Early Language Development in Nature

Training Programme

ELa DuNa

C Š O D

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Training Programme

ELaDiNa

Content

Introduction

This training programme deals with the possibilities of developing and stimulating language skills for children aged 3 to 7 in stimulating, natural environments. In recent years, the first thematic approaches in this field have shown that nature-educational experience has great potential to promote children's linguistic development, but this needs to be addressed. A significant consideration is that when children are given the opportunity and space in natural environments, their curiosity can be aroused and acted on, their imagination is stimulated and their urge to move and prove themselves is fulfilled. The setting provides children with the chance to communicate intensively. The training programme focuses on recognising and addressing these opportunities to help children learn and improve their language skills.

Between the ages of 3 and 7, children learn fundamental phonetic and grammar rules and vastly build their vocabulary. In addition to the family, the daycare centre and primary school provide the framework for these important developmental steps. These educational institutions play a decisive role in language development. It is important to impart everyday language skills and educational and written language skills. Therefore, this training programme was conceptualised for the teachers from primary schools and educators from daycare centres on the implementation of a nature-pedagogically framed language approach.

This training programme results from a 3-year European Erasmus + Project 'Early Language Development in Nature (ELaDiNa)' (9 /2020 - 9/2023) that took place from September 2020 to August 2023.

The present training programme shows how the topic 'Early Language Development in Nature' can be soundly and effectively designed for the qualification of educators and teachers - regardless of whether it takes place in an international European context. Additionally, it allows conclusions to be drawn about how an international three-year qualification project with 40 participants can be productively set up and carried out with the added value of international European cooperation.

General Idea of Training

In advanced training programmes, innovative operative models with theoretical backgrounds must be linked with practice and practical skills. ELaDiNa does not follow a top-down principle based on handling instructions that will be sent from the heights of theory into the valley of practice. Similarly, it is not about reproducing practice that already exists. Because training courses have the decisive advantage of being freed from the pressure of everyday work in order to deal with a work-relevant new topic or approach from a relieving distance, however, the immensely helpful distance of advanced training should not lead to losing sight of the practice and to become lost as an event completely isolated from the field of work. ELaDiNa strives to achieve this by closely interlocking the training methods and contents with the respective school or daycare practice. The guiding idea is to enhance the interplay between theory and practice according to a reflected practice.

The following are used:

1. experiential training methods,
2. inspiring input of important theoretical references,
3. handouts such as reflection cards for practical work,
4. a proposed roadmap for the interim practical period between the two training sessions,
5. self-made video recordings of pedagogical processes carried out,
6. joint analysis and interpretation of recorded practice in order to recognise more options in practical work.

In general, the training follows a four-step process of:

1. Pre-training activities
2. First Training: Input and new impulses
3. Phase of practical application/testing
4. Second Training: Reflection and consolidation
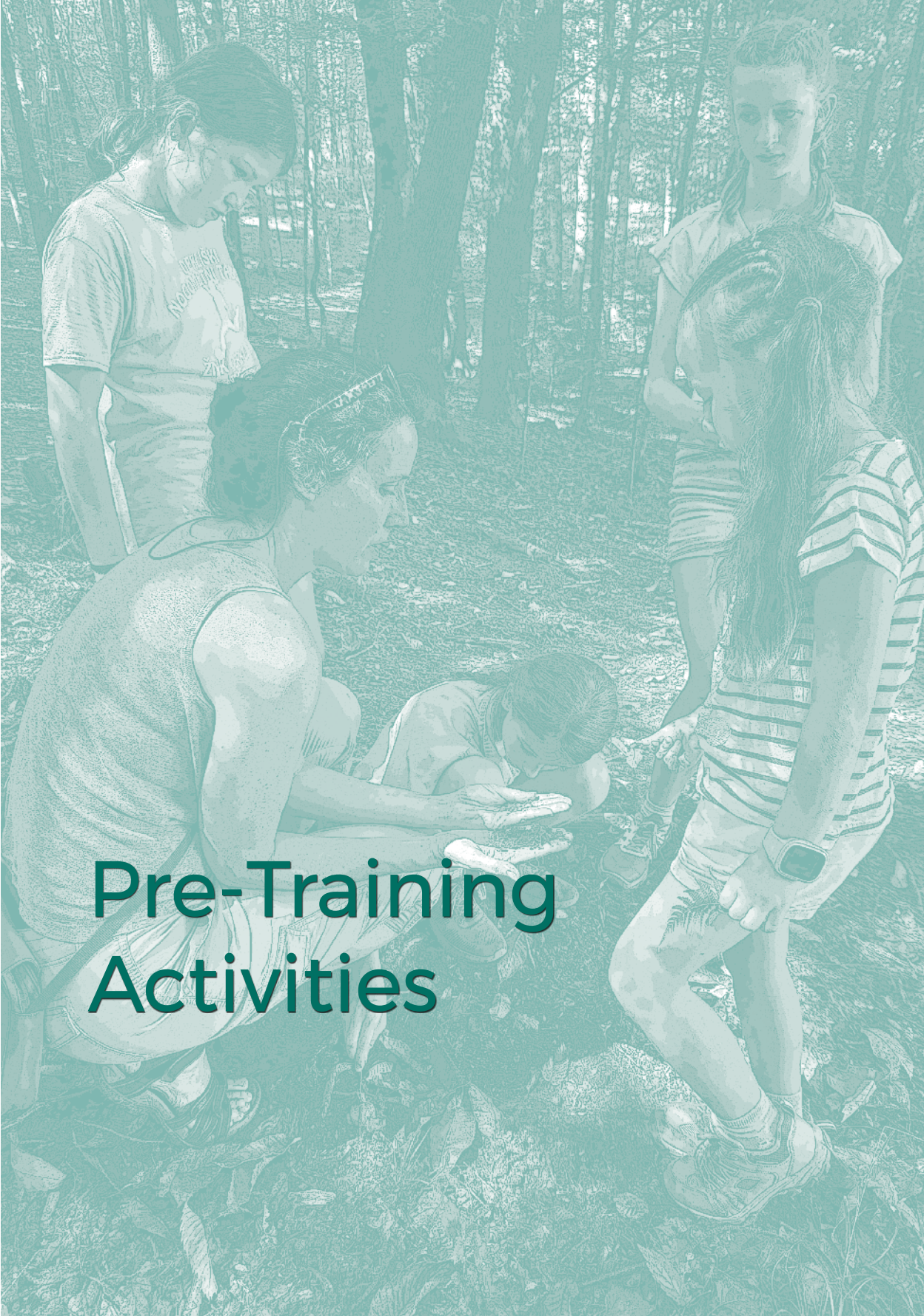
Pre-Training Activities

The main purpose of pre-training activities is to analyse the starting point and the initial conditions of early language development in nature. The participants are asked to do three activities:

1. **Complete an online baseline questionnaire about the views of participants on early language learning in nature**
2. **Create an annotated map of the learning environment with photos**
3. **Record videos of practice.**

Online baseline questionnaires

To analyse the initial conditions of early language development in nature, the participants are asked to complete a questionnaire about their desired outcomes, as well as their knowledge of language and language acquisition and promotion. They are asked to answer the following questions:

General questions:

1. What age are the children you are currently involved with as a teacher?
2. Currently, what percentage of the total time you spend with the children takes place outdoors?

Season	Percentage of your total time with the children spent outdoors
Spring	
Summer	
Autumn	
Winter	

What & Why?

3. Do you believe **being outdoors** contributes to children's language development? (Yes/No)
4. If yes, in what way(s) does being outdoors contribute to children's language development?

Where?

5. Do you believe **the location or qualities of the outdoor environment** is important to children's language development? (Yes/No)
6. If yes, describe how features or qualities of the outdoor environment can contribute to language development by providing the following:
   - curiosity,
   - movement,

- imagination,
- sensory experiences,
- adventure,
- collaboration,
- caring for animals and plants,
- in other ways.

How?

7. Would you use the same pedagogy to develop children's language out-doors as indoors? (Yes/No)

8. If No, in what way(s) would your pedagogy differ between outdoors and indoors?

Who?

9. Do you believe that your relationship with children is different outdoors than indoors? In what way(s)?

10. Do you believe that some children's language development is more in-clined to benefit from an outdoor environment than others? (Yes/No)

11. If Yes, what would you say characterises those children more inclined to benefit?

12. Concerning children's language development, do you believe your role as a teacher differs between an outdoor environment and an indoor envi-ronment? (Yes/No)

13. If Yes, in what respects would you say your role as a teacher differ be-tween outdoor and indoor environments?

14. Do you believe there is any difference in how the children at your school interact outdoors and indoors?

15. If Yes, how would you say this difference in the interaction between chil-dren affects children's language development?

An annotated map of the learning environment with photos

Participants are asked to create an annotated map of the learning environment with photos. They need to do so according to the following instructions:

1. Draw a map of your usual outdoor learning/play environment(s) on large paper (A3 format minimum). This might be the school grounds or an area away from the school. Please include the distance from the school. As a template, use a map of the school grounds (if available) or Google Maps to sketch one. Include a legend to describe the physical properties

of the space (materials, resources, and landscape available) and scale dimensions.

2. Take photos of those places outdoors (included in the map) where children spend time alone or with other children or teachers. There is no need to involve children in the photos. Make one small print (approx. 10 x 10 cm) of each place/location.

3. Write a short text to accompany each photo describing the physical properties of that location (e.g., trees, bushes, rocks, mud, water, pits), what activities usually occur there, and which are most popular for interactions and language use by children. Rate the photos in order of the most used, with number '1' being the most used.

4. Pin the photos with descriptions around the map. Place a pin that corresponds to the place of the photo on the map. Connect the two pins with coloured yarn. Or link the photos and maps as you wish.

5. Document the finished map with annotations in a photo and share this with other participants.

Videos of practice

Through videos and notes, participants are asked to document some examples of their outdoor pedagogical practice in early language development in nature. They need to choose video sequences that show what is important about how early language is supported in natural environments. They also need to explain these video clips with a written commentary to illustrate their use of outdoor spaces and pedagogical methods in relation to early language development using a set of targeted questions as well as open-ended discussion.

Prompts for reflection/discussion included:

- What is the nature of adult interventions?
- What was their intention?
- What interactions stimulate language the most? Consider people, places, own language use, and resources.
- How does this exemplify children's progress in language development?
- What sort of language is being supported?
- What are the strengths of the approach used?
- What might be done differently next time?

These videos and notes are supposed to be shared with other educators in their settings for collaborative reflections.
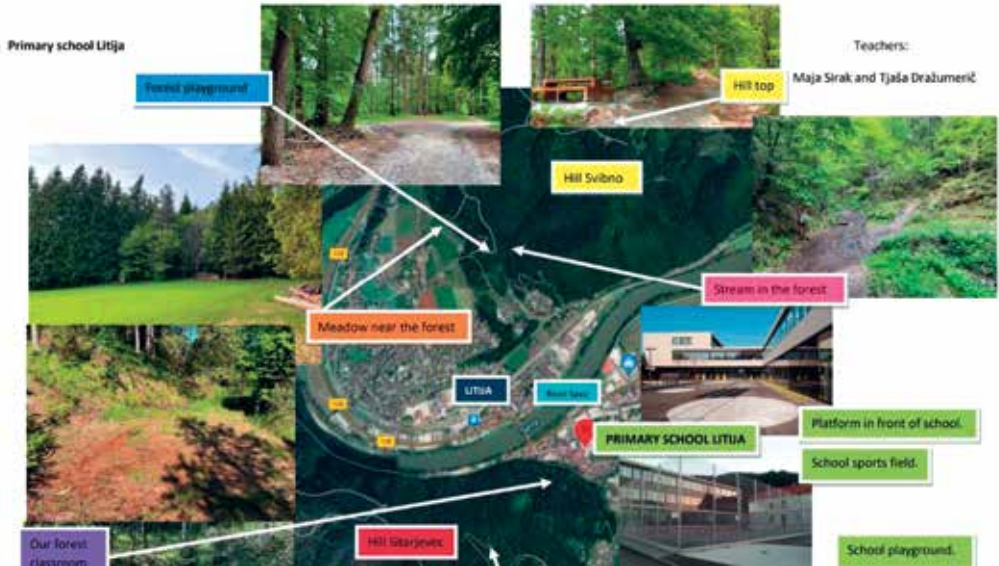
Photo 1: Example of annotated map – Primary School Litija, Slovenia
(M. Sirak and T. Dražumerič, 2021)

Photo 2: Example of a video clip of outdoor practice – Kindergarten Galjevica, Slovenia,
available at https://video.arnes.si/watch/h9qvwtmxx4r8 (M. Pišljar and A. Levičar, 2021)

First Training Session – Input and New Impulses

This training session serves to convey the 'ELaDiNa' approach to pedagogical staff (teachers) from kindergartens and primary schools. The programme aims to enable colleagues to implement the contents, knowledge, and skills in their pedagogical practice to support children's language development in the context of nature activities.

The training will be more efficient if:

1. the content and its mediation inspire and activate the participants,
2. the participants actively acquire knowledge and skills by trying them out,
3. the teaching will build on the experience and knowledge of the participants,
4. the activities and reflections create new insights and professional interpretation patterns.

The purposes of the first training session are:

- to set out a programme for developing teachers' support for children's early language development outdoors,
- to provide evidence-based frames for developing and sharing activities and knowledge between participants,
- to provide samples of detailed activity descriptions, ready to use in early-years development.

