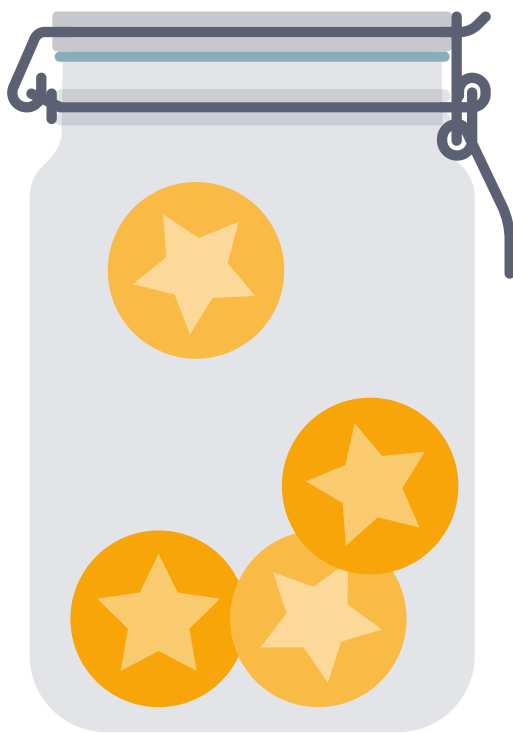


8. Loss and Avoidance

Activity: Attendance and Participation Rewards

Objective - encourage consistent participation and attendance.

Implementation - implement a points system where students earn points for attending classes, participating in activities, and completing assignments. Points can be exchanged for rewards such as extra credit, free homework passes, or language-related prizes.



By integrating these elements into language learning, teachers can create a dynamic and motivating environment that fosters both personal and academic growth.

Example Implementation Plan

Name of activity: Language Mastery Badges

Grade level: 6-12

Time: Ongoing throughout the school year

Preparation: Set up a badge system, create criteria for earning badges, design a class leaderboard.

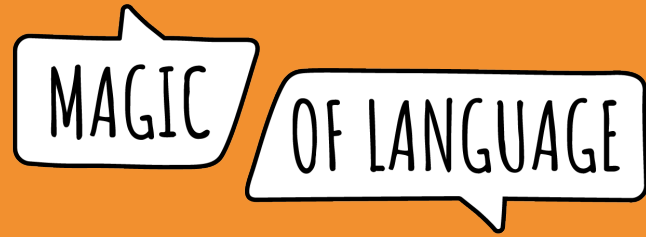
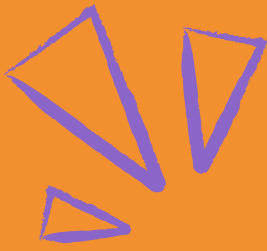
Instructions:

1. Introduce the badge system to the class.
2. Explain the criteria for earning each badge.
3. Encourage students to work towards earning badges by completing relevant tasks.
4. Regularly update the class leaderboard and celebrate achievements.

Materials:

Digital badges, leaderboard display, task lists, progress tracking tools.

MAGIC OF LANGUAGE



CHAPTER 2

Career prospects and economic capacity

Chapter 2:

Career prospects and economic capacity of young disadvantaged youth.

Unit 1: Career education and lifelong learning to promote employability and social inclusion among youth.

2.1.1. What is career education?

According European Training Foundation

“Career education refers to well-organised learning activities aimed at developing individuals’ career management skills.

Lifelong career guidance refers to services intended to support individuals of any age and their families at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers (career management skills).“*

*<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/career-guidance>

It seems that the difference between these two is not significant, however there is a thin line between career education and lifelong career guidance/learning.

Career education focuses mainly on professional growth prioritising individual growth and career opportunities and capacity to make their own informed decisions and manage them to reach their professional goals.

It has been included as one of the EU goals in educational systems to prevent early school leaving and promote equal opportunities and career prospects also for youth by introducing young people to labour market needs, necessary skills and promoting the importance of critical thinking and decision making skills.

