

**EU-Project**

**Alphatrain  
Literacy Training for Immigrants in Europe**

# **Evaluation Report**

**by**

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## A. Summary description of the projects *Re/Alphabetisierung für ImmigrantInnen* (ESF) and *Alphatrain* (EU)

### The Project *Re/Alphabetisierung für ImmigrantInnen*

**Project promoter:** Continuing Education Office, Department for German Culture and Family, Autonomous Province of Bolzano - South Tyrol

**Project coordinator:** Dr. Elisabeth Ramoser

**Funding:** European Social Fund (ESF)

**Premises:** Reading and writing skills are essential cultural prerequisites of our society. In European countries, illiteracy brings with it the exclusion from cultural society, massive social disadvantages, and isolation. Thus, literacy training programs are an invaluable step towards ensuring the social integration of the disadvantaged group of functional / secondary illiterates.<sup>1</sup>

### The literacy training course

**Goals:** to impart reading and writing skills and promote listening and verbal expression skills. These basic competencies are to be seen as prerequisites for living independently, being able to master daily tasks and for finding employment.

**Subject matter:** relevant and target group specific everyday subjects

**Target group:** primarily or secondarily illiterate immigrants past school age from non-EU countries

#### **Course structure:**

2 parallel courses with a high degree of internal differentiation and personalization

**Course size:** approx. 6 people per course

#### **Instructors per group:**

1 language teacher

1 social educator

1 cultural mediator (for a limited amount of hours)

**Course fee:** none

**Course duration:** October 2003 to June 2004

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<sup>1</sup> c.f. the project description of the application to the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and EU-Youth programs (4/2002).

**Course schedule:** total of 280 course hours: 4 modules 70 lessons each, 2 hours on 5 days per week.

**Necessary adaptations:**

Due to the participants' previous knowledge of the Italian language, literacy training will be carried through in Italian. German and elements of South Tyrolean colloquial language are to be introduced after conclusion of the literacy training.

A follow-up course is planned for the autumn of 2004.

**The EU project *Alphatrain***

The goal of this project is to develop an innovative, multi-disciplinary method of motivation and learning, in this case for immigrants in Bolzano/South Tyrol/Italy, in cooperation with international partners. In conjunction with the use of new media, this method is to awaken an interest in reading and writing in functional / secondary illiterates and thus to help them integrate themselves better into the society they live in. What will be innovative about it is that no fixed solutions will be prescribed, but instead flexible single modules will be developed and improved upon within the project groups themselves and in continuous exchange between the transnational partner organizations.

In each partner country (Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain), two project phases will be carried through with a target group. Further expected results of this project are to verify the applicability of the method developed to other illiterate target groups in Europe, and to create/increase awareness of the specificity of adult literacy training in methodology and teacher training.

**ICT-Tools**

**(special *Alphatrain*-program in Bolzano)<sup>2</sup>**

**SMS-messaging**

The immigrants participating in *Re/Alphabetisierung von ImmigrantInnen*, an ESF literacy training course for immigrants, have their own cell phone. They make use of it as simply as possible, because they are capable of dialing digits but can write neither names nor words. During the second and third course modules, the participants learn how to use the cell phone for the following tasks:

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<sup>2</sup> following an idea of project coordinator Elisabeth Ramoser

- as a name registry with phone numbers, into which the PART add their contacts, learning to save and retrieve them for use,
- as a means of communication between teachers and participants, for example in case of schedule alterations, etc.,
- as a means of communication amongst the participants themselves.

**Goals:**

To learn how to use the cell phone as an address book or as a means of communication, how to dial numbers or press buttons in general, the application of the alphabet, how to write SMS, send and read SMS, understand SMS.

**Job-Search on the Internet**

Many of the immigrants attending the *Re/Alpha* course expect literacy training and, beyond that, also to improve their language skills so that they can attain a higher professional qualification, which in turn is to facilitate their job search. The local Employment Agency in Bolzano has created a job database that is accessible to everyone by computer. The participants are to be familiarized with the website and learn to use it. Following this, a class excursion to the Employment Agency office is planned, during which they are to apply practically what they have learned in theory; they are to register themselves in the job database. This activity is extremely relevant to their lives and motivating, since several participants are searching for a workplace and to date were not able to check the job offers listed on the Employment Agency's website.

**Goals:**

Acquiring first simple computer skills, getting to know the Employment Agency's website, transferring the theoretical exercise into practice on the PC, reading the internet pages, learning to read the job database in detail.

## B. Preface to the Evaluation Report

The *Evaluation Concept* of Friedrich Scheuermann lists the single evaluation parameters for *Alphatraining*. The *Project overview* contains the following goals:

- *“to design and develop an innovative multi-disciplinary learning and motivation method for language training of immigrants;*
- *Alphatraining also intends to provide useful resources for teachers in language training of immigrants;*
- *Language learning activities are implemented with the use of ICT in order to promote learner’s autonomy;*
- *Nevertheless the aim of the project is not teaching computer literacy;*
- *The project partners want to develop a multi-disciplinary method which is applicable with different target groups of functional/secondary illiterate so that not only a regional but also a European added value is made by the transferability of the method;*
- *A method to increase interest in reading and writing and to help them to integrate better in the society and additionally to improve competencies in using new media;*
- *Main attention is put on the fighting of racism, xenophobia and violence.”*

The structure of the present evaluation report reflects the evaluation framework suggested by F. Scheuermann, which aims at standardizing the data collected by all the EU partners. All the results are to be collected centrally to facilitate the establishment of a common network.

By virtue of my own professional activity, I have especially focused upon the evaluative aspects involving the participants' increased learning motivation by means of practical and true-to-life ICT activities, with regard to the teaching techniques themselves as well as the observable effect of their implementation. I have nevertheless taken all of the above-mentioned evaluation goals into consideration in my observations. I have made some adaptations to the evaluation report index, the instructors' questionnaires and the interviews of participants.

The present report could not take into account all of the methodological-didactic, social education and intercultural or trans-cultural aspects of a literacy training course

for adult immigrants. A more detailed analysis of these areas, however, would be especially interesting for follow-up projects of this kind.

### C. Abbreviations

<b>PART</b>	Participant, participants, both genders
<b>INST</b>	Instructor, instructors, both genders
<b>LT</b>	Language teacher, language teachers, both genders
<b>SE</b>	Social educator, social educators, both genders
<b>CM</b>	Cultural mediator, both genders
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>PC</b>	Personal Computer
<b>SMS</b>	Short Message Service
<b><i>Re/Alpha</i></b>	<i>Re/Alphabetisierungskurs für ImmigrantInnen</i> , ESF Literacy training course for immigrants

## D. Evaluation Report of *Alphatrain* in Bolzano

### 1. Target Group

For the evaluation of the *Alphatrain* project, the target group consisted of primary, functional and secondary illiterates. The following PART actively took part in the *Alphatrain* project, while others unfortunately were absent from the ICT units for different reasons:

	First name	age / gender / origin / learning history <sup>3</sup>	<i>Alphatrain</i>
1.	<b>Ibrahim</b>	25 years old, male, from Mosul (Iraq); Languages: Kurdish, Arabic, Italian (very little); primary illiterate: he has never attended a school.	<b>SMS</b> <b>PC</b>
2.	<b>Manjela</b>	29 years old, female, from former Yugoslavia; Languages: Serbo-Croatian, Italian, German (a little); primary illiterate: she attended school for one year.	<b>PC</b>
3.	<b>Marsela</b>	22 years old, female, from Albania; Languages: Albanian, Italian; functional illiterate: she attended primary school for 4 years in Albania	<b>PC</b>
4.	<b>Bajramsa</b>	30 years old, female, from Skopje (Macedonia); Languages: Romany, Serbo-Croatian, Italian. primary illiterate.	<b>PC</b>

<sup>3</sup> It was striking that in some cases PART had attended school for a few years but then had not finished it, and according to their own accounts had only been able / been allowed / had wanted to attend school rather irregularly.

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<b>5.</b>	<b>Gulten</b>	35 years old, female, from Skopje (Macedonia); Languages: Serbo-Croatian, Italian. functional illiterate: she attended compulsory school for 6 years.	<b>PC</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Elena</b>	24 years old, female, from Moldova; Languages: Moldovan, Italian. Secondary illiterate: she attended compulsory school for 9 years.	<b>PC</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Fetije</b>	42 years old, female, from Kosovo; Languages: Serbo-Croatian, Italian (very little); Secondary illiterate: she attended compulsory school for 7 years.	<b>PC</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Manee</b>	32 years old, female, from Sukhothai (Thailand); Languages: Thai, English, German (a little) Secondary illiterate: she attended and finished compulsory school in Thailand.	<b>SMS</b> <b>PC</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Sevdija</b>	25 years old, female, from Kumanovo (Macedonia); Languages: Romany, Serbo-Croatian, Italian, German (very little); primary illiterate.	<b>SMS</b> <b>PC</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Bahija</b>	41 years old, female, from Ouled M'Rah (Morocco); Languages: Arabic, Italian; primary illiterate: she attended school in Morocco for 4 years.	<b>SMS</b> <b>PC</b>

## **2. Alpha-Space**

### **2.1. Classroom**

The teachers and participants had a total of two rooms at their disposal at KAOS, the main course location in Bolzano. These consisted of one larger room, a smaller room, a bathroom and a balcony. In the larger room there was a table that formed a large rectangle in the room. Chairs were arranged around this table. On the walls behind the chairs there were pin boards. Unfortunately, freedom of movement was very limited around the table: because of a few plants, a stack of chairs, and the proximity of the walls there was little space. At the other end of the room there was a flip chart, further pin boards, a TV set with video recorder, a shelf and a hallstand.

In the second room, there were tables grouped in rectangular form. Further tables were placed along one wall with 3 computers (older models) without internet access. Along another wall there were shelves in which the INST could place the instruction materials. Under the window there was another small desk. In this room there was also very little freedom of movement due to lack of space.