During the training programme, participants follow a 'road map' with different stops. They can acquire new knowledge through experiential and cooperative learning, exchanging mutual experiences of outdoor learning and early language development.

Suggested schedule of the 3-day training programme

Each day of the training has its main topic, which is addressed through different activities, theoretical inputs, and joint discussions and reflections.
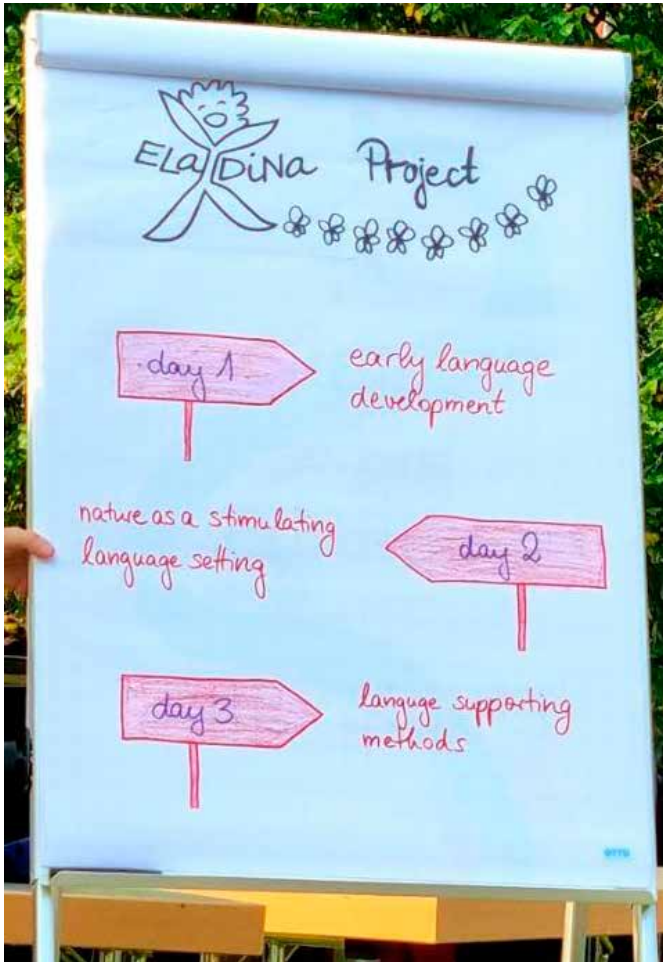
Photo 3: Introduction of main topics for each day (K. Dolgan, 2021)

Day 1 – Early Language Development

	Content	Procedure/instructions
09.00	Welcome	Introduction Presentation of the agenda of the training by each day
09.15	Getting-to-know-you activity	**Human Treasure Hunt**
10.00	Getting-to-know-you activity	**Group Formation**
11.00	**Break**	
11.15	Activity	**Strange things from the attic**
12.30	**Lunch**	
13.30	Activity	**Nature Memory**
14.30	Theoretical input	**Early Language Development**
15.00	**Break**	
15.15	Group work and discussion	**Milestones of language development** **Additional material** • Still Face Experiment Dr Edward Tronick, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTTSXc6sARg • Still Face Experiment, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOR7jId8wYk • Talking Twin babies https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JmA2ClUvUY
16.00	**Break**	
17.30	Triade	Looking back on today and the various activities - What is on your mind now? What was new or surprising?
18.00	**Dinner**	

Day 2 – Nature as a Stimulating Language Setting

		Content	Procedure/instructions
9.00	Good morning		Stand-up meeting – weather Presentation of agenda for day 2
9.15	Activity		**Across the Woods – the narrated adventure**
10.30	**Break**		
10.45	Theoretical input		**Why nature? Nature as a stimulating language setting, part 1**
11.30	Group work		**Narrated adventure in my practice/field of work**
12.30	**Lunch**		
13.30	Activity		**Storytelling**
14.15	Theoretical input		**Why nature? Stimulating character of nature, part 2**
14.45	**Break**		
15.00	Activity		**Enquiry and speculation**
16.00	**Break**		
17.30	Triade		Looking back on today and various activities - What is on your mind at this moment? What was new or surprising? Additional: using prevocational quotations
18.00	**Dinner**		

Day 3 – Language Supporting Methods

		Content	Procedure/instructions
9.00	Good morning		Stand-up meeting Presentation of the agenda for day 3
9.15	Activity and reflection		Language-stimulating strategies
12.30	**Lunch**		
13.30	Activity and reflection		**Language-stimulating strategies**
15.00	Individual plans		**Next steps**
16.00	**Break**		
17.30	Triade		Looking back on today, various activities and individual plans - What is on your mind at this moment? What was new or surprising?
18.00	**Dinner**		

Suggested activities for the main topics of each day during the 3-day training programme

DAY 1: Early Language Development
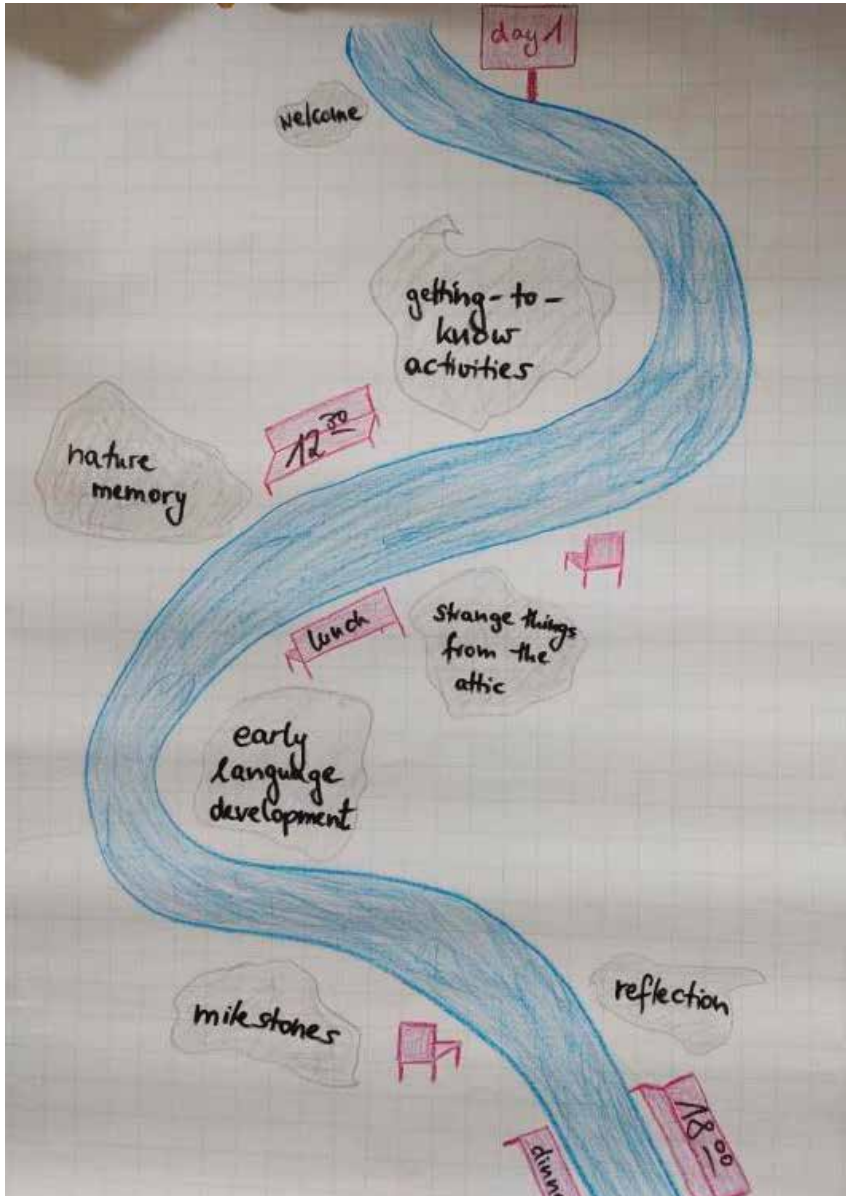
Photo 4: Introduction of the main activities for Day 1 (K. Dolgan, 2021)

On the first day of training, the main focus should be on practical and theoretical aspects of early language development and the following activities are suggested to be implemented:

Activity 1: Human Treasure Hunt and Group Formation
Getting to know each other: · exchange of personal and professional background, · thematic access to the topic 'Language Development'.
Theoretical background: · principle: 'Contact before Cooperation', · establishing a supportive learning atmosphere, · importance of positive group dynamic, · possibility for every participant to share something about his-/herself.
Process: 1. Every participant gets a prepared paper with 10 questions focusing on special abilities and experiences concerning language. 2. Task is to walk around and ask other participants these questions to find someone with the required feature. 3. After having asked one question, the interview partner has to be changed. 4. The interviewing phase ends when someone has filled in a name for every question and shouts, 'Bingo!'. 5. Afterwards, the answers to each question will be exchanged in the plenary session. Group Formation (motto: find out differences and similarities) 1. Where were you born? 2. What is the longest distance between your working places? 3. How old are the children you are working with? 4. In a line – what is the name of your institution? 5. Travelling – who has ever been to Slovenia? (Sweden / Germany) 6. How did you experience the country? 7. Which impression or ideas of this country and its culture did you get? Do you spontaneously remember an adventure or test of courage in nature in the past / your childhood or youth? · Please line up in a row in order of age. · Exchange 1-2 examples about your adventure in groups of three.
Material: pens, paper and clipboards for every participant

Activity 2: Strange Things from the Attic

Main aim of activity: understanding a child's approach to language development through dealing with strange unknown artefacts.

Theoretical background:
- unknown objects stimulate curiosity and a process of exploring,
- exploration stimulates language use: 'Speech prompts',
- exploring with all senses,
- 'curiosity is the key' (children are and have to be curious): Find out names and words – the unknown has to be predicated (X is a P).

Process:
1. Group of 4-5 persons chooses one unknown artefact.
2. Tasks are the following (15 min):
   a) To find out what the artefact is or could be, how it looks, feels, smells... (main questions are: How is it – what it is?).
   b) Prepare a presentation as if one has to promote the artefact on a market (find a product name and link sensory and physical qualities to its function).
3. Groups produce presentations.
4. Afterward, reflection on the process also regarding the theoretical reference aspects.

Material:
- collection of strange human-made objects, i.e., houseware from the past or special tools,
- intentionally non-natural objects because initially, adults' curiosity is often more stimulated by strange human-made objects.

Photo 6: Activity Strange things from the attic (K. Dolgan, 2021)

Activity 3: Sensual Diversity of the Natural World – 'Nature Memory'

Main aim of activity:
- perceiving sensual variety and finding words to describe the similarities and differences; the precise observation,
- differentiating and categorising vocabulary.

Theoretical background:
- adopt an inquiring attitude and support the children in their urge to explore and discover and find words for it,
- nature provides no duplicates, but the task of finding one leads to precise observation and description of similarities and differences; words for shapes, colours, surfaces and other sensual features have to be found,
- linked to language developmental process of the categorising lexical structure and taxonomic structure of vocabulary (tree -> broadleaved tree & conifer, ->trunk, branch, twig, tree crown, leave),
- Early language development process is based on acting/perceiving.

Process:
1. Group of 6-10 persons.
2. Mark with sticks a square on the ground.
3. First task for each participant is to find a natural object that appeals to him/her and that he/she can carry in one hand; all objects have to be placed into the square.
4. When all participants have placed an object in the square, the second task is to choose one of the objects that interest you (not your own) and find a duplicate of this object.
5. The trainer points out to the participants that the second objects found are not duplicates and sends them on a new search with the instruction to look even more closely and precisely.
6. Afterwards, reflection on the process also regarding the theoretical reference aspects.

Variation: 'Collect and order'

Material: different materials which can be found in nature.

Photos 7, 8 and 9: Activity sensual diversity of the natural world - 'nature memory'
(K. Dolgan, 2021)

Activity 4: Group Puzzle with 'Milestones of Language Development'

Main aim of activity:
- to describe an ideal development of linguistic and communicative competences,
- to obtain basic information about how the process of children's language acquisition works, about the main factors that drive the process, and to understand the differences in language learning between children and adults.

Theoretical background:
- children's language acquisition is implicit, meaning all rules are derived from the input,
- the individual developmental steps build on each other,
- language competences can be considered on different linguistic levels (language comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, pragmatics),
- the different linguistic levels are coordinated with each other,
- it is not the aim to know and focus on which competences have to be shown at what age, but it is more important to focus on the process. Discuss or ask: Why is this happening? Why do children take these steps?,
- understanding mistakes as productive mistakes.

Process:
1. Groups of 5-6 persons.
2. Each group receives a prepared puzzle of 'Milestones of Language Development' and tries to find a solution.
3. After 30 minutes, each group receives the solution.
4. Group members discuss differences between their solution and the given solution, and they collect questions about these differences.
5. Afterwards, the activity is reflected in the plenary session and highlighted by answering questions from the group's important steps in the language acquisition process.

Questions for reflection in the plenum:
- What was difficult? Which points were discussed?
- Where have been differences in the classification of phenomena / between the group solution and the given solution?

Material:
- prepared puzzle for each group; pieces of the puzzle are taken from relevant tables of linguistic research concerning different languages,
- one table or a straight surface for each group,
- if outdoor: no wind,
- possible additional material: Puzzle pieces translated from German linguistic literature into English.

