



universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

„Taking Responsibility – an Attempt to Establish
Cooperative Open Learning (COOL) in Second-Chance
Education“

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. Phil.)

Wien, 2021 / Vienna, 2021

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 190 333 344

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium
UF Deutsch UF Englisch

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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1 INTRODUCTION

Asylum seekers have little opportunities to work or receive education in Austria which diminishes their prospects and compromises their chances of self-determination (PRO ASYL 2013). Between 2015 and 2020, 196.184 asylum requests were submitted in Austria. Although only 14.192 people applied for asylum in 2020, 21.217 cases were still open at the end of the year (BMI 2020). This number is not surprising since “the entire asylum procedure takes between one to three years or more” (FRA 2019: 28). During this time asylum seekers have limited job opportunities. Since 2018 they are no longer able to enter an apprenticeship in understaffed professions and they cannot take up an occupation except for self-employment in certain trades and seasonal work (Asylkoordination Österreich 2018: 1-3), where they are vulnerable to labour exploitation. Furthermore, access to education is restricted for asylum seekers, especially for those who are too old to receive compulsory schooling. Since the recognition of qualifications is a complicated and time-consuming procedure, they encounter a further barrier to tertiary education (FRA 2019: 14, 107-111). These restrictions prevent them from living a self-determined life (PRO ASYL 2013) and, “coupled with uncertainty [...], the fear of return and the absence of family and friends, can affect integration prospects and mental health” (FRA 2019: 10).

To promote the social and economic integration of refugees, regardless of their legal status, the company Talenteentwicklung Missethon GmbH developed a programme called Talents for Austria in 2015. The original idea was to prepare unaccompanied minor refugees for an apprenticeship in local businesses. Therefore, the initial project included basic education and accommodation with permanent socio-pedagogical care (Talenteentwicklung 2019a). As the funding and success of such programmes mainly depend on political decisions, the company has constantly adapted and created new projects. In 2018 I joined the firm to teach a one-year preparatory course for the ePSA, generally known as *erwachsenengerechter Pflichtschulabschluss*, which had started six months before my employment (Talenteentwicklung 2019b). As an important part of second-chance education in Austria, the ePSA affords the opportunity to catch up on one’s middle school graduation and should increase the graduates’ chances on the employment market, allow access to further education and foster personal development (OeAD 2021). The primary reason for its establishment in

this institution was to create an educational opportunity for refugees who are not allowed to take basic education courses due to the age limit but have sufficient competencies, motivation and learning ability to complete the programme (Hödl 2019: 3-6).

An ePSA course should be more than just exam preparation, it also aims at the acquisition and development of essential skills. After the programme, some graduates still have limited future prospects while others experience difficulties in further education, depending on their legal status (Asylkoordination Österreich 2018; FRA 2019). To cope with these situations, they require autonomy, interpersonal and communication skills, learning and problem-solving competence, and learning motivation which should be developed during their education (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 7-10). Although this is explicitly mentioned in the ePSA curriculum, it was largely neglected during our first two courses because of our lack of experience and increased focus on the exam structure and content. However, for this particular target group the acquisition of such skills might be even more important than a compulsory education certificate. Therefore, I expressed the proposition to adopt a pedagogical approach that fosters the development of these abilities and provides opportunities for decision-making. Since their self-determination is highly restricted during the asylum process (PRO ASYL 2013), refugees should at least be able to assume responsibility in the classroom.

The concept of cooperative open learning, commonly referred to as COOL, seemed particularly suitable for my project as it focuses on autonomy and cooperation in secondary education and refers to heterogeneous groups. The initiative was started to cope with the increasing heterogeneity and the economy's demand for developing soft skills during compulsory education and is based on the Dalton Plan (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 4). While the first evaluation of COOL shows promising results, for example, learners acquired abilities to cooperate, communicate and work independently (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 174-179), findings of later studies, conducted in diverse schools, only partly indicate noticeable improvements through COOL (Friedl 2012; Helm 2016; Kogler 2015; Köck 2017; Neundlinger 2018). Nevertheless, it certainly allows students to assume responsibility (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 12-13) and they enjoy the freedom of making their own decisions during the lesson (Helm 2016: 249, 307). There is no research on establishing COOL in an ePSA course but according to Zach et al. (2013: 66-89), COOL provides an appropriate

learning environment as the concept corresponds with the didactic principles of adult education. Additionally, it can be adapted to the specific teaching context (Helm 2016: 25-26) and creates opportunities for differentiation and individualisation which are beneficial for heterogeneous groups (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 6-7). This further demonstrates the suitability for ePSA courses because the participants usually differ in age, origin, previous education and first language (Steiner, Wagner & Pessl 2006: 45-50; Zach et al. 2013: 69-70).

The aim of this thesis is to raise possibilities for taking responsibility, increase learner autonomy and encourage the development of soft skills by establishing COOL in our teaching facility. In addition to lessons based on COOL principles, the class council should promote the achievement of this goal as it is an important part of COOL and facilitates communication and self-administration (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 26). I will therefore try to answer the following research questions:

- How can the concept of COOL be implemented in the ePSA programme and my classroom?
- In which ways does COOL provide opportunities for my students to assume responsibility and promote learner autonomy?
- How can I establish an effective class council in my ePSA class?

While the first part of this thesis compares the principles of COOL and ePSA and discusses necessary improvements of the latter, the second one focuses on the practical implementation of COOL and its evaluation.

The special forms of second-chance education and different competent authorities result in a lack of comprehensive data (Brückner et al. 2017: 9). Therefore, this paper is limited to my experiences and the practice in our teaching facility, except for common issues that are collected in a report by Stoppacher and Edler (2017). To provide a better insight into this particular educational setting, the first chapter briefly covers the characteristics of ePSA courses and the particular target group of this research. It is followed by a discussion of the development and theoretical foundation of COOL. The subsequent chapters explore general requirements to implement COOL in our ePSA course and it is shown that although the theoretical framework of ePSA has similarities with COOL, the actual practice is not fully compatible with its principles. Hence, certain organisational changes and improvements on different levels are required. This especially applies to cooperation, forms of assessment, and

the students' right to choose certain features of their education. As a teacher my influence is limited, but I can make changes in my own classroom and share my findings with others which is realised in the next section of this thesis.

The second part, starting with the fifth chapter, presents the structure and results of the empirical study. First, the concept of action research is shortly introduced, which is particularly suitable for my project because it is commonly used in educational contexts (Burns 2010: 2) and pursues the goal "[t]o develop and improve practice through research in the interests of all those concerned" (Feldman et al. 2018: 173). Second, I discuss the design of my COOL lessons, necessary preparations, and the structure of my class council. The assignments and templates I created and used in these lessons are attached in the appendix which should enhance the readers' understanding and could provide a resource for other ePSA teachers. Third, the three methods of data collection, observation, questionnaire, and classroom documents, are covered. They were combined to increase objectivity and collect data from different perspectives and points in time (Burns 2010; Feldman et al. 2018). The fourth section of this chapter focuses on the findings and it is shown that COOL gives ePSA students more freedom and chances to take over responsibility. They enjoy the possibilities for cooperating with others and allotting their own time, but a lack of reading competency, accuracy, and self-assessment can cause difficulties when working with written assignments. Finally, the effort and time for preparation must be weighed against the short duration of ePSA courses.

2 OUTLINE OF THE SETTING AND THE TARGET GROUP

The low visibility of second-chance education in general (Brückner et al. 2017: 9) and the lack of research and data on ePSA courses and its participants in particular (Zach et al. 2013: 7, 69) lead to limited knowledge about this educational measure. To provide insights into the specific educational setting of this study, this section focuses on the characteristics, primary goal, and terms of admission of the new ePSA. Although ePSA groups share commonalities and face similar difficulties which becomes apparent when exchanging experiences with other course providers and comparing current with previous classes at our teaching facility, they are not strictly comparable due to the varying participants. Thus, in the following, the parameters of this particular educational programme, the composition of the case study group and the learning atmosphere are discussed.

The concept of ePSA provides an opportunity to receive a certificate that is equivalent to a middle school graduation and aims at the increasement of chances on the employment market and for higher education. In September 2012, the law for a new external compulsory education that is more suitable for adult learners became applicable. Participants can still prepare individually for the exams or attend a one-year preparatory course to have additional support which is preferred by the majority. The differences between previous and new preparatory courses lie in the form of individual funding, a new curriculum, exam regulations as well as examiners' qualifications which now enables institutions of adult education to administer the final exams themselves (Zach et al. 2013: 6-7). Funding is provided by the federal government and federal states whose main objectives are to create equal opportunities and facilitate the acquisition of fundamental qualifications and competences for everyone. Finishing compulsory schooling is crucial for higher education as well as the general job search, but it is also increasingly required for apprenticeships. Therefore, this educational programme, commonly referred to as ePSA, is aimed at people from the age of fifteen who do not have a positive school-leaving certificate from the eighth grade (Steuerungsgruppe der IEB 2019: 12, 25).

The new curriculum is competency-based and includes eight competence areas; thus, it differs from the middle school's syllabus (Zach et al. 2013: 7). Competences are understood as

personal dispositions that are developed through the reflection of practical experiences and are used to handle diverse situations (Rützel 2010: 3 cited in Zach et al. 2013: 34). Therefore, the curriculum focuses on competences that are essential in the work environment or further education and support participation in society. In addition, a critical reflection of society, politics and economy is encouraged (Muckenhuber & Schildberger 2017: 4). Except for mathematics, career orientation and an additional language, traditional subjects are combined in interdisciplinary competence areas, which is a relatively new approach in the Austrian education system. German, history, social studies and political education form one area, as well as English and geography. Music education and art are referred to as creativity and design, while biology and home economics build the competence area called health and social studies. The competence area nature and technics combines natural sciences and is the only one that can partly be compared to existing curricula (Zach et al. 2013: 7). Whereas the attendance of mathematics, English, German and career orientation is compulsory, participants are allowed to choose two of the remaining competence areas (Steuerungsgruppe der IEB 2019: 25-26).

As the duration of the preparatory course is limited to a year, participants need a particular level of previous knowledge and certain personal skills to successfully complete it. The general course admission requirements are sufficient skills of the German language and a minimum level of knowledge of mathematics and English. Therefore, competences in these three areas are assessed through standardised tests. Personal motivation as well as learning experiences are also of importance (Steuerungsgruppe der IEB 2019: 25-27) but not always considered. The main reason for this is that especially small course providers in rural areas need participants as the preparatory courses are financed per person; hence, admission is often solely based on the test results. In addition, motivation is difficult to test and can change over time owing to difficult personal circumstances, for example, a negative decision on asylum or concerns about the situation and family in the home country (Zach et al. 2013: 69).

Since ePSA was established for individuals who encountered difficulties at school or are not allowed to attend compulsory education in Austria, the target group has specific needs and is generally very heterogenous. Distinctions between the participants regard their level of knowledge, age, life experience and previous education. A high number has a migrant

background and a different first language than German (Steiner, Wagner & Pessl 2006: 45-50; Zach et al. 2013: 69-70). This heterogeneity is also displayed in the group composition of the course this research is based on. It finished in September 2020 and was attended by six female and fourteen male students with an age range from seventeen to twenty-eight. Asylum seekers formed the majority of the group, which is not surprising since ePSA courses often provide the only form of occupation aiming at a graduation that is available during the asylum process (Zach et al. 2013: 69-70). Half of the group was from Afghanistan, the others were born in Syria, Chechen Republic, Iraq, Somalia or Mongolia. Therefore, seven different first languages were spoken and there was a rich cultural diversity.