There were no separate teachers' and students' rooms. Both rooms were used for classes and / or meetings according to necessity. Due to the group-internal differentiation in lesson material, the PART often separated. Thus, sometimes both rooms were used for classes at the same time by small groups. The PC's were mainly used to familiarize the PART with the hardware and to perform first writing exercises in the form of word processing (with the *Word* program).

### **2.2. Computer room at the Continuing Education Office**

Since the computers in the classrooms did not have internet access, it was necessary to make use of a computer room at the Continuing Education Office for the ICT-activity 'Employment Agency registration'. This surely had the advantage that the PART experienced a certain break from the 'normal' course. Some of them spoke with real pride about having attended a 'computer course'.<sup>4</sup> The PART were especially impressed by the 'highly modern', technologically fitted PC room at the Office and felt like they were at a 'real' school. Specifically, they felt that they were being taken very seriously as learners, just like at a 'normal' further education course. As however the room at the Office was by no means reserved exclusively for use by

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<sup>4</sup> taken from statements made in the recorded PART interviews.

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the *RE/ALPHA* course, a fixed schedule had to be kept to. As I drove them home to the Roma settlement, a few of the participants told me that they would have liked to practice there much more often.

The Office course room consisted of two rows of tables facing each other with one computer per seat. A total of 14 PCs was in place. A view of the central computer's screen could be projected onto a large screen that was easily visible from all seats, making it possible to follow all the single steps and work processes of a given task. There was a flip chart at the front end of the room. In May and June, the room was also greatly appreciated by everyone for its air conditioning.

### 3. Description of the content and methods of the ICT activities

#### 3.1. Starting point

**Structuring the lessons** of the *RE/ALPHA* courses became a complex matter as early as autumn 2003 due to the PART's heterogeneity, and did not seem to truly accommodate the real-life necessities of the PART, an impression culled from several lesson observations and meetings with the INST.

Until then, **the methods and subject matter specific to teaching immigrants** had been implemented very sparsely, as for instance *'a familiarity with the target group / the participants, the reflection of one's own culture and identity, a consciousness for existing stereotypes and for one's own ethnocentric patterns of behaviour, the clarification of one's own attitude towards the Foreign, the promotion of motivation by means of immigrant-adequate subject matter, the application of language teaching techniques specific to a multilingual context, awakening interest for and joy with communicative, active language learning, fostering the ability to act and communicate within the South Tyrolean context, reflecting culture-specific language rituals and communication strategies'*.<sup>5</sup> By means of the ICT activities, the INST also planned to promote the mentioned themes.

The expectations of an adult illiterate largely exceed the mere learning of reading and writing. I deduce this from the recorded admission talks as well as from conversations with single participants when I sat in on lessons.

#### 3.2. Planned goals

**Task-based classes:** task-based lessons are to be counted to the forms of autonomous learning available to foreign language teaching. Learners work on a clearly defined task. It is important that they either leave the classroom or that local experts be invited into the classroom to complete their project. In fulfilling their task, they have to deal with real-life issues, are in contact with the outside world, and independently acquire strategies of coping with and influencing it. In the course of the project, there are sessions dedicated to the reflection of partial and end results. The acquisition of working techniques can also be part of a project assignment: for example the summarization of texts, different kinds of publication (bulletin boards/collages), or interviewing. By didactic means the INST challenge the PART to

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<sup>5</sup> c.f. the study *Analyse im Rahmen des Projekts „Sprach- und Kulturvermittlung an ImmigrantInnen“*, 2002.

learn other skills beyond the acquisition of subject matter, and the tasks have a direct relevance to real life. Task-based learning further is useful in promoting the *Alphatrain* - goal of independent learning.

**The practical orientation** of the language course towards the foreign employees' everyday needs of being able to orientate themselves here in this country and to communicate with the local people was a further focal point of the ICT activities. In intensive language training, i.e. within our language course model, the requirement of rapid learning progress and practical applicability is of essential importance.

**Transcultural communication learning**<sup>6</sup> was to be implemented by means of *Alphatrain* activities as a way of including 'cultural education' in courses for immigrants, whereby 'culture' is to be understood primarily as everyday culture, focusing on everyday dealings with the world. Our cultural understanding is gradually formed by the enactment of seemingly trivial everyday actions. In this way, a specifically orientated view and value system is formed, through which we subsequently filter our impressions and perceptions. By slipping into roles that are foreign to us, we experience a change of perspective that allows us access to the world of the other person on an emotional level. This experience gives us the opportunity of expanding our habitual understanding of the world and to thus create a new basis of cultural perception.

**An internal differentiation of learning phases** was necessary to take the heterogeneity of the course group's previous knowledge into account. Since there were two instructors, a LT and a SE, and occasionally a third person, the CM, per course group with a maximum of 6-8 PART, it was possible to plan and implement individualized and participant-orientated lessons.

The following goals were set **in terms of literacy training**: repetition and consolidation of already learned reading and writing skills in Italian, practical application of the Italian written language learned, an introduction first to the oral and

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<sup>6</sup> Transcultural communication learning is made up of various different teaching techniques from theater pedagogy and requires special training. Single elements however can nevertheless be partially integrated into one's own teaching.

then to the written language of German, contrastive / multilingual use of oral language, contrastive, German-Italian application of the Latin alphabet.

For this target group, according to the admission talks and interviews, **relevant subject matter** was: getting around in the city of Bolzano (bilingual), cell phone: writing and reading SMS, job search/application: being able to understand and fill out a printed (bilingual) registration form, working with a concrete example at the computer, getting to know the Employment Agency's website and to practice registering online.

**Interactive tasks:** the interaction between learners was focused upon, and the activities were directed towards student-centred communication (instead of student reactions to teacher impulses).

**Communicative tasks:** the enjoyment of communicative, task-based language training was promoted, and confidence in one's own abilities was fostered.

By means of **intercultural communication** tasks, the ability to perceive the foreign cultural reality from a variety of perspectives was to be developed. Empathy and critical tolerance towards the foreign culture and its people were the subject of several activities.

**The planned duration of the course** is two months. First, approximately 3 weeks of in-class preparation are planned, followed by 4-5 meetings outside the classroom in the old city centre and 3-4 meetings at the computer room of the Continuing education Office. At the last meeting, a 'treasure hunt' will lead the PART to a little 'coffee klatsch' with coffee/tea and cake at a city coffee house. Speakers from the job centre will be invited and will be interviewed by the PART. A total of 70 hours of classes will be necessary. I evaluated the course during the task-based lessons by means of accompanying and sitting in on lessons. The project was directed in terms of theoretical background and of content by the lesson plans presented here, a direct participation in the treasure hunt and the computer registration.

**Subject matter and tasks were distributed amongst the INST:** in accordance with the specific competences of each teacher, for lessons planned alone as well as for co-teaching situations.

### **3.3. Reading and writing SMS. A teaching suggestion**

**Warm-up / Introduction.** As a first step, during lesson time find out whether all PART have a cell phone, what role it plays in their private and possibly also professional lives, since when they own one. How do they use it? What typical phrases do they already make use of by SMS, which would they like to be able to use? These phrases are first to be collected orally and then to be written down. It is recommended to first find out what the PART already know and in which language(s). I then suggest first to formulate SMS in Italian, after that in German, and to write some of them down only much later. The expressions should be practiced phonetically and be spoken in the group within the context of the conversation and then singly, in conjunction with different pronunciation exercises.

**Instructions for use.** As a second step, the instructions for using the different cell phones present in class are to be discussed. Since all the PART own different cell phones, first each set of instructions must be checked individually. The PART could then perhaps also give a review of the use of their own cell phone. Before this, the INST should use a toy cell phone to describe and name the cell phone buttons. The PART can make a stencil or a drawing to acquaint themselves with the single cell phone menus and display.

**Utilization.** Finally, there is to be a practical exercise: first communications by SMS in the classroom. To minimize costs, I would suggest that the INST cell phones be used for sending the SMS.

**Getting around in South Tyrol / Bolzano.** A suggested activity as an introduction to intercultural knowledge of the area is to make a 'personal map of South Tyrol'. This method is also called making a "mental map", c.f. Pauldrach (1992, p.6). The PART should fill out an empty outline of South Tyrol with items (places, things, people, occurrences, dates, etc.) that relate them to the area. Of course, in this case it is not important that cities and such be placed with geographical accuracy, but they should instead represent an expression of each person's individual experiences and images of South Tyrol. The maps fashioned in this way are to be hung up, viewed, and talked

about in the group. Drawing such a personal map of South Tyrol brings the following to light: that the image of a country or other culture is formed by means of several personal and collective experiences, encounters, traditions. Further, that the image of a country is not always coherent, but in many ways rather ambivalent. And, not leastly, that images of foreign lands are often already within us, and that it is helpful to become conscious of them. With this simple activity, INST and PART alike experience that perception is always an interpretation of what has been seen within the context of one's own experiences, one's own cultural knowledge. It could be helpful to have authentic picture material (cutouts from South Tyrolean magazines, i.e., in German, Italian, Ladin) of people, places, landscapes, buildings, traditions, etc. at hand. The PART could also paste these pictures like collages into their maps.

In another lesson, a **city map** of the inner city of Bolzano with bilingual street name designations is to be used, accompanied by writing and reading tasks.

**How does one ask for directions?** Once again, first it must be established whether to do this lesson in Italian, in German, or in simplified form in both languages. The communicative situation should again be enacted orally first by planning simulations and role games. The game 'blind man's buff' (careful, not everyone enjoys this) is also very good for practice, for example to add variety to the lesson.

**Combining the different exercises:** in preparation for the final 'real' treasure hunt by SMS, simple instructions for a hypothetical treasure hunt in the inner city are practiced.