Video – Talking Twin Babies, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JmA2ClUvUY

Video – Still Face Experiment:
- Still Face Experiment Dr Edward Tronick, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTTSXc6sARg
- Still Face Experiment, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOR7jId8wYk

Photo 10: Activity Group puzzle with 'milestones of language development' (K. Dolgan, 2021)

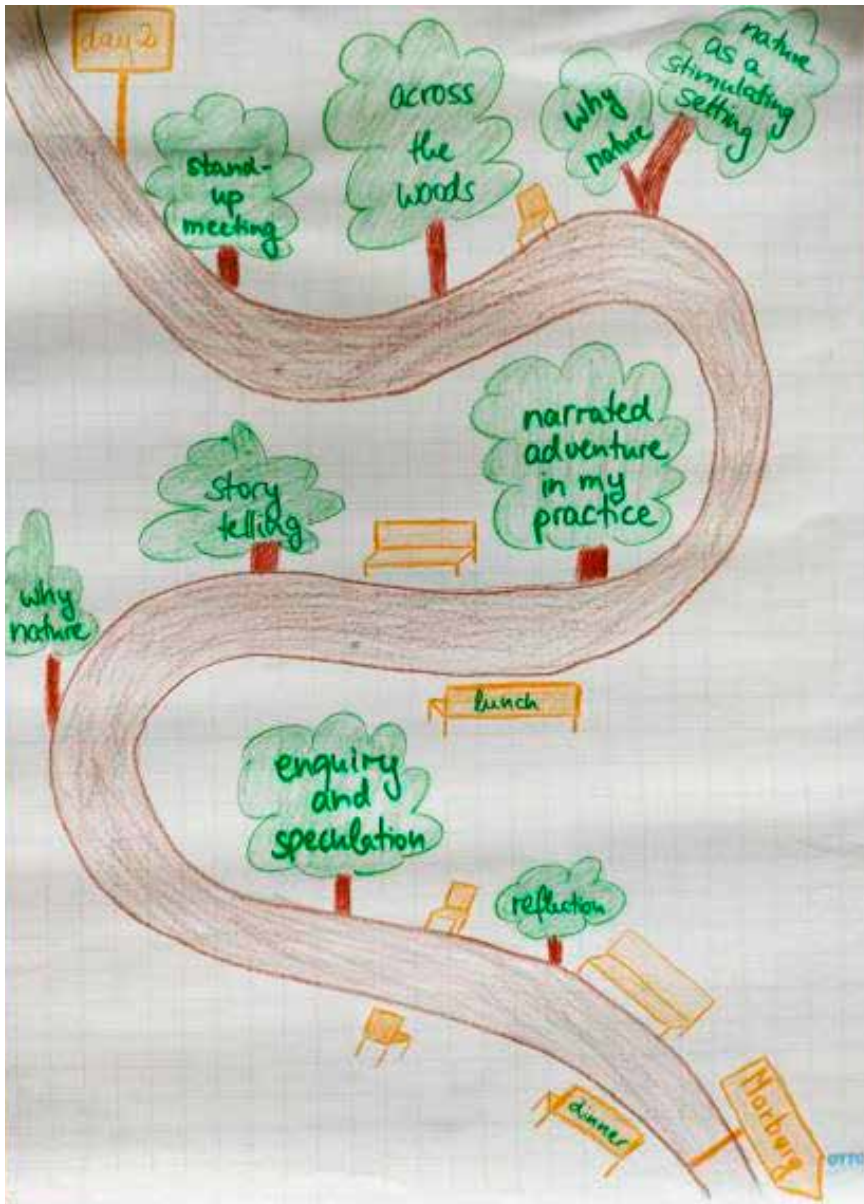## DAY 2 – Nature as a Stimulating Language Setting

Photo 11: Introduction of the main activities of the second day (K. Dolgan, 2021)

On the second day of training, the focus should be on recognising nature as a stimulating language setting, and the following activities are suggested to be implemented:

Activity 1: Across the Woods – the Narrated Adventure

Main aim of activity:
- intensive self-experience in nature leading to an urge to report,
- experiencing nature as a communication-stimulating environment.

Theoretical background:
- importance of a stimulating environment:
  'What the heart is full of the mouth overflows with.' – a quotation from the Bible / Luther
  'Denn wes das Herz voll ist, des geht der Mund über.',
- experiencing an exciting, emotional adventure needs to be told,
- nature offers such a stimulating environment (important elements: unforeseen events, interesting surfaces, being in movement),
- connection between movement and language/starting point of language is movement or meaningful action.

Process:
1. From a common starting point in the middle of the forest (standing in a circle, looking outwards), everyone walks for 5-10 minutes in a straight line in a different direction - no matter what condition of the forest is encountered (overcoming all obstacles, if possible, if not participants have to round the obstacle and follow their line again).
2. While walking, participants should focus on the features of the landscape and the inner world of body and soul: outward appearance and inner world of experience.
3. After 5-10 minutes, the signal to return is given by knocking sticks against a tree.
4. When all participants have returned (important! Wait for the last person!), the activity is reflected on with the group using the following possible questions: How was your journey? What did you experience during your journey? Did something happen? Is there something you want to tell us? Do you want to share something? What was stimulating? What is a stimulating environment?
5. Everyone has the task to undertake a 'journey' alone across the woods and to talk about it: a 'travel report' or even a story.
6. At the end, the trainer should summarise the different reports by focussing on the theoretical references mentioned above.

Material: sticks

Photo 12: Activity Across the woods – the narrated adventure (K. Dolgan, 2021)

Activity 2: Narrated Adventure in My Practice

Main aim of activity:

- reflecting on one's own practice and developing ideas on how to change practice to make more space for the telling of adventures experienced and for storytelling,
- be aware of what situations can constitute an adventure for children,
- consider appropriate settings in which storytelling and the telling of the adventures experienced can take place.

Theoretical background:

- see activity 'Across the Woods – the narrated adventure ',
- adventures for children have to be detected by the adults; it can be exciting situations, something unexpected, surprising events, daring something, tests of courage, taking risks or taking chances and so on,
- adults need to detect narratives, pick up the stories of the children and provide a setting in which the adventures experienced can be told (such as giving space and time, teasing out, supporting linguistically, structuring, dramatizing, creating a living bond between narrator and listener, creating a narrative culture in practice, being a role model as a teacher, creating extra narrative settings and places),
- storytelling is usually not a common practice and needs to be practised.

Process:

1. Participants work in groups of 5-6 persons and exchange the following questions:
   a) Think about your own practice – do you remember children's adventures in nature and according to stories being told? Exchange stories in your group.
   b) How do I need to arrange my practice so that children can tell their stories? Which conditions would help children tell their stories?
2. Main findings and key ideas are written down on moderation cards.
3. Results are presented in the plenary session.

Material: moderation cards and pens for groups

Activity 3: Storytelling – Anyone Can Do It

Main aim of activity:

- this group exercise provides insights into the typical structure of stories (story schema), the special situation of storytelling, and the language- and literacy-enhancing function of storytelling. It encourages more storytelling and recognises nature as an imagination-stimulating occasion for stories.

Theoretical background:

- storytelling introduces children to textual language in a conversational format. New words, imaginative plotting, and artful language formed with repetition can be taught especially to children for whom reading aloud is overwhelming. The face-to-face situation helps with body language gestures and signs to follow even a complicated plot with many unknown words (literacy support through storytelling, see *Hirsh-Pasek, K. & Golinkoff, R.M. (2004). Einstein never used flash cards. How our children really learn – and why they need to play more and memorize less. Emmaus: Rodale*),
- everyone has internalised a scheme for stories: there is usually a protagonist (can be plural) to whom something extraordinary happens, which coherently drives forward the parts of the story that build on each other and finally ends in a resolution.

Process:

1. 4 – 5 active persons and 4–10 persons as listeners.
2. A simple story is told by the course leader, the first active person, and the listeners, while the three remaining active persons hear and see nothing.
3. The first active person has the task of retelling the story to the second active person to be called in - and so on.
4. The listeners have the task to listen and observe, which is important for feedback and reflection.
5. The story has been told four or five times and has changed more and more as the storytellers have heard it only once and have not (yet) memorised it. They experience the unsettling situation of not knowing the details of the story for sure and have to improvise.
6. Reflection: The storytelling and the improvised additions and changes to the story provide many opportunities to reflect on the challenging situation of storytelling as well as to address the typical elements of a story (story scheme). In addition, the child's perspective can be reflected on since children often lack the right words when telling a story and are not yet always able to speak coherently. The language and literacy-promoting effect of storytelling and the possibilities for establishing a 'culture of storytelling' can be discussed.

Material:

- a quiet place to sit, the storyteller should be able to use his whole body to tell his story,
- one of many possible stories:

Activity 3: Storytelling – Anyone Can Do It

The Story of the Great Show-off
(following the original by Julia Klein)

In the days when the world was very young, the **rabbit** discovered that he could run, and he cried out:
"I can **run**, I can **run faster** than all the animals in the world!"
And he **ran** and **ran** and **ran**.

The **lion** heard that and shouted,
"All right, you can run, you can run faster than all the animals in the world.
But I can **roar**, I can **roar louder** than all the animals in the world!"
And he **roared** and **roared** and **roared**.

The **woodpecker** heard that and shouted,
"All right, you can roar, you can roar louder than all the animals in the world.
But I can **knock**, I can **knock better** than all the animals in the world!"
And he **knocked** and **knocked** and **knocked**.

The **firefly** heard that and called out,
"All right, you can knock, you can knock better than all the animals in the world.
But I can **shine**, I can **shine brighter** than all the animals in the world!"
And he **shone** and **shone** and **shone**.

The **elephant** heard that and shouted,
"All right, you can shine, you can shine brighter than all the animals in the world.
But I can **splash water**, I can **splash water further** than all the animals in the world!"
And he **splashed** and **splashed** and **splashed** with water.

When the **stones** heard these posers, they said:
"Yes, you can run faster, you can roar louder, you can knock better, you can shine brighter, you can splash water further but there is something we can do that none of you can:
we can be silent."

From then on, the stones were **silent**, **silent** and **silent**, and they remain silent to this day. Or have you ever heard a stone speak?

> *You can support your storytelling with gestures f.e. for every animal specific "ability" like running, roaring etc.*

Photo 13: Activity Storytelling (K. Dolgan, 2021)

Activity 4: Enquiry and Speculation

Main aim of activity:

- understanding the concept of sustained shared thinking and experiencing how the concept can be implemented in practice by initiating a dialogue with enquiring and speculative questions.

Theoretical background:

- sustained shared thinking is considered to be a particularly high-quality interaction which supports cognitive processes and, therefore, language development,
- a special way of joint thinking and discussing interesting subjects by asking either enquiry or speculative questions leads to deeper, more intensive and longer dialogues,
- the procedure awakens the inquiring and curious attitudes of children.

Process:

1. A short Input about the concept is given first (see below).
2. One example of leading a dialogue with those types of questions has to be demonstrated in the plenum. A practical phase of trying out the procedure follows in partner groups.
3. Two persons form a team and have the task of establishing sustained shared thinking. First, they decide who is responsible for asking enquiring questions and who is responsible for asking speculative questions. Then they make an attentive walk alone out in nature for about 5-10 minutes, receiving stimulations from nature and its phenomena and trying to find enquiring or speculative questions (those questions for which one is responsible). Partners meet again, and one partner starts the first round of initiating a dialogue by asking his type of questions. He tries to keep on going the dialogue which should last at least ten turn-takings. The second round is started by the other partner, who initiates a dialogue with his type of questions.
4. The exercise can be reflected on with the following questions:
   - Did I find it difficult to keep the dialogue going?
   - How did I deal with it when I couldn't think of anything else?

Material:

For the input, an enquiring attitude (such as to find out causes, reasons, motives, purposes and so on) and a speculative attitude (such as assumptions, fantasies, and ideas of the future) should be explained. Examples for speculative questions (what if...., imagine that...?) and enquiring questions (why....?) have to be given, as well as a corresponding dialogue with several turn-takings has to be presented.

Additionally, there may be a hint at another possibility to prolong dialogues. It is also important to deal with children's questions in a certain way:
1. honour the question (That's a good question. I have also wondered...)
2. raise an assumption (I guess..., I can imagine..., I would say...)
3. return question (What do you think? What do you suppose?)