Although all participants passed the compulsory entrance exam, their previous knowledge and language levels were very distinct. The duration of learning German as a second language ranged from one to four years; therefore, thirteen participants had the CEFR level B1, some of them leading towards B2, whereas others had only passed the A2 exam. Their English language skills varied from A1 to A2 according to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2020) and presented a challenge for those students who only learned English in basic education courses in Austria. According to their own statements, numerous students had limited education possibilities in their home countries, whereas a few already had a Higher School Certificate, but it was either not recognised by Austrian authorities or was no longer available. Thus, the students also had different states of knowledge in their first languages which either facilitated or impeded their learning progress. The various educational levels were further reflected in their learning methods and rates.

From the beginning of the course, the vast majority of this class was motivated and diligent which led to a positive learning atmosphere. Although only eight participants were given asylum or a subsidiary protection status and therefore had an actual chance of rebuilding their lives in Austria, the others eagerly pursued the goal to receive an ePSA certificate. They were aware of this great opportunity and assumed it would help them to find a job or an apprenticeship if they got asylum. Some also hoped that labour regulations would change or that course attendance would benefit their asylum application. Hence, most attended the course regularly, did their homework, participated in class and passed the final exams. Compared to previous classes, motivation was considerably higher, and students were more

eager to learn. We attributed this to the higher number of female participants who were very ambitious and had already received an advanced education in their home countries.

To conclude, the ePSA programme is a great possibility for adults to receive a compulsory education certificate within a short time and have more educational and occupational opportunities. Classes are commonly heterogenous which is clarified by describing the participants of our ePSA course. Participants are from various countries, have diverse experiences of previous education and there is a considerable age difference. As heterogeneity can be a challenge for lesson planning and teaching, this study explores a teaching concept that aims at differentiation. In the following, the theoretical background of COOL is discussed and related to this specific educational setting and group of students.

3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter outlines the theoretical foundations and ideals of COOL and compares it to the ePSA course in our teaching facility. It serves as an introduction and guide for ePSA teachers who want to transform their classrooms. The first section focuses on the reasons for the initiation of COOL, its dissemination in Austria and the development of quality management. In the second part, the underlying learning approach of the Dalton Plan which forms the basis for COOL is discussed. Since the fundamental concepts of cooperative learning and open classroom have been applied in various contexts and evolved since Parkhurst, they are addressed in the last two sections.

3.1 The Development of COOL

This section provides relevant information on the background of COOL and the community that was developed to distribute this concept and support other teachers who intend to modify their instruction. First, the reasons for the innovation are explained and the initial target group is compared to our ePSA class. Furthermore, the encounter of a successful implementation of the Dalton Plan and its appeal to Austrian educators is addressed. After introducing the COOL-centre which offers material, support and training courses, the quality standards are discussed as they provide a valuable source for initiating COOL. Finally, the

person-centred approach which also influenced the development of COOL is presented. It focuses on the teachers' attitudes and behaviour towards the students and is therefore an important and useful guideline for COOL educators.

COOL was developed due to the dissatisfaction and frustration with the teaching circumstances at HAK/HAS Steyr in Upper Austria. Teachers were confronted with several students who could not find an occupation due to a regional shortage of apprenticeships, and thus were forced to attend school. Around forty per cent had a different L1 than German and others had behavioural problems or special needs. Especially the HAS classes became a place for students who lacked motivation, self-confidence and a positive attitude towards education. As a result, the dropout rate and number of repeaters were considerably high. Traditional undifferentiated teaching methods were ineffective, and teachers felt helpless and unqualified to deal with the growing social tensions, aggression level and disinterest. These issues were frequently part of supervision conversations which lead to the decision to find a different teaching approach that would improve the students' social competence, increase their sense of responsibility and bring back the teachers' enjoyment of work (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 161-163).

In our ePSA course the starting situation was not as critical since it was regarded as a great opportunity by most participants, but there are certain similarities between the target groups that complicate teaching. First of all, both groups are heterogenous especially regarding the L1, cultural background and performance levels. The lack of prospects which can lead to a lack of motivation is another mutual issue as asylum seekers have limited educational and employment opportunities in Austria. Although absence rates are discussed in both learning contexts, they are difficult to compare owing to the different reasons for non-attendance. Furthermore, a missing sense of responsibility for their own learning process is displayed by members of both target groups (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 161-163; Neuhauser 2007: 273) which can be a result of previous educational experience. These parallels suggest that a new teaching concept would also be suitable and beneficial for our students.

The HAK/HAS teachers' research for an appropriate progressive approach resulted in a crucial educational trip to Drenthe College, a Dalton school in the Netherlands. Austrian progressive

education models almost entirely referred to primary schools and lower secondary grammar schools; therefore, a successful implementation of the Dalton Plan in a vocational school was a decisive factor. Parkhurst's ideas and views were consistent with the teachers' and the open structure of the concept made it possible to adapt it to their school conditions and combine it with elements of other progressive education movements. The first trial class started in 1996 which was followed by a year of reflection, positive feedback from various directions, continuous development and a focus on public relations. In 1997, it was officially approved as the first vocational school pilot project in Austria based on progressive education. To clarify that the approach does not exclusively aim at the integration of learners with behavioural and motivational issues and can benefit all students, COOL should be introduced to HAK classes who had not faced problems of attendance or behaviour. Owing to the HAK's good reputation, the teachers encountered resistance from colleagues and authorities and, therefore, developed a completely new school branch in cooperation with the JKU Linz based on the concept of self-directed learning. Since then, public and economic interest has grown, and COOL has been constantly refined and established in further schools (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 4-7; Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 163-165, 181-183).

COOL representatives understand that a successful initiative requires a contact point and an administrative framework for sustainability. Especially other vocational school teachers who were confronted with similar situations were inspired by the initiators' accomplishments and the requests for school visits and professional development increased. Therefore, Helga Wittwer and Georg Neuhauser established a COOL-centre (Neuhauser 2007: 276-277). It undertakes a variety of tasks that include consulting and support of individual school development processes as well as the publication of literature and teaching material. In addition, the centre focuses on the construction of a (digital) network between schools, national and international cooperation and public relations to create a positive image. The development of advanced training concepts is essential to ensure an effective implementation of COOL concepts, therefore the first two-year training course for school teams was offered in 2001. At the annual meeting of the whole COOL community, teachers from different schools can share their experiences, materials and problems and have the opportunity to discuss new ideas and ensure steady progression. One example for further development is eCOOL which combines the concept of COOL with eLearning elements and is a logical result of the

widespread use of learning platforms in schools and increasing importance of digital competences (Neuhauser 2007: 279-284; Neuhauser 2012: 226-228). It can be argued that this extends Parkhurst's principle of cooperation from one school to a whole community.

An additional responsibility of the COOL-centre is quality management which should enhance standardisation and can guide the implementation of COOL. The training courses' first participants addressed the need for quality standards and developed a list of criteria and procedures; thus, Austrian schools can now certify their COOL activities (Neuhauser 2007: 279). "A recurring certification process is used to ensure quality and realization in schools. [...] [The five quality areas are called] cooperation, learning and development, classroom work, organisation and communication and feedback, reflection and evaluation" (Csongrady et al. 2016: 125). They are related to three agents: students, teachers and school management, and include three stages of development that differ in their manifestation of COOL. When a school fulfils the criteria for the first stage, it is certified as a partner school, the second stage is the impulse school and the third one contains aspects for further development. Since these schools receive an official certificate and logo, teachers and school administration usually pursue the goal of recertification and are committed to the concept (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 3-4). There is no mention of a specific type of school; thus, it could be possible to certify an ePSA course. This objective can be pursued in the future if this study proves to be successful and the concept is supported by all teachers and school administration. For now, the quality criteria and areas are used as a guideline for the implementation process.

In addition to the Dalton Plan, the person-centred approach provides a guiding principle for COOL which is only briefly mentioned in the respective literature but illustrates the teachers' attitude towards the students (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 164). This psychological approach focuses on personality development and can be applied to the relationship between teacher and student. It is based on the assumption that individuals have the aptitude to understand themselves as well as change their self-concepts and attitudes. This process requires a congenial atmosphere that is created by certain psychological attitudes. The first one is congruence which means that the teacher is genuine, transparent, displays emotions and does not disguise or hide behind the profession. The second attitude is unconditional positive

regard for the individual, meaning that the teacher appreciates the student the way he or she is. Active listening, understanding emotions and causal relations, in other words, showing real empathy is also vital for the relationship between teacher and student. These attitudes promote the student's growth since he or she is acknowledged and accepted as a whole person which can lead to more self-respect and self-awareness (Rogers 1984: 10-12; The Person Centred Association 2018). This approach is also significant in ePSA as adult education is mainly based on relationship building and being on par with the participants (Zach et. al 2013: 16).

In summary, it can be stated that COOL emerged and was successfully introduced to several Austrian schools due to the commitment of a few teachers who were confronted with a challenging group of students and sought improvement. They detected a teaching concept that is adaptable to diverse educational settings and can be beneficial for a variety of students. Since it relies on a supporting community and good relationships between all parties involved, the initiators further established a contact point and centre for quality management. EPSA educators who want to implement COOL in their classrooms can benefit from that but primarily need to understand the underlying views towards education and learning; therefore, the following section focuses on the three fundamental principles of the Dalton Plan.

3.2 Principles of the Dalton Plan

The Dalton Plan was clearly developed under the influence of other progressive educational movements aiming at a new education for everyone as well as the development of independence, self-responsibility and social skills. It is based on three principles: freedom, cooperation and budgeting time; however, the third one is not mentioned as such in *Education on the Dalton Plan* and was only added in 1925 (Popp 1999: 63-73). To understand the appeal for the COOL initiators, the main ideas and their application according to Parkhurst, this section explores the original concept. After a brief discussion of the general reasons for its dissemination and disappearance in Europe, the three principles are explored and compared to the teaching practice in our ePSA course.

The Dalton Plan was developed in a social context similar to the current situation in Europe, but it disappeared from the European education system as quickly as it was implemented, with the exception of the Netherlands (Skiera 2010: 271-272). Since other progressive teaching ideas required extensive alterations, the Dalton Plan was often regarded as a moderate alternative with appealing principles that still focused on learning performance. On the one hand, the main advantage is that it deals with the core problem of education and provides pragmatic solutions that can be adapted to every school type, on the other hand, this openness is one reason for its disappearance. In practice, it rarely included all of Parkhurst's elements and was implemented in such diverse ways that the reference to the Dalton Plan dropped over time (Popp 2002: 56; Skiera 2010: 271-272). An additional reason for its vanishing was Parkhurst's refusal of an international association or supervisory body, specific teacher education and the authorisation of the concept's name. The lack of further literature also complicated the promotion of her ideas (Popp 1999: 33-34).

The concept of freedom within the Dalton Plan implies the reduction of barriers to learning and having freedom of choice which is closely associated with a sense of responsibility. Shifting the focus from teaching to learning helps students understand that they are accountable for their work and progress. Therefore, they can choose the material as well as where, when and with whom they want to carry out their assignments (Eichelberger 2002: 19-21). Parkhurst (1922: 19, 41-42) argues that students should have the freedom to select and work on topics without interruption from the bell which usually implies a change of subject and teacher. When students are concentrated on a task, it is indeed uneconomic to stop their learning process and draw their attention to a completely different subject. Her understanding of freedom also entails taking as much time as one needs to complete an assignment which is achieved through individual timetables.

In our ePSA courses, the students' freedom as defined in the Dalton Plan is fairly restricted. According to the didactic principles of ePSA, teachers should allow freedom and scope for decision-making; hence, students can assume responsibility for their own learning (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 10). This is consistent with Parkhurst's first principle, but our participants could not choose topics as they had to concentrate on a specific content to pass the final exams within less than a year. Since there was only one classroom available, there

was no alternative to learning space, but they could often select partners for cooperative tasks. Due to the various language and knowledge levels, students finished assignments at different paces. Sometimes teachers assigned additional tasks to faster students, but it seemed to put stress on slower ones. The limited number of subjects and teachers in our ePSA course could be beneficial as students were instructed by one person per day; thus, there were less interruptions of the learning process and the teacher could extend a certain lesson, if necessary.

