

Heinrich-Heine-Gymnasium Köln Plur>E needs analysis report

Important data of our school:

- Secondary School, grades 5-12 (A-level)
- Number of students: about 800, Students' range of age: 10 – 18 years
- Number of teachers: 65
- about 50% of our students come from a migrant background, most first languages spoken by learners (apart from German) are Turkish, Russian, Albanian, Kurdish, Arabic and others; many students speak their first languages at home
- subjects: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin
- Cambridge Proficiency/DELTA
- German is taught as a Foreign Language in an international group of learners: the German language Diploma DSD I (A2/B1) is implemented

Our needs analysis aimed to investigate the students' and teachers' views on multilingualism and multilingual projects. In general, there is a very positive attitude towards plurilingualism and the learning of multiple languages. English is the dominant learned modern language, followed by other modern languages like Spanish and French, but also Italian.

The figures of our evaluation clearly show that our school -situated in a multicultural context- is more and more developing into a multilingual and multicultural setting, as pupils with migration histories attend the school in an increasing number. However, pupils don't express the wish that their family languages should be offered in school. Only few want to master a language with the intention to familiarise with the culture and country of origin of their families and to be able to talk to relatives. They seem to be very motivated to study and learn languages that might help them in the globalised professional world of their future. These are believed to be English in the first place, Chinese, Spanish and for some, Arabic. The school's curriculum does not include any of the languages that our students with migrant background speak as their first language – this is not only a mismatch regarding appreciation but as a possible source to further plurilingualism.

Colleagues in general are aware of the importance of language teaching, the necessity of plurilingual knowledge in the future and of the actual problems/desirable changes in language teaching in our school. However, the fact that only few colleagues took part in our survey seems to underline the lack of awareness of the importance of plurilingualism/the awareness of existing plurilingualism in our school.

Students wish alternative learning / teaching methods such as CLIL, exchange programs, internship abroad, personal experiences and diversified methods (making languages more accessible and 'alive'), and a stronger focus on everyday situations and oral communication.

For our immigrant students the majority language is very important. The needs analysis shows that there is a consensus among immigrant students as well as teachers regarding the need for improvement and further development of German speaking and writing skills. In the multilingual drama group this focus on German became more and more evident. They were keen on playing in German, whereas the regular students enjoyed playing in different languages, f.i. English, French or Polish according to the profile of their role. The students of the international preparatory class wanted to be more integrated and more proficient using German as main language as well as the regular students. This influences the classroom organisation more and more and calls for the institution of additional linguistic support for those who need it.