Activity 4: Enquiry and Speculation
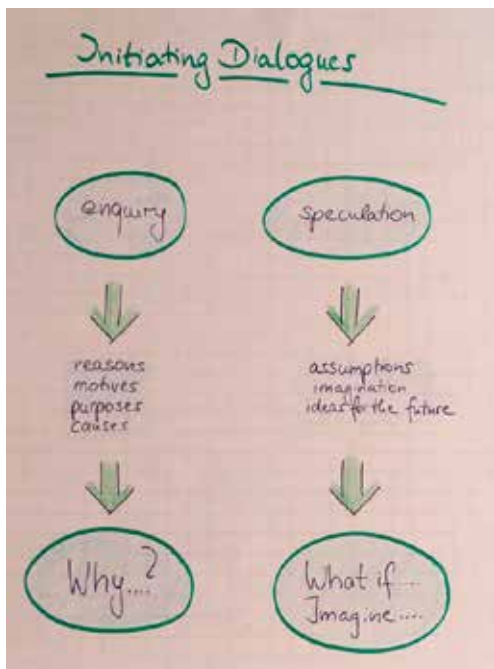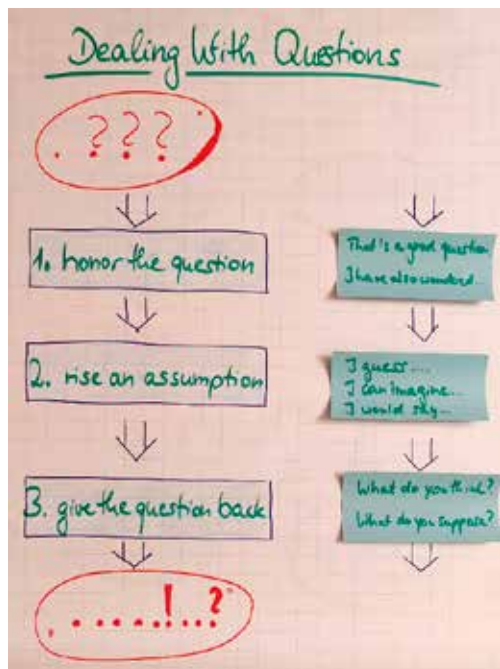
Photos 14 and 15: Flip chart photos (C. Sack, 2021)

DAY 3 – Language Supporting Methods

Photo 16: Introduction of the main activities of Day 3 (K. Dolgan, 2021)

On the third day of the training programme, participants learn more about language-supporting methods and the following activities are suggested to be implemented:

Activity 1: Language Stimulating Strategies

Main aim of activity:
- learning about and becoming aware of the most important strategies for stimulating language,
- using and exercising the strategies,
- experiencing the effect on a child.

Theoretical background:
- Techniques of modelling language (Dannenbauer, F. M. (2007). Spezifische Sprachentwicklungsstörung (SLI).)
- Heidelberger Interaktionstraining (Buschmann, Anke: Heidelberger Elterntraining zur frühen Sprachförderung – Trainermanual. Urban & Fischer Verlag/Elsevier GmbH, 2nd Edition, München, 2011.)
- The Hanen Centre YouTube Channel:
    - Why Interaction Matters Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAFcJVJHLCU
    - Why Interaction Matters Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJAgWdYM_og
    - Fostering Language Development: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVBjj5IL6to

Process:
- Language-stimulating strategies are worked out one after the other with the following steps:
    1. presenting and explaining the strategy,
    2. trying out this strategy in a role play in groups of three persons (one person as teacher using the strategy, one person as child, one person as observer),
    3. reflecting experiences by using the strategy in plenum.
- List of most important strategies is worked through.
- Pocket cards ('reflections for your pocket') are given to each participant as an invitation to put one day after the other a reflection card into the pocket.

Material:
- see more detailed descriptions of these strategies in the Eladina Practical Handbook and Eladina Theoretical Handbook,
- Material 1: List of language-stimulating strategies with explanation and significance from the child's point of view,
- Material 2: Pocket cards 'reflections for your pocket'.

Material 1 - Language stimulating strategies
1. Fundamental language supportive attitude
    - Get down to the child's level.
    - Make and hold eye contact.
    - Put on a friendly facial expression.
    - Assume a facing body posture.
    - Listen and enquire further with real interest.
    - Undivided/full attention.

Activity 1: Language Stimulating Strategies

- Create a good atmosphere.
- Give time.

2. Follow your child's lead – establish joint attention!
   - Observe, wait and listen (OWL).
   - Perceive and focus on the child's interest.
   - Give up your own leadership.
   - Listen carefully, be patient.

   Significant from the child's point of view
   - *I feel a real interest.*
   - *I am important, and I have something to say.*
   - *I may try something out.*

3. Parallel talk and self-talk
   - **Parallel-talk:** describe and comment on what the child is doing
   - **Self-talk:** describe and comment on what you are doing
   - If there is attention..

   Significant from the child's point of view
   - *I hear a model of correct expansive language.*
   - *I am seen, and I feel noticed.*
   - *I can learn the label of objects/actions and the meaning of words.*

4. Confirm, repeat and expand
   - Respond immediately but do not answer first – at first, confirm the child's utterance.
   - Repeat and build on what the child says.
   - Expand = add 1-2 more pieces of information, keep on child's subject and interests.

   Significant from the child's point of view
   - *All my attempts to communicate are valuable, so I am motivated to try more.*
   - *I feel understood.*
   - *I receive valuable input and can learn new words and sentence structures.*

5. Corrective repetition / Recasting
   - Repeat an utterance replacing mistakes with corrections (correct pronunciation, words and/or correct grammar).
   - Use this strategy consistently.

   Significant from the child's point of view
   - *I can hear how to say it correctly without being directly confronted with mistakes.*
   - *I have a chance to say it correctly next time.*
   - *I am becoming more confident in communication.*

6. Frequently naming unknown words
   - Repeat a new word several times within one activity / in a meaningful context.
   - Each word must be heard (and experienced) 60-80 times before it can be actively used.

   Significant from the child's point of view
   - *I can safely store new words in the lexicon.*

Activity 1: Language Stimulating Strategies

7. Use appropriate and rich language
    - Don't use restricted forms of language.
    - Note abbreviated remarks.
    - Maximal strategy of verbalisation instead of minimal.

      Significant from the child's point of view
      - *I can learn precise and differentiated vocabulary.*
      - *I am stimulated to think.*

8. Turn-taking – paying attention to reciprocity in dialogue
    - Pay attention to the role change between the listener and to speaker.
    - Create a circle of discussion with several changes of speaker.
    - Ensure a balanced share of speech or increase the children's share of speech.
    - If necessary, take yourself back more .

      Significant from the child's point of view
      - *I often have the opportunity to practise and thus become better and better.*

9. Focus on quiet children
    - Recognise which children are more or less sociable and communicative.
    - Take the initiative and actively seek contact with quiet children.

      Significant from the child's point of view

      - *I may also tell, although I would not have dared on my own.*

10. Avoid imperatives and pure instructions
    - Encourage the child to think for him/herself instead of giving instructions or even prohibitions.
    - Allow own ideas and independent actions of the child and discuss consequences with each other.

      Significant from the child's point of view
      - *I only have to function, and I am not allowed to discuss anything.*

11. Asking questions
    - Explain the difference between open questions (What is happening here? Why…? What do you see?) and close questions (What is this? Was it nice yesterday?).
    - Use more open-than-closed questions.
    - Alternative questions are helpful (Do you want to drink tea or water?) as the child hears the correct words and can answer actively.

Material 2 – Pocket cards 'reflections for your pocket.'
- Reflect today on which children are sociable and which children need more initiative from caregivers.
- Reflect today on how consistently you adopt a fundamental language-supporting attitude (getting down to the child's level, maintaining eye contact).
- Reflect today on how balanced the conversational parts are between you and the child.
- Reflect today on whether you give the children undivided attention.
- Reflect today on what non-verbal signals the children send as invitations to dialogue.

Activity 1: Language Stimulating Strategies

- Reflect today on whether you succeeded in following the child's lead (observe, wait and listen, focus on the child's interests …).
- Reflect today on whether you first confirm and repeat the child's utterances before you respond.
- Reflect today on how often you use corrective feedback.
- Reflect today on how often you ask questions and what kind of questions you ask.
- Reflect today on whether you describe what you are doing.
- Reflect today on how often you talk in imperatives and whether you can think of other phrases instead.

Photo 17, 18 and 19: Activity Language stimulating strategies (K. Dolgan, 2021)

Activity 2: Next Steps, Conclusion, Reflection

Theoretical background:
- at the end of a process, conclusion and reflection need to be done,
- feedback from the participants is a useful direction, what participants need, what they find out and what they need for further practice development.

Process:
1. Participants are asked to reflect and make some conclusions about the activities during the first training.
2. They leave their short feedback statements on the flip charts and try to answer these types of questions:
    - What is new in your luggage?
    - What else is important to say about the days here?
    - What do you need (wish) from us leaders for your practice?

Material: flip charts, markers
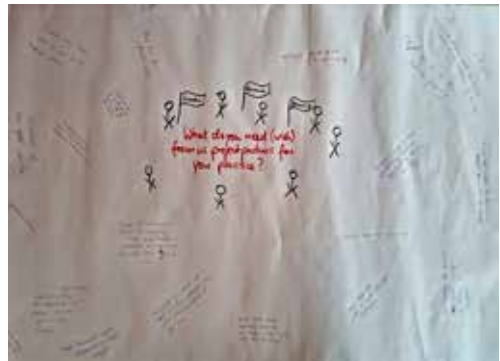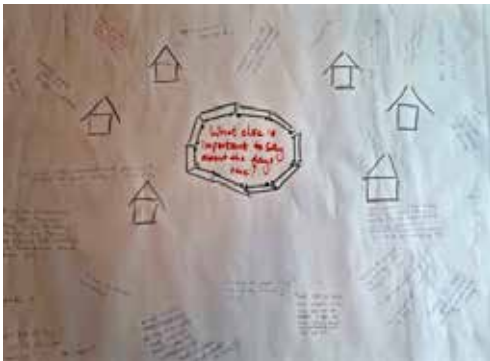
Photos 20, 21, 22: Activity Next steps, conclusion, reflection (K. Dolgan, 2021)
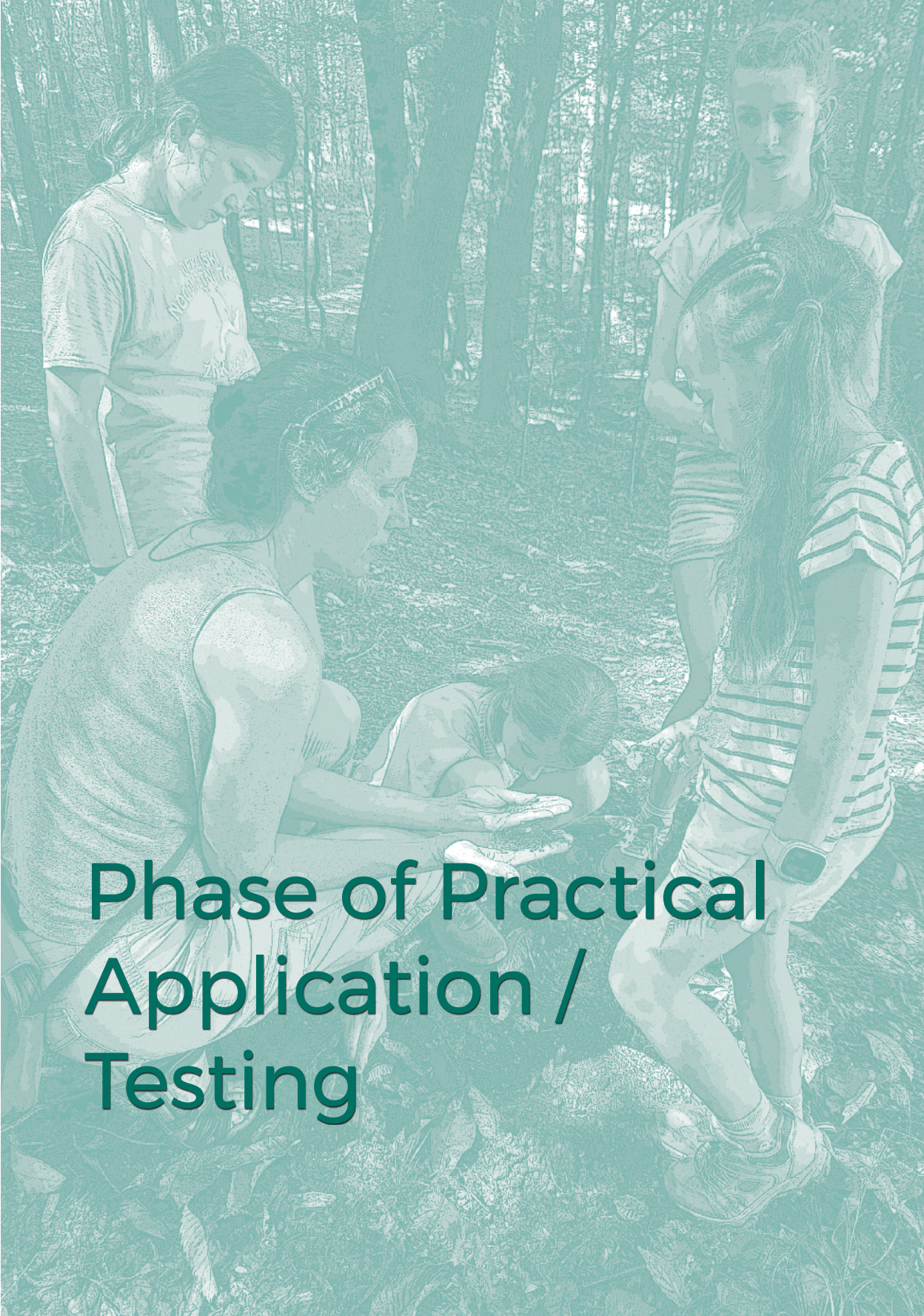
Phase of Practical Application / Testing

After the first training session, the participants' professional rucksack is filled with experiences, impressions, newly acquired knowledge, suggestions, and impulses for language education in nature. Applying what they have learned in everyday practice is a crucial process. The professional rucksack must not be stripped off at the entrance door of the school or daycare centre but should find its way into everyday practice. The ElaDiNa project team has developed supporting tools, reflection loops, and repetitive inputs so that the knowledge and skills acquired in training are not lost in the practical everyday pressure of real pedagogical action.