### **Treasure Hunt by SMS**

**Materials** needed are an inner city map of Bolzano, a vocabulary list of useful specific terms & phrases that have been discussed in class, and a few activated cell phones. SE and CM should find out whether there is a café that could be used as ending point, and which the PART would otherwise, perhaps out of 'insecurity', not go to themselves.

**Implementation.** Each PART works alone, unless someone needs the help of another PART or an INST. Initial meeting point is the course location, from where everyone goes to a central point that is familiar to all, and that will be the starting point of the hunt (in the case of Bolzano: Theatre at the Verdiplatz). Each PART needs a cell phone and a city map.

The INST accompany their PART. As soon as all PART have arrived at the starting point, they write an SMS to an INST who has not come along. As soon as the O.K. sign has come from a PART, the INST writes the PART one of the SMS that have been practiced in the classroom.

E.g., *Go to Waltherplatz No. 8. What is the store's name there? And further, Go to Laubengasse No. 120! What can I buy at that shop?*

As soon as the PART answers by SMS, the next place is passed through. The last instruction takes the PART to the afore-mentioned city café. Arriving there, all the PART can sit together comfortably and celebrate their success. The level of difficulty and the quantity of instructions is to be determined by the INST depending on each PART's ability; the phrases/instructions/questions should have been thoroughly practiced during the course.

#### **3.4. Computerized registration at the Employment Agency. A teaching suggestion**

**Implementation.** The INST should tell the PART clearly that the ICT activity is not meant to be a computer course, but that they will learn specific PC skills that will enable them to register at the Employment Agency's job marketplace. This task is meant to foster the PART's self-confidence and give them the satisfaction of already being able to practice writing at the computer in the midst of their literacy training.

**Warm-up / Introduction.** Similarly to the cell phone lessons, as a first step the machine must be introduced didactically. What do the PART know, what are they afraid of? First there should be a very general explanation of the hardware. What are the single parts' names, how does one write them? All this again is first to be accomplished by means of drawings and pictures, then using the computers at the course headquarters and finally those of the Office's computer room. The PART are shown how to turn on the computer, how one must wait for the system to load, and are familiarized with the desktop containing a few symbols. It is enough to have only a few symbols visible, Word, Excel, Internet. It is also advisable to practice using the mouse separately. It would be better to work with a print-out of the registration page before making use of the real online Employment Agency's registration page. The task to be accomplished is to fill out a form. Firstly, practice on paper, then a few times at the computer at course headquarters, and then at least once in the Office computer room. Probably the presence of all INST will be necessary here so that

each PART can be assisted. An in-class appointment with a speaker of the Employment Agency is to be made only after the PART have learnt the whole process and think they have mastered the ICT activity. Then, the PART can tell them, which difficulties they had as former illiterates with registering, and perhaps they will also want to ask questions. The interview can be prepared beforehand.

**Excursion.** The next step is to go to the agency office itself.

**Getting to know official authorities.** Another possible suggestion for task-based lessons is to depict one's own or others' experience with official authorities, possibly also using photographs. PART are to describe people and authorities, recount stories from their lives, and talk about different institutions, their organizations, and how they work.

## 4. Implementation of the pilot activities

### 4.1. Necessary adaptations

An adaptation or revision of the activities planned became necessary for the following reasons:

**The cultural heterogeneity of the participants.** The INST and I discussed the belated beginning of the ICT activities during a meeting. The SE expressed the opinion that single PART would not want to leave the classroom, on the one hand, because it was still very cold in February/March, and on the other, because the PART preferred to 'learn' and 'be taught' in a 'concentrated' way in an 'established' classroom.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, I did not verify to what extent these truly were the thoughts and wishes of the PART, and not of the INST themselves. How this issue is dealt with to my view is very instructive and in future should be taken into closer account. A possible explanation of the belated and merely hesitant implementation of the *Alphatrain* activities may be that at the time their 'usefulness' was not fully recognized, according to the INST by the PART (in my opinion however by the INST themselves).

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<sup>7</sup> Personally, I have many reservations about this attitude. The image each PART has of a teacher depends upon many different factors (degree of socialization, school experience in their home country, learning history, etc.). Teachers will probably never be able to fulfill all expectations as to what school is to be at all times. Instead, they should concentrate upon a clear depiction of their own methodological convictions. For more on teacher-student relationships, cf. the following chapter of: BARKOWSKY (1986: S.17-40).

In my view, this is to be accounted for by the transparency, or non-transparency, in conveying the project's goals. Perhaps there was too little effort or enthusiasm in explaining what was to be achieved by the activities outside the classroom to the PART (or to the INST?). Perhaps however the suggestion of these 'extracurricular' activities did not harmonize with the INST's teaching plans.<sup>8</sup> It be mentioned, however, that all INST present at the time had basically agreed upon implementing the ICT activities and had willingly agreed to participate in the pilot project. Nevertheless, a few weeks afterwards, there were often objections to the activities, as for example those of a social educator, who stated that *"at the moment the planned [ICT] activities seem to be too ambitious"*.

For these reasons, the ICT implementation was greatly slowed down and only partially included in the course plans. This is something to give greater attention to in a follow-up project.<sup>9</sup>

**The variability in class attendance:** One factor of insecurity in such an intensive, long-termed course model is the irregular attendance of the PART. This fact must be taken into account in the planning of the course's content. The irregularity makes a progression in content more difficult. As soon as this is recognized, it is necessary for the INST to overcome it by nevertheless continuing the planned activity. One means of promoting regular attendance is also the friendly reminder that the course is a continuing process and that constancy and endurance are prerequisites for good learning progress. That however does not mean it would be superfluous to rethink the course's length and hours for this target group.

**The different degrees of literacy:** from the beginning, the course group already consisted of functional as well as secondary illiterates. Then, in February, a primary illiterate (Ibrahim) joined the group. Obviously, this heterogeneity influences the learning program. What is easy for one PART (e.g. reading SMS) is a great

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<sup>8</sup> The INST own statements refer to exactly this assumption. An answer to question 16, Were you prepared, motivated, convinced of the project work to be done? for example was "Not very much in the beginning, since they were suddenly introduced into the course and we did not take the time to organize the whole thing calmly and better. But then it worked out quite well and I enjoyed the work."

<sup>9</sup> Since afterwards I could confirm the great enjoyment of and motivation for doing the ICT activities in the PART themselves and the INST also praised their success in the questionnaires, I am now almost certain that the INST at first were not very convinced of the ICT activities' effectiveness! Fears such as being overtaxed and not having clearly defined, own plans more likely were the reasons for the delay. The project did not fit into their teaching concept: "We have other worries now, for example, that the course can be continued at all [because of the irregular participation of the PART in February]", said one INST. What remains unclear is why the INST did not articulate their doubts right away, either to me or to the project coordinator, Elisabeth Ramoser.

challenge to others. An internal differentiation of task difficulty becomes more necessary than ever to avoid overtaxing one PART while others are not sufficiently challenged. This difficulty also added 'didactic' insecurity to the teaching of single INST and thus influenced the effectiveness of course implementation.

**The bringing together of the two RE/ALPHA groups** (*Roma* and Bolzano groups): in April 2004 another unfortunate occurrence further added to the difficulties: the Roma group ceased to meet and single 'afficionados' were transferred to the Bolzano group. At the same time, there were changes in course staff; one social educator left the group and three new INST (two SE and one LT) were introduced. Unfortunately, it was necessary to introduce these new INST to the goals and plans of the ICT-activities, and their 'agreement' had to be secured, which also took some time and energy at the cost of continuous ICT activities implementation. Communication between the 'old' and the 'new' instructors apparently did not work excessively well, so that the transmission of the aims and goals of *Alphatrain* was a rather laborious matter.

The **adaptations** to the pilot project plans added an additional four months to the length of the implementation period. The ICT activities were interpolated between the INST 'usual' lesson plans.

The greatest change was thus made in terms of the duration of the project course. **Instead of 3 weeks, the preparatory phase of the ICT activities spanned a total of 5 months due to the many stops and pauses.**

➤ Sending SMS was practiced by 4 PART in all (Sevdija / Bahija / Ibrahim / Manee). One of the participants (Mariam), who had demonstrated great interest in the course, left the course for reasons we have not been able to define to date.<sup>10</sup> The other participants practiced getting around town on paper instead of by SMS. At the same time, further tasks, such as shopping/ordering/reading fairy tales were implemented during classroom times. Ibrahim at the time was not yet able to write SMS, but together with an INST, Sonia, he caught up on that later. The new PART who joined the group later already seemed to have acquired the ability to use cell phones and write SMS.

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<sup>10</sup> When Mariam stopped coming to lessons, INST tried to reach her by phone, and I did also, unfortunately to no avail.

- The computer-based activities, on the other hand, were extended time-wise as well as content-wise. Interest in this area was so large, that several lessons were used to accommodate these activities. It was the PART's explicit wish that this be so. Revisions of the planned course subject matter thus apply to practicing within the Word program, and mainly word processing. The PART were logged into the this website quite a few times: <http://iprase.g-floriani.it/abc/abcmenu.html>, to practice writing in Italian. A total of more or less 10 PART took part in the task of Employment Agency registration via internet. Unfortunately and as mentioned above, the INST only began using computer application in the fourth project month. Single, slightly advanced PART such as Marcela, Elena, Manee, wanted to make use of the lessons at the computer room to write their CVs. Others became aware of their spelling mistakes due to the computer's spelling correction feature. Thus, their own autonomous 'editing' abilities were promoted: where is the mistake? Why is the word on the screen underlined in red? We all, the INST and I, were impressed by the new ability they acquired in this way.
- The last change involves the visit to the Employment Agency itself. Most of the PART had already been there, they knew the offices and people better than the INST themselves, and thus were well-informed about the function of the Agency. The guided tour, which was undertaken by an agency employee, unfortunately did not correspond to the PART's linguistic abilities, as the expressions used were too elaborate for the PART's understanding. Although the PART's listened intently to what was being said, they could grasp little of the tour's content due to the linguistic complexity used. In part, this is to be ascribed to the fact that the interview was not sufficiently prepared beforehand by the INST, and that the guide had not been better informed of the characteristics of the group. In any case, the PART did not pose any questions. Of the two terminals which were in place there, one was out of order, and the other was being used by other visitors. Therefore, the INST and I decided to access the Agency's website from the computer room. The project task '*Getting to know official authorities*' with photographs and short interviews of the PART with civil servants, accounts, etc., in the end was not implemented by the INST.

