

Title of example of practice: Collaboration between a primary school teacher (Lourdes Magallon), two secondary teachers (Isabel Serrano and Carmen Tirado) and a university lecturer (Ana Artigas) in the design of the new primary and secondary languages curricula at the request of the education authorities of the “Comunidad Autonoma de Aragon”, following the Spanish national guidelines.

The new primary and secondary curricula were approved and came into effect in academic year 2007-8. The insights gained from this collaborative work are being considered in the new initial language teacher curriculum of the University of Zaragoza to start next year 2009-10.

Author

(i.e. details of LanQua partner submitting example of practice):

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Institution and initiating department/faculty

(i.e. where example of practice takes/took place):

Dirección General de Política Educativa. Departamento de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Gobierno de Aragon. This was the Department of the “Gobierno de Aragon” which asked us to elaborate the curricula for primary and secondary. It was a two year-collaborative work.

Departments/faculties in which initiative implemented/to be implemented:

Primary and secondary schools and the Faculty of Education of the University of Zaragoza

Abstract

(QA question: What are/were you trying to do?)

We thought there had been a lack of coordination between primary, secondary and university in the design and implementation of language curricula.

The new Spanish legislation makes the learning of a foreign language compulsory from age 6 up to the end of secondary education.

When students go to university and enrol on a languages education course, their communicative competence in the foreign language is not as good as ten years of learning the language could imply.

We analysed different factors which could explain the situation and decided to work together to look for ‘some’ improvements in the new curricula.

Background – contextual issues giving rise to the initiative

(QA questions: Why are/were you trying to do it? / What are/were the aims and objectives?)

Contextual issues

New legislation in the first place as explained above and the fact that the education authorities contacted us.

Our main aims and concerns were to establish a smooth transition from primary to secondary and university. We felt each of us had a lot of ideas to share, each from our own practising context.

Description of activity or initiative

(QA question: How is/was the activity/initiative implemented?)

This very collaborative work had various consequences:

1. For the first time in our 'Comunidad Autonoma de Aragon' and I dare say in Spain, teachers from primary, secondary and university came together to contribute ideas for the new curricula
2. We managed to establish a common terminology to label learning outcomes
3. For the first time as well, we elaborated a smooth transition between primary and secondary
4. We also managed to make a compromise between the official requirements and our experience as teachers

Evaluative comments

(QA questions: What are/were the outcomes? What is/was the impact? Is/was the activity/initiative successful? How do you know whether or not it works/worked?)

The outcomes were, as mentioned above, a coherent curriculum between primary and secondary and a clear idea about what the initial language teacher curriculum should be like.

The impact is clear: the education authorities approved the curricula and made it compulsory for primary and secondary schools.

Advice to others

Share ideas, collaborate, all of us in teacher education, which obviously includes primary and secondary have a say in language teacher education.

What we did meant many meetings and hard work for two years but we enjoyed the process and learned a lot from each other.

Reflection/any other comments

QA question: Is/was that the best way to do it? Why/why not? What improvements or adjustments are needed?

Further details

e.g. web links; relevant references/publications; alternative contact names