A follow-up meeting scheduled shortly after the training increases the commitment and sustainability of the transfer into practice. It enables the participants to reflect on the contents of the training together, to discuss implementations that have already taken place and to plan future ones. Possible questions include: What is particularly important to you from the first training? What contents particularly impressed you? What would you like to work on more intensively?

The further work is supported by an implementation plan, which offers a binding but not rigidly fixed compilation of topics as a 'roadmap'.

The roadmap invites participants to apply the training content in their practice, to try it out and to reflect on the different aspects of the training in more depth and in a practical way. It serves as a guide for participants on their 'journey' to the next training.

Seven different stops each represent a different content focus of the first training session.
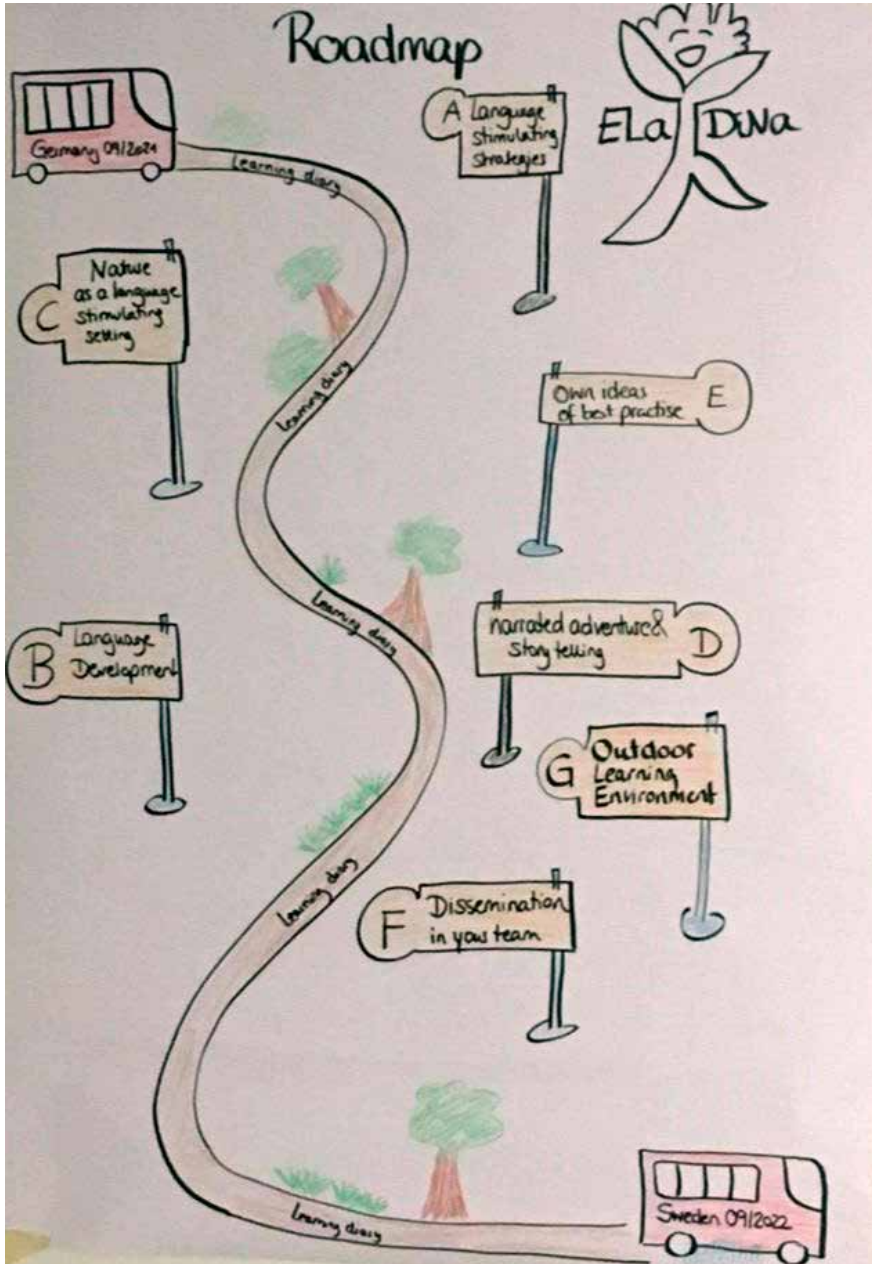
Photo 23: Roadmap with the Bus stops (C. Sack, 2021)

The stops have the following focal points:

- Stop A: Language-stimulating strategies
- Stop B: Language development
- Stop C: Nature as a language-stimulating setting
- Stop D: Narrated adventure and storytelling
- Stop E: Own ideas of best practice
- Stop F: Dissemination in your team
- Stop G: Outdoor Learning Environment

The thematic stops are visited in two different ways in the phase between the two training sessions: individually and in the training group:

- In the individual process, the stops can be 'approached' by the participants in their own chosen order, e.g., by using 'pocket cards' on strategies to stimulate language in their own work. Keeping a training diary helps participants to individually reflect on and link practical situations and experiences. In the training diary, the latest experiences, insights, developmental steps and emerging questions are thus regularly documented, which can ideally be linked to a stop.
- This is flanked by regular joint meetings in the training groups. This requires a jointly developed sequence for approaching the stops with all participants of the training group. In the training group, the participants exchange information about the practical application in the pedagogical fields of work. In order to engage in an intensive, profound and reflective exchange about the practical experiences in everyday life, methodological possibilities for the stops A to D are given below. Stops E and F are presented at every meeting of the training group. Everyone has the opportunity to share successful activities from their own practice with all participants.

Stop A: Language stimulating strategies and reflections for your pocket

The aims are to apply and internalise different strategies to improve one's own language-stimulating attitude in nature and to reflect on them afterwards.

Training diary

What to do in your practice?

- Choose one strategy or reflection card and try it out in your practice (for one day, for one week, ...) – one by one.
- Write down your observations and findings (use the notebook/learning diary).
    - How did the children react? Have they benefited; do you see changes?
    - Did you find it easy or difficult to apply this strategy?
    - Which strategy suits which age or language level?
- Take video recordings while using one or more strategies. This should show how you support early language development in nature.

Training Group

Experience Exchange in your Training group:

Video analysis in the training group:

- Choose a video to watch with your training group from the perspective of a language support strategy.
    - Is the strategy being used? Does it come into play in the video?
    - If yes, please give an example.
    - If no - where could it have been used? Why? Or why does it not play a role in this video?
    - At what point would the children have particularly benefited from it? Why?
    - What could alternative language activities have looked like?
- Select a video to watch with your training group using the aspects of the Pocket Cards. Each participant will be assigned 1-2 Pocket Cards. Each person watches the video with the imaginary glasses of the assigned Pocket Cards.
    - Was your Pocket Card content visible in the video?
    - Where in the video could you see your Pocket Card content?
    - Where could the content have been used more often?
    - When and where would there have been other possibilities?

Material:

- Pocket Cards
- Reflect today on which children are sociable and which children need more initiatives from caregivers.
- Reflect today on how consistently you adopt a fundamental language-supporting attitude (getting down to the child's level, maintaining eye contact etc.).
- Reflect today on how balanced the conversational parts are between you and the child.
- Reflect today on whether you give the children undivided attention.
- Reflect today on what non-verbal signals the children send as invitations to dialogue.
- Reflect today on whether you succeeded in following the child's lead (observe, wait and listen, focus on the child's interests...).
- Reflect today on whether you first confirm and repeat the child's utterances before you respond.

Stop A: Language stimulating strategies and reflections for your pocket

- Reflect today on how often you use corrective feedback.
- Reflect today on how often you ask questions and what kind of questions you ask.
- Reflect today on whether you describe what you are doing.
- Reflect today on how often you talk in imperatives and whether you can think of other phrases instead.

Stop B: Language Development

The goals are the intensive examination of the individual linguistic development of one or more children, as well as the deepening of knowledge about the general linguistic development of children.

Training diary

What to do in your practice?

- Have a closer look at the level of language development of one child (or more).
- Write down some utterances of the child in the way he/she speaks (if so, with incorrect pronunciation, grammar etc.).
- Try to interpret what level of language development the child is at and what the child has already learned.

Training Group

Experience Exchange in your Training group:

- Invite a language expert or a speech therapist for an interview.
  - Ask your questions about the language development of a selected child and discuss vocabulary, grammar, multilingual contexts, developmental delays and language disorders with all participants.
  - What possibilities do you have to support the child in language acquisition?
- Conduct a case analysis in your training group on the above-mentioned aspects and find ways to support them in everyday life.

Stop C /Stop G: Nature as a language-stimulating setting / Outdoor Learning Environment

One goal is the precise perception of the stimulating moments for children in nature by means of the developmental driving forces: curiosity, sensory perception, imagination and movement/adventure. The other goals are becoming acquainted with new natural spaces and the differentiated perception of natural units with their flora and fauna.

Training diary

What to do in your practice?
- Reflect on the 4 developmental driving forces: curiosity, sensory perception, imagination, and movement/adventure.
- Do you observe situations in which one of these developmental driving forces had a stimulating effect? If not – what do you think might be the reasons?
- Write your observations down in your notebook/learning diary.
- Video your practice showing how nature is used to stimulate language development.

Training Group

Experience Exchange in your Training group:
- Visit each other in your natural spaces. Introduce your forest places to each other and talk about what games the children play there.
- What makes this natural space special?
- What animals live there / What plants can you find?
- What activities do the children do there?
- What arouses the children's curiosity?
- What adventures do the children experience in which natural areas?
- Where is the children's imagination particularly stimulated?
- In which situations do the children talk to each other particularly often?
- In which natural spaces do the professionals have the opportunity to talk to the children?

Stop D: Narrated adventure and storytelling

The aims are to try out and apply the imagination-stimulating method of storytelling and to perceive situations in which children can tell their experienced stories.

Training diary

What to do in your practice?

- Reflect on whether your practice provides enough adventurous situations for children to let them tell stories. Write down children's narrated adventures and corresponding situations.
  - How can you improve the conditions in your preschool or school for children's storytelling?
- When was the last time you told a story? Try to do it more often.
  - How did the children react to your storytelling?
  - What was difficult/easy for you?
  - Write down what is important and helpful for you to improve your storytelling.
- Make video recordings or a photo gallery telling a story.

Training Group

Experience Exchange in your Training group:

- Narrated adventure: experience an extraordinary event, e.g., something surprising, something that requires courage.
  - What and how do the children talk about it? What are children's adventures? How can they be encouraged?
  - When do children have time and space for storytelling?
  - (How) do you document children's stories?
- Self-experience: Become a storyteller. Find a story collections in your country and try out telling a story. For example:
  - German storyteller: Johannes Merkel (https://stories.uni-bremen.de/geschichten),
  - Slovenian storytellers: Ljoba Jenče (https://www.ljobajence.eu/) and Špela Kaplja (http://www.spelakaplja.art),
  - English sources for info about storytelling: https://www.sfs.org.uk/ and https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/storyteller-videos/.
- Reflect:
  - What differences do you see between storytelling and reading aloud?
  - What do you think are appropriate places for storytelling?

Stop E: Own ideas of best practice

The aim is to share good practice ideas that work well/are well received by children to educational professionals in schools and daycare centres so that as many people as possible can benefit from them.

Training diary

What to do in your practice?

- What are your best practices concerning language stimulation in nature settings (methods, materials, …)?
- Collect these ideas and write them down in your notebook/learning diary.

Training Group

Experience Exchange in your Training group:

- Share your ideas at the next meeting in your training group.

Stop F: Dissemination in your team

The aim is to pass on the ELaDiNa approach with its content strategies and methods.

Training diary

What to do in your practice?

- Share your observations about language learning in nature with your team (at a team meeting, team day, conception day, etc.)?
- Ask someone to keep a note of the approaches and experiences shared.

Training Group

Experience Exchange in your Training group:

- Share your ideas at the next meeting in your training group.

On-Line Video Analysis Protocol

The aim of group meetings is to analyse videos that were made during the practice. There is a special protocol prepared which can be followed during the online video analysis.

VIDEO CONFERENCE PREPARATION FOR VIDEO OBSERVATION LESSONS

1. The moderator encourages the teacher who conducted the lesson (or contributed a video) to briefly present to colleagues who will observe the lesson recording:
   - purpose, goals and activities of teaching,
   - what the students will do on the video and what the role of the teacher will be,
   - how the teacher knew that the goals had been achieved (what will be the evidence, indicators),
   - what I would like observers to pay attention to; what would you like feedback on or discussion after observing the video.

2. The moderator leads a conversation in which video observers decide on the following:
   - the purpose of observation,
   - what they will observe or what they will pay special attention to: what they will observe about the students, what about the teacher, what other evidence they will pay attention to (e.g. student products, learning environment),
   - whether everyone observes the same thing, whether different observers focus on different aspects,
   - what data/evidence they will collect from the observation, and how they will be recorded…

   In doing so, they can use instrumentation to observe lessons.

If the video is:

1. shorter (e.g., up to 20 minutes), we observe the video at the group meeting,
2. longer (e.g., longer than 20 minutes) or complex (requires multiple observations), after the joint preparation for watching the video, the date of the videoconferencing meeting will be determined, which will be used for the analysis of the video. In the meantime, observers watch the video on their own.

CONVERSATION / ANALYSIS AFTER VIDEO VIEWING

Instructions and support questions for discussion in the group:

A. State the identified **facts or observations** in the video of the lessons, refer to the previously agreed areas of observation.