“The second principle of the Dalton Laboratory Plan is co-operation or [...] the interaction of group life” (Parkhurst 1922: 19) which refers to removing traditional structures, for example teacher-centred teaching, that prevent cooperation and increase competitiveness. Thus, it is not primarily about the regulation of partner or group work which might be initially assumed (Eichelberger 2002: 21; Popp 1999: 74). Influenced by Dewey’s ideas, Parkhurst states that all parties involved in school life should constantly interact and cooperate with each other to achieve a sense of unity. This especially depends on the teachers’ collaboration in terms of organisation and the development of assignments as well as their authenticity and interaction with the students. The latter can be compared to Roger’s person-centred approach. Furthermore, teachers should create a stimulating learning environment where students experience themselves as part of a social community and ask others for help (Parkhurst 1922: 19-23; 63). Therefore, a laboratory for each subject should be established which is equipped with adequate and interesting material and serves as a place where students from different grades can experiment, discuss and work together in small groups (Parkhurst 1922: 39-43).

Although cooperation is highly valued in our teaching facility, this principle is only partly applied in the sense of Parkhurst. Since we are a small team of teachers and social workers, communication and cooperation regarding organisational matters and students’ personal or learning issues is essential. Contrary to regular schools, there is only one teacher who is responsible and trained to teach his or her subjects. Therefore, we do not necessarily develop learning content together. One exception is career orientation which is taught in a team as participants lack computer skills but have to write a job application portfolio and require increased support. In terms of interaction with the students, I can only speak for myself. As their class teacher, I avoided increasing competition between the participants and aimed at

creating a pleasant atmosphere based on the person-centred approach which seemed to be successful because students were honest about their problems, shared opinions and expressed criticism. Parkhurst's idea of establishing laboratories is not viable in our teaching facility due to the lack of rooms and is also not adopted in COOL. The most plausible reason for this decision is that not all classes and periods are organised according to COOL which also results in a shortage of available classrooms.

In the COOL quality criteria, the third principle is referred to as self-responsibility which implies that students set their own goals, plan their ways of learning and reflect on their development; thus, they increasingly take control of their learning process (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 3-5). Parkhurst (1922: 23-24; 37-38) emphasises that students should explore various solution strategies by themselves or share their ideas and problems with other students. They are responsible for planning and completing their work in a certain amount of time leading them towards more autonomy. As this is a gradual process, students require support and a method to record their time and work. Therefore, Parkhurst (1922: 134-148) suggests graphs that offer an overview of completed and unfinished assignments which is helpful for planning and allotting time. Additionally, teachers can observe the progress of individuals as well as the whole class and recognise when additional instructions or individual help are needed.

Taking responsibility for their own learning and developing time management skills is crucial for our target group but often neglected. One pedagogical aim of the ePSA is to support the development of self-responsibility and learning motivation which are closely connected (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 10). Although all participants were (young) adults and one would expect that they were fairly independent, most of them heavily relied on their teachers to tell them exactly what to do during class and constantly remind them of homework or deadlines. One example which illustrates their dependence is that absent students expected the teacher to inform them about the missed lessons. To avoid this, I put all worksheets in a marked folder, participants could access it and were expected to catch up on the lesson content by themselves. In addition, two students were responsible to inform others about the homework and participants alternated in cleaning the classroom after school. These measures were not directly related to learning, but they helped our students to understand their responsibilities.

The principles of the Dalton Plan were valued in our ePSA course and applied to a variable extent but required considerable improvement. Although COOL is based on Parkhurst's views on freedom, cooperation and self-responsibility, it does not include all elements as it was adapted to the needs of the target group and possibilities of the respective school. Over time, the general teaching concepts of cooperative and open learning were developed by other educators and applied in different ways which also influenced COOL practice.

3.3 Cooperative Learning

To further approach the implementation of a successful cooperative classroom, this section focuses on the essentials of cooperative learning. After providing common definitions, the four types of cooperative learning are discussed and related to COOL. Furthermore, I indicate the significance for ePSA courses, the application in our teaching facility and point to five components teachers should consider when planning activities that should promote effective cooperation between students.

Cooperative learning is a widespread and established instructional procedure in diverse educational institutions (Johnson & Johnson n.d.); therefore, various definitions can be found which slightly differ. According to Slavin (2015: 5), cooperative learning "refers to teaching methods in which students work together in small groups to help each other learn academic content". Dörnyei (1997: 482) defines it as "the instructional use of small groups in order to achieve common learning goals via cooperation" and Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994: 3) explain "that [it] allows students to work together to maximize their own and each other's learning". It is summarised by Jacobs, Power and Loh (2002: ix) as "[p]rinciples and techniques for helping students work together more effectively". These examples indicate that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a learning environment and choose methods that facilitate cooperative learning.

COOL can be classified as formal cooperative learning as it is based on a careful and thorough preparation, monitoring and evaluation. There are four types of cooperative learning: "formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning, cooperative base groups, and cooperative structures" (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec 1994: 7). The latter is omitted in more

recent literature and refers to collecting typical procedures that are suitable for cooperative lessons regardless of the subject. The main differences between the remaining three are the duration and extent of the group work. Whereas cooperative base groups are formed for the minimum of a year, formal cooperative learning means that students work with the same group for at least one lesson. Informal cooperative learning often takes only a couple of minutes and usually consists of brief discussions to activate prior knowledge, actively engage the students or summarise the period/content. Formal cooperative learning requires intensive preparation since teachers set the learning goals, provide instructions and explanations, observe the students' behaviour, intervene if beneficial and give feedback on the individual and group process. This also applies to COOL, except for the fact that tasks are primarily explained by means of written instructions (Johnson & Johnson n.d.; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec 1994: 7-9).

The didactic recommendations for designing and planning ePSA courses also include cooperative learning; hence, this instructional procedure should not be completely new to ePSA teachers. To increase communication and cooperation between learners, partner and group work should be common social forms. Students usually enjoy working together which can increase participation and promote the development of social competences. Additionally, it generates discussions and participants can gain different perspectives and deepen their understanding of the topic (Zach et al. 2013: 67, 72). Therefore, we planned an introductory week for every new group which focused on student cooperation; it is thoroughly discussed at a later stage of this paper. The quantity and frequency of cooperative learning during the course depends on the individual trainers and their style of teaching. I regularly include informal cooperative learning as defined by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994: 7-9) in all subjects but have not considered the requirements for efficient cooperation in my preparation.

Effective cooperation requires more than just assigning group work as teachers need to understand five components to structure the learning situation. The first one is called positive interdependence which is the basis for cooperative learning and means that students comprehend that everyone must understand, participate and accomplish the task in order for the whole group to succeed. Hence, they develop a sense of responsibility for others' as well

as their own achievements. The second one, promotive interaction, refers to creating opportunities for students to support and encourage each other, share their knowledge and compliment on successes. Individual accountability is the third element; when the group receives an evaluation of each individual's performance, students can ascertain which group members require more assistance and provide it during the next learning process. Apart from learning academic content together, students should also acquire interpersonal and small-group skills that are essential for successful teamwork, for example, solving conflicts, communicating effectively, assigning tasks and trusting each other. Teaching these skills is the fourth component since students cannot be expected to know instinctively how to cooperate with others. Group processing is the final component which occurs when the groups evaluate and discuss their actions and draw conclusions for their future collaboration (Johnson & Johnson n.d.; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec 1994: 5-6).

As can be seen, cooperative learning is an established and straightforward term, and the case study group is reasonably familiar with it. Nevertheless, to meet the requirements for COOL, cooperation needs to be extended to all levels in our institution. In addition to cooperative learning, COOL is based on the concept of open learning which is also widely used but more complex due to diverse implementations. Since the term open classroom can be found more frequently than open learning, especially in English literature, it is preferred in this thesis.

3.4 Open Classroom

The overall organisation of COOL lessons is grounded on the ideas of the open classroom; since it is not a finished concept that can simply be imposed on every class, it is necessary to take a closer look at it. In the following section, the problem of defining the term open classroom is addressed and common characteristics that enable orientation and comparison are presented. Furthermore, a dimensional model for quantitative as well as qualitative evaluation of openness is discussed and applied to our ePSA course which demonstrates the need for improvement regarding the organisation, methods, content and participation.

The term open classroom does not denote one definable method, instead it is generally considered as a collective term for alternatives to a traditional understanding of teaching. The

origin of the idea and term lies in the socio-critical debates during the sixties and seventies which led to different executions and notions of openness. Although the present understanding of open classroom is influenced by various progressive teaching movements, the actual teaching practice differs as it is exposed to permanent advancement. Thus, it is a collective term for didactic and organisational measures or alterations that aim at changing the structure of traditional teaching and therefore promote individualisation and freedom of choice. The demand to open the classroom to enable self-regulated learning is supported by current research results and not restricted to progressive teachers (Hofmann & Moser 2006: 32-33; Peschel 2009: 8; 67-69; Skiera 2010: 377-379). Examples of what is typically regarded as open classroom in German literature are the concepts of “Freie Arbeit, Projektunterricht, [and] Wochenplan” (Hofmann & Moser 2006: 32) which are implemented in diverse ways and permit different degrees of openness.

To compare and evaluate open classroom practice, several lists of common features have been compiled. Hofmann and Moser (2006: 32-33) mention three features. First of all, the changed distribution of roles since students are more active, independent and involved in decision-making processes, while the teacher acts as a learning coach. Secondly, the focus is shifted to the learning process instead of the product and should be action-oriented, problem-solving and self-regulated. Thirdly, the students’ individual learning conditions and needs are recognised and considered in the planning and implementation. Individual objectives are formulated as not every student has to learn the same content in the same period of time anymore. Giaconia and Hedges (1982: 592-594) identified a more detailed set of seven features as the basis of their analysis which include the above-mentioned. Additionally, they refer to heterogeneous age groups, more open and flexible classroom or learning area designs and increased teamwork between teachers before, during and after the lesson. Another characteristic is the use of a variety of materials to generate the students’ interest and enable them to explore new ideas by themselves. Furthermore, evaluation is used to improve teaching and learning, focusing on individual progress, and the number of traditional graded tests is decreased. Skiera (2010: 379-380) altered Wallrabenstein’s (1994: 205f cited in Skiera 2010: 379) list of questions to describe open classrooms and rephrased them as a comprehensive set of features. In addition to already mentioned elements, it contains the spatial opening of the classroom for excursions or experts and the use of various methods and

social forms. Aside from that, clear rules about social behaviour and cooperation are established, students are included in conflict management and a culture of open communication is fostered. Skiera (2010: 380) emphasizes that the open classroom is not a finished and transferable concept and therefore this list cannot be regarded as an ultimate goal. In practice, it can only be applied selectively and requires a critical and constructive development process with respect to the individual school's parameters.

This view is also supported by Peschel (2009: 76-86) who proposes a practical concept that facilitates quantitative as well as qualitative evaluation of open classrooms. It is based on the following understanding of open classroom: students can choose the place, time, social form and content, within an open curriculum, and a high degree of participation and shared responsibility is sought. Peschel stresses the importance of minimum requirements to classify and distinguish between different forms of learning. Therefore, the dimensions of organisational, methodical, content-related, social and personal openness are evaluated individually using a scale from zero (non-existent) to five (mostly). This system of classification is quantitative and suitable to assess the lesson as a whole as well as gain a general impression of the personal and social openness. To analyse the openness of the content, organisation and methodology in specific lesson sequences, a more qualitative grading is provided. As the applied definition of open classroom clearly conforms with the concept of COOL and this model is also recommended for ePSA courses, it can be used to evaluate the openness of both.

