D3.2 Pilots: preparation, execution, analysis

Deliverable 3.2 | December 2014

1. Introduction

The objectives of work package 3 include design of the project pedagogical content piloted in various settings and analyzed as part of the main aim of WP3, quality control. The main output for deliverable 3.2 was to provide a set of demo classrooms containing pedagogically sound tasks and activities in the SpeakApps tools. In order to do this, the workplan was carried out according to the following stages:

1. Identification of model to follow
2. Creation of task self-evaluation criteria for Oral Production and Speaking Interaction tasks
3. Piloting of criteria in teacher training courses
4. Collection of data in post-Teacher Training questionnaires
5. Analysis of Teacher Training focus group discussions
6. Creation of Task Criteria documentation and tips for teachers

This report describes the different stages of the process.

2. Quality control and best practices

In order to establish quality control and best practices with the SpeakApps tools, the LanQua model was identified as lending itself best to our needs. Below is a summary of the LanQua model.

2.1. LANQUA QUALITY MODEL

When embarking on task design, we should first answer various basic, but at the same time important questions to help us prepare high-quality materials. The LanQua Quality Model, "LANQUA. A quality toolkit for languages" has been developed to guide practice and reflection on practice in order to enhance the quality of the learning and teaching of languages. It approaches quality from the teacher and learner perspective and supports a bottom-up view of quality assurance. More information about the project and project's outputs can be found: http://www.lanqua.eu/

2.1.1. LanQua Quality Stages

The LanQua model is a five-stage process from planning, through to identifying purpose, implementation, evaluation, to modification and revision. Below are details of each of the five stages and the various questions each stage considers.

Stage 1. Planning: overview and process

What are you trying to do? – the question of a purpose

At this phase we should answer following questions:
- Who the learners are?
- At what level are they operating?
- What language area(s) is/are to be covered?
- What skills and competences do the learners already have?
- What kind of competences do the learners need to have?
- What resources might be needed?
- What reasons do learners have for doing selected activities?

Stage 2. Purpose: objectives and outcomes

Why are you trying to do it?

At this phase we should answer following questions:
- What are the specific goals for this activity (what are the objectives)?

- What capacities should be developed by learners as a result of learning activity?

- Are the intended learning outcomes clearly stated for the learners?

- What the learner is expected to: "…know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning." (DG Education and Culture, 2009).

Stage 3. Implementation: teaching, learning and facilitation methods

How are you going to do it?

Why is that the best way to do it?

At this phase we should answer following questions:
- What is the learning and teaching environment (fully online / blended)?
- What kind of tools do we need to use?
- What extra support might students need (language support, content support)?
- How will feedback be given to learner?

Stage 4. Monitoring and Evaluation: results and feedback

How will you know that it works?

This stage relates to the outcomes and impact of the learning and teaching experience.

At this phase we should answer following questions:
- The question of whether or not a particular teaching or learning activity/module/programme etc. has been successful. The monitoring and evaluation process feeds into the adaptation of teaching/learning activities?
- Have the learning outcomes been achieved / did the real outcomes match the expected outcomes?
- What were the reasons for achieving/not achieving the learning outcomes?
- What feedback from learners has been collected?
- Is additional support required (additional skills development, conversation practice, revision tasks?

Stage 5. Adaptation: modification and revision

How will you be able to improve it?

Reflective practice (piloting, review board, comments system, rating and workflow mechanism) cycle of monitoring and evaluation.

At this phase we should answer following questions:
- Which features of the activity worked particular well or how might you extend their application?
- What scope is there for improvement?
- What would you do the same/different next time?
- What specific changes do you wish to make to your activities?
- How do you intend to introduce these changes?

The description of the stages in LanQua model was using during the Teacher Trainings provided by the partners to guide the focus groups discussions and help teachers/participants of the teacher training sessions to prepare their own tasks and evaluate the task prepared by SpeakApps instructors. Identification of the stages of the pedagogical design in an user-friendly way (by asking the questions) help teachers to prepare high-quality learning materials.