Supporting question: *What did I see/hear/perceive … while watching the lesson video*?

B. What **conclusions and interpretations** could be drawn from the observed facts?

Supporting questions: *What do the observations tell us*? *How can they be interpreted or understood*? *What conclusions/explanations/assumptions can we form, or do we understand from observations*?

C. What other **questions** would you ask the teacher (or team of teachers)? What open-ended questions could encourage reflection in the teacher?

Supporting questions: *How do you know that you have achieved the set purpose and goals? What did you manage? What are you happy with? What would you do differently in the future? What could be alternative implementation options? What all influenced the achievement of the goals? What could you have foreseen and what not? Where are the reasons why you reacted like that in a given situation? Etc.*

D. Reflection on the process of shared learning.

Supporting questions: *What insights/ideas/dilemmas did I come up with while watching the lesson video? What did I personally gain or learn? What could you use yourself or test in practice?*

E. Develop a plan for **further joint learning in the group meeting.**

Supporting questions: *What do I think is the added value of learning together with video lessons, and should it be maintained in the future? What changes/improvements/upgrades do I suggest? How can I support a colleague or colleagues in the group (with knowledge and experience)?*
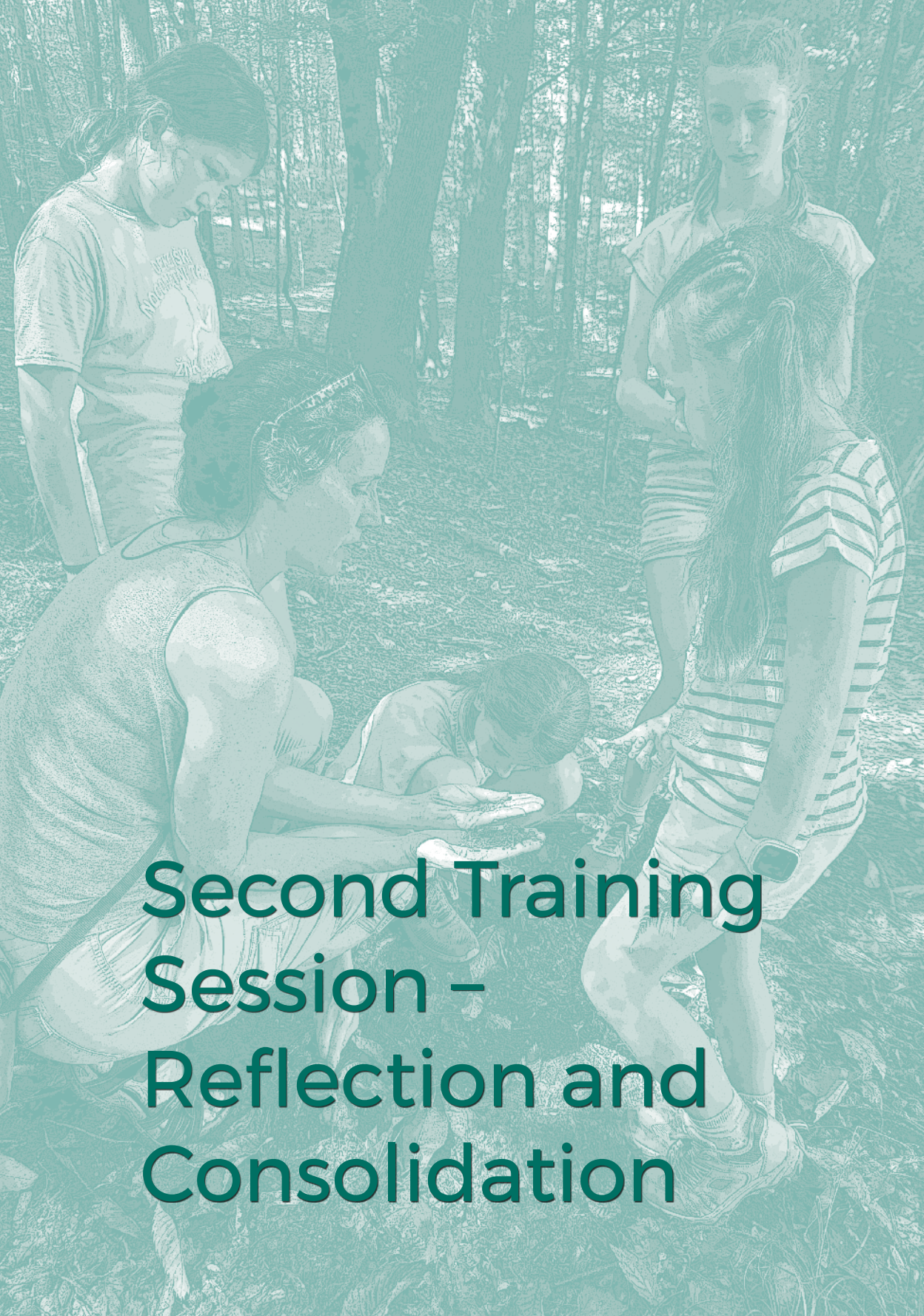
Second Training Session – Reflection and Consolidation

The main aim of the second training is to follow up on the implementation of the first training and, in particular, to pick up practical processes, experiences and reflective considerations being made during the application phase. The training session allows the participants to share their experiences in the large circle of the training group, to analyse protocols together and thus to learn from each other. The many different perspectives, depending on the origin and field of work, are particularly valuable.

The second training session deepens the topic of the outdoor learning environment, the role of places, and the meaning of their affordances in early language development. This starts with a questionnaire about what natural features teachers find useful for language development to consolidate thinking.

The training should take place in a place with many different types of natural environments available for activities. The activities deliberately include several theoretical inputs to deepen and develop practical knowledge through active learning and social opportunities to share practice across settings and countries.

DAY 1		
Activity	*Why?*	*How?*
ROAD MAP REFLECTIONS	Answering the question: 'How was the practice phase after the first training?'	Everyone brings an object or photo and exchanges experiences and ideas. Put up the road map and pin the Aha experiences (if some happened) to the bus stops. Add any bus stops recognised from practice experience. Summary of responses circulated after training
APPRECIATING INTERACTIONS	Developing options for action, reflecting on practice. What could have been alternative possibilities of actual scenarios?	Mixed groups watch three examples of videos taken by teachers. Discuss and explore other possibilities for responses through role play, taking on roles of teachers and children and embodying the experience of being the child. Respond to template questions about the role of teacher/ child/ nature, what was good and what they might change. Groups move to the next video laptop after 15 mins and repeat etc. Insights are documented on templates circulated to all and shared in an extended plenary the next day.
EFFECTIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	Outdoor context as a stimulating site for recognising and creating patterns	Short introductory talk about patterns and codes - how patterns occur in nature and how they can be represented. Groups look for/create patterns in nature and explain the codes. Outdoor experiential activities draw attention to how these real-life contexts can foster engagement.
OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (OLE) ARTWORK	Creatively representing OLE features and associated language development opportunities to aid reflection	In mixed groups outdoors, discuss the outdoor learning environment features that were chosen in their OLE survey and why they were helpful. Plan how they can show these artistically using natural objects, pens and crayons to represent what in nature stimulated language development. Creatively include the sorts of language development that features promoted. • Which physical environmental features were useful? How? • What natural or manmade features, animals and plants contributed and how? • What atmosphere/ ethos/relationships were there? • How did the teacher or other children interact there? • What sorts of language were supported? Plenary: Gather to review the artworks in the gallery with explanations and questions

DAY 2		
Activity	*Why?*	*How?*
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS	To provide research background	A presentation about research on language development in outdoor environments.
ASSESSING OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	To consider the assessment of environments	Comparison of tools to assess the environment for language development in groups with the supporting template of strengths and weaknesses.
VISIT TO LOCAL NATURE PRESCHOOL, SCHOOL OR OUTDOOR CENTRE	This a valuable opportunity to see a nature school in action	
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES IN PLACES: **Focus on place and purpose**	To consider how a particular environment could be used to stimulate specific forms of language	Groups visit outdoor sites of Field, Water, Forest. Facilitator at each site to support thinking. Choose cards describing a language development aim (vocabulary, communication, natural science, precise description, imaginative storytelling, prepositions or other grammar) and think about how nature affects this purpose by stimulating interactions, curiosity, imagination, movement, and sensuality. At each site, groups record their suggestions under the various aims on flip charts. Plenary discussion. Summary of ideas circulated to all post events.
MOVING LANGUAGE ON …	To advance the language development and thinking of children	Introduction of Cummin's quadrant to support teachers to reflect on cognitive demand and context to progress children's use of language and ensure a mix of basic interpersonal communicative skill development and cognitive academic language proficiency.
MORE BUS STOPS	To continue the learning journey by supporting further reflection on training	A new road map is introduced with reflection points along the way to be considered independently, within settings and in the groups. This will consolidate the thinking stimulated by the activities, provide reflection time and prompt putting new ideas into action in their practice.

Suggested activities for Second Training

Activity 1: Road Map Reflections
Main aim of activity: to reflect on the practice phase after the first training.
Theoretical background: • experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) – more information available at https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html.
Learning intentions: • consolidate prior learning, • reflect on training and practice, • share significant learning moments.
Description of activity: 1. **Activating prior knowledge** Everyone attending is asked to bring an object or photo to exchange experiences and ideas that have arisen since the first training. 2. **Reflections in the round** Roundtable conversation/discussion with participants about the first training, using flipcharts and post-its to annotate the key bus stops on the road map that is circulated after the first training. Participants add 'Aha' experiences and suggest any other bus stops that they recognise from their practice experience. 3. **Feedback** A summary of responses is circulated after training session so participants have a written record that supports the consolidation of training.
Material: road map poster, pens and Post-it notes

Activity 1: Road Map Reflections

Photos 24, 25 and 26: Activity reflect on their journey in training in relation to the bus stops (K. Dolgan, 2022)

Activity 2: Appreciating Interactions

Main aim of activity:

- to explore interactions in videos of practice to develop alternative possibilities from real-life scenarios.

Theoretical background:

- experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) – more information available at https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html.

Learning intentions:

- consolidate prior learning,
- reflect on practice,
- share ideas about how to extend the language in adult/children interactions.

Description of activity:

1. **Activating prior knowledge**

    Each participant prepares video examples of practice, from which three are used for observation – one from a kindergarten and one from a school.

2. **Sharing practice across different backgrounds and settings**

    Laptops are loaded with an example of a practice that has been videoed by the teachers of their work in language development. Mixed groups with 5-6 teachers from different backgrounds and a facilitator watch each example, discuss the video and complete a template, making comments about the practice shown and possibilities for language development shown.

    The templates are designed to focus thinking on the roles of the adult, role of the the child and role of the natural environment by providing prompts. They are invited to try out the role of teacher and child to explore alternative ways of responding.

    What would they keep from this practice? What might they change?

    Groups move on to view the next video laptop after 15- 20 mins and repeat the process.

3. **Discussion in the wider group**

    Some reflections on the examples and the process may then be shared with the whole group in a plenary session.

4. **Feedback**

    A summary of responses and ideas is circulated after the training session so participants have a written record that supports the consolidation of thinking.

Material: laptops (sufficient for one between 5-6 teachers); video examples of practice; templates; pens

Activity 3: Patterns And Codes

Main aim of activity:
- outdoor context as a stimulating site for recognising and creating patterns,
- to recognise the pattern and describe it, to write down the rule in the form of a scheme and to continue the pattern or create your own.

Theoretical background:

1. **Effective learning environment**
   (Nature of learning, Guidelines for 21st-century learning environments, Istance, D., Dumont H., 2013; https://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/50300814.pdf)

   An effective learning environment is defined as:
   - ... aligned as far as possible with the motivation of the learners and the importance of their emotions.
   - ... facilitating social and collaborative learning.
   - ... where learning is put at the centre, engagement in learning is encouraged; students are allowed to see themselves as learners.
   - ... sensitive to individual differences, including previous knowledge.
   - ... including evaluation aligned to objectives, with a strong focus on formative feedback.
   - ... promoting horizontal links between objectives.

2. **Encouraging learning environment:**
   - ... an encouraging learning environment is the foundation of the educational process in school, preventing negative attitudes and ensuring equal opportunities for all *learners (Pielstick, C. D. (1998). The transforming leader: A meta-ethnographic analysis. Community College Review, 26 (15), 15-34.) and* identifies the learners as key stakeholders.

Learning intentions:
- The following activities try to combine all dimensions of social and emotional learning as a part of an effective learning environment.
- Participants can recognise the sequence of elements of a pattern in movement, in nature, in a picture, when listening to sounds, and describe the rule of the pattern, continue it and create their own patterns.

Description of activity:

Initial situation

Preparation of material and viewing examples of prints (example: footprints - walking, tree leaves, the bark of a tree trunk, shell print, print of fabric pattern, palm, stone tiles, bamboo product, print with seals etc.).

1. **Activating prior knowledge**
   Conversation/discussion with participants about:
   - Pictorial material (art products) about artistic motifs, techniques, tasks, elements, etc.
   - What properties of an object do prints imitate (object shape, object patterns/texture, etc.)?
   - What else do prints represent (samples)?

Activity 3: Patterns And Codes

We can list:

Season, day/night, days of the week, months, years, water circulation, life cycle, heart rhythm, behaviour pattern, pattern of operation/routine, school timetable, a sample of the written form, a sample of solving the task, sample text of a specific text type, bus schedule.

Life works according to a pattern.