Although the suitability of the concept of open classroom is stressed in the didactic recommendation for ePSA courses, it has not been considered in our teaching facility. Open structures can fulfil the requirements of action-oriented, differentiated and individualised teaching which are essential in adult education. The challenge is that teachers and learners require social and structural competences as well as basic autonomy which cannot be expected from this specific target group (Zach et. al 2013: 72-75). This is one reason for the neglect of open learning methods in our institution; additionally, teachers lack experience and the diversity of open classroom forms can be overwhelming. It also involves extensive preparation, and since we only started offering ePSA courses in 2018 our primary aim was the fulfilment of basic requirements as well as the familiarisation with exam content and procedures. Based on Peschel's (2009: 79-81) scale, which ranges from zero to five and

evaluates the openness of lessons, I rate the organisational, methodical and content-related openness in our previous ePSA courses as non-existent. The social dimension reached level two because students formulated their own rules at the beginning of the year, decided if they want to have a class representative and frequently expressed propositions. In terms of personal openness, I can only relate to my relationship with the students which mostly reached level four. Due to their age, living conditions and my assistance in matters outside the classroom, we established a close relationship over a short period of time. There was a positive atmosphere in class as participants were honest about their concerns and were encouraged to share their opinions and interests.

In conclusion, COOL was initially developed to cope with a challenging target group, is based on progressive teaching ideas and should enhance self-responsibility, independence and cooperation (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 4). As was shown, the theoretical concepts are appropriate for ePSA courses, but our programme requires considerable improvement in terms of cooperation, developing basic autonomy and permitting students more freedom and scope for decision-making. In addition to exploring to what extent lessons at our teaching facility can be adapted to COOL, organisational structures and procedures need to be evaluated in relation to their conformity with the ideas of COOL. Hence, the following chapter examines the possibilities, limitations and challenges of introducing this teaching concept into our ePSA classroom.

4 REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING COOL IN THE EPSA PROGRAMME

The difficulty of comparing COOL and ePSA and evaluating the opportunities and drawbacks of an initiation in our teaching facility lies in the diverse implementations of both concepts. Although the theoretical and philosophical foundations are highly consistent, several organisational alterations on the level of our institution and the board of education are required to enable an effective implementation of COOL. This chapter examines these changes and shows the discrepancies between theory and practice. First of all, the similarities between COOL concepts and the ePSA curriculum, and the problems of practical implementation are discussed. The second section focuses on the participants' backgrounds, living conditions and

language levels which can pose a challenge to the implementation of COOL. Following this, possibilities to enhance learning competence and cooperative skills, which are basic requirements for COOL, are explored. After a brief discussion of the general framework of COOL lessons, the need for increased cooperation on various levels is addressed. Finally, the problems of final examinations and unsuitability of assessment forms are presented.

4.1 Conformities With COOL and Issues of Application

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the principles of freedom, cooperation and self-responsibility are included in the didactic principles for ePSA but not sufficiently applied in our course. The same is true for the educational objectives in the curriculum which share similarities with the concept of COOL. This section evaluates the practical application and feasibility of these curriculum descriptors in our ePSA class. First, the significance and acquisition of soft skills are discussed; then, the possibility to include COOL activities which promote self-evaluation and reflection in our course is examined. Furthermore, I address the students' right to choose competence areas based on their interests or existing knowledge which is not enforced at our institution because the decision is made by the examination board. The final paragraph focuses on the curriculum content which is not suitable for the actual target group and duration of the course.

COOL and ePSA courses aim at the development of soft skills which are vital to both groups of students. The initial reason for the initiation of COOL was to ameliorate a critical situation, but it was also a reaction to the economy's demand for more independent, communicative and cooperative employees who can face new challenges (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 181-183). Therefore, soft skills, for example, flexibility, integration ability, communication skills and problem-solving competence, are increasingly important and emphasized in COOL (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 25). EPSA courses also aim at the development of these competences as they are essential for participants to find an occupation or apprenticeship and complete the practical and theoretical education (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 7-10). Students who are still asylum seekers and have limited future prospects also benefit from these skills. As they live in accommodations with numerous refugees, they should be able to integrate and communicate with a variety of people. Additionally, the responsible social worker often

changes and can only be consulted on specific days; therefore, asylum seekers must be flexible, independent and solve their own problems. After the course, they have no further educational opportunities and should autonomously practise their language skills, study for exams they failed the first time or apply for seasonal employment. To stimulate the development of these skills, we frequently assign groups and encourage open dialogue between all participants, regardless of their background, which has proven to be successful.

Personal development through self-evaluation and reflection is fostered throughout the course. One educational aim of ePSA is to encourage critical reflection about personal development and support participants to recognise their strengths and weaknesses which facilitates the choice of suitable occupational or educational opportunities. Therefore, teachers should employ methods that display the development process, allow self-reflection and improve the ability of self-appraisal (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 7-10). In COOL, students regularly evaluate and reflect on their progress as well as their learning and social behaviour and compare it to their teachers' feedback. Additional steps include the writing of learning journals and developmental conversations between teachers and students (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 11). Whereas self-evaluation and learning journals require practice but can be introduced in ePSA courses, teachers at our organisation do not have sufficient time resources to prepare and evaluate one-on-one conversations that are held after school. Hence, the time for teachers' feedback is limited and can only be provided during instructional time while other students work independently. Nevertheless, these measures can already help students to develop or improve self-reflection and still conform with the quality criteria of a COOL partner school.

According to the ePSA regulation, participants can choose two competence areas which would comply with the principle of freedom if it was applied in practice. Based on personal interests, existing knowledge or abilities, at least two of the following competence areas can be selected: creativity and design, nature and technics, health and social studies or an additional language (Steuerungsgruppe der IEB 2019: 25-26). In the curriculum, it is explicitly mentioned that the lessons in career orientation should further help participants to reach a decision based on essential capabilities for their desired career (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 40). This suggests that students are instructed in all competence areas and make their choice during

the course, but this is not viable due to the short duration of the educational measure, the lack of classrooms and special equipment needed for creativity and design, and limited number of teachers. In practice, participants can be asked at the beginning of the course when most of them are not yet aware of their strengths or future plans and therefore strongly rely on the teachers' recommendations which are often based on the examiners' specifications. The final decision is often made by the external board of examiners according to their proficiencies which applies to our situation as learners can only take exams in nature and technics and health and social studies. One potential improvement would be to inform and ask interested participants after the entrance test which is administered months before the course. Thus, the selection of competence areas can at least be based on the students' interests. Additionally, it gives the school or authorities enough time to organise an examiner and the course provider to find a qualified teacher. In our teaching facility, more than one classroom would be available in the afternoon which provides the opportunity to simultaneously teach two different competence areas, but it requires careful planning and increased funding.

The main problem of the current ePSA curriculum is that the level is set too high for the course length and especially for the actual target group and is therefore not entirely followed. From experience, the entrance test can be passed with a German language level of A2 and the aim during the course is a minimum level of B1 (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 12). Nevertheless, the fulfilment of several curriculum descriptors certainly requires B2 which connotes that language users „[c]an produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options” (Council of Europe 2020). This language level can be compared to the following descriptors taken from the competence area German – communication and society: students can weigh the pros and cons and justify their own opinion, students can compare different perspectives on a historical event or students can assign interests or actions to certain viewpoints and question them (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 14-16). The transition from A2 to B2 is not possible within such a short amount of time. Furthermore, the duration of one year also includes the final exams; therefore, participants only have five or six months to prepare for the first one. Teachers often have to impart basic skills in writing, reading or calculating and support the acquisition of learning competence to facilitate the discussion of more difficult topics. Due to

the lack of language abilities and previous knowledge, complex tasks, for instance, contextualisation and reflections, present a significant challenge and overwhelm the participants (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 35). Therefore, teaching and exam practice does not always follow the curriculum, instead goals and contents are based on examiners' experiences of the students' capabilities which results in diverse realisations of ePSA.

This section showed the similarities between the didactic principles and learning goals of ePSA and COOL, but it also addressed the changes that are required to fully adopt COOL. Furthermore, it highlighted the need to review the ePSA curriculum which is not adequate for the target group. As the participants are refugees with different backgrounds and first languages, there are certain aspects teachers must consider.

4.2 Challenges of Working With the Target Group

Apart from the adaption of the curriculum, teaching this specific target group presents a challenge to the implementation of COOL. The first issue is trauma which needs to be addressed in the context of refugee education. Clear structures and transparency which are established in COOL can have a beneficial effect on the students. The second matter is course attendance which depends on the participants' mental health, uncertain living conditions and diverse obligations. Low language abilities are another challenge since reading skills are imperative to understand and complete COOL assignments.

When working with this specific target group, the participants' life situation and mental state must be taken into consideration. As explained at the beginning of this thesis, most students are still requesting asylum. They have already been refused; therefore, raised an objection against the decree and are now waiting for their second hearing. An ePSA certificate may positively influence their application, but in case asylum is denied once again, they must leave the country or are deported. This continuing uncertainty and limited prospects can affect their motivation, attendance and particularly their emotional state (Siebert & Pollheimer-Pühringer 2018: 20). Furthermore, "[t]he vast majority of refugees [...] have lived through traumatic situations. It is therefore indispensable for teachers [...] to have an understanding of trauma, its symptoms, and its possible consequences for their teaching" (Beckmann-Schulz et al. 2007:

44). Students of this particular course have frequently mentioned common symptoms like insomnia, headaches, or a lack of concentration. In some cases, loss of interest, social withdrawal or self-harm have been noticed (Beckmann-Schulz et al. 2007: 47-48; Siebert & Pollheimer-Pühringer 2018: 29). Since teachers are not trained in trauma therapy, we collaborate with social workers and ZEBRA, an organisation that provides free psychotherapy including an interpreter for refugees (ZEBRA n.d.).

Schools and language courses have a positive influence on traumatised refugees when they provide stability and transparency which is also a feature of COOL. To establish a secure environment, we share information about our institution, its aims, political background and funding with the participants. Clear structures, routines and rituals as well as continuity regarding teachers and classmates are also imperative. Therefore, the lesson plan changes as little as possible, we keep a record of attendance, assign homework and offer support measures to reduce the drop-out rate. To promote their self-efficacy, students should participate in lessons and be involved in decision processes (Beckmann-Schulz et al. 2007: 48; Siebert & Pollheimer-Pühringer 2018: 32-34). This can be encouraged by establishing a class council which is an essential element of COOL. Furthermore, transparency is valued to develop trust and self-responsibility (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 16, 26). Beckmann-Schulz et al. (2007: 48) also suggest that students formulate their own rules and think about their hopes and expectations at the beginning of a course. This is part of the first week of our ePSA courses, where students learn about the programme and get to know each other. Throughout the year, particular attention is devoted to group dynamics to create a congenial atmosphere, encourage teamwork and foster solidarity which is further discussed in the section on cooperation.

In our ePSA course, attendance can unexpectedly drop due to the participants' life situation or mental health which causes difficulties during the introduction to COOL. Falling attendance is common before the second interview as the student has to prepare, collect evidence and consult with his or her lawyer. Throughout the course, they have to visit government offices or stay at home for appointments with their Caritas advisor which are commonly in the morning. This is a problem in regular lessons as students miss instructions and usually fall behind because most of them have difficulties catching up on learning content on their own.

Irregular attendance also complicates the introductory phase of COOL during which participants get used to this new form of learning. According to Parkhurst (1922: 57-64), students should be given weekly assignments at the beginning since they need time to adjust and would be overwhelmed with a monthly workload. Thus, if students miss a day, they will struggle to meet the deadline. Additionally, it can be difficult to find a partner or group when the others have already started or even finished the task. However, teachers cannot improve attendance, especially if students miss class due to appointments or other obligations. The aim is that participants inform them about the reasons for their absence and teachers are understanding and offer additional guidance if needed. Hence, a good relationship and open communication between both parties are crucial.