Whilst Lifelong career guidance and learning is a support to those who are willing to improve their personal and professional skills.

Not always it is linked to their profession, but it might be related to their interests, personal necessities and interests. Lifelong learning is strongly based on free will and self-motivation.



2.1.2. Career education driven skills.

To begin with, career education is the first step to introduce youth and adults to career opportunities, global labour market needs and requirements to reach their professional goals. Providing quality career education might be a strong motivating element to provoke interest and motivation for lifelong learning in future.

It allows them to acknowledge personal skills that might be useful in choosing their professional path.

The most important skills developed in career education are:

- -Critical thinking skills;
- -Decision-making skills;
- -Literacy and listening skills;
- -Negotiation skills;
- -Self-motivation;
- -Management skills (including self-management);
- -Psychological resilience and ability to recognize social etiquette.

By developing this skill set in early ages and as teenagers, youth work on their inner motivation to strive for what's best for them and be involved in civic participation.



We can think about this as in the chess game - be ready to know at least 3 steps ahead, assess the situation, plan and manage your strategy. In the long term this skill set opens the door to motivation and interest in lifelong learning and being able to decide what kind of improvement is needed to reach goals, thus reducing the number of early school leavers and unemployment.

2.1.3. Required business skills

To prove the necessity of the above mentioned skills, let's have a look at the research done by Erasmus+ project "Talk Retail" (2021-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000026600) where more than 100 entrepreneurs from 5 countries were interviewed to collect 10 most important business skills.

They were the following:

- 1) "Vocabulary knowledge in the targeted language
- 2) Use of social networks
- 3) Proficient oral expression skills in the targeted language
- 4) Oral comprehension in the targeted language
- 5) Proficient management of a website
- 6) Patience
- 7) Cultural and ethical sensitivity
- 8) Problem-solving skills
- 9) Written comprehension in the targeted language
- 10) Effective pitching techniques."

(<https://talkretail.infoproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/International-Report-short-version-ENG.pdf>, 2022)



From the skills list above we can see that all of them directly or indirectly involve language and social skills and most of them are directly related to literacy and language skills which leads to communication skills - not only reading, writing and listening, but also acknowledgement of cultural diversity, social skills, body language and negotiation skills.

Secondly, ability to read the situation and recognize cultural, ethical and social etiquette. This skill requires ability to think critically, detect and assess the situations in a global context instead of relying on only visible elements of the communication.

The decision making skills which is a transversal in every process. To make an informed decision is not enough with only linguistic skills, it requires all previously mentioned abilities to communicate successfully with others, thus improving their opportunities to set and reach goals.

Digital literacy - in the 21st century to gain more success it is crucial to learn digital skills as in the last decade enterprises have introduced different digital innovations and practices to facilitate processes thus building more efficient workflow. Digital technologies also allow to generate in depth analysis of the progress of business and customer flow.



It also allows the introduction of green practices into the work environment. Key elements for successful digital literacy skills are literacy skills and in most cases also foreign language knowledge, especially English language.

Good digital literacy in combination with general literacy skills and English and/or other foreign language knowledge will allow them to be more informed and access more information thus boosting their personal and professional opportunities.



Unit 2: The importance of digital skills in language learning

2.2.1. Digital literacy.

According to EU Digital skills policy “In Europe, more than 90% of professional roles require a basic level of digital knowledge, just as they require basic literacy and numeracy skills. The use of digital is spreading across all sectors from business to transport and even to farming. Yet, around 32% of Europeans lack basic digital skills, including 37% of those in the workforce.”* (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-skills> , 10/10/2023)

As it can be seen in the statistics from the earlier mentioned “Talk retail project” digital skills are one of the key components in the labour market according to entrepreneurs, however it is not sufficient just to be able to turn on a device or plug it in. It requires many other skills to use digital tools and innovations wisely.

