# LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH COMPANY MENTORS AT THE WORKPLACE

## TRAINING MANUAL FOR LANGUAGE MENTORS AT THE WORKPLACE

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# CONTENTS

# ABBILDUNGSVERZEICHNIS

# ▰ INTRODUCTION

One of the great challenges facing Europe today is the fast integration of migrants into society and the labour market. This is made even more challenging by the fact that a great number of migrants only have a low level of education (see Rudzio, 2019). The EU-funded project Fast Track Integration in European Regions (FIER) allows European project-partners from regions with a high influx of refugees to interconnect in order to develop, test and evaluate joint innovative measures and strategies for a sustainable and fast labour-market-integration. The FIER partners in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Turkey are guided by the specific requirements of their own regions, all the while maintaining contact through the network established through their exchange. This allows them to integrate Best Practices and ideas from various other partner projects when implementing their own strategies.

Figure 1 shows the participating actors in Baden-Württemberg and gives a short overview over their respective initiatives.
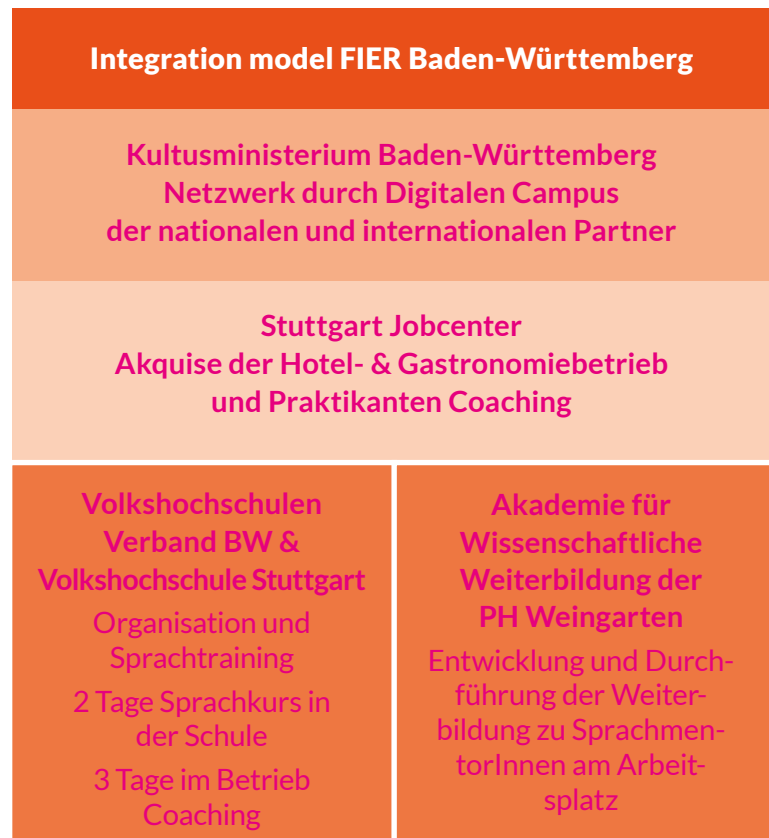
| Integration model FIER Baden-Württemberg |
|---|
| **Kultusministerium Baden-Württemberg** Netzwerk durch Digitalen Campus der nationalen und internationalen Partner |
| **Stuttgart Jobcenter** Akquise der Hotel- & Gastronomiebetrieb und Praktikanten Coaching |

| **Volkshochschulen Verband BW & Volkshochschule Stuttgart** Organisation und Sprachtraining · 2 Tage Sprachkurs in der Schule · 3 Tage im Betrieb Coaching | **Akademie für Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung der PH Weingarten** Entwicklung und Durchführung der Weiterbildung zu SprachmentorInnen am Arbeitsplatz |
|---|---|

**3**

A key factor for the successful initial integration in the labour market is the successful grasp of the second language – in this case German –, because "if one cannot express oneself verbally, it becomes impossible to carry out more precise, qualified work processes" (Efing, 2014).

This manual is based on a definition of integration that describes "stable relationships between elements" (Heckmann, 2015) or a process of convergence, cooperation and interaction between two cultures (Jeuk, 2015). This definition differs significantly from "assimilation", which describes a process of one-sided adaptation.

Based on this background and as part of the FIER-project "Language training on the job (LaTJo)", the Akademie für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung der Pädagogischen Hochschule Weingarten (AWW) has developed a training program for the position of "Mentor for Language Learning at the Workplace". The training enables German-speaking employees of the participating companies to assist their new colleagues with their integration at the workplace, especially by mentoring them in the field of work-related language acquisition. Here the workplace serves as a valuable language-learning-space, and the job-related actions and activities as natural prompters for language mentoring. Company language mentoring is not intended to function as a replacement for institutionally organised language teaching, but rather aims to establish a new means of supplementing and enhancing it. During the programme offered by the AWW, the prospective Company Language Mentors undergo module-based training courses. After successful completion of these modules they receive a university certificate authenticating their acquired competences. Thanks to AWW's particularly close cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK) Northern Black Forest, participants from the hospitality sectors of this region additionally have the chance to obtain a IHK-certificate with completion of the training. Participation in the programme is not tied to specific worksectors, so far it has been tested in the hospitality sectors and manufacturing industries. This manual provides insight in the overreaching concept of "Language Mentoring at the Workplace" as well as the content modules of the training.