The LanQa model was also used for designing Teacher Training core syllabus for SpeakApps workshops. The final version of the outline of SpeakApps Workshops is deliverable D2.1.

2.2. DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-EVALUATION OF TASKS

With the LanQua model in mind, during the SpeakApps 2 project, the following self-evaluation checklists were prepared and piloted initially during online teacher training. The first versions of checklists were modified according to the comments and opinions of participants of the online teacher training expressed during the discussions on Moodle Forums in the training classroom. The analysis of focussed group discussion helped to developed the following lists:

<u>**General questions relating to pedagogical aspects:**</u>

Look at your task/activity and consider following questions:

• Does the activity relate to real world communication activities?

• Is there any specific outcome?

• Does the activity engage learner's interests?

• Is task completion a priority?

• Is success judged in terms of outcome?

• Is the topic appropriate for the level?

• Does the activity encourage students to interact (e.g. are they asked to listen to each others' contributions)?

<u>**General/Technical Questions for self-evaluation of Tandem activities:**</u>

Look at your Tandem task/activity and consider some, or all of the following questions:

• Is the task/activity interesting?

• Does the task/activity relate to real world communication activities?

• Is the task/activity appropriate for the level indicated?

• If there is more than one task, is the activity logically staged?

• Does the task/activity have an expected learning outcome?

• Is there a solution? If not, should there be one?

• Is the input appropriate for the task?

• If you used images for input, are they copyright free? What about the size?

• If you used text for input, is it clear? What about the font/size?

And finally,

• When you tried your task/activity, did the oral interaction meet the expected learning outcome?

• Are the instructions clear?

### General/Technical Questions for self-evaluation of Langblog activities:

Look at your video in Langblog and consider some, or all of the following questions:

• What message does your facial expression convey?

• What do you notice about the background of your video? Your body position?

• How might your tone of voice be perceived?

• How understandable are you?

• What do you notice about the technical aspects (lighting, sound, length etc.)?

• Are your instructions clear?

• Is the quality of the input good?

Further piloting of the self-evaluation of the checklist for Langblog activities was carried out with a focus group of English teachers at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and as a result, two documents were produced: Best Practices Video checklist and Making instructional videos.

Towards the end of the project, two further, more visual documents were produced, to be used as a part of future teacher training sessions.