2.2.2. What is understood by digital skills?

According to UNESCO “Digital skills are defined as a range of abilities to ***use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfilment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large. [...]***

To thrive in the connected economy and society, digital skills must also function together with other abilities such as strong literacy and numeracy skills, critical and innovative thinking, complex problem solving, an ability to collaborate, and socio-emotional skills.”*

(<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion> , 20/04/2023)

As we can see, digital skills involve not only technical skills, but also basic personal skills and some more advanced abilities such as collaboration and communication. Therefore, it can be concluded that without language skills it would be a challenge to reach the maximum.

Based on the data of the EU publication “Digital literacy in the EU: An overview”

(<https://data.europa.eu/en/publications/datastories/digital-literacy-eu-overview> , 6/12/2023),

Around 65% respondents believe that by 2030 digital technologies will be important in working remotely, ~70% trust that it will affect engaging in democratic life (voting, finding reliable information etc.) and accessing education and training opportunities, while more than 80% are sure that it will significantly affect connecting with relatives and friends.



2.2.3. The role of literacy skills.

Developing digital skills requires technical and interpersonal skills. As we can see from the research results, digital skills are more likely to affect not only civic engagement and professional life but also personal life as people tend to travel more and work or study abroad. Therefore the need to socialise in many cases is based on knowledge of how to use digital tools, devices, and one's ability to read and write, especially in English.

Nevertheless, the role of native language should not be underestimated.

Why?

Firstly, native language is the language where one should feel comfortable and able to express their deepest concerns, secondly, it facilitates communication between generations. In many countries people in the age group 50+ do not know or struggle with foreign languages, yet they still have the need to communicate with family or friends abroad.

This is still a niche for youth to develop such communication skills that would not only facilitate use of digital tools for older generations, but also for young people to explain it carefully and with patience.



2.2.4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technological development

Artificial intelligence has been a part of our lives for some years now, but only in the last few years - we have started to notice its effect on habits and daily practices. AI is a powerful tool that significantly facilitates the workload and capacity of ourselves, meanwhile it still requires revision before actual use of AI generated results, especially concerning smaller languages like Latvian and Bulgarian.

Although it seems easy to ask AI to do some tasks, it still requires particular skills for the user - clear definition of the task, target audience, expected results. The AI might generate content, but the user has the final decision if it fits their needs, right tone, if it tells the story they want to tell. Yes, technically innovations can assist, however, the critical thinking skills, language and literacy skills, ability to analyse and sort the necessary and trustful information is still on the user, especially if it is not generated in the target language.

Communication with technological advancements is also a type of communication in which the user must be as concise as possible to get the best results in the shortest time.



2.2.5. Career opportunities and digital skills

The 21st century comes with many advancements and innovations, including the education sector. The technological advancement has been so rapid, that education systems must cope with frequent and sometimes even quite drastic changes in practices.

It is a significant challenge especially for senior educators who often are not willing or capable to adapt to new approaches, in particular the digital innovations, thus affecting their career opportunities. As for the younger generations, they do have better digital skills, however meaningful use of digital technologies should be considered.

Online environment nowadays offers so many interactive opportunities - study in other countries, virtual travels, immerse in 4D visualisations to understand history, create 3D prototypes to test the practicality of the idea and so on. These skills might be an extra motivator for young learners to boost their creativity, create interest in technologies, languages and any other subject by presenting it from a practical angle.



Project's "*Magic of Language*" survey shows that time management, difficulties to understand the topic and lack of interest are the main aspects that stall the learning process. In all partner countries students emphasise the need of modernised methodic materials and more interactivity and gamification in the classroom, such as simulation, real-life examples instead of only theoretical knowledge. In their opinion, competencies based learning processes would improve their career opportunities and critical thinking skills as well as ability to make informed decisions.

Unit 3: Career based learning (CBL) innovations in partner countries

Career based learning is still in its infancy. According to our research, although there are materials that might be considered as career education resources, mostly they do not fit the reality.