## WHY EMPLOY MENTORING FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AT THE WORKPLACE?

1 | It is important to note that the workplace language does not necessarily have to be German. Third-Language-Companies are however not the focus of this particular training concept.

Currently various educational institutes offer courses for German as a second language. Most of these courses prepare the students for certification exams. After these have been successfully completed, those certificates authenticate language skills according to the level system of the European Framework of Reference for language.

These language courses mainly teach everyday language. However, in order to successfully integrate in a workplace environment, a sufficient grasp of professional jargon is essential. Vocationallyoriented language courses do exist, but not all employees with migrant backgrounds will be able to participate in such a course. And even if they do take part, these courses are intended for a broad range of vocations and might not take into account the specific jargon needed for the sector the participant works in. That's why it makes much more sense to acquire the necessary language skills in the space where they are supposed to be used and understood. The workplace furthermore functions as a social space, a space for communication, networking, establishing contacts and integration.

This comprehensive social interaction only works if all participants are able to speak and understand the dominant workplace language[1]. In most cases employees are willing to include migrants in their colleague-relationships. But understandably they often have no knowledge of language acquisition and language support. Often enough even two people who speak the same language have trouble communicating. Imagine the difficulties when a second language – and what´s more, often a second culture – becomes a part of the communicative experience.

In constructivist learning theory social interaction between teacher and learner is paramount, and teachers are seen more as learning guides and less as omniscient lecturers. For language acquisition the social component is especially significant – for the best way to learn a language is by using it constantly and repeatedly, in as many different communication experiences as possible. That is why mentor-assisted language learning makes so much sense: the language that is actually relevant for everyday worklife is practiced at the workplace itself – structured, in social interaction and without hierarchies.

# WHAT IS LANGUAGE MENTORING AT THE WORKPLACE?

"Language mentoring", in the following pages shortened to "language mentoring", is an adaptation of the term "mentoring", so a short explanation of the principle follows. Mentoring describes a relationship at the workplace, where experienced senior executives or colleagues advise and support new employees. Its target group therefore are junior or newly employed members of the organisational structure. Mentors usually are more senior or more experienced members of the organisational structure in question.

In contrast to coaches, whose function is that of external and neutral procedural advisors, mentors, who are members of the organisation itself, are not independent in the mentoring situation. In their work they are bound to the organisation that employs them. Additionally, mentors' advice stems primarily from the perspective of their own experiences in the organisation. Again, that differs from a coaches' approach. The relationship between mentor and mentee is longterm-oriented and constant, and has no fixed endpoint. Establishing and nurturing this relationship are therefore important aspects of mentoring. The mentor in this case assumes the role of a listener and conversation partner, among others. (see Rauen, 2014)

Language mentoring at the workplace uses the concept of mentoring with the addition of the language factor and develops it further, with the aim of language training as part of the individual's integration in the organisational structure. The certified language mentors are able to mould the workplace into a learning environment, and to appropriately plan, implement and reflect language training processes. They appreciate the linguistic and cultural diversity at the workplace and are prepared to deal with intercultural challenges sensitively. This reflective attitude should make them role models for their colleagues, and enable them to give sensitive and appropriate feedback.

Language mentoring is set up as a so called "privileged learning situation" -- in which mentor and mentee identify as a team. The establishment of the relationship is always voluntary, and both parties pledge confidentiality concerning all actions and conversations related to the cooperation. Language mentoring is goal-oriented as well as theory-driven, and it is aimed at promoting the mentee's linguistic, professional and social competence.

In order to become this nexus between professional, linguistic and social advancement, mentoring employs the method of "verbalising actions" (handlungsbegleitendes Sprechen).

# EXAMPLE

Ms. Müller, a cleaning service professional, is training to become a language mentor. Ms. Masry has been living in Germany for six months. Because of her low-level German language skills she has been avoiding German-only conversations with her colleagues and only rarely understands strictly verbal instructions. Ms. Müller (mentor) wants to teach Ms. Masry (mentee) how to change a vacuum cleaner bag. In order to do this, she performs the required actions slowly and verbalises what she is doing: "I am opening the cover", "I am taking the dust bag out", "I am throwing away the used bag", "I am taking a fresh dust bag", and so on.

The actions the mentee has to master anyway are hereby synchronized with the appropriate language. This way the mentee not only learns to perform the required action, but also how to use the necessary jargon and how to verbalize the activity through the appropriate verbs and sentence patterns. Actions that would usually be performed silently are now usable as occasions for communication and language development. The mentee learns necessary expressions, gains speech-confidence and can talk to others about what he/she is doing. He/she learns how to understand instructions and how to use jargon to communicate. In short: Language mentoring at the workplace promotes professional/technical competence, articulateness, and the mentee's self-efficacy and social integration. Through verbalising actions the mentee gains confidence and experience in using the German (professional) language and is motivated to enter into a dialogue with the mentor in privileged learning situations.

The competences the mentors have acquired during their training allow them to fulfil a dual function in the company. On the one hand they can work as Mentors directly with one or several mentees. Simultaneously they function as an internal contact person who is able to give skilled and informed advice on issues and questions concerning the integration of colleagues with refugee or migrant backgrounds. If necessary, the mentor can help with developing overarching frames of support. This understanding of the mentors' position and functions in the company is the basis of the training objectives.

# TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Regarding the self-conception of language mentors at the workplace:

— The language mentors assume partial responsibility for the language development support and company integration of their colleagues with refugee or migrant backgrounds.

— The language mentors behave as liaisons between management, colleagues and mentee and are willing to fulfil an advisory and supportive role if necessary.

— The language mentors see themselves as role models in the areas of language, intercultural sensitivity, procedure and work culture, as well as social interaction.

— The language mentors identify — in accordance to the concept of mentoring — as their mentees' sponsors and are aware of the special responsibilities that entails.

— The language mentors know the limits of mentoring. If certain issues exceed their competence (e.g. if an issue requires therapeutic intervention), they can refer their mentee to the appropriate authorities.

Regarding the professional skills of language mentors at the workplace:

— The language mentors know how important language skills assesments are when creating an adaptive language development environment.

— The language mentors can gather the linguistic data of the mentee, interpret them through Grießhaber's profile analysis and develop appropriate development measures.

— The language mentors are able to design, implement and deliberate language development processes based on the ascertained language level of the mentee.

— The language mentors are familiar with the method of "verbalising actions" (handlungsbegleitendes Sprechen) and can employ it.

— The language mentors are familiar with the theory of model learning and its importance for video-based-learning.

- The language mentors know both the advantages and the limits of viedo-based-learning in language development at the workplace.

- The language mentors can plan, produce and deliberate corresponding learning videos.

- The language mentors are familiar with definitions of culture and can reflect on their inherent chances and risks.

- The language mentors know models for the description of and the differentiation between various cultures, they are aware of the risks unreflecting categorisation poses.

- The language mentors are familiar with the basics of intercultural communication and based on this background are able to create communication occasions with the mentee in a linguistically and culturally sensitive way.

- The language mentors know the basics of competence oriented training and can utilise their learnt strategies to give constructive feedback.

- The language mentors know the concept of collaborative problem solving and can plan, moderate and reflect on corresponding sessions.

- The language mentors can explain and argue for the concept of company language monitoring, using the contents of the training course.

# TRAINING STRUCTURE

The training for prospective language mentors at the workplace is conducted by AWW Coaches. In two attendance-required modules, each encompassing two days the trainees will be introduced in language level assessment via profile analysis; designing videoassisted learning arrangements; planning, executing and deliberation of learning processes; furthermore in the issue of interculturality and workplace communication. During the modules scientifically grounded content is developed in a practical way, always with the goal of making research findings viable for the individual practices of the prospective mentors.

An intermediate phase between modules 1 and 2 allows the trainees to transfer acquired knowledge into practical application and supports establishing the concept as a part of everyday company life. The portfolio for language mentoring at the workplace published by the AWW offers the participants the chance to delve deeper into the thematic areas discussed during training. It contains corresponding transfer-excercises and incentives for thinking ahead. This portfolio is available to the prospective language mentors during the intermediate phase and long-term. If required, the teachers offer Individual consultations online or locally.

Materials, questions and findings developed during the course of the training can be exchanged via an online-platform that allows the prospective language mentors to learn from and with one another, share cooperatively designed learning materials and help participants to network, for the duration of the training and after graduation. The basic concept of the training course will follow the timeline depicted in figure 2. In consultation with the participating companies the individual modules can be adapted to specific preferences and timeframe constraints.
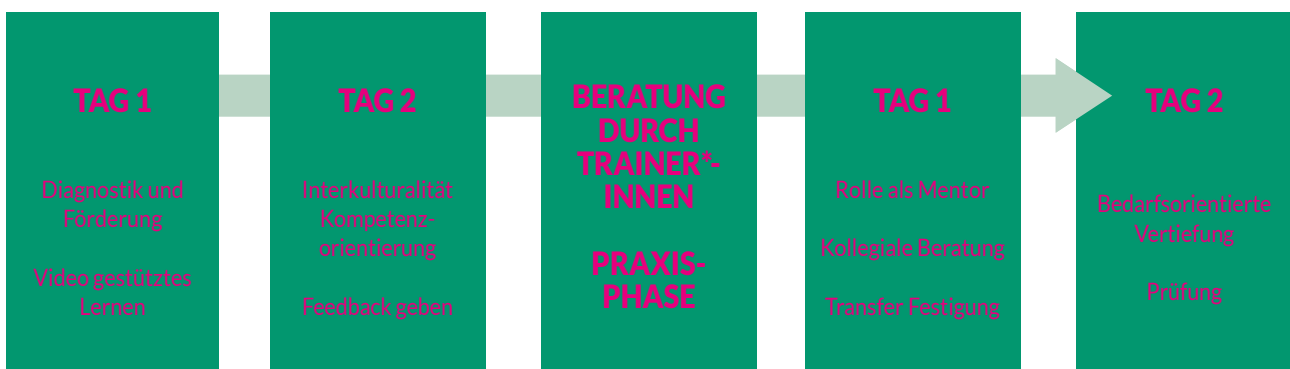
| TAG 1 | TAG 2 | BERATUNG DURCH TRAINER*-INNEN PRAXIS-PHASE | TAG 1 | TAG 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Diagnostik und Förderung | Interkulturalität Kompetenz-orientierung | | Rolle als Mentor | Bedarfsorientierte Vertiefung |
| Video gestütztes Lernen | Feedback geben | | Kollegiale Beratung | Prüfung |
| | | | Transfer Festigung | |

FIGURE 2: TRAINING STRUCTURE

10

# CONTENT MODULES OF THE TRAINING

The training was developed as a basic concept that is applicable across all sectors and can be adapted easily to suit sector- and company-specific requirements. The course is therefore preceded by an extensive needs assessment, the results of which will significantly impact the fine-tuning in terms of content. Following this principle, the training contents presented in this manual will be executed without focussing on a specific sector.

