



Interlacing practice and language

German language courses “on the patient” prepare medical professionals for their career in Germany



GOOD PRACTICE to the point

Addressees for transfer:
Providers of German language courses, which prepare medical practitioners for the profession in a practical way.

Concept of the practice-oriented German language course:

For the preparation to acquire the licence to practise medicine, migrant physicians and pharmacists are taking part in preparatory language courses from level B1 onwards in order to gain level C1 German language skills. In the courses, practising physicians teach practical content in the courses, mostly from documented cases (medical reports, transfers, case presentations, etc.). In collaboration with so-called “role play patients”, authentic clinical cases are presented.

Project:

German for medical professionals in Saarland

Implementing organisation:

FITT gGmbH [non-profit LLC] - GIM Agency for Research and Transfer in cooperation with the educational organisation People to Work (P2W) (pre-course) and the VHS Saarlouis (main course)

Project Contact:

Dr Neda Sheytanova / Saaruferstraße 16 / 66117 Saarbrücken /
Tel.: +49 (0)681/5867 919 /
sheytanova@gim-htw.de

Offer:

At the end of 2016, a handbook on didactic implementation for educational organisations and lecturers will be published by the working group “Arbeitsstelle Deutsch” (“Workplace German”). It can be ordered from the contact person, Dr Neda Sheytanova under the above e-mail address.

Starting position/challenge

In Saarland hospitals there is a great need for doctors, posing a high demand for immigrant specialists. In 2015, about 16% (more than 800 people) of the employed doctors in the Saarland were of foreign origin. Since October 2014, the Conference of Health Ministers has been calling for stricter language requirements of level C1 in the field of medicine.

However, adequate offers to achieve the required language level for immigrant physicians were not offered in Saarland, with the exception of so-called ESF-BAMF courses for vocational orientation. In order to close this existing gap, the working group “Arbeitsstelle Deutsch” (“Workplace German”) of the IQ regional coordinator in Saarland developed the language course “German for Medical Professionals in Saarland”.

Implementation

A practice-oriented language course for specialists with a foreign university degree from the fields of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy was developed. The contents were designed in cooperation with practising and leading medical doctors.

The special thing about the concept is that from the first day of the course, participants practise authentic communication situations and perform exercises on test patients while simultaneously improving their language skills. In a preliminary course, leading from level B1 to B2 medicine, the participants are prepared for the main course “German B2-C1 Medicine” in 400 teaching units. This leads to the examination of German B2-C1 medicine, a prerequisite for the licence to practise medicine in Germany. The preliminary course was necessary, as there were only a few interested people with the required language skill level of B2 at the start of the project.



The financing of the preliminary course by the job centre proved to be a major challenge in the implementation, as this is not part of the regular funding scheme of job centres. Moreover, there were no teaching materials suitable for medical professionals at the B1 level. The teaching materials for level B1 medicine had to be redesigned by the “Arbeitsstelle Deutsch” group (“Workplace German”).

Summary

Of the 17 participants in the first language course “German for Medical Professionals”, 16 reached level B2 or C1 medicine. 90 percent of the participants are already employed.

The developed concept proves to be very practical because the communication situations with so-called “role play patients”, which were trained and practised in advance, are as realistic as possible, and the participants in the course are prepared for the future clinical routine with all its spontaneity.

Job shadowing as an ambitious additional achievement

The Syrian doctor Sanaa Roumia succeeded to start her career in Germany at maximum pace

Some of the participating doctors already attended clinics during the pilot phase of the main course “German for Medical Professionals” in order to create a career in Germany as quickly as possible. “This is a great opportunity to use the German language at the workplace. Mainly, because we get direct feedback from the hospitals, on which areas in particular we have to focus our support for our participants”, explains Dr Neda Sheytanova, project manager of the “Arbeitsstelle Deutsch” group (“Workplace German”). To work in addition to the intensive course with four to five classes per week, however, is a demanding additional task. “Our target group possesses learning strategies, is

used to learning and willing to learn. Many participants are able to quickly internalize, implement and automate”, says Dr Neda Sheytanova. A very successful participant of the course is Sanaa Roumia, who has been working as a resident physician in the department for children and adoles-



cents of the Marienhaus hospital in Saarlouis since January 2016. Before that, she worked as a paediatrician in a hospital in Syrian Damascus for 14 years. After fleeing the war in Syria, she arrived with her family in Saarland in 2014. There, she immediately began to learn German at the VHS Saarlouis [adult education centre]. She started taking the integration course and later the German language course for physicians at IQ - a basic prerequisite for her work in the hospital. For the clinic and Sanaa Roumia this was ultimately a win-win situation, not only in professional terms: The doctor is also able to use her native language in order to treat Arabic-speaking patients adequately.

Three questions to Dr Neda Sheytanova, project manager of the “Arbeitsstelle Deutsch” group (“Workplace German”) in the Network IQ Saarland

Pilot concept for the “Comprehensive language program”



What is the innovative aspect of the practice-oriented German language courses?

Our concept is based on the enormously high proportion of practical lessons, the use of role play patients and the constant exchange with medical specialists. In the courses, we offer targeted career preparation in response to the previous lack of courses. For this purpose, we use authentic materials that have been simplified to language skill level B1 and are used in the classroom. This ensures integrated professional and language learning from the beginning of the course. We also emphasize the fact that realistic communication situations from everyday clinical practice are used as exercises.

Is it possible to introduce this concept in other regions?

By the end of 2016, the “Arbeitsstelle Deutsch” group (“Work-

place German”) will publish a practical handout with didactic recommendations, which can be used by all implementing language organisations nationwide and with which our concept can be transferred. The developed concept will be integrated as a pilot into the “Comprehensive Language Program (CLP)”, which the German government recently announced. This makes the handout even more accessible to all educational institutions.

What can the practice-oriented German language courses affect in the long term?

The role-playing with fake patients delivers a long-lasting added value for the daily work with patients and colleagues, e.g. in the hospital. The current curriculum is designed to keep transfer time and costs manageable. Work experience or placement are still being pursued while taking the course, and the language deficits are directly addressed through close consultation with the hospitals and processed in individual training sessions. Work experience or placement only takes place if the work can actually be completed. The proportion of our successful graduates is demonstrably above-average.

Imprint

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Network IQ

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