

Summary of Workshop A – Digital media in literacy/in second language acquisition by refugees

Speakers: **Bettina Fruchtmann and Anna Lena Schattenhofer** presented the ‘Community Reporters’ project, which is intended to encourage people to go public with stories from their everyday lives. Courses on this topic which are aimed at refugees are offered at the Volkshochschule [adult education centre] in Cologne.

Ronnit Wilmersdörffer and David Demmel presented the language app Serlo ABC. The app provides an intuitive literacy course on smartphones, which is aimed especially at illiterate individuals with no prior knowledge of the German language.

Moderation: Silke Betray, National Agency ‘Education for Europe’ at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training / National Coordination Point for the European Agenda for Adult Learning

Two projects that help refugees with literacy and with learning a second language got the chance to introduce themselves at the workshop. Both projects showed very different approaches and inroads to this.

Bettina Fruchtmann and Anna Lena Schattenhofer, Community Reporters

Community Reporting involves telling stories about moving experiences and subjects. Different media can be used, such as videos, written articles, photos or sound recordings. The developed products can then be shared on the collective website of the Community Reporters.

Gary Copitch developed and established the concept of Community Reporting in 2008 in Manchester. Since then, the online community has several thousand members in England and Europe.

The adult education centre in Cologne offers courses that are specifically aimed at the needs of refugees. They start with media workshops where they are taught the necessary tools for Community Reporting. This includes topics such as holding an interview or using certain types of media. Adequately equipped, the participants in these courses can now apply journalistic methods and work on topics that motivate them from their everyday lives.

The concept itself arose from social work. Basic principles such as social orientation, low acceptance threshold, the direct relevance to everyday life and recourse to a more affective form of expression, however, offer almost perfect conditions for educational work with target groups that previously could not be reached. This is why this kind of format is suitable for refugees, because a lot of the work is done through pictures. This means that language barriers become less important and personal contact takes on a more significant role. This applies to the teaching and learning situation and participants’ cooperation with one another, but also in establishing informal gatherings for the Community Reporters. The online community offers additional networking based on location.

Ronnit Wilmersdörffer and David Demmel, Serlo ABC

Serlo is a non-profit organisation that develops free digital learning resources. It is financed solely by donations and aid money, has around 5.3 million users and currently employs 10.5 full-time equivalents. Against the backdrop of unequal educational opportunities, which is linked to access to learning resources and tutoring services, Serlo's vision is to make high-quality education available for free worldwide. Serlo encompasses different topics aimed at school subjects for which there is already an extensive amount of digital learning resources.

A free, mobile literacy tool was developed: **Serlo ABC**. There are not yet any German language learning opportunities that are largely free of prerequisites.

The platform is aimed at young refugees and young adults who are considered functional illiterates. The development process took into account the fact that the app should be appropriate for its target group and relevant to everyday life. The tool is supposed to be straightforward to use, regardless of the native language of its user. This is mainly ensured through the use of image and video content. The app has been programmed in such a way that it can also be used offline. This takes into account any possible access barriers, such as limited mobile data and not having Wi-Fi in their accommodation.

Just like the other digital learning resources by Serlo, Serlo ABC is also without charge and licence-free. The app is thus an appropriate tool for self-study. However, it can also be used in a professional capacity, such as in voluntary language and primary education services.

Both presented projects show that digital media is not used as an end in itself. This means that recourse to audio-visual presentations and heterogeneous forms of expression of the learning group and the various starting positions can be appropriately taken into account. In both cases, digital learning is more than the digitisation of existing analogous opportunities. Both projects show how the use of digital media can be used meaningfully in order to overcome access barriers.

<https://communityreporter.net/>

<https://de.serlo.org/abc>

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