## LANGUAGE LEVEL ASSESSMENT — PROFILE ANALYSIS DRAWING ON GRIESSHABER

Language development at the workplace must be targeted and needs-oriented. In order to achieve this, the mentors must assess the language skill level of the mentee before beginning the mentoring process, and then again in regular intervals. This way they can document the development and adapt the implemented support measures if necessary.

Because an arbitrary, purely subjective assessment of the language skill level must be avoided, profile analysis after Grießhaber is an integral part of the process of coaching a prospective language mentor. Profile analysis after Grießhaber is a tried and tested diagnostic tool that allows the assessment of a learner's language skill level — and the corresponding learning goals — based on the placement of verbal elements, primarily the finite verb. It is based on the thesis, that fundamental word order patterns are acquired in specific sequences. Profile analysis is suitable for Germanspeaking and multilingual Learners. The analysis can be based on written and oral samples constructed by the learner him/herself. (see Grießhaber, 2013)

*"For a well founded assessment of language skill levels two aspects are of particular importance: There must be a sufficient amount of utterances, and narrative texts are the best option for written statements."* (Grießhaber, 2013)

The analysis is conducted in three consecutive steps. *"(a) first the utterances are divided into minimal phraseological units, (b) then the syntactic structure of each minimal unit is determined; the distribution of these structures forms the syntactic*

*profile, and (c) finally, the achieved language level, the acquisition stage, is deduced."* (Grießhaber, 2013)

Grießhaber defines stages 0 to 7, with 0 being the stage with the lowest, and 7 the stage with the highest grammatical complexity. The assessed language skill level of the mentee has consequences for the verbalisation of actions. For stage 0 learners action verbalisation should not start at stage 3, but rather commence at Stage 1.

At this point we return to the previously shown example.

# EXAMPLE

When verbalising actions Ms. Müller repeats the same sentence patterns over and over again, the verbs she uses occupy the same position in every utterance. Why? The result of Ms. Masry's profile analysis put her currently at stage 0, although she is already trying to use constructions that belong to stage 1. Ms. Müller therefore supports her by using constructions at stage 1, encouraging Ms. Masry to imitate them. The finite verb after the subject: "I open/I take/…". Ms. Masry recognises this structure, employs it in her own utterances and will soon start to transfer it to her own sentence constructions.

During their training for the position of language mentor at the workplace the trainees learn the basics of the acquisition of German as a second language, as well as the theoretical background for profile analysis. The focus always remains on applying this newly acquired knowledge practically, the examination of real-life case studies and methodological diversity in exercise design ensure a viable transfer from theory to practice.

Furthermore, the prospective language mentors have access to a collection of specific support measures for different acquisition stages. The collection was compiled in cooperation with lecturers from the German compartment of PH Weingarten who are experts in German as a Second Language. Its practicability was tested by external advisors for professional practice.

As soon as the results of the language skills assessment have been procured, support measures are planned, like the example showed. One of these measures and an important pillar of language development at the workplace is video-assisted learning.

## MODEL AND VIDEO-ASSISTED LEARNING

**"[…] you have to demonstrate a lot, just explaining doesn't work, you have to show exactly how it works."**

In the interviews that were conducted as part of the needs assessments, many statements emphasise the importance of "Demonstration and Imitation" in training practice. Learning by observing and imitating a model is called observational/model/imitation learning and has been extensively proven. Albert Bandura discovered during a lab experiment in 1963 that children who had observed specific behaviours in grown-up models later showed the behaviour in question more often than the children of the control group, who did not have a model to observe. (see Bandura et al, 1963). Later studies showed that children will also imitate behaviours they have only observed via video sequences. (Gerrig/Zimbardo, 2008).

It goes without saying that not only children, but also grown-ups learn by observation. The Step-Method[2], which is often used in vocational training, emphasises Demonstration and Imitation, especially in synchronised learning settings:

Coach/model and learner are at the same place in the same time and interact directly. Direct, face-to-face interaction has many advantages, but spoken words and explanations are fleeting and the time constraints of the learning situation are a major disadvantage of synchronised learning settings. Each modelling repetition of an action by the coaches drains their often rather limited temporal resources further. These situations can also be overwhelming for the mentees – their cognitive resources are possibly not sophisticated enough to concentrate on action and language simultaneously. Their focus is limited to one factor – other important aspects are neglected. Ideally, the language mentors would have to verbalise – in their role as model – the action in the appropriate language level, and the mentee should have the chance to learn not only the action but also the accompanying verbalisation by imitation. These conditions create a temporal and cognitive demand that cannot be sustained long-term in company

2 | For further information about the Four-Step Method, see: https://ausbilderwelt.de/die-vier-stufen-methode-in-der-aevo-pruefung/.

everyday life. Here we can see the advantage of using audiovisual media in the shape of video recordings in language mentoring at the workplace. Video recordings counteract not only the fleetingness of oral speech by preserving it, but also the temporal limitation of the learning situation by offering the possibility of countless replays. So the mentee can focus his/her concentration on *one important aspect after the other*.