Another potential challenge for the implementation of COOL is the low language level of some participants. Written assignments form the basis of COOL lessons (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 4) which implies that students have to understand and follow written instructions; thus, good reading skills are essential. Although almost half of the target group that caused the implementation of COOL did not speak German as their first language (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 161-163), this is not further discussed which leads to the assumption that it did not cause any difficulties. Based on the language Neuhauser and Wittwer (2002: 188-196) used in their sample assignments, I presume that their students' language levels were considerably higher compared to our participants. In ePSA courses, teachers often have to concentrate on the development or improvement of basic skills (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 35). This also applies to our teaching facility since several students are very slow readers and most of them cannot get the gist of a text because they just focus on individual words they do not understand. Additionally, they often ignore instructions on worksheets and simply start with a task. To successfully implement COOL in this class, the language level of the assignments must be adequate for all students. Furthermore, they need to be familiar with the imperative, know common phrases that are used in instructions and carefully read the assignments.

There are certain issues regarding this particular group of students which need to be considered for the realisation of COOL. Refugees encounter great difficulties during their asylum process and are probably traumatised. This can result in a lack of motivation and falling

attendance; therefore, it is essential that teachers show understanding, offer support and provide stability. Transparency helps students to manage expectations and develop self-responsibility. The concept of COOL meets these requirements and further provides opportunities for participation. To implement it in this course, the participants' language level must be carefully considered during the planning stage and students must be adequately prepared.

4.3 Leading the Students Towards COOL

In order for COOL to be successfully implemented, students need to acquire certain skills and understand the concept and its elements. Helm (2016: 144) criticises that statements about necessary competences for COOL mainly focus on motivational and volitional aspects, whereas required work techniques are rarely discussed. This also applies to Neuhauser and Wittwer (2002: 180) who state that it is essential to supply the students with detailed information about COOL and its procedures as most of them are used to traditional teaching methods and need to understand the new approach. Assignments and class council are then gradually introduced and practised. Thus, there are no detailed guidelines for this preparation phase which implies that it depends on the schools' and teachers' resources and the assessment of the students' abilities and needs. As an ePSA course only takes a year, the time for this phase is limited and can only focus on introducing COOL features and explaining the components of assignments. Additionally, students require learning competence and cooperative skills to take on COOL assignments. Since these skills are also included in the educational objectives of the ePSA (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 7-10), they are fostered throughout the course and discussed in the following section.

4.3.1 Developing Learning Competence

To lead the students towards more autonomy which is essential for COOL, they have to start thinking about their own learning difficulties as well as know and try different learning strategies. This is also included in the ePSA objective to enhance students' learning motivation and competence and develop an understanding of the significance of lifelong learning for their personal and professional development (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 7). The following chapter

addresses the general issue of learning competence and evaluates several activities, we tried with our ePSA students over the course of two days. The overall aim was to raise awareness, activate prior knowledge and provide an overview of general learning strategies.

The lack of learning competence is not only an issue in ePSA courses. Klippert (2010a: 24, 43) states that students of various school types do not get the opportunity to question and reflect on their established learning styles or share their experiences with others. As a consequence, they lack awareness of the problem and have limited knowledge of available methods. Learning difficulties are therefore frequently regarded as individual weakness or blamed on the teacher. According to Klippert (2010a: 248), students often feel insecure or overwhelmed since they do not know how to learn effectively. This particularly applies to those ePSA participants who received poor education in their home country. Some of them do not study which is often interpreted as idleness, but it can also indicate that they simply do not know what to do and are too ashamed to ask for help. Others are astonished by the number of mistakes they made in vocabulary quizzes because they did study, which usually means that they read the words at least once. This illustrates the lack of knowledge about learning strategies and difficulties to reflect on their personal abilities which would help them to find more suitable methods.

One example of an activity we did to promote awareness of learning competences is a brief survey on their perceptions of different learning situations. First, students filled out a questionnaire taken from an activity developed by Klippert (2010a: 23, 44-45) which was adapted for the target group. They had to decide if certain actions, for example, working with others, summarising a topic or learning vocabulary, are difficult or easy for them. The questionnaire was completed at home to give them enough time to think and translate words. At school, students were divided into groups of five and had to analyse randomly selected questionnaires. I collected the results on the board and we discussed those with a great disparity between easy and difficult. Klippert (2010a: 44) emphasises that teachers cannot expect objective results as students tend to overestimate themselves and have inaccurate perceptions of their learning behaviour, but this activity raises and addresses numerous learning problems and may stimulate clarification processes. During the group discussion, I asked additional questions, particularly when I disagreed with the result, and some students

actually realised that their self-perception was not as accurate as they thought. Additionally, I collected valuable data about the groups' general learning difficulties.

After this general introduction to learning difficulties, students successfully analysed more specific problems and brainstormed ideas for improvement. Four cartoons displaying fear of learning, forgetting learning content, a messy workplace and vocabulary learning were given to the groups who had to identify the learning problem, share personal experiences and collect helpful advice. After every group had discussed all four issues, they picked one cartoon and presented their findings which were then written on a poster. The goal of this activity is to initiate thinking processes about concrete learning strategies as well as activate and reflect on prior knowledge (Klippert 2010a: 48-53). This was achieved since students offered and evaluated suggestions to solve the respective problems based on their individual experiences. One student emphasised that it is important for her to study for at least an hour every day, so she is not overwhelmed before the exam. Others claimed that they have to talk to another person to review the learning content and it was also stressed that you should avoid putting too much pressure on yourself. Regarding vocabulary learning, it was suggested to focus on ten words per day, repeatedly write them down and study the German words with the article. These insights and advice were mainly provided by participants who already received a higher education and there is hope that the others benefited from this group activity.

In a next step, fundamental learning strategies should be elaborated through a fill-in-the-blank activity which was not very effective. The text was also taken from Klippert (2010a: 75-80) but greatly simplified for the target group. Although the missing words were provided in a box, it proved to be very time-consuming and too difficult for several students. Therefore, I asked faster participants to choose the most important method and share their opinion with their group members. Additionally, all learning strategies were carefully repeated and explained for the whole class. Based on the students' reactions and loss of interest, the text was too long and repetitive, and not suitable for their language level. Thus, I would not recommend it for this target group as participants mainly concentrated on unfamiliar words instead of the actual content of the text.

The final activity of this sequence on learning competence requires participants to act as learning counsellors and aims at the revision of learning strategies and application of theoretical knowledge. In pairs, students read a case example, identified the person's learning difficulties or mistakes and offered suggestions for improvement. After the partner work, they joined another team with a different case example, explained the learning issue and shared their outcomes. The texts were again based on an idea from Klippert (2010a: 85-86) and adjusted to the learners' abilities. The first problem referred to a lack of motivation and knowledge of strategies for vocabulary learning, and in the second situation, the student only studied the day before the test and could not comprehend the negative grade. Most students remembered basic methods of learning vocabulary and gave similar learning advice which was already mentioned above. In terms of the second case example, they recommended that the person starts earlier, writes short summaries or studies with a friend.

Informing the students about different learning styles and identifying their individual type can further improve their learning competence. The majority of students bases their learning primarily on what they hear, see and read. Practical learning strategies that include writing, structuring or researching require more effort and are therefore regarded as too time-consuming. Thus, students need to develop an awareness of the benefits and sustainability of such methods of learning. Testing their learning styles can stimulate this process (Klippert 2010a: 62). Several tests are available online, but not all of them are suitable for this target group. Although the statements used in the selected learning styles test were understood by most of the students, a certain degree of instruction is still required, especially for the visualisation. The advantages are the graphical presentation, description of every learning style and valuable practical advice (LVB Lernen e.V. n.d.).

These activities primarily focus on activating prior knowledge, sharing experiences and identifying learning difficulties. Thus, it only serves as an introduction to this issue, should stimulate the students' interest and provide the teacher with valuable information about learning issues that should be further addressed. Methods of learning can only be taught to a certain degree, instead they have to be employed, experienced and frequently repeated (Klippert 2010a: 248). It is the responsibility of the teacher to create opportunities for students to practise and reflect on learning strategies (Helm 2016: 344). In addition to basic learning

competence, students need to develop cooperative skills to meet the demands of COOL lessons.

4.3.2 *Encouraging Cooperation Between Students*

Cooperation is a fundamental principle of COOL, but it can be challenging for this particular target group and should therefore be promoted from the beginning of the course. This section presents cooperative activities that can be used in this educational setting. Teachers should ensure that students work with different partners as it increases integration in heterogeneous groups. Therefore, suggestions for assigning groups are discussed. Furthermore, cooperative learning can also support second language acquisition which is vital for our participants; thus, it should be included in all competence areas.

As the group consists of a variety of cultures and some are not even used to male and female students being taught in the same class or at least sit next to each other, our goal is to establish a sense of community and ensure that all participants can work together regardless of their origin or gender. Thus, the first week mainly consists of team building activities which lays the foundation for future cooperation. Participants should get to know each other, their teachers and the institution, find similarities, share ideas and opinions and build relationships (Green & Green 2006: 126-135). The following activities taken from Green and Green (2006: 126-127) have proven to be effective in this setting and might be known under different names since they are widely used. *Getting Acquainted Interviews* prevent students from patterning their personal introduction, instead they have to listen to their partner carefully, remember as much as possible and use the third person singular while presenting the other person. *Line Ups* add variety as students move around and stand close to each other while they form lines according to their height, shoe size, age, distance of residence etc., this can be done with or without talking. The *Venn Diagram* helps them to identify common and individual features as they formulate statements about what one, two or all of them have or like. During *Find the Fip*, students can be creative and have to remember information about the person to find out which statements are true or false. Diverse name games, collective formulation of class rules and brainstorming ideas and individual interests are also integrated in the introductory week.

To further promote integration and cooperative learning in heterogenous groups, students should work with different partners. Hence, groups should mainly be assigned by chance and only sometimes planned by the teacher or chosen by students. The advantages are that they get to know everyone and become used to working with different people which reflects real situations. It is usually accepted by students who regard it as fair and everyone finds their place in the group as they help and support each other. In addition, every student is assigned to a group regardless of his or her popularity which decreases exclusion and increases social cohesion. Further benefits for the teachers are that it is time-saving and they can use material to assign groups which is then part of the task. Counting is the easiest way to assign groups by chance and rotating circles are highly suitable for short speaking activities in German or English. A variety of cards can also be used, for example, beginning and endings of sentences, questions and answers or pairs from word games (Klippert 2010b: 129-132). To make group arrangements, I prefer to pair weak and strong students together for the correction of a written assignment since they can explain the rules to their partner and thereby repeat them.

To foster the development of social skills and create a good foundation for L2 learning, cooperative learning tasks should be used in all competence areas. According to Dörnyei (1997: 491), “CL tends to produce a group structure (including peer relationships and learning norms) and a motivational basis that provide excellent conditions for L2 learning” which is vital for this target group. The following two cooperative tasks are suitable for diverse topics and subjects and require students to summarise and discuss ideas, information, and opinions in their second language. For *Think - Pair - Share* students receive general information about two topics, after an individual thinking phase, they share their ideas with a partner who has the same information and can also ask comprehension questions. Then, they pair with a new partner who has had a different topic and summarise the information for him or her. For *Expert Group Jigsaw* the individual phase is omitted, and students work in groups (Green & Green 2006: 130-131). It should be noted that written information has to be appropriate for the target group and new vocabulary can be explained in the footnotes. Otherwise, students spend too much time on translating words during the individual phase or share false information. In addition to such activities during lessons, we also organise workshops that encourage cooperation in different settings.

As a result of the extensive use of cooperative learning forms, we created a congenial atmosphere, social cohesion and a room for open discussions. Thus, students are used to work with different partners which is a good initial situation for COOL. Nevertheless, cooperation and especially learning competence must be continuously developed throughout the course which is supported by the overall organisation and structure of COOL lessons.