In this Unit you will find some of the most recent innovative and valuable resources from partner countries:

1. **Гл. ас. д-р Ваня Ганева, СА „Д. А. Ценов” – Свищов.**
СОЦИАЛНО ВКЛЮЧВАНЕ ЧРЕЗ РАЗВИТИЕ НА СОЦИАЛНОТО
ПРЕДПРИЕМАЧЕСТВО. https://dlib.unisvishtov.bg/bitstream/handle/10610/3058/n20_174_tom1Konf_80%20tom%201.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y



2.**EduCompass.** My career path, board game for 6-12 years old children. <https://edu-compass.com/en/game/>

3. **Erasmus+ project**, 2020, "Future literacy as an ongoing way" <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-1-DE03-KA229-077311>

4.**Erasmus+ project** "Education is key", 2023, <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2022-2-LV01-KA210-ADU-000099955>

5.**GameStorming.** <https://gamestorming.com/>

6. **Drošs Internets.** <https://drossinternets.lv/lv>

7.**Solve for tomorrow Baltics**

<https://www.solvefortomorrowbaltics.com/lv/>

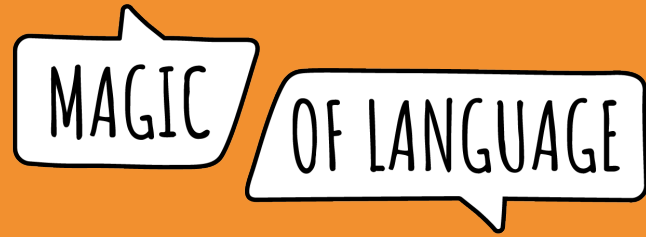
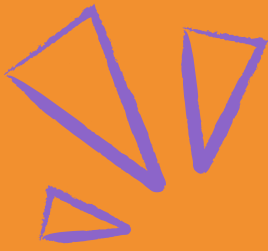
8.**VIAA, Izglītības un karjeras speciālistiem.** Karjeras izglītības materiāli. https://www.viaa.gov.lv/lv/metodiskie-materiali?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

9.**Metodiskie karjeras materiāli.**

<https://karjerasmateriali.lv/metodiskie-materiali-karjeras-attistibai/>

10.**Pedagogu veidoti karjeras izglītības resursi un sadarbības iespējas.** <https://karjerasmateriali.lv/>

MAGIC OF LANGUAGE



CHAPTER 3

Accessible education and training

Chapter 3:

Accessible education and training

Introduction

Following the exploration of critical thinking and decision-making skills in language learning (Chapter 1) and the examination of employability and social inclusion through digital skills (Chapter 2), Chapter 3 focuses on accessible education and training. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how educational practices can be adapted to meet the needs of NEETs and migrants, ensuring that language learning is inclusive and effective.

It highlights good practices from partner countries, presents case scenarios with practical solutions, and emphasizes the role of digital tools and educational games.

By building on the principles of critical thinking, decision-making, and digital competency discussed earlier, this chapter seeks to create a framework that fosters accessible, engaging, and equitable language learning environments.

Unit 1: Good Practices of Accessible Education in Partner Countries

1.1 Overview of Good Practices

Accessible education practices are critical in creating inclusive learning environments. These practices ensure that all learners, regardless of their background or abilities, have equal opportunities to succeed. Examples from Ireland include the integration of inclusive teaching methods, support services, and the use of technology to accommodate diverse learning needs.

1.2 Good Practices examples

IRELAND

In Ireland, several good practices have been implemented to enhance accessibility in education:

Inclusive Teaching Methods

Schools and training centers use differentiated instruction to cater to the diverse needs of learners. This includes varying teaching styles, using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning strategies, and providing individualized support.



Support Services

Institutions offer various support services such as counseling, language assistance, and mentoring programs to help NEETs and migrants integrate into the learning environment.

Technology Integration

The use of assistive technologies, such as screen readers and speech-to-text software, helps learners with disabilities access educational content. Online learning platforms provide flexible learning opportunities for those who cannot attend in-person classes.