During their training the prospective language mentors at the workplace learn to recognise what makes a learning video effective and how to employ these features in their own video productions.

Decisive factors in the production of a successful learning video are not only determined by the theory of model learning however. Just as important is matching the verbalisation of actions by the mentor to the language skill level of the mentee. "Observational learning can only happen when the observing party watches the model attentively, can retain the observed behaviour and is motivated to imitate it and capable of doing so." (Langfeldt, 1996)

Additionally, certain aspects of film language are conductive to designing a learning-promoting design of the video and are developed in an appropriate adaptation during the language mentoring training.

The prospective language mentors have unrestricted access to example videos that provide ideas for their own productions. The necessary technical requirements for producing a learning video in language mentoring are available in any commercial smartphone, post-production (editing, background music etc.) is not required. On principle additional features like subtitles are possible, but their usefulness is determined by the individual interests and capabilities of the participants. As soon as the leaning video is planned and designed, it can be recorded with simple means and used as a learning tool as often as required.

# EXAMPLE

Let's go back to our example to further for further illustration: Ms. Masry still needs to learn how to change the vacuum cleaner bag. Ms. Müller formulates the objective, determines the various necessary actions and how to appropriately verbalise them. Then she records a video of herself or another professional changing the vacuum cleaner bag correctly while verbalising the action. Afterwards Ms. Müller provides Ms. Masry with the recording. Ms. Masry can now imitate the action and practice the verbalisation. She can do that independantly, and Ms. Müller doesn't need to be always present in the learning situation.

Through category-based peer and trainer feedback the quality of the mentor trainees' videos is examined, controlled and improved during the duration of the course.

The value of videos in language mentoring at the workplace is not restricted to showing a model and having it verbalised. The videos can also be used as a diagnostic tool.

# BEISPIEL

In our example Ms. Müller then records Ms. Masry while she is changing the vacuum cleaner bag. She records her on the first day of training and one week later. With this data Ms. Müller and Ms. Masry can document her development and deliberate the results. Additionally Ms. Masry gets the chance to listen to herself and compare her pronunciation to Ms. Müller's.

# INTERCULTURALITY AND COMMU-
# NICATION AT THE WORKPLACE

In order to sensitise the prospective language mentors not only for linguistic but also for intercultural issues, the language mentoring training focuses on the thematic area of "Interculturality and Communication". These training modules are designed to encourage the trainees to reflect on intercultural situations they have experienced personally, in the light of the theories discussed during these modules. That is why open exchange plays an important methodological role here, so each theoretical input can be directly projected into the pre-existing practical knowledge of the mentor trainees.

During the input phases the lecturers introduce and discuss widely known cultural definitions and cultural-dimensions-models in class, for example those of Edward T. Hall and the dimension of power distance by Geert Hofstede (1984). In contrast to Hofstede's approach, Hall's cultural-dimensions-model has the advantage of not being bound to a nation-state-specific concept of culture, as it can also be applied to organisational cultures among others. With this model culture-specific stereotyping can be more easily prevented. However, the analysis of the needs assessment interviews showed that many companies with multi-cultural employees struggle with issues concerning compliance, acceptance of hierarchies and power structures. For that reason the dimension of power distance from Hofstede's cultural-dimensions-model was added to this training module. Power distance describes the measure of acceptance less powerful members of cultures have for an unequal distribution of power in organisations. People from cultures with a high power distance index tend to accept steep hierarchies without questioning them.

Hall distinguishes between three cultural dimensions:
1. Polychronous vs. monochronous temporal orientation (Hall, 1984)

2. Spatial orientation (Desire for a lot of vs. little personal space) (Hall, 1984)

3. High context vs. low context communication. (Hall, 1976)

The module covers all these dimensions, here it will be sufficient to describe the third point in summary.[3]

3 | A summary overview of the different
dimensions can be found here:
https://lehrerfortbildung-bw.de/u_berufsbe
zogen/wahl/fb1/kompcult/culpat/hall.htm

In high-context cultures many aspects in communication are embedded in the context. Verbal messages for example are imbued with less relevance for understanding one another than onverbal messages, which are considered more important.

High context cultures regard indirect communication as an art form that needs to be mastered for cultivated interactions. Additionally, in high context cultures the personal relationship between communication partners plays an important role. Lingering conflicts that could disturb the shared context have to be resolved immediately. Only when a good working relationship has been reestablished, cooperation can continue. Low-context-cultures are different. They value direct communication, do not rely strongly on nonverbal messages for understanding each other, and favour the verbal. Unresolved conflicts between conversation partners can wait until the work is done and there is time to clear the air. Of course conflicts affect the shared context negatively here as well, but the consequences for communications are less severe, because most of those are executed verbally.