4.4 Adjusting the General Framework

COOL requires a different form of lesson planning and organisation which can be adapted to the individual educational setting. First, suggestions for the number of COOL periods and the development of a new lesson plan are provided. Furthermore, the available options for the learning environment are regarded, which are rather limited at our facility. Creating assignments can be time-consuming and challenging for unexperienced COOL teachers; therefore, guidelines on basic elements and design are presented. One advantage of using assignments in our ePSA course is the possibility of internal differentiation which can improve the learning situation. Although the concept of eCOOL corresponds to the current demand for digital competences, it cannot be realised in our facility due to the lack of computers and skills.

Dividing the lesson plan into COOL phases where students independently complete assignments and regular lessons is the best way to establish this form of learning in a vocational school (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 167) and the same applies to ePSA courses. It would overwhelm students and teachers to completely replace lessons with COOL phases since they need to get used to the new learning form. In addition, students and certain contents sometimes require teacher-centred teaching. The initial number of subjects including COOL assignments has decreased as Neuhauser and Wittwer (2002: 167) mention seven to nine in their first endeavour to implement COOL, while current literature refers to a minimum of three (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 9). One of the benefits of COOL is that it can be applied to any subject (Schlosser 2007: 296), therefore the selection of subjects and actual number of COOL lessons which is normally a third of the instructional time depend on the teachers' preferences and resources. Double lessons in the morning have proven themselves in practice (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 28). In our ePSA course, the lesson plan is based on the participants' needs and the scope of the particular

exam. Thus, there are four periods of German, English and mathematics every week which easily allow time for COOL, whereas other competence areas are restricted to one lesson leading to more difficulties in planning weekly COOL phases.

In COOL lessons, students have the possibility to choose their learning environment which poses a challenge to our teaching facility. Depending on the school's facilities, students can work in their own classroom or additional places with a certain infrastructure, for example, libraries, designated COOL rooms, seating areas in the corridors or computer rooms (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 28). The school location in Leoben consists of three separate classrooms, one for every one of the classes which are taught simultaneously, and an office which is also used for private conversations and therefore usually occupied. Next to the ePSA classroom there is a park with seating possibilities where participants can work during warm days but there might be too many distractions. Otherwise, their choice is unfortunately limited to a place in their own classroom which is rather spacious, so they can quickly move the tables or sit on the sofa. Furthermore, students have access to a computer and two laptops or can bring their own device and the room is equipped with various dictionaries and reference books. I considered establishing subject corners which are sometimes used instead of laboratories described in the Dalton Plan (Hackl 2002: 119), but it would require a constant rearrangement of the whole furniture for other lessons and restrict the students' freedom of choice as they have to work in a specific corner.

Teachers are given considerable freedom in designing and formulating written assignments but there are essential components and helpful guidelines that ePSA trainers should consider. Lesson planning usually means that teachers choose contents or activities but particularly for open learning forms, they should first decide on the learning objectives and then collect methods and material to achieve them. These learning aims should be clear and well-defined to ensure that students understand them. In addition, they should be practice-oriented and meaningful for the students as well as achievable in the given time frame (Hofmann & Moser 2006: 46-47). After this preparation phase, teachers can create written assignments which should contain as much information as the students need to approach the tasks without the help of a teacher. First of all, the organisational structure including the class, title, subject(s), date and deadline must be specified. An appropriate social form, individual, partner or group

work, is suggested for each task. Learning objectives are also indicated in the assignment; hence, students understand the reasons for the activities and learn to formulate their own goals. This also applies to the description of the assessment criteria. Furthermore, options to check the learning outcome, for example, through teachers, colleagues or self-control, and receive feedback are provided. COOL assignments also include the student's signature emphasising that it is a learning contract which must be read, accepted and carefully executed. To obtain an overview of this considerable amount of information, a clear layout is needed. The structure, elements and symbols of assignments must be explained in advance to ensure that students can orientate themselves (Hofmann & Moser 2006: 51-54; Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 11, 19-20; Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 9).

COOL assignments provide opportunities for internal differentiation and can solve the difficulty of working speed in this ePSA class. Owing to the different language levels and educational backgrounds, several students frequently have to wait for others to complete a task or even finish copying from the board in regular lessons. Hence, some are bored and start talking or disturbing the learning process while others feel stressed and work hastily. Internal differentiation can improve the learning conditions for heterogeneous groups as students learn according to their individual capabilities (Salner-Gridling 2009: 18). In COOL, this is achieved through differentiated assignments which can be constructed for distinct difficulty levels or include compulsory and optional tasks. Thus, students can work at their own pace without feeling rushed or restrained by their colleagues and perform more appropriate tasks. In practice, teachers mainly incorporate additional tasks as the preparation is less time-consuming (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 8; Helm 2016: 308; Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 11). Both possibilities for differentiation can be used in our ePSA course, but teachers should carefully observe if students are willing to perform optional tasks and are able to choose the suitable assignment for their abilities, which assumes a certain degree of self-evaluation, and adapt their preparation accordingly.

The advancement to eCOOL is not feasible in this context due to the lack of resources and foreknowledge. First of all, our students have no experience with learning platforms and most of them have little practice in using a computer for more than online searches or playing games. This presents a challenge in career orientation where students have to hand in a typed

CV and letter of application for their final exam. Furthermore, the vast majority of participants of the current and previous courses does not have a computer at home, and sometimes not even unlimited internet access is provided in their accommodation which has to be considered when setting homework. It also means that they cannot practise their computer skills apart from school. Due to a lack of financial resources, we do not have our own computer room and students have to share one computer and a few laptops. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for this purpose as the development of digital competence is not the main focus of this educational measure. The curriculum descriptors only refer to a responsible and critical use of media and information as well as using online dictionaries and online resources to improve the knowledge of foreign languages (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 10, 19). Therefore, we discuss vital issues, for example, fake news, cyberbullying or phone addiction, compare different sources and use videos, learningapps.org or kahoot.it to stimulate the students' interest.

As can be seen, the basic structure of COOL can be established in our teaching facility, but not all elements are viable. Due to the lack of space and resources, the learning environment is restricted to one classroom and eCOOL cannot be implemented. This new form of classroom organisation also changes the role of the teacher and shifts the focus from teaching to learning.

4.5 Changed Expectations on the Teachers

COOL teachers must be open-minded, cooperative and willing to adopt the role of a learning coach or advisor. In the following, the new areas of responsibility are compared to our educational setting and it is shown that owing to the needs and background of the participants, ePSA trainers already perform a variety of tasks that differ from the traditional role of a teacher. Furthermore, the necessity of personal commitment and teacher training is emphasised and the potential difficulty to motivate other teachers is addressed.

An effective implementation of COOL requires an alteration of the traditional role of a teacher which corresponds to the concept of ePSA. Teachers are considered as more than conveyors of knowledge since they create stimulating learning environments based on their students' individual abilities and act as facilitators and coaches of learning processes (Böcksteiner et al.

n.d.: 10; Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 11-13). Thus, the demanding and difficult work shifts from teaching to the preparation of interesting written assignments and suitable material. While students work independently on these assignments, teachers answer questions or explain difficult facts but intervene as little as possible. Furthermore, they constantly monitor students to evaluate group work, individual progression and the development of competences. Thereby, teachers can also comprehend learning difficulties and provide further assistance if students are overwhelmed by the tasks (Greimel-Fuhrmann & Rechberger 2008: 13-14; Konrad & Traub 2015: 41-43). This can present a challenge for some teachers as they adopt a more passive role and permit the students freedom to explore, make mistakes and grow. It can feel like a loss of control or even authority, hence, teachers need to develop trust in their students, treat them with respect and take them seriously (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 12; Konrad & Traub 2015: 41-43).

EPSA teachers are also advisors and companions who provide support for various personal matters and help the participants to examine their prospects and reach their goals. Although this educational measure includes additional socio-pedagogical assistance because teachers are usually not trained in this area, students tend to trust and discuss their problems with persons they see on a regular basis (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 30-35). In our course, participants can consult with a qualified social worker who is also responsible for the care of unaccompanied minor refugees who live in our accommodations, therefore, he is already a confidant for several male students. Since he is only available once a week and I am the class teacher who is present every day, students often come to me to talk about bureaucratic or personal issues. Thus, I get to know them and their living conditions in a relatively short time which is an excellent foundation for COOL because we already have a close dialogue and I can relate learning difficulties to their personal situations (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 11-13). A good relationship and basis for discussion can also facilitate the introduction phase of COOL. Students are probably sceptical and need to be convinced about the benefits of this learning approach as the majority is used to traditional teaching methods and generally relies on the teacher's instruction.

The success of COOL and ePSA depends on the commitment of dedicated and competent individuals who are willing to question and change their perception of the teaching profession.

To obtain benefits from COOL, teachers who are convinced of the concept and accept the time-consuming preparation and follow-up evaluation play an essential role (Greimel-Fuhrmann & Rechberger 2008: 14). Adequate training, methodological competence and self-reflection are also imperative. Therefore, the Impulszentrum offers a two-year training course for school teams where contents and methods are not only studied but adopted and reflected in various teaching contexts (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 22-24). This would be an excellent foundation for the implementation of COOL in ePSA, but it is uncertain if our teaching facility qualifies for this programme which might be exclusively for regular schools. A further issue is that it takes two years and an ePSA course is only taught and financed for one year; thus, it cannot be assured that teachers have a class to work with throughout the whole training. Due to the small size of our team, limited financial resources and time pressure, this programme also relies on personal commitment and undertaking extra duties. Therefore, it can be difficult to convince colleagues to take on even more extra work with COOL. In addition, some teachers simply prefer more traditional teaching methods which reflects their character and should not be forced as it contradicts the principle of freedom.

COOL changes the tasks and obligations of teachers since the focus shifts to careful lesson preparation while they adopt a more passive role as a learning coach during teaching. The additional responsibilities and positive relationship between students and teachers are already part of our ePSA course; thus, it should not be too difficult to cope with the new demands. Increased cooperation between teachers is also essential and should be extended to the whole ePSA community which is discussed in the following.

4.6 The Need for Greater Cooperation

To satisfy the requirements of COOL, cooperation with all involved parties needs to be advanced. In our ePSA course, this differs from COOL as this concept of cooperation was not developed for adult education. As is discussed in the beginning of the section, parents are not part of the ePSA community. The extent of teacher cooperation that is recommended for COOL is limited in our facility due to the lack of resources. In addition, the ePSA network requires improvement regarding collaboration and communication. To further increase students' cooperative skills, a class council can be established in our course programme.

COOL is based on a systemic view of school which includes every person who is part of the school community, hence collaboration of school administration, teachers, students and parents is promoted but not all of them can be involved in an ePSA course (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 164-165). Parents are not part of our ePSA community because it is a form of adult education and the vast majority of participants has no family in Austria. Only a fifth of this group of students lives with their parents who speak less German than their children. Small parents' evenings would be possible but either the students have to be present or an interpreter must be hired. It can be regarded as unfair to exclude other students and since it is an education programme for adults, participants are responsible for themselves. Furthermore, school administration must be committed and actively involved to enable reorganisation, offer staff training and represent the approach in public (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 29-32). Due to the small size of our teaching facility, one of the basic education teachers is in charge of school administration. As she appreciates new ideas and methods that can help the students, she fully supports the implementation of COOL.