#### **4.2. Success of the ICT Activities**

All in all, I am convinced that the ICT activities were well-received by the PART, which is confirmed by the passages of the concluding PART interviews that are

reproduced after this chapter. The enthusiasm with and enjoyment of working with a computer for example were overwhelming. Another wonderful moment was also when a mother (Bahija) wrote and sent her first SMS to her almost grown-up children. She was overjoyed as she hugged us and thanked us for teaching her an ability that was so very useful to her, another participant (Mariam) was so impressed with her classmate's success that she wanted to learn how to read and write SMS at the next class meeting too. After the first 'computer course', which is how the PART designated the first meeting in the computer room, they wanted to write at the computer all the time. They asked me and the INST to be allowed to practice there every day. In my view, all this enthusiasm could have been put to very good use quite a while earlier. PART Bahija, in her own words, said she would only come anymore when the computers were to be used.<sup>11</sup> Another PART, Elena, said that the larger her schooling (categorized into reading, writing, computer knowledge and knowledge of German), the "*more important/bigger*" (see the interview transcript) her work would then be! The PART were almost disappointed when the INST told them that in the last 3 weeks the 'computer course' was 'only' planned to be once a week. How proud were the PART as they left the computer room with a diskette in their hands and a printed CV in their pockets!

The desire to learn how to write a CV arose from the need of some of the PART to find a job. Marsela already had a job interview two days later. In my eyes, her performance was truly astounding: there they were, 'former' illiterates, who not even after three hours of uninterrupted work at the computer did not show any signs of exhaustion, weakness or headache. They worked so animatedly that this phase was much more strenuous for the INST than the PART, since they constantly asked questions, expressed wishes, and asked for help at their computers. The PART were unquenchably curious and anxious to learn. There is no experience that one can imagine to be more motivating than this.

A separate question concerns my self in my evaluating role. How much should the evaluating person intervene in INST activity, how strongly should she exert control in the implementation phase, how often should she slip into the role of teacher during the ICT activities? These are questions I have been very preoccupied with. I believe

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<sup>11</sup> "Unofficially", she had already quit the course, naming as reason that she had so much to do. But that she really needed computer skills, and would come to those lessons, she told me during a conversation in the Office computer room on June 11.

that a thorough answer to these questions would be beyond the scope of this evaluation. Nevertheless, at this point I would like to note a thought which is relevant to the applicability and understandability of ICT-activities:

A precise attribution of roles between the trainers, the instructors, and, why not, the evaluator, is vital to the success of the activities. The final responsibility for the realization or non-realization of goals developed and agreed upon together (!) should be clearly decided upon. Too many teachers lead single ones of them to regard the distribution of tasks in a rather superficial manner, they do not feel directly responsible and then easily leave the implementation of certain tasks to their colleagues.

## 5. Interviews with the participants

These interviews contain questions from the questionnaire in Appendix B. The talks were recorded on tape. In the following, transcribed passages<sup>12</sup> of the tape recordings that are relevant to the project have been translated into English:

### Elena

I: Why do you enjoy working at the computer so much?

E: I don't know. It's an indescribable feeling. It is something that awakens one's interest. Before, I probably didn't even know what a computer is. I had seen one, but I wasn't familiar with it. But as soon as you have worked with one, you just don't want to stop. It's something that makes you want to learn, to learn more than the things I can do, to learn other things, maybe even to become something larger than I am now some day.

I: You've never used one before?

E: No, it is the first time. Today, the second time.

I: Really? Good! You have already learned a lot in only two lessons!

E: ...it's like this: when I really want it, I learn quickly. The same as how I feel like going to school, attending the course, then I am quick. I learned all of the things more quickly than the others.

(...)

E: (*referring to computer work*) ...because I enjoy it a lot. I would really enjoy learning how to use the computer perfectly.

I: So you think this computer course should begin earlier?

E: ...yes, it is something I really want, even if I would be working somewhere, I want to find the time to learn ... very important.

I: So you think being able to use the computer and the cell phone can help you with work?

E: If I have a cell phone and can also use a computer, as a person I feel to be one level higher up than I was before. In my country for example, I was nothing because I couldn't do anything. I came to Italy. I didn't know anything, slowly, seeing how I work, I could feel myself to be on your level, perhaps even together with you, who are a teacher, I could also feel myself to be like that ... slowly, maybe.

I: ...absolutely, you have made great progress, (...)

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<sup>12</sup> I have modified these passages only slightly in terms of grammar.

E: ...if I could with the computer, perhaps I slowly, slowly could reach your standards

...

I: So you are saying it would help you to find a better work place, as you say.

E: ...within me, that I can reach something, if I want to, higher than I am much larger, I think.

I: Did you have support to do this, or did someone also criticize you?

E: No, I wanted it myself, because I wanted to go to school, I felt like it because I am grown up now, and I have finished the school, I really wanted to learn the computer, I wanted to become a lawyer or someone of these big people, but I don't have the possibility to pay for University tuition, I couldn't do it, so (...)

E: ...so I really want to become a lawyer and if I use the computer I can slowly study, even if I am working, study two three hours, I could also do that evenings.

(...)

I: Is there anything you'd like to say, for your classmates, for the course?

E: ...if they want to get anywhere, they need to fight.

I: I admire very much, the motivation to participate in the course was very big, I could even feel and I saw the desire to learn.

E: Yes, because they (*the other PART of the Bolzano group*) don't know, when you cannot read and write, it is like not being able to talk, because, if you go somewhere, and can't read a sentence, then you're also ridiculous, let's say (...) we were, we there at the camp, we were all together, we helped each other, but with this course here (*Bolzano group*)? They wanted to make that they are better than we, but they haven't even reached our level, they still have lots and lots to learn and they are not focused, they think it's like, I've heard something, I've written it and done, but there's this thing, if you don't study, then you'll never learn, (...).<sup>13</sup>

### Ibrahim

I: Before you came here, did you speak Italian?

B: Hardly! Today it's better than before.

I: Can you write in another language?

IB: No, ...

I: ...you didn't attend school?

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<sup>13</sup> Roma PART Elena's criticism of the course participants of the Bolzano group was a clear sign of one or several conflict situations within the new group that emerged from the joining of the two groups. I am not aware that this 'problem' was discussed or dealt with by the SE, CM or LT.

IB: No, nothing.

I: May I ask why you didn't attend school in Iraq?

IB: ...because my father said, you are not going to school, and when I was older, I want to go to school and saw many little people, me big, so I can't go to school.

I: ...mhm, .... now, with this course, what has changed for you? You can read and write now.

IB: Yes.

I: what has changed for you? ... is it good or not?

IB: ...yes, when you cannot write, you don't have eyes.

I: oh, that's true...!

IB: You don't have eyes...

I: ...and now you HAVE eyes!

IB: Now I HAVE eyes.

*They laugh-*

I: And it is nice?

IB: Yes, yes ... very nice.

I: Because it is positive, in your opinion, why is it nice?

IB: It is nice, when people can read and write, it is better, if you cannot write and read, you go to another country, mhm, train station, like trains, Milano is written there, you cannot read and must ask people.

I: How did you do it before, then?

IB: Before, I talked with people, not anymore now ...

I: You can do it on your own now?

IB: Yes I do.

I: You are more independent?

IB: Yes, if you can read, it's better...

I: Were you a little nervous, when you had to ask people? Does it bother you a bit, to ask other people?

IB: Oh yes, many people don't even answer.

I: That is also not very nice.

IB: Yes.

I: So, Ibrahim, do you have a cell phone?

IB: Yes.

I: Do you use it? How do you use it, can you do everything with your cell phone?

IB: Yes. Yes, with names I can write ... yes I write.

I: Since when can you write, when did you learn that?

IB: This ... one month, in this course with Sonia.

I: Not before this?

IB: Not before this, you know I didn't know the letters ... now I do.

I: Before, you used it to make calls?

IB: Yes but not to write names ...

I: Computer, is it the first time?

IB: Today the first time.

I: Do you like it?

IB: Yes, I like it.

I: Yes?

IB: All days.

I: Why do you like it?

IB: Because you can find a job, then the computer looks for one.

I: ...you can do it on your own. Is it important that you can do it on your own?

IB: Yes, better to search than to ask, one day I have time, I play on the computer ...

### **Manee**

M: I'm alone, some teacher can teach me German, but now no!

(...)

M: I want sometimes a teacher to learn more, I don't learn much more now!

I: What do you think about computer activities?

M: I don't need, I think, if I work, I like to work in a kitchen or something like that. I need sometimes for Internet. In Thailand I used many times the computer, because I contacted my boyfriend with Internet. Was easy for me, because it's my language, here it's not so easy, because I don't read German perfectly...

I: You prefer more the work in the classroom or the activities outside?

M: I go alone every day, I have to go shopping, every day, that's my job...

I: I'm sorry for you, I saw the confusion in you about the changes.

M: Yes, they speak about a German course and in the half time they changed! They have to make that right away: if they write a German course in the flyer, they have to do a German course.

I: What do you think about the many teachers in this course?

M: I think, they don't had so much program, not much idea for teach, I don't know, it's agree for the other, but for me, I don't understand much.

I: ...and it was a problem for you?

M: Not problem for me, but if teacher have really good idea how to teach, how to make we understand for both languages, many plans, new ideas, activities. But I understand sometimes teacher, because sometimes students not understand, what they learn before, so she have to go back in the program.