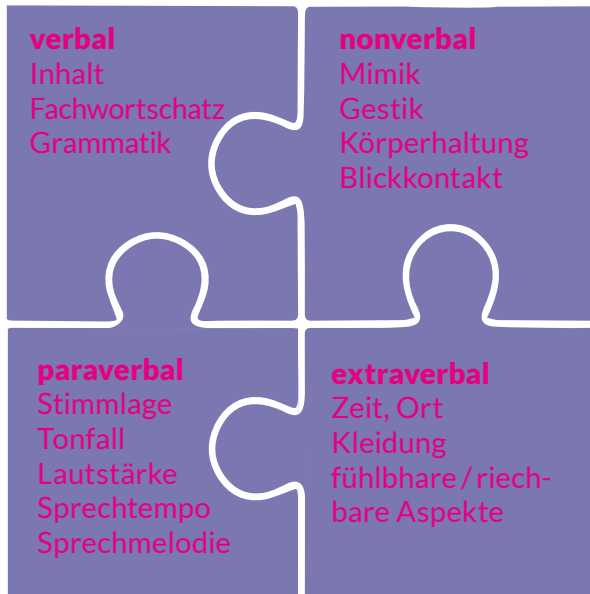This already indicates quite clearly: Communication encompasses more than the simple exchange of words.t

# EXAMPLE

The following example should illustrate this: "Wow, great work!", Ms. Müller says to Ms. Masry, who has removed the used dust bag correctly, but has managed to spill the contents on the floor with a clumsy movement.

The utterance "Wow, great work!" can turn from motivating praise into an ironic attack, depending on context and/or if it is accompanied by an eyeroll, a headshake or a tonal modification. At least, when both communication partners know what differentiates irony and attack from praise and kindness verbally and non-verbally.

The 4-Component-Model of Communication drawing on Bolten (1999) shows the layered complexity of communication processes. Such processes are automatic in production and reception for experienced speakers of a language, but have to be learned and internalised by language learners first. As seen in figure 3, Bolten differentiates between verbal, nonverbal, paraverbal and extraverbal factors.

**Mündlich (Schwerpunkt des Trainings)**       **Schriftlich**

**verbal**
Inhalt
Fachwortschatz
Grammatik

**nonverbal**
Mimik
Gestik
Körperhaltung
Blickkontakt

**paraverbal**
Stimmlage
Tonfall
Lautstärke
Sprechtempo
Sprechmelodie

**extraverbal**
Zeit, Ort
Kleidung
fühlbhare / riech-
bare Aspekte

**verbal**
Inhalt
Wortwahl
Formulierung

**nonverbal**
Bilder
Zeichnungen
Diagramme
Layout
Smileys

**paraverbal**
Zeichensetzung
Schreibweise

**extraverbal**
Papierqualität
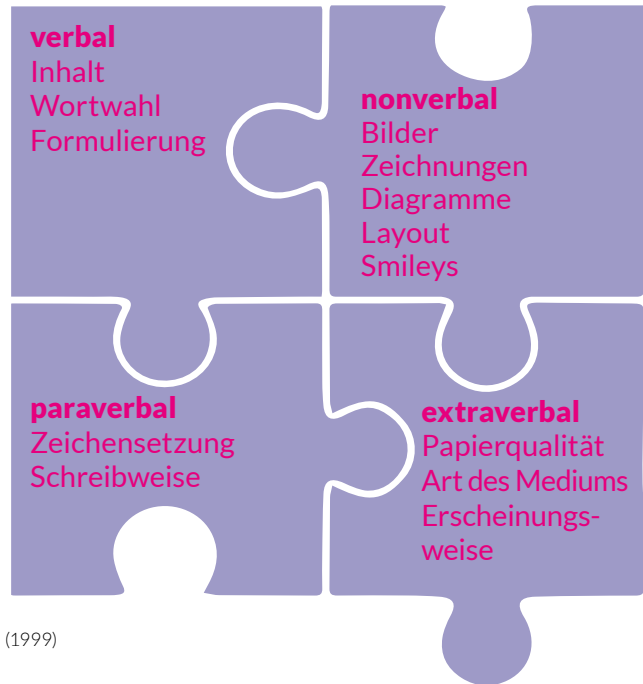Art des Mediums
Erscheinungs-
weise

FIGURE 3: COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION, ACCORDING TO BOLTEN (1999)

During their training the prospective mentors are familiarised with the components of communication as differentiated by Bolten. Simultaneously they are encouraged to de-automatise their own linguistic actions through various experience-based exercises, in order to utilise the findings of the model in their work as language mentors.

Even though Bolten's model is not limited to a specific language and deals with communication as a whole, his statements are relevant for language development through language mentoring. It shows in a simple way, which components of communication have to be considered implicitly when mentoring language development at the workplace. Mentors as language role models need to be aware of them, not only in specific support situations but also in everyday communication.

## EXAMPLE

After having dealt with Bolten's model in regards to language mentoring, Ms. Müller realises that as a model she not only has to offer the right words in the right sequence (verbal), but also needs to monitor her speech tempo and volume (paraverbal), her facial expressions (nonverbal), and the temporal and spatial framework (extraverbal), when she shows Ms. Masry a new action with verbalisation or wants to initiate a mentoring conversation.

# COLLEGIAL PROBLEM SOLVING

During the training for language mentoring at the workplace lecturers often employ methods of collegial consultation in order to collaboratively discuss cases from the current practical experiences of the participants. The objective is to review the content and based on the results develop potential solutions and perspectives.

Collegial consultation "is a structured consultation in a group setting, in which one participant is being advised by the rest of the group, following an established routine with assigned parts. The goal is to develop solutions for a specific professional key question." (Tietze, 2020)

Considering this definition we use the term collegial problem solving, based on collegial case consulting. Collegial problem solving is both method and content of the training module and thus follows the principle of the didactic double-decker (Wahl, 2005), which demands that content has to be experienced on an action level in order to make newly acquired knowledge viably usable.