LATVIA

Inclusive Teaching Methods

Latvia has introduced an education programme “Skola 2030” where inclusive education is considered to be a significant milestone in the modern education system. Whilst the idea itself is noble, the main issue here is that despite the provided materials teachers lack practical knowledge and experience working in an inclusive environment. What needs to be taken into account is the fact that there is still some post-soviet mindset present that children with special needs and/or learning difficulties should not attend general education institutions, but go to specialized schools instead.

Support Services

Although the system is changing, the teaching staff is ageing and new teachers often are not capable of coping with the working conditions, in rare cases a mentor or teacher assistant is provided. Around 51% of staff are older than 50 or retired, therefore especially rural areas are most likely to experience incapacity to provide the required services as the lack of teachers and assistants is critical.

Technology Integration

Digital literacy skills within youth in Latvia are quite high as basic knowledge is received at an early age, many preschool institutions and extra curricular activities include robotics , also programming and basic IT lessons are compulsory in schools. Schools are provided with novatory teaching technologies such as smart boards and interactive boards. Due to the pandemics, the government has started providing schools with laptops, some educational institutions use tablets in classes to make the learning process more interactive. At the same time digital skills already are a must for graduates as some pilot exams are already being tested in an online environment.



Inclusive Teaching Methods

Inclusive teaching methods in Bulgaria are focused on the successful inclusion and permanent engagement of every child within the educational system. Efforts include addressing the needs of over 25,000 children with special educational needs (SEN) who are integrated into general education schools. The approach involves differentiated instruction, individualized support plans, and the utilization of teachers' resources to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities, receive the appropriate support to succeed academically and socially.

Support Services

In Bulgaria, several innovative support services are employed to enhance language teaching, particularly for young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and migrant populations. One effective method is Project-Based Learning (PBL), where learners engage in group projects that align with their interests or career goals, such as creating business plans, organizing events, or developing marketing campaigns.

This approach includes activities like writing resumes, role-playing job interviews, and creating family trees for class presentations, allowing students to apply language skills in meaningful contexts.

Another approach is Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), which starts lessons with open-ended questions that encourage learners to research and present their findings, fostering curiosity and active engagement. For instance, students might investigate local cultural practices through interviews and multimedia presentations.

Additionally, Suggestopedia, a Bulgarian-developed method, enhances learning by creating a relaxed, non-threatening environment incorporating music, art, and positive suggestions. This method involves activities such as role-playing with costumes, using classical music during lessons, and decorating classrooms with real-life visuals and posters to immerse students in the learning experience.

Technology Integration

In Bulgaria, technology integration in language learning includes the use of online language platforms, virtual classrooms, and educational apps to enhance the educational experience. Popular platforms like Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise offer interactive exercises, gamification, and progress tracking, allowing students to engage in self-paced learning.



Virtual classrooms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Moodle, and Blackboard facilitate online classes, assignments, and assessments, enabling teachers to create structured learning environments, provide resources, and monitor student progress. Additionally, educational apps like Quizlet and Anki are utilized for vocabulary building and practice, employing flashcards and spaced repetition techniques to help students retain new words and concepts.

Unit 2: Case Scenarios with Possible Solutions and Requirements for Accessible Education

2.1 Case Scenario 1 - Language Barriers

Scenario: A group of migrant learners struggles with language barriers in a vocational training program.

Solution: Implement bilingual education programs where instruction is provided in both the native language and the target language. Use visual aids, simplified language, and peer support to enhance understanding. Provide language support classes focusing on vocational terminology and practical communication skills.



2.2 Case Scenario 2: Digital Divide

Scenario: Learners from rural areas have limited access to digital resources and internet connectivity, affecting their ability to participate in online learning.

Solution: Establish community learning - centres equipped with computers and internet access. Partner with local governments and NGOs to provide affordable internet solutions. Use offline learning materials and ensure that all digital content is downloadable for offline use.