I: ...and you can't go on?

M: Yes, unfortunately!

### Bajramsa

I: Could you read or write before you attended this course?

B: No, nothing.

I: ...then you have learned a lot now, I've seen that. How much of the course did you attend?

B: Everything.

I: ...and you enjoyed it?

B: Yes.

I: What did you like about it?

B: Everything, writing, reading, because before I did not go to school, also in Macedonia, and now I like to write.

I: ...I have heard that you are very diligent! May I ask why you attended this course?

B: ...it is important for me, also for a job, also when I go take a walk, when I then look into the street, the things, it is not easy, now I have learned a bit and I like it very much.

I: It takes a lot of willpower and energy to attend a course every day, because it is very strenuous, where did you get the strength to do it?

B: Yes, very, I take the willpower from my self, because I enjoy it.

I: To work with a computer, is it the first time?

B: The first time.

I: ....and how do you like it?

B: ...a bit strange. (*pause*)

I: Strange? How? Nice? Positive? Or not?

B: ....nice, I like it.

I: When I began with computers, I thought it was difficult, how was it for you?

B: I like it better to write at the computer than with a pencil.

I: Yes?? And why?

B: You only need to press and everything is already finished. (*Pause*)

I: Did you receive support from your family to attend the course, or did they not understand why you want to attend the course?

B: I like it, my brother tells me, don't go, you are big, 30 years old ... and I told my brother, I'm going, I have to learn, that's it.

I: Are you glad that you did it that way?

B: Yes! (*pause*)

I: You are especially elegant today!

B: Thank you, on purpose because of the course. (*laughing*)

I: Do you have a cell phone?

B: Yes, because you can't live without a cell phone!

I: Can you also write, read, SMS?

B: No

I: Would you like to be able to?

B: I would like that, my brother can do it!

I: What would you like, what should we do in the next course?

B: I told Marilen and Sonia (*two LT*), that I have to go to school to learn, I must study many years, I have heard, five years, to work... (*pause*)

I: Are you looking for a job right now?

B: Yes.

I: That is why it is important to do searches on the Employment Agency's website?

B: Yes, I also always go to the Employment Agency's registration office. I am looking for work, they look at me and then nothing, we're all set up...

I: Is there anything we teachers could do better?

B: I am happy, I swear so!

### Sevdija

I: Did you attend the course the whole year?

S: Yes.

I: ...at the beginning of the course, what did you expect of it, and now at the end, what do you think about it?

S: I think, that I have learned something, oh well! (*pause, hesitation*)

Yes, I am happy, but not very, no, let's say, I am happy. Now I can write.

I: ...and the computer, had you used one before?

S: No, first time.

I: Were you a bit afraid?

S: Yes, a bit excited, then I worked and am happy.

I: ...did you enjoy it?

S: Yes.

I: Do you want more?

S: I want to learn more computer in another course ... I now also have to learn a bit at home, with the child, because I also do at home.

I: Do you have anyone to help you?

S: Yes, because I need a teacher for myself alone, because otherwise, they (*the other PART*) know more, because I never attended a school, so I hope to learn next year!

I: ...was it difficult to attend classes every day?

S: No, it is a good thing!<sup>14</sup>

I: Something else now; here at the course you learned to write SMS, or did you know how to before?

S: No, I couldn't, because Sonia (*LT*) showed me a little bit.

I: Sonia.

S: ...because I couldn't write and came...

I: Good?

S: ...it is important! It is good! (*pause*)

I: ... In your opinion, is it also important to practice on the computer?

S: Yes, it is important to write, read, and also more, because now I also want to get a driving licence!

I: Ahh, do you need one? Do you enjoy driving cars?

S: Yes.

I: Something you did not like about the course (*silence*) For example the change in teachers? The material...

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<sup>14</sup> This PART attended classes very irregularly, but when she came she enjoyed coming, often however she would arrive late or leave early, or would not appear for days. In the interview it looks as if she perceived her attendance as regular.

S: Yes, it was a little bit too much, I didn't know anything, well a little bit, then too many came, everyone in one room, form e that doesn't work well, for me, if there is one teacher form e alone, a few times or two days, then I learn much more if she teaches only me.

I: ...were there too many now...?

S: Yes.

I: ...the participants, you mean?

S: Yes, because they know more, they know a bit, I am only beginning now,....<sup>15</sup>.

### **Bahija**

*(taken from an interview with Elisabeth Ramoser of 8.04.04)*

L: What has changed since the beginning of the course to now?

B: I am happy, a lot has changed, before, I could not write.

L.: Reading and writing, how is it useful for you?

B: For everyday life, for work, for the people, for everything, today you need it for the appointments at school, now you write down the appointment, in a calendar I have this appointment, before I had to memorize everything.

L. I know you have learned how to send short messages by SMS! Do you like that?

B: Yes, SMS, I use that, it is good, I am happy. I wanted to learn more, I didn't want to stop here, it was difficult in the beginning, but I want to go on.

L: We still have another three months of lessons, what would you like to be taught in this time?

B: Everything is O.K., I would like to continue working at the computer, lots of things in these months, specifically to learn to read well and how to use the computer. My children use it, but I don't want to ask them.

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<sup>15</sup> In this statement, further doubts, insecurities of Sevdija are expressed. Uniting the two groups into one and putting together new PART into a new group should have been better accompanied by the SEW (and perhaps the CM).

## 6. Instructor Questionnaires

After the end of the course, all the INST involved were sent a questionnaire. The following are extracts from the questionnaires of a cultural mediator (CM), two social educators (SE), and two language teachers (LT), consistently listed in this order.

### About the course participants

#### Question 3:

CM	<i>Sometimes there were very many, sometimes less, so it wasn't really adequate</i>
SE	<i>Yes, participant numbers were adequate, in some phases there were almost too many, but in others they were too many</i>
SE	<i>Had the participant count stayed constant, yes</i>
LT	<i>Yes and no. It depended upon how many participants attended class</i>
LT	<i>It depended upon how many participants came to class</i>

#### Question 4.1:

CM	<i>I didn't, but the participants did, depending upon which culture they originated from, sometimes did</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
LT	<i>Yes, for example Sevdija had difficulties with the arrival of a man (Ibrahim) as well as with some of the new participants from the Roma group</i>
LT	<i>No</i>

#### Question 4.2:

CM	<i>made planning more difficult, differences in vocabulary, group dynamics</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
LT	<i>No</i>
LT	<i>No</i>

#### Question 4.3:

CM	<i>It was important to maintain mutual respect and also observe the holiday calendar in lesson planning. I am firmly convinced that we succeeded well in doing this and celebrating together.</i>
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SE	No
SE	No
LT	<i>No and yes, not always consciously. I cannot know every single aspect and thus will always occasionally make mistakes.</i>
LT	No

**Question 4.4:**

CM	<i>There were difficulties in this respect, and it often required group-internal differentiation</i>
SE	<i>Yes, at a few points at which there was full group attendance. February – April, with 4-5 different levels of proficiency!</i>
SE	Yes
LT	<i>Yes, very big ones</i>
LT	<i>Yes, not all were primary illiterates</i>

**About the teaching/learning situation**

**Question 5:**

CM	<i>They were conscious of the fact that learning successes can only be achieved by means of such continuity</i>
SE	<i>Perhaps a bit too long</i>
SE	<i>Perhaps the course could have been more concentrated in length, and more focused</i>
LT	Yes
LT	Yes

**Question 6:**

CM	<i>They understood it as a 'real' school and that seemed to suit them all</i>
SE	<i>I believe it was good for some, for others too long, but many came later and therefore only attended a part of the course</i>
SE	<i>For some yes, for others the course was too intensive</i>
LT	<i>Several wanted to continue</i>
LT	Yes

**Question 7:**

CM	<i>Not exactly, sometimes it was too crowded, The participants were expecting</i>
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	<i>a school classroom</i>
SE	<i>Yes</i>
SE	<i>definitely not</i>
LT	<i>No</i>
LT	<i>No</i>

**Question 8:**

CM	<i>Two machines without printing facilities, internet connection only at the Office</i>
SE	<i>There were computers, with internet only at the Office</i>
SE	<i>not at the KAOS location</i>
LT	<i>Yes, but not useful ones</i>
LT	<i>Yes, no internet</i>

**Question 9:**

CM	<i>No problems with cell phone, with computer and the programs – not fully comfortable to be able to explain to others</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
SE	<i>No special problems</i>
LT	<i>Yes</i>
LT	<i>No</i>

**Question 10:**

CM	<i>For many it was the first time with these machines, to learn new functions or to use them at all</i>
SE	<i>I only was present for the computer activities and I can say that most of the participants needed a lot of support</i>
SE	<i>obviously yes, but in my opinion they are very attractive nonetheless</i>
LT	<i>Yes</i>
LT	<i>Yes</i>

**Question 11:**

CM	<i>SMS – the smallest, but immediately applicable lesson, which can have a very motivating effect. Computer: a challenge, in which the participants first learn to overcome "their fear of the machines"</i>
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SE	<i>As mentioned, I only took part in the computer training. I view this as a useful activity that arouses the participants' interest. Perhaps it is an activity to be done more often next year.</i>
SE	<i>It be noted that I worked very little with these. In respect to the SMS activities, it seems to me that they have an immediate practical effect that makes them attractive. The same seems to be true of the internet, it was interesting to search for work (see field trip to the Employment Agency) as well as for other practical necessities. A personal search (individually chosen selections) can make the desire to read and explain what is being searched for easier.  The computer itself is a bit more difficult, the word processing program however is very interesting and its level of difficulty is compensated by the end result – the production of text on-screen (print-out, CV).</i>
LT	<i>Good idea to visit the Employment Agency accompanied and to work at the terminal. SMS was practiced little because of the absences of those interested.</i>
LT	<i>At the time I no longer was with the course.</i>

**About the materials**

**Question 12:**

CM	<i>SMS messages from everyday life, computer: personal data, forms</i>
SE	<i>Only writing personal data on the PC</i>
SE	<i>I tried to work with Sevdija once at the literacy training website</i>
LT	<i>other teachers used them for practice <sup>16</sup></i>
LT	<i>At the time I no longer was with the course.</i>

**Question 13:**

CM	<i>Some participants did need extra explanation</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
SE	<i>Yes, perhaps, in any case we would have needed more time.</i>
LT	<i>For some, sometimes yes. That is why it was so difficult to work with the</i>

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<sup>16</sup> This answer is very superficial. It is not clear who and if another INST really used them for practice.