By addressing and experiencing collegial consultation the participants are encouraged to build a long-lasting team of language mentors whose members regularly exchange information and support each other.

In doing so they ensure their constant further development and the professionalisation of language mentors at the workplace, and additionally strengthen the cross-company-network they have established during their training. During the module the prospective language mentors also learn strategies for planning and moderating these kinds of consultation settings.

# COMPETENCE-ORIENTED TRAINING — THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Competences are defined as "the cognitive problem solving skills and abilities of an individual, either inherent or learned, and the corresponding motivational, volitional and social willingness to use these solutions in variable situations successfully and responsibly." (Weinert, 2001)

Language mentoring at the workplace and the corresponding qualifying training course is competence-oriented. Instead of learning "inert" knowledge, it aims to impart "intelligent" knowledge, i. e. knowledge that allows goal-oriented, solutionoriented action approaches that are optimised for each situation. What the learners know is not of central importance; important is, what they should learn to do with the help of support. Not the teachers are the centre of the endeavour, the learners are.

For language mentoring at the workplace this means:
— The "mentees" are in the foreground; support is tailored to meet their needs.

— The mentees' pre-existing knowledge and potential are taken seriously, they are valued as human beings.

— Their learning processes and results are being observed and analysed.

— Support should neither be under- nor overexerting.

— Development measures follow pre-established competenceoriented goals.

— Knowledge and skills are being trained connectedly in authentic situations, a learning-promoting environment is important.

— The support follows the dimensions of competence of the German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (DQR): Professional competence (knowledge and skills) and personal competence (social competence, self-sufficiency). (see AK DQR, 2011)

— The mentee is encouraged to transfer his/her newly acquired knowledge in order to use it when solving problems in specific challenging professional situations.

— The language mentors give constructive feedback.

# OUTLINING AND ACHIEVING COMPETENCE-ORIENTED GOALS

Constructive feedback requires a reference standard that can be used to compare the current and the desired state of the mentee. During their training the prospective language mentors learn to outline and formulate corresponding objectives. It is important for the mentor to focus on the essential here. The following impulse questions will help with formulating the goals:

— What should the mentee be able to do, in summary and in detail?

— How does this goal help with acquiring professional and personal competences?

— Can the mentee meet the objective?

When formulating competence-oriented goals, the SMART method can be helpful as well..

4 | For an overview of the SMART method, see:
http://projektmanagement-manufaktur.de/smart-ziele

> **SMART**[4] stands for
> **S:** Specific
> **M:** Measurable
> **A:** Attractive / Achievable
> **R:** Realistic
> **T:** Time based

FIGURE 4: SMART METHOD

# EXAMPLE

Instead of the vague phrasing: Ms. Masry should know how to change a dust bag, Ms. Müller could use SMART and formulate: On November 27, 2019 (T) Ms. Masry can independantly (R) change a vacuum cleaner bag und verbalise this action simultaneously. (open cover, remove used dust bag, insert fresh dust bag, close cover) (S), so that the vacuum cleaner is fully operational afterwards (M), and Ms. Masry can explain her actions. When this objective is met, Ms. Masry can perform this task without oversight and knows new technical terms and phrases, which will make her more self-sufficient in her work and able to communicate with colleagues (A).

To help plan achieving the objective, Ms. Müller can also employ the WOOP method for orientation.[5]

**WOOP** stands for:
**W:** Wish
**O:** Outcome
**O:** Obstacle
**P:** Plan

FIGURE 5: WOOP METHOD
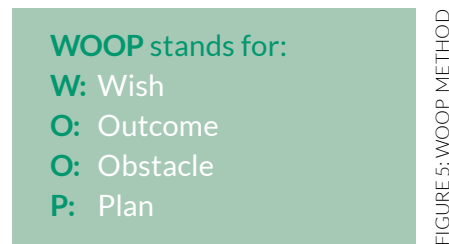
This imagination technique was developed and evaluated by Gabriele Oettingen. The motivation researcher and professor of psychology postulates that objectives can be reached more successfully, if they have been well planned and examined for potential obstacles in advance. "If - Then"-phrases are very important here.

# EXAMPLE

An example: Ms. Müller believes that Ms. Masry will face problems, because she doesn't know where to find new dust bags. That's why 5 For she notes down: „IF Ms. Masry cannot find the dust bag, THEN she should ask me and furthermore know the sentence: "Where are the new dust bags?"t

## GIVING/ RECEIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

As soon as the objective is defined and the way they are mapped out, Ms. Müller can initiate her support measures and produce for example a learning video (see above). While Ms. Masry practices, constructive feedback should support her in the acquisition process. That is why prospective language mentors also learn which rules they need to follow while giving feedback, which methods they can use und which aspects of interculturality could have an effect on receiving and giving good feedback.

The trainees learn the burger-method among others. It is practiced and then tested in real-life case studies. The burger-method utilises the simplified picture of a burger (bun — patty — bun) to explain, how constructive feedback can be structured.

First something positive, then something to be optimised, and finally something positive again.

It is important to emphasise that feedback should always motivate and never humiliate. This issue is especially sensitive if the mentee is still learning how to deal with direct criticism/feedback — we recall: High context cultures value indirect communication. Direct communication and direct criticism can therefore feel unfamiliar and sometimes leads to frustration.