We distinguish visual, vocal, movement, and abstract patterns.

2. **Didactic game Blanket**

   Participants describe the picture:

   - What do you think the images of the samples represent (describe in your own words)

   For example, behind each number are some facts about the pattern:

   1 Mathematics explains abstract (numerical) patterns that follow a rule (Pascal's triangle).

   2 The building blocks of the pattern are repeated in the set, consisting of elements, e.g., in the ABABAB scheme.

   3 In an ascending pattern, the number of elements increases with each building block (ascending pattern).

   4 Symmetry is a type of pattern found with animals, plants, objects, a picture of a dead nettle or a butterfly (when it rotates, we talk about a spiral).

   5 Also, in movement, we notice a pattern: walking, running, heartbeat rhythm, water waves, and tracks in the snow.

   6 Patterns on animals have a protective or warning role (leopard).

   7 We find spiral patterns that follow the Fibonacci sequence of numbers, as with a sunflower (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 etc.).

   8 Voice patterns are quickly recognised when we imitate the sounds of animals. (Word recording – rhythm, tone, music).

   9 Patterns are also created by repeating tiles over the entire surface (honeycomb).

3. **Discussion of the learning intentions**

   What can we conclude from the activities thus far? What will be our learning intentions for the seminar-workshop?

   I will know... (be able to...)

   Participants propose writing down learning intentions on a laminated poster (we can also put it on a self-adhesive piece of paper that you stick on the poster) and arranging them to steps of outdoor lessons/map.

4. **Creating a sample pattern from didactic materials**

   The participants are divided into groups of 8 members.

   Each group receives a tray with different didactic material.

   Participants within the group create a sample in pairs (4 samples in a group).

   They choose their neighbour's pattern and describe it (using the professional nomenclature: pattern elements, set, building block, pattern scheme).

   - What types of patterns have you designed (repeating, ascending, rosettes etc.)?
   - What is the rule in (this) pattern?
   - Which building blocks are repeated in the pattern set?
   - How many different elements does the sample consist of?
   - How to design a pattern scheme?

Activity 3: Patterns And Codes

5. **Discussing success criteria**

    Success criteria are derived from pattern design activities: I will be successful when I can...

    The participants propose to write down the success criteria, and one of the co-facilitators writes the success criteria on a laminated poster - steps of outdoor lessons, map).

    They also suggest success criteria for outdoor learning from the introductory presentation.

    The co-facilitator writes down the criteria on a poster or sticky note.

    I will be successful when I can:

    · recognise the pattern and describe it,

    · write down the rule in the form of a scheme,

    · continue the pattern or create my own.

6. **Outdoor activities**

    Activity 1

    Participants work individually within a group of 8.

    Each participant searches for 1 or 2 examples of the sample in the agreed area (3 min).

    The members of the group present to each other recognised patterns in nature and describe them in professional language (12 min).

    Try to answer the question: Why is this a pattern?

    If they find the same (same) cases, they do not describe them every time.

    Activity 2

    Participants are divided into groups of 12 members each.

    Each group composes an arbitrary movement pattern (8 min).

    Each group presents its pattern, and the other groups recognise the rule and write it down on the board in the form of a scheme.

    One of the groups presents its solution and explains it.

    Each group presents a sample once and a solution once with an explanation.

7. **Knowledge sharing, reflection**

    The participants first evaluate and present their insights and feelings from their own perspectives.

    We reflect on:

    What did I learn through my own experience of outdoor activities?

    What thoughts or concerns do I have about done similar outdoor activities with my pupils/children?
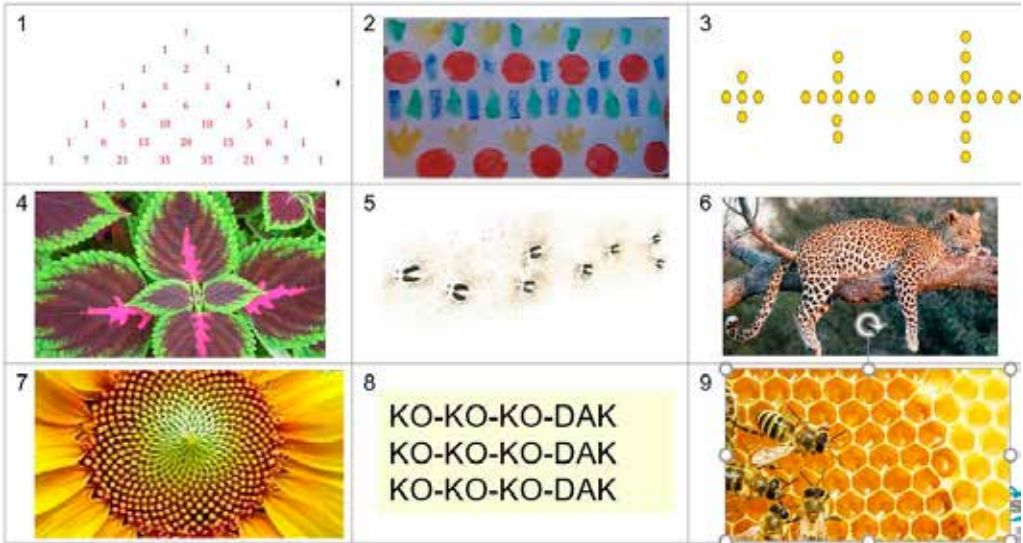
Activity 3: Patterns And Codes

Photo 27: Image material of different patterns (K. Dolgan, 2022)

Photos 28, 29 and 30: Activity Patterns and codes (K. Dolgan, 2022)

Activity 4: Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) Artworks

Main aim of activity:

- to represent creatively the OLE features and associated language development that have surfaced by completing the questionnaire.

Theoretical background:

- art-based methodology for participatory action research – using multimodal ways to reflect on and share one's thinking and connect to nature. For more on this idea: Maximilian M. Muhr (2020) Beyond words – the potential of arts-based research on human-nature connectedness, Ecosystems and People, 16:1, 249-257. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2020.1811379,
- multiple intelligences – supporting a range of preferred learning styles, e.g., visual, kinaesthetic. For more on this idea: Denig, S. J. (2004). Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles: Two Complementary Dimensions. Teachers College Record, 106(1), 96–111, available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2004.00322.

Learning intentions:

- stimulate creativity,
- reflect on your own thinking,
- provoke discussion,
- collaborate effectively,
- share ideas about how to extend children's language using nature,
- consider its use with children to stimulate discussion.

Description of activity:

1. **Activating prior knowledge**

   The participants are reminded of their completion of the OLE questionnaire (see ELaDiNa theoretical Handbook). It was designed to focus attention on aspects of nature that teachers are using in children's language development. Completing the questionnaire helps raise awareness of specific features outdoors that they find beneficial to children's language use.

2. **Sharing practice across different backgrounds and settings**

   Mixed groups with ca. 5 teachers from different background sit outside around tables and are provided with some art materials and large sheets of flipchart paper.

   They are invited to collect natural objects from the surroundings in order to collaboratively create artwork showing what they consider important in nature for language development. They are given some prompts to support the discussion.

   Consider:

   Which physical environment features are useful and how?

   What natural or manmade features, animals or plants contribute and how?

   What atmosphere/ethos/relationships are there?

   How do teachers & children interact?

   What sorts of language are supported there?

   Can these relationships be shown artistically within the picture?

   The collaborative artwork supports reflection upon and summarises how different natural features influence teachers' work in supporting children's language development.

Activity 4: Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) Artworks

3. **Discussion in the wider group**

    Each group presents their artwork and explains them, prompted by a facilitator, sharing their thoughts with the whole group in a plenary session. The various representations stimulate other ideas.

4. **Feedback**

    A summary of responses and ideas is circulated after the training session, so participants have a written record that reinforces learning from the activity.

Activity 5: The Impact of the Environment on Children's Language

Main aim of activity:

- to report on research which shows an interaction between the quality of the environment and children's utterances.

Theoretical background:

1. Transcendental idealism (Kant, 1781) – for more information on this idea see https://rb.gy/iiobi

   A priori – aspects which can be seen or measured,

   A posteriori – intuition, that which is 'felt'.

2. Quality of environments (Canning, 2012): 'We understand the concept of quality when we experience it, but when asked to describe a quality experience, explanations are very personal and subjective.' (p. 78). For more information, see Canning, N. (2012) Exploring the concept of quality play. In: Reed, M. and Canning, N. (eds.) *Implementing quality improvement and change in the early years.* London: Sage Publications.

Learning intentions:

- knowledge of research-based evidence of the impact of different learning environments on children's language,
- consider implications for own practice regarding the sorts of contexts available for language developments.

Description of activity:

1. **Presentation of research study**

   PowerPoint presentation of the research study.

2. **Reflection on their practice**

   Participants are invited to reflect on the implications of their practice.

3. **Discussion in the wider group.**

   Open to questions.

4. **Feedback**

   Evaluation forms can be used to assess whether the delivery mode is useful.

Activity 6: Assessing the Environment for Children's Language

Main aim of activity:

- to compare different measurement tools for assessing learning environments.

Theoretical background:

1. Transcendental idealism (Kant, 1781) – for more information on this idea see https://rb.gy/iiobi

   A priori – aspects which can be seen or measured,

   A posteriori – intuition, that which is 'felt'.

2. Quality of environments (Canning, 2012): 'We understand the concept of quality when we experience it, but when asked to describe a quality experience, explanations are very personal and subjective.' (p. 78). For more information, see Canning, N. (2012) Exploring the concept of quality play. In: Reed, M. and Canning, N. (eds.) *Implementing quality improvement and change in the early years.* London: Sage Publications.

Learning intentions:

- critical appraisal of different tools for the assessment of learning environments,
- consider implications for own practice regarding their own setting.

Description of activity:

1. **Introduction of tools**

   The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2005), Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing Scale (Siraj, Kingston & Melhuish, 2015); and the Transferable quality assessment Framework (Richardson, 2018).

2. **Reflection on their practice**

   Participants form groups of 5-6 people and are invited to reflect on the tool's strengths and weaknesses and any implications for their practice using a template.

3. **Discussion in the wider group**

   Groups are invited to share their comments in a plenary.

Material:

- evaluation template for the tools.

Activity 7: Language Development Possibilities in Places: Focus on Place and Purpose

Main aim of activity:

- to consider how a particular natural environment could be used to stimulate specific forms of language.

Theoretical background:

1. Experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) – hands-on experience to ground learning in practice. More information is available at:
   https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html

2. Situated learning/Learning in situ (Waite & Pratt, 2015) – being part of a community of practice, learning from others with experience and skills in an area, and learning that takes place in appropriate locations. More information in Waite, S. and Pratt, N. (2015) Situated learning (learning in situ). In: James D. Wright (editor-in-chief), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, Vol. 22. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 5–12.

3. Affordances (Fjørtoft, 2001) – what is the functional value for language development of various features in the OLE? For more information:
   https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ingunn-Fjortoft/publications

Learning intentions:

- become more aware of outdoor learning environments and their affordances,
- generate ideas for language development of specific kinds of (for example) vocabulary located in places,
- provoke discussion,
- collaborate effectively,
- share ideas about how to extend children's language regarding key language development aspects using different outdoor contexts,
- consider implications for the practice with children and specific language development goals.

Description of activity:

1. **Activating prior knowledge**

   The session is introduced by referring to teachers' work in identifying natural features that they use for language development and the OLE artwork session. They are invited to bring these ideas together about what activities with children's different types of places might support.

2. **Sharing practice across different backgrounds and settings**

   In this session, participants are divided into mixed groups of about 5 teachers from different background.

   Two groups of about 5 teachers visit three outdoor sites, representing a Field (e.g., grassy area, meadow, lawn), Water (e.g., a pond, lake or the sea), or Forest (e.g., wooded area with trees and some undergrowth).

   A facilitator is located at each site to support discussion and thinking.

   Each group is given a set of cards describing a language development aim (vocabulary, communication, natural science, precise description, imaginative storytelling, prepositions or other grammar), and they think about how nature affects this purpose by stimulating interactions, curiosity, imagination, movement, sensuality.

   At each site, groups record their suggestions under the various aims on flip charts.

Activity 7: Language Development Possibilities in Places: Focus on Place and Purpose

3. Discussion in the wider group

Each group presents their ideas to the whole group in a plenary session.

4. Feedback

A summary of ideas about how to foster associations between places and aims for language development can be circulated after the training session, so participants can have a written record to reinforce learning from the practical activity.

Material:

· flipchart paper with the language development aims at the top, markers.

Photos 31 and 32: Activity Language development possibilities in different places (K. Dolgan, 2022)

Activity 8: Moving Language On

Main aim of activity:

- to progress ideas about early language development in children: conversational and academic languages.

Theoretical background:

1. Language development and different types of language skills (Cummins, 1999), available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED438551.pdf,

2. Transformative learning (Christie, Carey, Robertson & Grainger, 2015) - providing a framework (a theoretical framework for further reading and professional development) to support a learning journey transforms training into education. Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1059138.pdf.

Learning intentions:

- become more aware of distinctions between everyday communicative language and the academic language of disciplinary knowledge,
- generate ideas for language development that calls on both forms,
- provoke discussion,
- consider implications for practice with children and specific language development goals.

Description of activity:

1. **Activating prior knowledge**

   The session is introduced by a PowerPoint that sets out Cummins's framework. It explains Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) as social language, which involves such abilities as retelling events, describing experiences, narrating activities, and offering personal opinions, all within the general give-and-take of conversation with family and friends.