Close cooperation between teachers is also imperative, but it is restricted to a small team in our teaching facility. When students should develop capacities for teamwork, teachers must act as role models and effectively cooperate with their colleagues. In addition to regular supervision, team meetings with school administration are arranged at least four times a year and used to discuss problems, share experiences and plan projects. Not every issue can be thoroughly discussed during these meetings which usually exceed the time frame and financial opportunities; hence, new information or updates on participants' problems are often briefly exchanged before or after lessons. In an ideal COOL setting, teachers have sufficient time before and during the school year to organise and plan COOL phases, create assignments and material, evaluate and advance the concept and develop as a team. Cooperation ranges from class teachers and subject groups to all COOL teachers of the respective school (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 164-167). As our ePSA course is only taught by three teachers, the scope of cooperation and constructive dialogue is considerably reduced. Nevertheless, preparation and follow-up time for teachers must be extended, and extra COOL conferences must be organised which would require additional financial resources and is therefore rather unlikely.

In addition to individual school administration and teachers, increased cooperation and communication between regional course providers and authorities should be promoted. Various forms of cooperation can be found all over Austria and a crucial issue is that authorities prefer communicating with institutions that have the right of examination whereas those who rely on a middle school to administer the final exams are generally neglected (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 7-13). During the last two years, we participated in small working groups and meetings between regional institutions, but there was only one conference with the ministry of education, all exam schools and course providers in Styria. The problem is that communication is not always open, materials are not shared and information about actual success rates, attendance or difficulties with participants is often withheld. The main reasons for this are the diverse examination requirements and competition between teaching facilities in rural regions. To create a more supportive ePSA network and improve standardisation, regional education authorities must accept responsibility and become more involved, for instance, by organising regular meetings (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 28).

Since cooperation with parents is not necessary in ePSA courses and increased cooperation between teachers and other institutions can be challenging, the main focus shifts to the cooperation between students, which can be further encouraged by establishing a class council. It should be implemented regularly in school culture and gives students the opportunity to discuss different matters, for instance, difficulties with assignments, personal conflicts, projects or excursions and develop a democratic culture of conversation (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 171-172). There are a few preliminary considerations teachers must take into account regarding time, roles and structure, but it does not require elaborate preparation (Blum & Blum 2006: 30-33, 61-63). According to Neuhauser and Wittwer (2002: 171-172), the teacher serves as the moderator who collects the topics and ensures that students adhere to the conversation rules. During the second semester, students are prepared and encouraged to take the moderator's role to reach the long-term goal which is a class council that is independently organised by students. Due to the limited duration of our course and monthly final exams in the second semester, I suggest that the teacher performs the role of the moderator throughout the year as this process can be rather time-consuming, depending on the group.

An effective class council also promotes educational objectives of ePSA courses and can be highly beneficial for our participants. The goal is to collaborate, support others and seek a solution, but it cannot solve all problems and is not a place to make accusations, impose punishments or discuss bullying (Blum & Blum 2006: 21-24). If the implementation is successful, it can improve the class community and learning atmosphere, help the prevention of violence and disburden the teacher during the lesson as concerns can be adjourned to the next class council. Furthermore, students can develop various competences, for example, self-efficacy, communication skills, self-responsibility, tolerance, empathy and conflict resolution (Blum & Blum 2006: 14). These potential benefits correspond with the ePSA objective to lead students towards active participation and co-creation of society. Additionally, participants can improve their speaking skills, formulate opinions and learn conversation rules which are all included in the descriptors of the competence area German – communication and society (Böcksteiner et al. n.d.: 7, 16-17).

As was shown, involved parties in ePSA differ slightly from COOL due to the context of adult education. Cooperation between teachers at our organisation is sufficient for ePSA but needs to be increased to comply with COOL principles. Meetings between all regional teaching facilities and authorities to discuss common difficulties and practices are rare but would be valuable to improve the quality of the ePSA. To increase cooperation in the ePSA classroom, a class council can be easily created. Although our participants generally value cooperation, their main goal is to receive an official school report and therefore pass final examinations which poses challenges in relation to COOL.

4.7 The Disregard of COOL Principles in Examinations

The administration of exams is a critical issue in ePSA owing to differences in the right of examination and therefore in the exam format which makes it difficult to compare certificates from different institutions. It is easier to adapt exams to COOL principles when they can be administered at the own teaching facility, but the final exams for our participants are set by an external board of examiners. The benefits and issues of this procedure are discussed at the beginning of this section. Furthermore, I indicate a breach of ePSA regulations that are consistent with the concept of COOL and offer practical suggestions for improvement.

Like other small course providers, we cannot gain the right of examination which brings advantages and disadvantages in relation to COOL. If the institution and its teachers meet the regulations and obtain the school board's permission, all except one final exam are administered at the teaching facility that offers the course. Otherwise, all competence areas are assessed by an external board of examiners at a middle school which is appointed by the education authority (Steuerungsgruppe der IEB 2019: 27; Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 12-13). The main advantage of external exams is that it enables teachers to simply focus on their roles as learning coach and companion; additionally, it increases credibility and objectivity (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 8, 30-31). A considerable disadvantage is that the institution completely depends on the examiners' complaisance and specifications regarding exam formats, contents, and dates. This restricts the ePSA teachers' freedom of decision as they need to adapt the lessons accordingly to assure that their students can pass the exams. The central problem is the small financial compensation for middle school teachers compared to the effort, expenditure of time and growing number of examinees. Therefore, not all of them voluntarily agree to perform this additional task which occasionally results in unmotivated examiners who are not interested in the ePSA reform or the participants' actual abilities (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 15, 37-38).

The disregard of interdisciplinary learning and freedom of choice is also not consistent with COOL philosophy but considerably influences ePSA education. In certain competence areas, students should be allowed to choose between an oral exam, written assessment or a project work (Muckenhuber & Schildberger 2017: 9), but this is rarely done as the examiners generally decide on the validation form. Hence, all participants study for the same exam although they would have the possibility to select a form of assessment based on their individual strengths or interests. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary competence areas are divided into more traditional individual exams which reflect the middle school curriculum (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 24-25). This has a significant effect on exam preparation and teaching in our ePSA course. Thus, the contents for the history exam are taught separately from German while nature and technics is divided into two subjects because of the broad scope of the exam, which presents an enormous challenge for German as a second language learners. The topics of the geography exam exceed the required level of English, are therefore assessed in German and

taught in a separate period. Nevertheless, English lessons still include interdisciplinary contents, for example, factual knowledge about countries, cities and fair trade.

An enhancement of exam formats according to ePSA and COOL principles particularly depends on the commitment and effort of the ministry of education and authorities. The examiners' effort has to be recognised and adequately compensated and a minimum number of meetings between course providers and schools should be specified. This would increase their cooperation and give them enough time to discuss and maybe even design exam formats that are adequate for the target group. They can be based on existing material and good practice examples which can be adapted to the students' needs (Muckenhuber & Schildberger 2017: 49-77). When examiners receive appropriate compensation, they might also be more willing to give participants the choice of individual validation forms. Authorities can also create incentives or adapt the service law, for instance, through a reduction of teaching duties. They could further invest in the establishment of a training programme that includes competence-oriented teaching and assessment, the design of material and development of intercultural competences. The aim should be the qualification of experienced ePSA teachers as examiners which would further relieve the schools (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 17, 40).

As can be seen, final examinations do not fully conform to the ePSA regulations or principles of COOL. The teachers' and participants' freedom of choice and self-determination are reduced, and more traditional exam formats are administered. Sufficient financial compensation for the examiners and increased cooperation between both teaching facilities are needed to improve this exam setting. It further requires adequate assessment methods which are discussed in the following.

4.8 The Demand for Alternative Assessment

The practical implementation of ePSA assessment procedures at examination schools is another fundamental problem. For participants, passing the final examinations is usually the most important part of the course as it is decisive for the successful completion of the ePSA. This contradicts the views on learning and assessment in COOL which are based on individual development. Summative assessment cannot be abolished in Austrian schools, but COOL

teachers also employ alternative methods of assessment. This section explores the differences between assessment regulations which generally comply with COOL and the actual practice. It is also shown that certain forms of assessments exceed the capabilities of the target group. Possibilities for advancements include improved communication, appointing ePSA teachers to the examining board and verbal assessments about the individual progress.

A different approach to learning requires different assessment methods. COOL lessons are learning situations where students have time to practise and make mistakes; thus, teachers should focus on the individual learning process instead of the product (Helm 2016: 143-144). Adequate assessment is continuous, includes diverse methods, has transparent evaluation criteria and involves the students who do self-assessment and receive regular constructive feedback on their progress and development of social skills. In addition, formative assessment methods, for instance, portfolios, learning journals, peer feedback or verbal assessment are recommended (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 11; Winter 2007: 36-51). At the end of the term, final grades can be based on mandatory summative assessment and a variety of evaluation methods which is often an advantage for weaker students (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 170).

Final examinations are exclusively assessed by the examination board which does not adhere to COOL guidelines. Due to the high number of examinees and lack of time, examiners cannot get to know the students before the exam. Thus, grades are only based on one performance and achievements throughout the course are not considered (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 22, 66). Although assessment criteria should be transparent and comprehensible for participants and ePSA teachers, which complies with COOL requirements, we usually receive no information and can only refer to curriculum descriptors and the 4.0 assessment grid which is used in middle schools (Muckenhuber & Schildberger 2017: 6, 11-13). Additionally, it is uncommon for examiners to return corrected exam papers or provide constructive feedback (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 75) which would be helpful for students who did not pass. Obvious reasons are the limited amount of time and financial compensation, but it is also possible that the same exam is used for other course providers and should therefore be concealed.

According to ePSA regulations, assessment should be competency-based which would be suitable for COOL but is not applied in practice. Individual resources, strengths and learning experiences should be considered and exam questions should be open to individual solutions and require an action-oriented application of knowledge instead of the reproduction of facts (Muckenhuber & Schildberger 2017: 6). In reality, only career orientation which is assessed by the presentation of a portfolio and parts of the language exams are competency-based. The majority of examinations is based on a catalogue of questions and the students have to reproduce the content of two or three topics. This procedure is generally justified as a form of assistance for participants with a lower level of German (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 38). In my experience, this does not apply because these summaries are too extensive for the duration of the course and students need a lot of time to understand the topics, especially when they cannot explain them in their first language. Hence, some simply try to memorise the content which contradicts the educational approach of ePSA.

The option to carry out a project and present it for the final exam is in the sense of COOL culture but not suitable for this target group. As already mentioned, examination regulations allow participants to choose a project in their optional competence areas which can be done in individual, partner or group work. They should work independently, use their existing resources and focus on experiential learning. Since there is no sample project and the guidelines for the choice of topic are rather vague, it is difficult to understand what examiners would expect. Nevertheless, the formal criteria and extent of the written work equal a seminar paper at University and therefore exceed the abilities of the target group (Muckenhuber & Schildberger 2017: 11, 78-80). Apart from the language deficiency, most participants lack experience in using a computer. In addition, the basics of academic research, writing structure and citation rules need to be taught which is not feasible within the duration of the course.

To ensure that assessment procedures adhere to the actual guidelines, several organisational measures can be considered. As mentioned in the previous section, most issues can be settled through better financial regulations, motivated teachers and an increased cooperation. Assessing the individual learning process requires at least information about the person's background, competences, and development which can be provided by ePSA teachers through written or oral descriptions. In addition, one or several excursions to the middle

school can be organised at the beginning of the course. Students can meet their examiners and vice versa, receive basic information about the exam content, validation form and assessment criteria and have the possibility to ask questions. A further option is the inclusion of teachers in the examination commission, they are not allowed to assess, but examiners can consult them about the examinee's progress, participation or motivation (Stoppacher & Edler 2017: 12-16, 23, 58). Changing the examination regulations and integrating the teacher's assessment of the participant's gradual development into the final grade would be an advance towards competency-based exams. General guidelines or a standardised template to record individual development can facilitate this process.