The scholar of Islam Gabi Kratochwil provides culturally sensitive tips for conflict management that can be transferred to feedback situations. She writes (with a focus on Arabic cultures): "Your counterpart must never lose face in a conflict [...] appealing to commonalities, conciliatory gestures, friendly and revaluing words or mediation via a third party are proven strategies of conflict management. Resolving a conflict purely on a factual level without any reference to the personal level is rarely possible in the Arabian region." (Kratochwil, 2012)

Communication therefore needs to be appropriately sensitive.It might be a good strategy to establish the conditions for feedbackconversations in the respective companies in advance, so that frustrating moments can be kept to a minimum for both sides.

It goes without saying that feedback-talks should not be a one-waystreet. Mentor and mentee are allowed to give feedback and should be willing to receive it.

# CONCLUSION — BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

The language mentor training is designed to teach attendees practical methods for supporting colleagues with migrant background and low language skill levels in regards to their linguistic and professional competence. These methods are easily applicable to everyday company life.

The programme is considerate of the scant time resources of most companies, but without waiving building on a solid scientific foundation. The unique feature of this concept lies in the fact that it starts with the colleagues and not with the employees with migrant backgrounds. Viably successful integration can't be "made" from outside – it must come from inside the company or the organisation itself and requires togetherness and cooperation in order to work. In this endeavour the entire staff is indispensable. Training to become a language mentor at the workplace contributes to making collaboratively developed integration possible and successful.

Companies that decide to let employees train as language mentors at the workplace not only show social commitment and dedication to the social and professional integration of employees with migrant backgrounds. They also show that they are part of a company culture in which all employees are addressed, valued and brought to their full potential.

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**FAQ**

### Welche Vorteile hat das Training für den Betrieb?

Unternehmen, die sich dafür entscheiden, Mitarbeiter*innen zu Sprachmentor*innen am Arbeitsplatz ausbilden zu lassen, zeigen nicht nur soziales Engagement und Interesse an der sozialen und beruflichen Integration von Mitarbeiter*innen mit Migrationshintergrund, sondern vor allem, dass sie für eine Unternehmenskultur stehen, in der alle

Mitarbeiter*innen angesprochen, wertgeschätzt und in ihrem Potenzial gefördert werden.

Teilnehmende Betriebe profitieren von der neuen Expertise ihrer Sprachmentor*innen am Arbeitsplatz in dem sie diese nutzen, um bestehende Integrations- und Fördermaßnahmen zu reflektieren und weiterzuentwickeln und ggf. zukünftige zu planen und umzusetzen. Die Sprachmentor*innen nehmen im Betrieb eine wirkungsvolle Doppelfunktion als Vorbild und Ansprechpartner*in ein und setzen damit ein wichtiges Zeichen für einen professionellen und kollegialen Umgang mit kulturellen oder sprachlichen Herausforderungen am Arbeitsplatz.

### Wer kann am Training teilnehmen?

Am Training können alle Personen, die sich für Sprachmentoring interessieren und sich auf diesem Gebiet professionalisieren möchten, teilnehmen. Da die angehenden Sprachmentor*innen während der Praxisphase bereits mit einem Mentee am Arbeitsplatz arbeiten, ist eine Anstellung in einem Betrieb Zulassungsvoraussetzung, empfehlenswert ist auch eine bereits oder in Kürze abgeschlossene Ausbildung.

### Was muss ich investieren um Sprachmentor*in am Arbeitspatz zu werden?

Um Sprachmentor*in am Arbeitsplatz zu werden, nehmen Sie an insgesamt 4 Tagen Schulung in Präsenz teil, eine Freistellung für diese Zeit ist notwendig. Über die Kosten des Trainings informieren wir Sie bei Interesse gerne über Mail, Ansprechpartner*innen und deren Kontaktdaten finden Sie auf der Homepage.

Link: https://aww-phweingarten.de/de/weiterbildung/projekt-fier

**Was sagen bisherige Teilnehmer\*innen zum Training?**

„Ich habe durch das Training viele Tipps und Tricks an die Hand bekommen, wie ich sprachsensibler mit Kollegen mit Migrationshintergrund umgehen kann. Dadurch bekomme ich einen persönlicheren Kontakt zu meinen Kollegen – eine Win-Win-Situation – der neue Kollege fühlt sich Wohl und hat Spaß an seinem Beruf, was für die Gastronomie sehr wichtig ist." - Gürkan Gür, Hoteldirektor Mercure Hotel Stuttgart Airport Messe

„Es hat mich persönlich weitergebracht und Spaß gemacht, mich näher mit meiner Muttersprache Deutsch auseinander zu setzen. Die Sprache ist wichtig, damit eine berufliche Integration stattfinden kann." - Rune Gramlich, F & B, Mercure Stuttgart City Center

**Wo finde ich weitere Informationen zum Training, wen kann ich ansprechen?**

Weitere Informationen zum Training finden Sie auf der Homepage der Akademie für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung der PH Weingarten. Die Informationen und Ansprechpartner\*innen werden fortlaufend aktualisiert.

Link: https://aww-phweingarten.de/de/weiterbildung/projekt-fier

**Wo finde ich weitere Informationen zum Projekt FIER?**

Weitere Informationen finden Sie auf der Homepage des Projekts.

Link: https://fierprojecteu.com/

## IMPRESSUM