   It also details skills associated with classroom language skills, which are known as cognitive academic language proficiency, or CALP.

2. **Reflection on their practice**

   Participants are invited to reflect on the different types of language that they commonly experience in their settings. Thinking back to the video examples, how much CALP was observable? How might the role of the teacher change to encourage the use of CALP once BICS is well established? How could both types be stimulated outdoors?

   The framework suggests that high cognitive demand is supported by a relevant context for learning academic language. Experience in using concepts and language developed through that can then be used in low contextual situations, aiding abstraction and wider generalising of concepts.

   Role play by groups could help demonstrate how interactions between adults and children could be steered to make use of these associations, with participants acting out different scenarios that would lead to BICS or CALP development. What kind of outdoor environment would be useful to enable these interactions?

3. **Discussion in the wider group**

   Smaller groups can share their examples and ideas with the whole group in a plenary session for further discussion and suggestions for how to support children.

4. **Feedback**

   The settings can be invited to keep a log of their activity to share with others at a later date.

Activity 8: Moving Language On

Material:

- Laptop; Overhead projector; PowerPoint short talk; Large paper/blanket with Cummins Quadrant set out (big enough for individuals to move between sectors to act out what interactions they might have in that scenario within smaller groups).

Activity 9: More Bus Stops

Main aim of activity:

- to support reflection following the Road Trip Reflections.

Theoretical background:

1. Reflection & metacognition (Desautel, 2009) – a rehearsal of learning initiated in training and metacognitive approach (thinking about thinking) helps to reinforce and consolidate active learning. For more information, see: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/016146810911100803,

2. Transformative learning (Christie, Carey, Robertson & Grainger, 2015) – providing a framework (a road map and resources for further reading and professional development) to support a learning journey transforms training into education. Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1059138.pdf.

Learning intentions:

- consolidate the learning points covered in the training,
- stimulate more ideas given time to reflect on the intensive training event,
- provoke discussion,
- consider implications for practice with children focusing more precisely on different outdoor environments and specific language development goals.

Description of activity:

1. **Activating prior knowledge**

   The summary of the training activities is sent after the face-to-face training to support teachers' reflection on what they have experienced and learnt through participation in the training.

2. **Reflection on their practice**

   Participants are invited to reflect on aspects of the training, and prompt questions are used to focus attention. Grounding these in their daily practice will help to make changes in thinking and practice more sustainable.

3. **Discussion in the wider group**

   Individual teachers can be encouraged to cascade their learning to others in their setting. For example, this might be achieved through team teaching, leading twilight training or mentoring colleagues.

4. **Feedback**

   Monitoring of impact might be through senior leadership, governors or professional bodies.

Material:

- the BUS STOPS continued document is reproduced here. No other specific resources are needed.
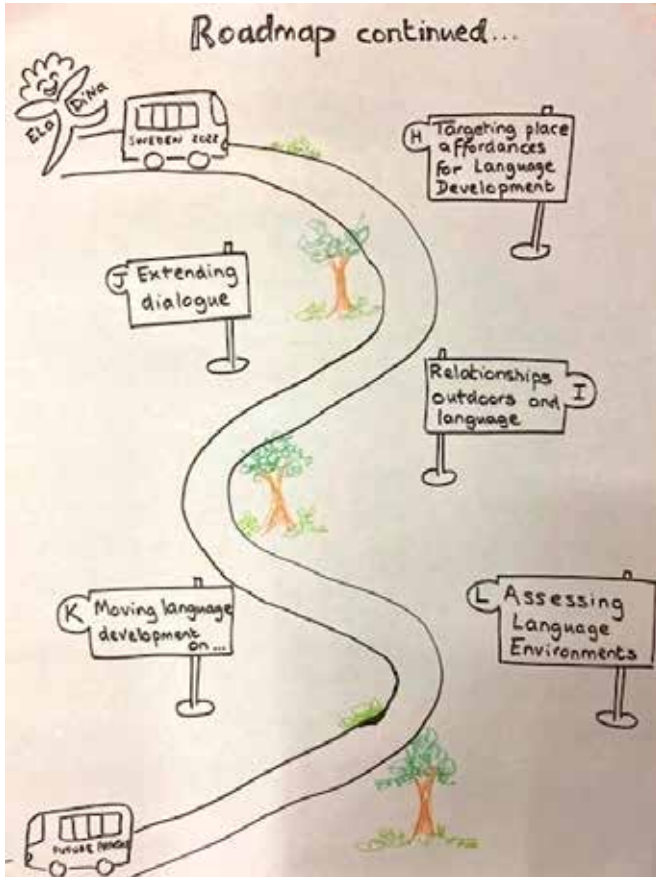
Activity 9: More Bus Stops

Photo 33: Road map continued (K. Dolgan, 2022)

Photo 34: Activity Conversation about continuing the Road map (K. Dolgan, 2022)

THE ROAD MAP CONTINUED ...

The 'road trip' continued at the second training with sessions designed to support thinking about aspects of Early Language Development in Nature. In this part of the Road trip, the particular focus is on the **contribution of different places and environmental features** to early language development.

The following reflection points based around new bus stops invite teachers to carry on the journey in their own future practice at their setting.

BUS STOP H: Targeting place affordances for language development

The aim is to increase sensitivity to the possibilities offered by different environmental features for language development.

What to do in your practice?
- What do you notice when you are working in different parts of your sites regarding children and adult interactions and language use – are there any 'aha' moments?
- Try out the Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) survey in your own setting. By completing this, key features and how they are used in language development can be identified.
- Read the summary of results completed by participants in ELaDiNa in the theoretical handbook.
  - How do your results compare?
  - Are there areas for development of the natural infrastructure that is currently available in your setting?
  - Which OLE features will you prioritise to provide for the age or language level of your children?

Further dissemination

Experience Exchange in your Training group:
- share the Field, Forest, Water activity (either by doing it or by reviewing the ideas generated in the appendices of the theoretical handbook).

Consider OLE survey results with other settings.
- Choose several features that are present in all the settings and brainstorm ways that they could be used to achieve different language development outcomes.
  - How many ideas can you generate?
  - Share ideas about how access to other important OLE features might be introduced to sites that don't currently have them.
  - What OLE features do your children seem to appreciate most? Why do you think this is?

Material:
- outdoor learning survey,
- flip charts for recording.

BUS STOP I: Pattern and code relationships stimulating language outdoors
The aim is to help children to appreciate structure, which is fundamental to language acquisition.

What to do in your practice?
·   Adapt this training activity for use with children in your context. Consider age appropriateness.
    –   How does the activity affect their language use?
    –   What do they find challenging?
    –   How does nature support them?
·   Record and reflect on the successes and difficulties.

Further dissemination **Experience Exchange in your Training group:** ·   share adapted activities.
Material: ·   example activities.

BUS STOP J: Extending the dialogue
The aim is to try out methods of extending dialogue with children.
What to do in your practice? ·   Practice with a colleague first. ·   Decide which of you will look for an enquiring (e.g., what is...? How does...?) or a speculative question (e.g., What if...? How might...?) stimulated by what you see/hear/feel in nature. ·   Go into nature on your own for 5 minutes and find an enquiring or a speculative question. ·   Come back together, and one of you put your question to your partner. Try to keep the sequence of responses going. Can you reach 10 turns? Then let the other partner ask their question and do the same turn-taking. ·   Now try it out with children. ·   Can you extend dialogues with the children, having reflected on what sorts of responses and natural stimuli encourage continued engagement?
Material: ·   look at the activities and the language-stimulating strategies in the practical handbook.

BUS STOP K: Moving language development on

The aim is to continue thinking about different types of language development and consider how meaningful context can support their development in children.

What to do in your practice?

- Continue to video and view examples of practice and reflect on the roles of the adult, child and place. (See the Appreciating Interactions templates summary document in the theoretical handbook appendices to get some idea of what this reflection might look like.)
- How do the context and pedagogical support that is provided affect children's language use?
- Are adults providing challenges and capitalising on opportunities to develop not only basic interpersonal communicative skills but also scaffolding grammatical principles and academic language and vocabulary – moving language on?
- Reflect on the successes and difficulties and plan what else might help children to continue to expand their language capabilities.
    - By playing with ideas with colleagues and putting yourselves in the child's place, are there things teachers might do differently?
    - What other creative ways are there to extend interactions and language development in nature to support academic progression?
    - What aspects of language development need more work for individual children?
    - How can natural environments outside of the pressure of classrooms help them?
- As you continue your practice development, can you use these reflections to ensure that you are supporting language of both kinds through hands-on experiential engagement with nature? The balance of each is likely to vary according to the age of the children and their language experience.
- You may like to refer to the milestones of language development in the theoretical handbook to see how these reflect on the types of interactions and language you observe. How do they relate to Cummins's framework?
    - Do these milestones and frameworks adequately represent the richness and competence of the children's language you work with? Consider the huge range of developmental progress in the early years.
    - Would you add more/other statements?

Material:

- example videos,
- Cummins framework (1999).

BUS STOP K: Moving language development on

CUMMINS' FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING LANGUAGE DEMANDS OF ACTIVITIES

I
COGNITIVELY UNDEMANDING
+
CONTEXT EMBEDDED

II
COGNITIVELY UNDEMANDING
+
CONTEXT REDUCED

BASIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

III
COGNITIVELY DEMANDING
+
CONTEXT EMBEDDED

IV
COGNITIVELY DEMANDING
+
CONTEXT REDUCED

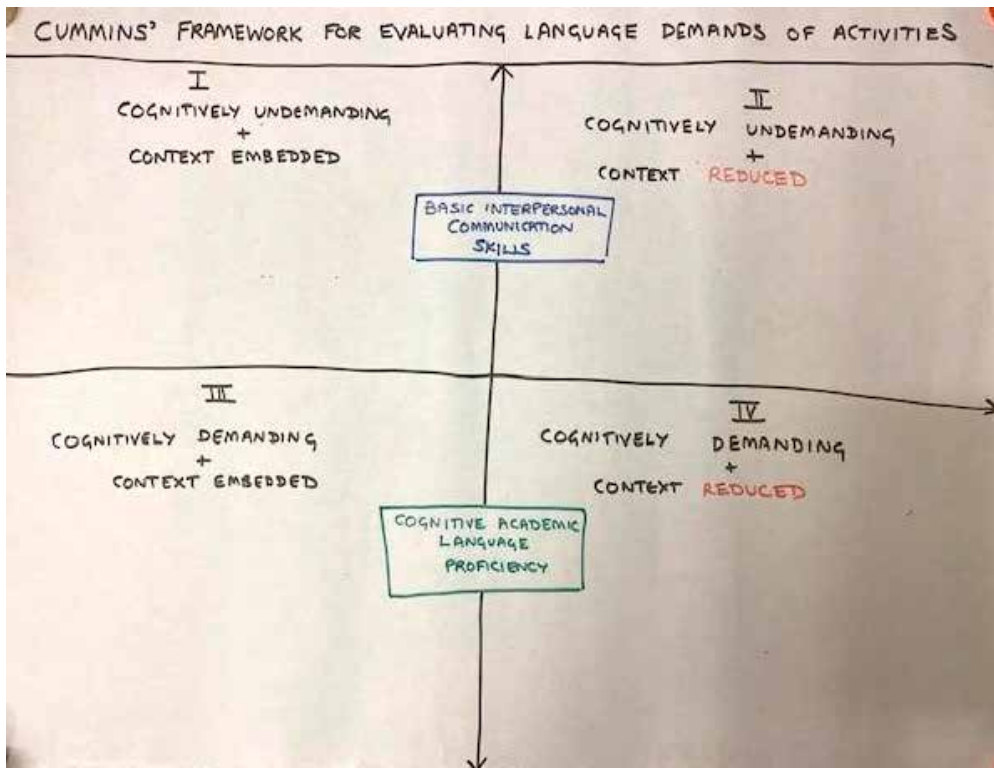COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Photo 35: Cummins framework for evaluating language demands of activities (S. Waite, 2022)

BUS STOP L: Assessing language development environments

The aim is to support the assessment of the outdoor learning environment in terms of early language development opportunities.

What to do in your practice?

- The OLE survey detailed in the theoretical handbook is one example of assessing your outdoor environment for language development opportunities. There are also tools to assess quality in indoor and outdoor environments with other methods for assessing language development environments. (See the theoretical handbook appendices for pdfs of the tools).
- In your setting, try some of these tools out in practice.
- Consider which might be most useful to you as a teacher to
  - audit your setting's outdoor spaces for language development?
  - improve outdoor features for language development in your setting?
  - demonstrate the quality of the environment for language development to parents and others?
- Which of these aims is your priority?
- What are the tools' principal disadvantages and strengths?
- Are there other methods that you currently use for the assessment of environments for language learning? How do these compare to standardised tools?
- Having carried out an assessment of your OLE:
  - What do you consider your main environmental challenges to supporting language development in nature?
  - How might these be overcome?
  - What environmental features might you emphasise to parents in communicating support for language development with their children?

Material:

- OLE survey from Theoretical handbook,
- Pdfs of other assessment tools.

New Insights and Improvement of Pedagogical Practice

After the second training session, the participants receive a new package of pocket cards of insights to improve their pedagogical practice. In order to reflect on what they learned and what kind of changes in their practice is made following participation in the training programme, they are invited to continue to use the activities and suggestions in the bus stops and to discuss with other teachers and educators.

Sharing new knowledge with others will encourage teachers to continue on their journey.