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	<i>whole group at once.</i>
LT	/

**Question 14:**

CM	<i>I did not notice anything of the kind.</i>
SE	<i>No, at least I didn't notice anything</i>
SE	<i>Not that I know of</i>
LT	<i>Not that I know of</i>
LT	<i>No</i>

**About the method**

**Question 15:**

CM	<i>technical, because of the very many different cell phone models, computer, some uncertainties</i>
SE	<i>No special difficulties</i>
SE	<i>No</i>
LT	<i>lacking previous knowledge, personal aversion against them</i>
LT	/

**Question 16:**

CM	<i>Yes, very, from my own experience I am aware of the need for a practical application of what has been learned</i>
SE	<i>Not very much in the beginning, since they were introduced to the course all of a sudden and we had not taken the time to organize it calmly and better. But then it went pretty well and I enjoyed cooperating</i>
SE	<i>Yes</i>
LT	<i>Yes, despite my computer 'allergy'</i>
LT	/

**Question 17:**

CM	<i>For some yes, for others less so</i>
SE	<i>I do think so, although I did not study the method very much in depth</i>
SE	<i>It is always difficult to answer this, especially because of the large heterogeneity of the group: for some yes, for others no</i>

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LT	Yes
LT	/

**Question 18:**

CM	<i>Yes, by all means</i>
SE	<i>of course, as said, these activities should be implemented more often</i>
SE	Yes
LT	Yes
LT	Yes

**Question 19:**

CM	<i>The schedule should include planning hours together (possibly once a month)</i>
SE	<i>At course begin, a plan should be elaborated that should then be systematically controlled and improved upon in the course of time</i>
SE	<i>I do not remember having seen a specific plan related to such activities</i>
LT	<i>Coordination between instructors must be improved upon</i>
LT	/

**Question 20:**

CM	<i>A person one can refer to, more talks amongst instructors</i>
SE	<i>better organization, to meet and plan together more often, better task distribution and systematic work</i>
SE	<i>obviously to have more homogeneous groups</i>
LT	<i>clear goals</i>
LT	/

**Question 21:**

CM	<i>yes, I would</i>
SE	<i>yes always</i>
SE	<i>surely</i>
LT	yes
LT	yes

**Question 22:**

CM	<i>Yes, because in this way they could monitor their efforts themselves, and also, because they feel more appreciated</i>
SE	<i>I do think so, I saw this in their attitudes, they were always prepared to do such activities and some clearly expressed that they enjoyed them. It is important for them that they can do near-to-life practical exercises now and then!</i>
SE	<i>of course</i>
LT	<i>Yes, to write at the PC is easier than by hand. The selected subject matter was also very interesting for the PART</i>
LT	<i>/</i>

**Question 23:**

CM	<i>They try to recognize the letters on the keyboard, remember them, and that should also help with writing</i>
SE	<i>I believe them to have contributed much in terms of the impulses and the interest connected to something more concrete than the normal in-class exercises</i>
SE	<i>see above</i>
LT	<i>In my opinion, it helps illiterates to realize that letters are just symbols by reading and writing in different systems and by different means</i>
LT	<i>I think it's an additional motivation</i>

**Question 24:**

CM	<i>I am convinced, yes</i>
SE	<i>On the PC, surely, I am not sure in terms of the cell phone, since most of them could already use the cell phone well</i>
SE	<i>I think so, yes!</i>
LT	<i>Yes, surely</i>
LT	<i>Yes</i>

**Question 25:**

CM	<i>Yes, first in the circle of their families, and also in their working environment. Their self-value surely increases and that is especially important.</i>
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SE	<i>Certainly for all those who feel motivated and take all further necessary steps</i>
SE	<i>Actually I don't know exactly, how it was continued and so...</i>
LT	Yes
LT	Yes

**Question 26:**

CM	<i>It is very important, even praiseworthy, that such a project was started here. We should all, as a team, educate ourselves further so we can help the greatest amount of people also to acquire these culture techniques, which are essential to survival</i>
SE	<i>I hope that next year an even better course will take place</i>
SE	/
LT	/
LT	/

## 7. Critical and interpretative analysis of the instructor questionnaires and the participant interviews

I would like to note beforehand that the evaluation of this pilot course was no easy task. The success of the PART, their successful literacy training and their diligence are surely the most important results of the *RE/ALPHA* course in general and the *Alphatrain* in particular. Nevertheless it is essential that several aspects of course planning and implementation be looked into closely, so that a follow-up project can make good use of these experiences and can organize an even more satisfying course for the PART.

I took part in class often and also planned and headed some lessons myself. I thus was in the happy situation of witnessing the spontaneous and overjoyed reactions of the PART to their own learning progress, and interviewed them at the end of the project. From the standpoint of an external evaluator of *Alphatrain*, my primary concern is to deal with the achievements of ICT activities in literacy training from the participants' view. In the role of a "critical friend" (c.f. SCHRATZ, M./JAKOBSEN, L.B./MAC BEATH, J./MEURET, D. (2002), *Die Arbeit des kritischen Freundes*), I will afterwards briefly examine the weaknesses in the course's coordination and the planning of its content, to make it possible to include useful improvements in its continuation.

### *Alphatrain*

From the INST's questionnaire answers regarding the ICT activities, it is definitely clear how positive their introduction into the course content was. Above and beyond that, their own experiences proved that future courses should dedicate more lesson time to ICT activities. As stated by one INST, these activities should be introduced much earlier. The INST witnessed how motivating an effect the cell phone and PC have upon PART and how it is possible to work with them in almost playful ways.

For the PART, the SMS exercises were directly and pragmatically useful. On one of my visits to class, when I suddenly suggested to a PART that she could learn how to write SMS, she immediately was agreed and even enthusiastic. This joy, this élan, this motivation were much more than the mere desire to learn a further reading or writing skill. I felt it made the participant somehow rise above her role as student. She now was an adult learner in possession of a cell phone who wanted to learn how to make use of all its functions for use in her daily reality. I asked her, what kind of SMS

she would want to write in her daily life. She answered, for example in case she was late in coming to an appointment, or to ask someone to call her back in case for example her cell phone card was almost used up.

So we first practiced the short messages she had suggested on paper. Then we wrote them on her cell phone. When the PART tried writing a few SMS for practice and we sent them to each other, she was laughing all the time. She was so happy and at the same time incredulous that she had actually learned to write SMS so quickly. Therefore, she wanted to let her family members know immediately about her success and did so in a very bold and meaningful way: she wrote her almost adult children an SMS! These in turn called her back immediately to check whether it had really been their mom, who had sent that message. The pride shining in the participant's eyes was not to be overseen. and it caused a domino-effect within the course group: the other PART now also wanted to learn how to write and read SMS. The way in which this true-to-life, practical activity encouraged learning is doubtless a reason to include and refine upon this and other such activities in subsequent courses.

The fact that another PART was motivated in her learning by witnessing her classmate's positive experience in my view is also another very interesting point to take note of and to take into earnest account regarding the choice of social forms of work (such as working in pairs, in groups, and so on).

Regarding the PC exercises, some INST at first were rather sceptical whether these activities would be too difficult or not. From the questionnaires completed at the end of the course, however, it became evident to all how successful working at the computers had been for the PART, and that this work had contributed in an especially strong way towards motivating them to learn more.

The exercises at the computer were linked to the search for a job and this was a further reason for most of the PART to attend the last lessons in the computer room – despite the fact that it was already mid-June and the first summer heat of Bolzano city had already set in. The PART would even have preferred to have every lesson there. Some wrote their CVs, others searched the internet job database for adequate placements, etc. Suspense and excitement were in the air, the INST were swamped with questions, the urge to know and be able to do ever more were overwhelming for the teachers. During these lessons, the PART's wishes were also given much more weight in the teachers' didactical planning. The PART demanded information about

different areas of computer use. In my own experience, once in the role of instructor and once as observer, I could see that the PART actually did not fear the medium at all, and already demanded very high standards of their own abilities. Mostly their questions and thirst for knowledge exceeded the limits of mere literacy training by far, which in turn was a new challenge for the teachers. On the whole, the PART seemed to forget all limitations, they felt empowered to do anything. This heightened self-confidence exceeds all expectations, those of the INST as well as those of the project coordinator and the evaluator. Above and beyond reading and writing skills, a strengthening of the PART's self-confidence and self-value was achieved. This is also to be deduced from the interview recordings. The PART recognize computer work as further education, as an additional vocational training that can take them higher up in their professional as well as social status. This social aspect and the idea of promoting integration were planned, important expectations of the *Alphatrain* project. These were certainly fulfilled in the course.

### **Implementation**

If we now turn our attention to the background goings-on, I must assert that the implementation of *Alphatrain*, in terms of time as well as of content, generally was made more difficult by the instructors. Newly arrived teachers were alternately responsible for classes, and they had not been at the preparatory meetings from the beginning in the autumn of 2003, at the workshops and lesson planning meetings from mid-December to the end of February. Thus they were not all informed about the efforts of the project coordinator to create an instructor team from single language teachers and social educators. The introduction to the ICT activities unfortunately only occurred by means of the evaluator, who was supported by the cultural mediator, who had been with the project from the beginning and was highly committed to the project's realization. The continuity of the INST is just as important as that of the PART when it comes to planning lesson content. This is a conclusion I would give special attention to in planning future courses.