2.3 Requirements for Accessible Education

To ensure accessible education, organizations should:

- **Develop Inclusive Curriculum**

Design curriculum that accommodates diverse learning needs and styles.

- **Provide Training for Educators**

Equip educators with skills to use inclusive teaching methods and technologies.

- **Ensure Physical Accessibility**

Adapt physical environments to be accessible to learners with disabilities.

- **Promote Digital Literacy**

Offer training programs to enhance digital skills among learners and educators.



Unit 3: The Use of Digital Tools and Educational Games

3.1 Digital Tools for Language Learning

Digital tools play a crucial role in making language learning more accessible and engaging. Tools such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise offer interactive language exercises that cater to different learning styles. Additionally, platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams facilitate virtual language classes, making learning accessible to those who cannot attend in person.

3.2 Educational Games

Educational games can significantly enhance motivation and engagement in language learning. Gamification elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards create a fun and competitive learning environment. Examples include:

- **Kahoot!**

(<https://kahoot.com>)

A game-based learning platform that allows educators to create quizzes and interactive lessons.



- **Quizlet**

(<https://quizlet.com/>)

An online tool that uses flashcards and games to help learners memorize vocabulary and language concepts.

- **Minecraft Education Edition**

(<https://education.minecraft.net/en-us>)

An immersive game that teaches language skills through virtual world-building and storytelling.

3.3 Emphasis on Existing Erasmus+ Projects

Many Erasmus+ projects focus on integrating digital tools and games into language education. These projects provide valuable resources and best practices for creating engaging and accessible language learning experiences. Examples include:

- **E-Learning Platforms**

Projects that develop comprehensive online language courses.

https://www.ifo.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/T4TEMP-Toolkit-for-trainers_ENG.pdf

<https://education.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/online-learning-resources/eu-funded-projects>

<https://learn.skills-framework.eu/>



- **Interactive Learning Apps**

Apps that use gamification to teach language skills - **App Your School** (<https://www.appyourschool.eu/>)

- **Virtual Exchange Programs**

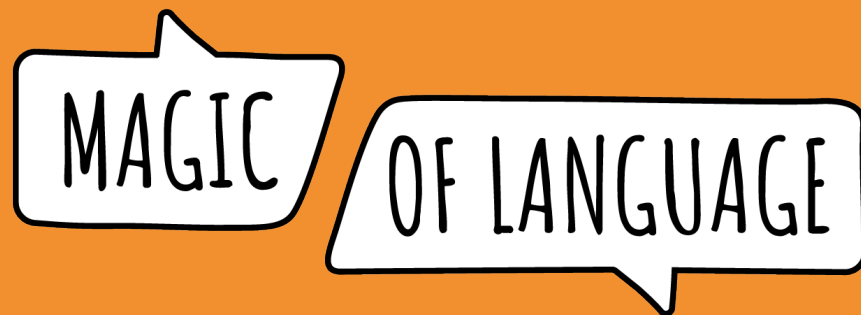
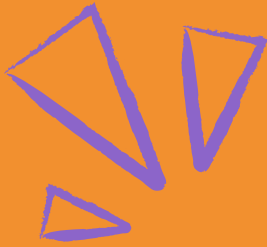
Programs that connect learners from different countries for language practice and cultural exchange.

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-1-HR01-KA105-060690>

Conclusion

Accessible education and training are essential for empowering NEETs and migrants. By adopting inclusive practices, leveraging technology, and integrating gamification, educators can create engaging and supportive learning environments. The insights and examples from Bulgaria, Ireland, and Latvia, combined with the collaborative efforts of Erasmus+ projects, provide a robust framework for enhancing language learning accessibility across Europe. (<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/erasmus-and-epale-framework-inclusion>)

MAGIC OF LANGUAGE



BG: edu-compass.com
IE: humaninhub.com
LV: <https://valodumape.lv>

"Funded/Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, European Commission or [name of the granting authority (Agency for International Programs for Youth)]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."