

# Language for Work

## The contribution of work-related second language learning towards integration of adult migrants

Labour market inclusion is a primary goal of integration policy. For millions of adult migrants in Europe, learning the language of the country of residence (L2) is a key enabler of access to and progression within the labour market.

The Language for Work Network (LfW) aims to promote and develop this important area of linguistic integration. Created through a project funded by the Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, this international network brings together researchers, practitioners, policy makers and others from the field of vocational learning and skills. Through its website and programme of activities, LfW shares research, policy and practice across Europe, supporting the full range of practitioners engaged in this field.

### Why work-related L2 learning?

The logic chain

1. Integration of migrants is essential for society
2. Work is central to migrant integration
3. Communication is central to modern work practices\*
4. The ability to communicate effectively at work is crucial for migrants, employers, wider society
5. Work-related language learning matters!

\*Workers need to

- Understand work, safety and quality issues
- Understand workplace rights and responsibilities
- Participate in relevant social networks
- Access training, etc., to cope with change and progress

And more...

### Complex, boundary crossing

Work-related L2 learning is complex and boundary crossing – this field encompasses work, migration, intercultural communication, social policy, learning, language, literacy, linguistics, labour market, people management...and more.

It occurs in a range of contexts, including

- Pre-employment L2 learning for immigrants, also emigrants
- L2 learning in vocational schools
- Work-related learning in integration courses
- L2 learning for specific occupational areas, qualifications
- Workplace L2 learning

It is multi-dimensional, many faceted – but its various strands are strongly connected.

### In a nutshell

L2 development for, at and, particularly, through work has proved an efficient and sustainable instrument towards integration. Europe needs policies to support it!

### Work as a vehicle for language learning

With the right support, work can provide an effective vehicle for language learning.

#### What do language learners need?

- Encouragement and support to learn
- Exposure to authentic language, spoken & written
- Opportunity to interact in the language, spoken & written
- Help to understand the form of the language
- Help to develop effective personal learning strategies
- Rewards that encourage persistence

#### What does the workplace offer?

- Structured opportunities to communicate linked to role & task, team work, customer service, safety & quality management etc.
- Structures of support through e.g. management, supervision, teamwork, learning and development



Pictures by Lars Bergstroem (centre), Mara Monetti (right and left)

### Language for Work Network

A European learning network for practitioners supporting work-related language development for migrants and ethnic minorities

Are you involved in

- work-related language provision and/or support?
- related research and development?
- linguistic integration of adult migrants?
- workforce or workplace development?
- related policy development and/or administration?

**Join the network to share and develop your practice**

### Two ECML Language for Work projects

#### Developing migrants' language competences at the workplace (2012-2015)

**Aim:** Network of professionals across Europe

**Rationale:** Work-related L2 learning is an emerging field. There are common concerns across Europe, but diverse responses. A professional development network can help to share research, practice, shape policy and enable more effective local responses.

**Outcomes:** A website with a resource centre and a community section to support active networking (currently more than 50 members from over 20 countries).

#### Tools for professional development (2016-2018)

**Aim:** Foster professional development in the field of work-related L2 learning for adult migrants and ethnic minorities

**Rationale:** Currently, new approaches are emerging across Europe with a potential to significantly widen participation. Some build on established methodologies. Others are wholly innovative, focusing on non-formal and informal learning. All make new professional demands on practitioners.

**Objectives:** Create tools and resources to make these new approaches accessible to practitioners, including an online 'quick guide', an expandable compendium of approaches, an online resource bank and consultancy for decision-makers.

## Join the Language for Work Network to share and develop your practice

[www.ecml.at/languageforwork](http://www.ecml.at/languageforwork)