The INST should participate in all further training, planning meetings, etc. from the beginning and stay with the course until its end, since it has become evident that it is not so easy to pass on the didactics, subject matter, social pedagogy and socio-cultural aspects discussed in the preparatory phase, which caused the continuity of these agreements to be lost along the way. The intention of the pilot course, the

project goals, the conviction of the necessity of certain contents, the practical implementation of the PART's expectations, should not be constantly endangered by the appearance of new INST. These changes cost great effort and especially great amounts of time, which unfortunately is lost to the PART. The teacher-centeredness of this course and the complex difficulties in the relationships between SE and LT, first in the Bolzano group and then, after bringing them together with colleagues from the Roma group, were the most prominent disturbance factor of the *Alphatrain*. In my opinion, with few exceptions the INST were far too much occupied with themselves. I could ascertain various constellations of conflict, which are illustrated in the following examples:

- Someone began their studies in the meantime and because of an unclear distribution of competencies between SE and LT, after the first part of the course had simply distanced themselves from the course line and went their own didactic i.e. social-pedagogic ways.
- Another had been entrusted in a rather hesitant way (for course-external reasons) with the course direction and had only taken on marginal responsibility for its didactical planning, and left the project in mid-February, never to be sighted again (not even to the PART's final party).
- Someone else had been employed despite serious didactic and psychological gaps and unfortunately was not sufficiently supervised and accompanied during the course, which in consequence resulted in having to suspend their work mid - course.
- Another person joined the project in the beginning of March as a substitute, but it took her at least one month to become aware of the PART's needs, to become acquainted with the target group, and to educate herself in their interest (something that she succeeded very well at). Her predecessors and team colleagues had not acquainted her sufficiently with the course contents, goals, methods, etc. before she took up her teaching activity. Thus she was forced to acquaint herself 'ex novo' in the course of March.
- And someone else quit their job due to a definite role mix-up, because of which they were overtaxed, became unhappy and lost their belief in the course.

All these and other regrettable incidents prove the importance of the choice of instructors. For future projects, in my opinion one should take the selection of course teachers very seriously, test the INST effective competencies and especially their

professionalism, but above all establish their true interest in the target group and the contents of the specific course.<sup>17</sup> That does not mean that the necessary professional resources were not there, but rather that the relationships between team colleagues were paid too little and too superficial attention to, that training in the didactic methods to be applied was too little focused upon, that the planning of course contents was occurred rather coincidentally, and that the responsibility for leading the course was assumed and carried by very few of the INST. Why this happened surely is to be attributed to various reasons that are not all to be placed at the INST'S doorstep. However, in the interest of a participant-centred course, this critical analysis and the experiences made should serve in future to make the choice of teachers one of the central pillars of course design.

### Summary

As is documented by the instructor questionnaires and the PART interviews, the ICT activities nevertheless achieved their goal: towards the end of the course, the PART and even the INST were strongly motivated to continue, and more intensely, to work on ICT activities. In my view, it is also of great importance that after carrying out the exercises the INST recognized that they should have planned work at the computer better and that they should have immediately recognized the PART's interest. That is the crucial point!

Interviews with the PART, the inclusion of their wishes and expectations, should be reassessed again and again by the INST in the course of the project. This is necessary for ascertaining a high degree of PART motivation, to be able to counter a possible decline in motivation with measures on the level of content, didactics or social pedagogy.

And now, in detail:<sup>18</sup>

#### 7.1. Training

Because of the many stops and pauses, the duration of course implementation added up to 5 months instead of **2 months**. However, I believe that the originally planned time for implementation is sufficient (c.f. chapter 4).

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<sup>17</sup> For example, a purposeful search for teachers, with talks and interviews in which the values on both sides and the expectations are clearly defined.

<sup>18</sup> In these subchapters of chapter 7 I refer in a summarizing way to afore-mentioned observations and conclusions. Thus, there possibly are repetitions here.

On the other hand, the computer-based activities were extended in terms of time and content. Group interest was so large that several lessons had to be dedicated to them. This was the express wish of the PART. Thus, training should include more computer work. Task-based teaching, for example getting to know institutions that are of special practical importance to immigrants' lives, but also to the life of every citizen in general, was under-represented in the training curriculum. It was restricted to filling out a few forms and visiting a historical museum. The excursion was very meaningful for the PART. I would recommend more such excursions.

## 7.2. Method

Here, I will briefly describe how the lessons for the two ICT activities, SMS and computer-based registration at the Employment Agency, had been planned.<sup>19</sup>

This method consistently applies a didactic model of three steps:

### Step 1:

Introduction of the teaching program by means of getting acquainted with the teaching and learning material. Getting used to the new medium (cell phone or PC).

### Step 2:

Practice of the contents in 'traditional' exercise books, with 'classical' writing utensils and usual reading and writing exercises.

### Step 3:

Adaptation of the contents and their practical transferral to the new writing utensils, cell phone and PC.

In conclusion, I cite the statements of the INST regarding the method.

Two answers to question 17 of the questionnaire in Appendix A:

*In your opinion, was the method adequate for the participants?*

INST: *For some yes, for others less so.*

INST: *I do think so, although I did not study the method very much in depth*

To question No. 20: *What could be improved in terms of implementation on the part of the instructors?* The following answers, amongst others, were given:

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<sup>19</sup> The theoretical description is to be found in chapters 3.2. – 3.4.

INST: *better organization, to meet and plan together more often, better task distribution and systematic work.*

INST: *clear goals.*

It is rather difficult to cull any methodological guidelines for course planning from these and other INST comments. If, however, one reads *below the literal surface of what is being said between the lines of...* (as suggested orally by Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dietmar Larcher), which I did, in any case it becomes evident that there is an urgent need for a clear distribution of tasks between LT and SE: who is to do what? Who is ultimately responsible for the in-class implementation of activities defined in the course plans, who is the "director" of a lesson unit, who introduces the lesson's activities, who will add relaxing elements to the lesson, who is in charge of improvising if something does not work out as planned? Plans can fail in practice if their goals are not clear and also convincing to all instructors involved.

The three-step method was implemented in cooperation with the CM especially with regard to the SMS activity. The CM brought city plans to class, practiced the street names, cursive writing, and the candy treasure hunt with the PART. She developed her own teaching style to adapt the contents to the target group and to the attending PART. Even the best lesson planning unfortunately cannot take into account how many and which PART will appear to class on the day the activity is planned for. This is the point at which the competence of each INST is required to adapt themselves and the lesson's contents to the PART who are in attendance. The variable of PART attendance will however always remain an objective hindrance to carrying out lesson plans.

### **7.3. Motivation**

In summary, I can only repeat how much the PART enjoyed the ICT activities, and refer the reader to the interviews, in which they themselves have expressed their great interest for and pleasure with them. If it is one of the goals of the evaluation report to encourage an increase of computer work and to underline its importance for the literacy training process, then I can only agree wholeheartedly if I base my opinion upon my evaluation, my observations, and my own participation in the project as language teacher. The 'computer course' and the SMS exercises had the following significance for increasing the PART's motivation:

- a broadening of competences (first computer skills!)

- the improvement of writing skills through practice at the PC
- an incentive towards self-correction on-screen (spelling correction feature)
- in the case of possible deficits in fine motor activity, a de-stressing of difficulties in writing by hand by means of keyboard use
- an increase in self-value through the acquisition of a new qualification
- independence in searching for a job at the Employment Agency's terminal
- a starting point for further courses, computer courses included
- a promotion of self-confidence in general

#### **7.4. Learning progression**

What has been included in Chapter 7.3 under "motivation", in part also applies to the learning progression. In-course work included above all the use of books, worksheets, and authentic materials (city maps, forms, etc.). Through *Alphatrain*, other didactic materials were included in the curriculum. As stated, this continuously encouraged the PART, especially towards the end of the course, to attend classes regularly. On the other hand, the ICT activities in different ways represented a challenge to the PART.

The PART were to make use of a new means of writing, the cell phone or the PC. In foreign language didactics there is an explicit mention of taking different learning types and styles into account. In our literacy training course, there were several PART who preferred the keyboard above the pencil for writing. Their explanation is that they could recognize the letters on the keyboard more easily and thus could write more quickly. This was especially true of primary illiterates. For several PART, especially functional illiterates, the ICT activity was useful for practicing their writing skills. For yet others, it created a new understanding of the alphabet: i.e., on screen some PART more impressively recognized that they were actually producing written texts. This may be due to the media effect of the screen itself. But the fact that one presses keys and thus 'creates' a text that can even be printed immediately to be taken home, impressed most of them enormously. The possibility of becoming conscious of one's own spelling mistakes without the help of an INST also promoted the ability of working independently. The PART learned to correct their own written production, and to question why something was orthographically incorrect.

Finally, I can only emphasize that the implementation of the ICT activities increased their learning progress.

## **7.5. Conclusions and suggestions for improvement**

In my opinion, this evaluation report above all shows that one should ask the PART themselves about their course-related expectations and wishes. This is something that was also done for this course. Experience has shown, however, that the interviews were not always very efficient. Firstly, because the INST only read the PART'S answers at the beginning of the course and did not include them in their lesson planning in the subsequent months. Secondly, that the PART may not be acquainted with this kind of questioning from the context of their respective cultures may be an additional weakness to be taken into account.