Task Design Criteria for Langblog activities:
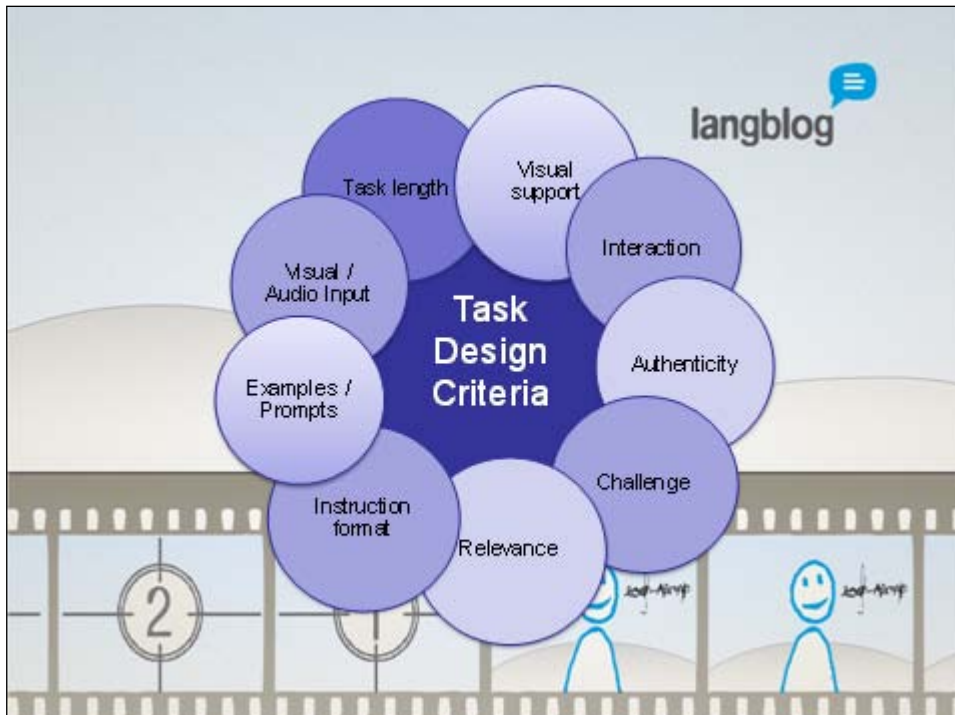
Task Design Criteria for Tandem activities:
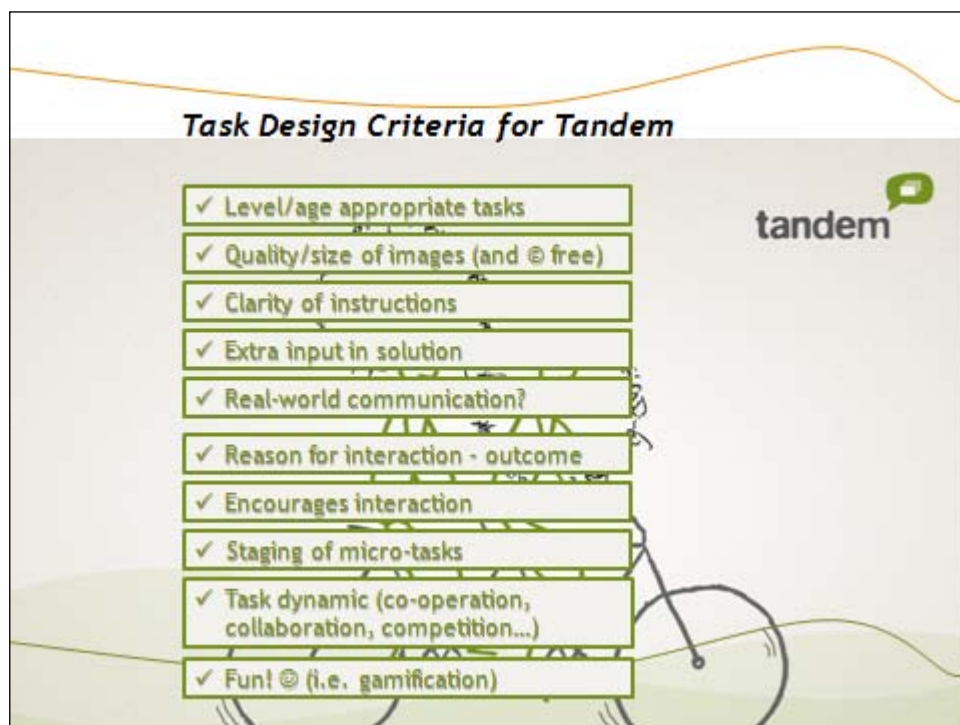
One issue that became apparent during workshops was how to find copyright-free images for tasks, and to this end, a document was prepared to ensure that all image contents in the OER are copyright-free (see Finding copyright free images).

3. Output from Teacher Training courses

As detailed in the project proposal, the actions undertaken within the WP3 included:

> 1. The evaluation of the Open Educational Resources in order to provide suggestion for improvements of the OER as a system and establish the criteria for evaluating educational content in the OER.

> 2. Creating the list of suggested improvements of the existing features of the tools and development of new functionalities (according to the recommendations of new users' needs).

> 3. Ensuring the quality of the pedagogical content by providing criteria and recommendations for tasks' creation and evaluation.

Enhancing the usability and ensuring the quality was possible because of more extensive and varied use of the SpeakApps resources, discussions with the new users who took part in the teacher trainings or attended the events connected to dissemination of the project outputs.

In order to achieve these actions, apart from the Review Board, the results of which are given in D3.1, the other main source to prepare, execute and analyse learning materials were the teacher training courses. As most of the participants were language teachers who would ultimately be using the tools

with their own students in their own learning contexts, it was considered that the teacher training courses provided the best source of critical feedback.

3.1. FOCUS GROUPS DURING TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

A key element of each of the teacher training courses once self-evaluation of tasks had taken place, was focused discussion of task design for speaking interaction activities, in addition to consideration of technical and usability aspects of the OER and Tandem. The conclusions of these focus discussion groups may be found below in section 3.2.1 Main recommendations.

3.2. POST-TEACHER TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRES

In addition to the focus discussion groups, after each of the teacher training courses and workshops, participants were invited to complete a questionnaire. These questionnaires asked participants about technical as well as pedagogical aspects of using the tools and designing tasks during their time on the teacher training course. The main conclusions of these questionnaires may be found below in section 3.2.1 Main recommendations.

3.2.1. Main recommendations

Various recommendations were made regarding technical, pedagogical and usability aspects of the Open Educational Resources:

- A rating system should be incorporated so that good tasks could be identified easily,
- There should be the possibility to work collaboratively with other task designers,
- It should be possible to create introduction and transition screens between Tandem tasks, within a Tandem activity
- The search function was inefficient
- It would be helpful to be able to search the OER by author's name
- The tag cloud had grown too much
- There should be a way to search for different Tandem Task typologies
- For tasks with different input, different instructions should be possible
- Uploading files (e.g. images) for tasks during Tandem Task creation was cumbersome
- Preview of Tandem activities in the OER needed improving to resemble the tool
- In the Tandem preview screen, it was only possible to view Student A
- Mobile-friendly OER needed

3.2.2. Preparation of best practices and tips for teachers

Supporting documents produced as best practices and tips for teachers are:

- Practical tips for teachers
- Best Practices Video Checklist
- Making instructional videos
- Finding copyright free images

4. Demo classrooms with best practice tasks

The main output for D3.2 is the preparation of Demo classrooms in the project languages. These can be found on the website in the category Demo classrooms (http://moodle.speakapps.org/course/index.php?categoryid=30). During SpeakApps 1, one demo classroom was set up but it was decided that for SpeakApps 2, we would create a demo classroom for each of the project languages. There are 9 demo classrooms open for the public with a set of best practice activities and userguides in the following languages:

- English
- Catalan (Demo classroom Català)
- Dutch (Demo classroom Nederlands)
- Irish (Demo classroom Geailge)
- Polish (Demo classroom Polski)
- German (Demo classroom Deutsch)
- Croatian (Demo classroom Hrvatski)
- Italian (Demo classroom Italiano)
- French (Demo classroom Francais)

Each classroom has the latest version of the tools Langblog, Tandem, Videochat Recorder and Videochat Player. Each classroom also has links to the Support blogs for each tool where teachers can post technical or pedagogical queries and a link to SpeakApps Info blog where all the guides for all the tools (for both students and teachers) can be found.

The demo classrooms are open access for the public who can enter as guests. As guests, users are able to try out Langblog, although as Tandem requires two different users, it is currently not possible to try Tandem without at least one of the participants entering with a user name.

The demo classrooms have already been used in various demonstration/presentation sessions to show the tools and share ideas for different activity types when separate classrooms were simply not requested or required.

5. Conclusion

As can be seen in the report, the main focus for the pilots was from the teacher perspective, as the main objective was establishing the quality of the learning materials and also improving the usability of the Open Educational Resources tool for creating new materials. As most learning materials are created by teachers, it was reasonable to focus attention on teachers' actions and opinions.

Almost all of the suggestions for improving the functionality and usability of the Open Educational Resources tool have been implemented as part of WP4 and informal feedback from teachers using the updated version of the OER tool is extremely positive.

As for the demo classrooms, Jagiellonian University was responsible for coordinating the WP3 but each institution of consortium partners was responsible for choosing the best examples of tasks (according to developed quality model) and incorporated them into the demo classroom for their languages.