However, it is also clear to be as an observer that there should be a separate preparation of these interviews. How well a PART knows the interviewer and the recording device obviously also plays a central role. It be mentioned here that two PART refused the interview, i.e., they refused that the interview be recorded. Despite my explanations, I could not convince them to participate. Apart from the unfamiliarity with the technical device itself, I am not certain that the opportunity to express their (critical) opinions about the course was really understood or made use of. Some pf the PART kept giving their thanks, thought everything was great – the INST, the rooms, simply everything. I cannot at present determine in how far a cultural component played a role in answering the questions posed. This is also a variable in interviews with Europeans as well as, and especially in the case of people pertaining to such different cultural backgrounds. It would be a too Europe-centred way of thinking to believe that the current, 'Western' trend towards evaluation, quality assurance, and questionnaires is being given the same importance in all other countries and cultures. This is another reason for being better informed about the PART and their countries of origin, to discover to what extent the members of other cultural contexts would be prepared to critically assess the course's organization and planning and to contribute towards changes and improvements themselves. Probably, this also depends upon their respective degree of social and cultural 'integration' into their 'host country'.

I did notice, in contrast to the afore-said, that critical comments were expressed rather unexpectedly but spontaneously in different situations. Even during the final course party, here and there hints were given 'us', the INST, meant to help improve quite a deal in future courses. I would note these inputs afterwards in the form of a diary.

The rooms and their fittings should be better adapted to the model of the course: there should be more computers with access to the internet, more freedom of movement for the participants, more adequate teaching materials. Otherwise, the instructors were at great pains to make classes a pleasurable experience: one SE was especially praised for always making tea for the PART.

The course implementation was already discussed in detail in Chapter 7. The course organizers can surely deduce a few useful pointers for the desired teacher profile from the experience gained and from the present evaluation.

In general, the project goals should be made transparent to all instructors, and that they must all explicitly agree with them before they are put to practice. It would be ideal if the INST themselves would recognize the usefulness of the activities and were prepared to implement them 'voluntarily'. According to the INST, meetings for course planning should be institutionalized, during which the INST themselves should determine what is to be discussed and should plan the lesson contents together as a group. The meetings that did take place apparently were not perceived by the INST as such.

Suggestions for possible improvements are:

- planning and temporal progression of learning matter,
- improvement of co-teaching in general,
- exchange and complementation of respective professional skills,
- further training in the methods of literacy training,
- collection, production and evaluation of course materials.

## 8. Applicability of the implemented course methods to other courses

The ICT activities suggested in Bolzano were successful in terms of content and method for the specific local target group. I would like to examine the question in how far these activities can be transferred to other target groups by means of the following sub-aspects, since these (certainly for courses with adult immigrants, but not exclusively) are of great relevance and hopefully will be taken into account in future courses.

Thus, I summarize the transferability of the *Alphatraining* project under the following aspects:

### 8.1. The creation of awareness of problems connected to illiteracy

I hold the opinion that the *Alphatraining* project and the *RE/ALPHA* pilot course have made a significant contribution towards the 'creation of awareness of problems connected to illiteracy', especially in terms of sensitizing the INST. Reality often supercedes one's expectations. I have already made sufficient mention of the shortcomings of the teachers' work. One could conclude that learning progress would have suffered under these circumstances, but I by no means think that this was so: The PART did recognize certain shortcomings, but did not react to them openly.<sup>20</sup> Instead, they happily put their own interest first. It seemed to me that the PART left the INST to sort out their 'conflicts' themselves and did not let themselves be influenced by them. I constantly felt the PART'S strong motivation to learn, (almost) independently of all personal or course-internal problems. The PART focused on their own further training. They simply demanded the unlimited readiness and undivided attention of each INST and engaged them for their own cause! They took what they were in need of at the moment. This caused some INST to feel overtaxed, since that is truly strenuous, physically as well as mentally. We 'all-knowing' teachers should no longer be surprised at the fact that the target group knows itself best and can define its need very exactly. **A more conscious consideration of the specific requirements of literacy training in methodology and INST training is an essential element of every future course. This can only be achieved if**

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<sup>20</sup> A citizen of the EU would probably have brought forth a complaint, reprimand or such against the organization.

**instructors truly allow PART to learn in self-managed ways. For example, autonomous learner groups could be created to assist new PART.**

### **8.2. Temporal perception**

The PART's perception of time during the course did not match that of the INST: the former wished to acquire a maximum of knowledge in a short time, in contrast to which they often perceived the INST's pace as too slow.<sup>21</sup> I often witnessed how PART would pull an INST'S sleeve, if he or she briefly was inattentive or began talking off-topic to a team colleague. Distractedness of the INST was not allowed by the PART! This further underlines **the great motivation of the PART to participate in the course.**

### **8.3. Group dynamics**

One should pay due attention to the target group's dynamics. That also means 'educational work' for the INST. They should structure learning units and schedule social forms of class work for each activity. In this way, they could also reduce the sometimes unnecessary, strong individual demands of single PART on their attention. To allow for pace of learning of each PART, the original suggestion of a modular curriculum is nonetheless valid.

### **8.4. Modular curriculum**

This teaching suggestion is based upon a communicative, task-based approach. The curriculum, in which the modules build upon each other in terms of content and structure, and in which consolidation and reinforcement are included in cycles, is just as valid for other course groups. After dealing with certain steps of the course, each PART advances to the next module, while if they are in need of further practice, they remain in the first module. This system is also indicated because not all PART are in truly constant attendance. Upon their return, some had simply missed a week, or even a whole month, of class time. Some PART also criticized not having learned much new subject matter for a while because the course program kept repeating itself.

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<sup>21</sup> Here, I base myself upon statements and observations from my visits to class and from the PART interviews.

### **8.5. Applicability of the Bolzano Alphatrain's ICT activities**

In my opinion, the ICT activities in themselves are applicable to all further course types and target groups. They represent two lesson plans that are complete in themselves and which can both be simplified or extended in terms of content by means of adequate adaptations. The everyday use of the cell phone, the computer and the internet are relevant to all of us, since these new technologies play an important role in our (western) societies.

Appendix A

## **INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Name of INST and group (specify whether Bolzano or Roma)
2. Please explain your role / job within the literacy training course

### **About the learners**

3. In your opinion, was the number of participants in your group adequate?
4. Did any of the following aspects cause you problems in your teaching activity?
  - 4.1. mixed group (women / men)
  - 4.2. different age groups of participants
  - 4.3. different origins (cultural / religious differences)
  - 4.4. heterogeneity of the participants' previous knowledge

### **About the teaching / learning context/situation**

5. Was the course duration adequate for the participants?
6. Were the learners satisfied with the duration of the course?
7. Were the rooms adequate?
8. Were the rooms fitted with computers, access to the internet?
9. Did you experience any difficulties in using the computer/cell phone (hardware) or the programs (software)?
10. Did the participants have difficulties in using the computer/cell phone (hardware) or the programs (software; Word/internet)?
11. Please add other / your personal comments about the training with SMS or computer.

### **About the materials**

12. What materials did you use for the exercises with cell phone/ computer?

13. Were the materials sometimes too difficult for the learners? Lexically / technical language / subject matter too ambitious?

14. Was a participant indignant about the use of any materials/media for religious, ethical, gender-specific reasons?

### About the method

15. What subject-matter related or technical difficulties did you have with the implementation of the SMS and computer work projects?

16. Were you prepared to, engaged, convinced of wanting to cooperate on these projects?

17. In your opinion, was the method (c.f. project description) adequate for the participants?

18. Would you recommend these activities (cell phone/SMS, computer/Word/internet/ Employment Agency registration) for further courses?

19. What should be improved in terms of content, of planning?

20. What could be improved in terms of implementation on the part of the instructors?

21. Would you generally recommend these ICT activities (computer, etc.) for this target group (illiterates of all types)?

22. Did working with the computer, with cell phones, incentivize participants to learn? If so, what were the motivational reasons, elements?

23. If you are positively convinced, in how far did these exercises also contribute towards the improvement of their reading and writing skills?

24. Do you feel that the participants' attitude towards these technologies (cell phone / computer) improved in any way?

25. Do you think that these extended skills will facilitate the participants' professional, social integration?

26. What else would you like to say that has not been asked here?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!!!!!!!!**

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire for the oral interview with the participants *(remains in the hands of the interviewer)*

#### ➤ General personal facts

- Type of illiteracy (before the course)
- Language knowledge (native, other languages)
- Level of computer/technological literacy

#### ➤ Alphatraining/Training

#### SMS

- did the person participate?
- If so, what has changed in his or her practical life, what does he or she write? Is the SMS system clear? Is it easy to use? What causes difficulties? Was it fun to work / learn with the cell phone? Were there any negative experiences while learning?
- If not, how does he she use it without assistance?
- Does the person still want to learn SMS messaging? Was he / she happy with the course schedule? Need more, less time for it?

#### COMPUTER (Word in general, Employment Agency)

- Were the lessons clear, using the PC clear?
- Was the subject matter easily understandable?
- Was learning to read/write more fun with it?
- Was the material adequate?

#### TRAINING

- Was there enough time to learn at the computer?
- Was the room well fitted?
- Did you have any problems at the PC, any "lacks"?
- Was the student group too large, adequate?
- Did you have any problems with the other PART?
- Material: any language literacy problems using the materials?

- Level of difficulty of text/images?
- Was the information provided interesting?
- On the whole, was learning by means of media more interesting / motivating?

#### Method

- Was the method (SMS/PC) fun / enjoyable?
- What should be improved?
- What did you like less?
- Were the chosen materials adequate?
- How did these activities contribute towards the improvement of your reading and writing skills?
- Did you attain a greater desire / confidence to continue working with these media?
- Did it help you to integrate yourself professionally, socially?

#### About the course in general

- Did you enjoy the course?
- In general, would you say so if you like something or not?
- What would you do differently?
- Were the materials adequate? Did you find them appealing?
- What do you honestly think about the teacher change, or the many teachers, did that confuse you? Did that disturb you, did it enrich your skills because of the different methods / teaching styles used?
- Were you satisfied with the course location, the class room, the technical fittings?
- Did the cooperation between the different teachers work well in your opinion?
- Did you learn enough? Are you satisfied with your progress during the course?
- Would you like to add anything?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for the INTERVIEW and  
CONGRATULATIONS to your LEARNING SUCCESS!!!!!!

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