If these suggestions are dismissed, an alternative form of assessment can still be included in the certificate the students receive directly from the course provider. Since there is no assessment system for ePSA teachers, they can apply diverse forms of evaluation throughout the course. In our teaching facility, we monitor the learning progress with the help of homework, presentations, a variety of quiz formats and mock exams that are not graded and are usually followed by peer or teacher feedback. This could serve as the basis for a verbal assessment in the certificate which describes a student's performance through words instead of grades. The development status of social skills can also be included, but teachers have to be careful with their phrasing as it can lead to misunderstandings and personal offence. To avoid this, teachers can refer to students' self-evaluation and ask them if they agree with their assessment. Furthermore, students can consider possible ways of improvement which also increases their self-responsibility and reflection. The main issue of verbal assessment is the considerable effort (Stern 2010: 64) and it is not assured that all students value this form of feedback. To decrease the expenditure of time, teachers can write a general verbal assessment about the motivation, participation and development of soft skills, instead of a comment on every subject. Additionally, an arrangement could be made that only students with regular attendance receive a verbal assessment.

This discussion showed that there are possibilities for adopting assessment methods that are compatible with COOL principles in this ePSA course. Teachers should provide transparent criteria and evaluate the learning progress through a variety of methods including self-assessment. Grades are not based on one performance which implies that examiners must

find a way to include the students' participation and development throughout the course. In addition, ePSA teachers can decide to offer verbal assessment which is a short description of a student's capabilities and can also be valuable for future employers or teachers.

In summary, it has been shown that the concept of COOL is suitable for this form of adult education as it pursues the same goals, is based on similar didactic principles and can have considerable advantages for the participants. Nevertheless, certain organisational changes and improvements on different levels are required, otherwise ePSA is not fully compatible with COOL philosophies. It must be assured that students can exercise their right to choose competence areas and exam formats. Furthermore, examination and assessment procedures must be more transparent, consider the learners' performances during the course and include constructive feedback. Even though collaboration and open communication between authorities and course providers presents a challenge, ePSA teachers can at least seek closer cooperation with their assigned examiners. It is the board of education's responsibility to adopt these suggestions and change the policies of the programme, whereas the teachers are in charge of the implementation in the classroom. They can adapt COOL to the needs and abilities of the particular target group, evaluate their practice, and share their findings with others which is done in the following part of this thesis.

5 DOING ACTION RESEARCH IN THE EPSA CLASSROOM

The second part of this thesis presents the practical implementation of COOL in my classroom on the basis of action research. The goal of this study is to find out how COOL and a class council can be implemented in this particular ePSA course. In addition, I aim to explore if this concept provides opportunities for taking over responsibility and promotes learner autonomy. First of all, the concept, suitability and phases of action research are briefly explained. The next sections cover the parameters of the project, limitations in our teaching facility and necessary preparations. Furthermore, the methods of data collection in action research are presented and the advantages and drawbacks of observations, classroom documents and questionnaires are discussed. In the last chapter, I reflect on the possibilities and challenges of implementing COOL in my ePSA course.

The concept of action research is highly suitable for this study as it is widely used in education and conforms with the purposes of exploring my own classroom and improving the learning situation (Burns 2010: 2). Due to its application in a variety of fields and countries, several definitions can be found (Tripp 2005: 444-445). One that is frequently used is provided by Elliott (1991: 69) who defines it as “the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it”. Since action research is “a flexible methodology, not merely in terms of being eclectic in research methods, but more fundamentally in needing to adapt to the social and political situation in which it is employed” (Somekh 1993: 29), it can be applied in various areas. In relation to education, it outlines “a strategy for the development of teachers as researchers so that they can use their research to improve their teaching” (Tripp 2005: 445). Furthermore, successful action research requires the collaboration of all participants (Feldman et al. 2018: 179) and formed the basis for the evaluation of the first implementation of COOL (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 173). This underlines its conformity with the principles of COOL.

There are four phases for conducting a study which are generally recommended in action research guides and provide valuable assistance for unexperienced teachers. They are based on Kemmis and McTaggart’s (1988) cycle of research which received criticism “for being too fixed and rigid [...] [but] it is a useful model as it summarises very succinctly the essential phases” (Burns 2010: 8). The first step is planning and involves the identification of an area of improvement and possible measures for the particular educational setting. In the second phase, this plan is carefully implemented which is accompanied by the third one, observation and the systematic collection of data. In the final step, the data is evaluated, and the teacher reflects on the effects of his or her interventions. This cycle of planning, action, observation and reflection can be repeated if the results are not satisfactory and the teacher has the opportunity to continue the research (adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart 1988: 11–14 cited in Burns 2010: 7-8). As was already discussed in the introduction of this paper, the areas of improvement in this classroom are the approach to heterogeneity and students’ independence. The identification of these issues started the initial phase of action research including extensive research, the decision to introduce the concept of COOL, and developing a plan of action which is outlined in the following section.

5.1 Planning and Preparing COOL Lessons

This chapter discusses the measures that were necessary for the implementation of COOL and were also feasible within this particular teaching situation and time frame. Therefore, the duration and timeline for my research project, the number of COOL lessons and the choice of subjects are presented. In addition, the components of the written assignments, types of differentiation and the content of the tasks are addressed. The last paragraphs focus on the structure and benefits of the learning log and describe the introduction day which should familiarise the students with the procedures and documents used in COOL. For a better understanding of the practical implementation, all relevant documents are included in the appendix of this paper.

After a detailed discussion with my superior, I received the permission to test COOL in our ePSA course for the duration of one month which was suitable for this educational setting. The time limit was based on the factors that my main duty was to prepare the students for their final exams within a short period and we could not know for certain how they would behave during COOL lessons; in other words, if they would take them seriously or consider them as free periods and therefore neglect studying. In addition, the preparation and follow-up of COOL is known to be rather time-consuming and we had to ensure that I could still fulfil my overall responsibilities. The practical implementation was scheduled for November 2019 because of the appropriate distance of time to the first exam in February. Furthermore, students had already been working together for two months during which they could practise cooperative skills and acquire basic learning competence. After an introduction day, students received assignments, chose the subject, partner and place in the classroom, and kept a learning log for three weeks. The plan for the last week included time for biology presentations, COOL evaluation and to finish previous assignments.

The new lesson plan included eight COOL lessons and a fifty-minute period for the class council. Since those were my regular teaching days, students had three hours on Monday, two hours on Wednesday and three hours on Friday to complete their COOL assignments for the week. In comparison to the regular lesson plan, COOL periods are more than a third of the subjects as well as the total lesson plan which also conforms with the quality criteria (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 9). The main reason for this high initial

number of COOL lessons was to allow students enough time to get used to this new concept. In addition, I wanted to have the opportunity to test a variety of tasks. The new lesson plan was approved by my superior who supported me during the preparation stage by providing additional input and proofreading the assignments.

For this study, I decided to set assignments in three subjects to give the students an actual choice and created a system to facilitate the organisation of the material. This also conforms with the quality criteria for COOL which include a minimum number of three subjects (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 9). Initially, I planned to cooperate with the career orientation teacher and include it as one of the COOL subjects, but it was not possible due to a long illness of the respective colleague. Since I teach German, English, nature, and health and social studies, the choice was limited. I was concerned that four individual assignments would overwhelm the students in the beginning; thus, I combined the last two which was not difficult as both include topics from the area of biology and are taught in the context of German as a second language. To help students organise their worksheets, they received an extra folder with three sections. The assignments, additional materials and answer sheets were kept in three stacking trays distributed in the classroom; hence, there was a specific subject corner where they could find all papers. Furthermore, I chose a different colour for every subject which was repeated in the design of the assignments, letter trays and folders that contained the answer keys. This should help students to find the worksheets, understand which belong together and how to sort them in their folders was an issue for some participants. After establishing the administrative framework for the COOL lessons, I focused on the creation of assignments which was the most time-consuming part of the planning phase.

There are certain elements COOL assignments should contain, but educators are free to adapt and format them according to their needs. During my literature research, I garnered ideas for the layout and tasks I could use in my ePSA class. Hence, the final design combines elements of several existing COOL assignments and is divided into three parts. The first box contains general information including the subject, topic, deadline, and level of difficulty, which should provide the students with an overview. Detailed descriptions of the tasks form the main part of each assignment. The social form, type of feedback and learning materials are indicated

and students are informed if the task is compulsory or optional. The tasks can usually be approached in different orders but some build on each other; thus, it is vital for learners to carefully read the explanations. The last box should help students to reflect on their own progress and attainment of the learning objectives. They can also formulate additional learning goals or competencies they acquired while completing the assignment (Friedl 2012: 75-81; Hofmann & Moser 2006: 53-54; Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 185-196; Schöpf & Burtscher 2012/13).

Due to the participants' diverse language levels, I created as many differentiated assignments as possible. Students could either choose between the basic or more difficult version, marked with +, or received the same assignment with optional and compulsory tasks. For some compulsory tasks they could select one exercise, for example, writing an email or an expression of opinion. The assignments for faster students included additional, modified or different tasks, for instance, a revision of grammar rules for those who had only recently started to learn English and a new grammar topic for advanced participants. In the second and third week, the instructions for the advanced English assignments were supplied in the target language as students were more familiar with the expressions and general structure of COOL. I tried to balance the amount of quantitative and qualitative differentiation, but the former proved to be less time-consuming as it can be achieved with optional tasks or an increased number of exercises (Grond 2014: 8; Helm 2016: 308). Differentiation can also be based on the students' interests which I especially considered in biology (Hofmann & Moser 2006: 53).

To test a variety of tasks, I included all language skills, grammar and vocabulary exercises, the revision of familiar topics as well as exploring new ones. Due to the ÖSD language exam which was set for the beginning of December, the German assignments involved practising for the reading, writing and speaking part. When the participants pass the mock exam, our teaching facility offers to pay the costs because it is of high importance for refugees to prove their language competence, but the majority cannot afford it. As nine students passed the mock exam in B1 at the beginning of November, exam preparation was vital for them; nevertheless, assignments should also contain relevant and interesting activities for those who did not pass or already had a B1 certificate. In terms of English assignments, the main focus was on the acquisition and use of vocabulary and learning methods. In biology, the topics of internal

organs and nutrition were reviewed in the first week, whereas the assignment for the second and third week required choosing and preparing a new topic, creating a poster and presenting it. Furthermore, parts of the assignments were interdisciplinary since they included activities dealing with the subject of nutrition. Learners had to apply their knowledge from health and social sciences to an English task about the food pyramid, a reading activity about crops and a crossword puzzle about nourishments in German.

Students also needed a tool to record their work in order to organise their tasks which can increase their sense of responsibility and encourage self-reflection. The regular reflection of one's learning progress is also part of the COOL quality criteria (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 11) which can be related to Parkhurst's (1922: 134-148) idea of graphs. Bartnitzky's (2004: 34) learning log served as the template for my version. It is suitable for the target group since the illustrations enable students to give a quick answer which can increase their motivation to complete the log. At the beginning of each COOL period students should set their goals and at the end, they write down what they actually managed to do. In addition, they answer questions regarding the difficulty of the assignments, the effort they put in their work, the reasons for achieving or missing their goals, and their general feeling at the end of the lesson. These questions should give them an overview of their completed tasks and provide assistance to plan accordingly. Furthermore, learners can monitor their progress and develop a better understanding of their capabilities. The learning log can also help them to relate the level of difficulty and the amount of effort to their learning success or failure (Bartnitzky 2004: 33-34). Implementing the learning log can be challenging and requires time; therefore, I included it in the introduction day.

It should not be assumed that students are instantly able to work with written assignments or use the learning log correctly; therefore, I planned a day to introduce the procedures and features of COOL. After reading a short summary about the principles and aims of COOL, students completed a sample assignment to help them understand the structure, symbols and abbreviations. The sample assignment can also be found in the appendix. It only includes short activities to help the learners adapt to finding and working with different partners. Afterwards, the learning goals were compared and discussed, the learning log was introduced and filled out together. The aim was to guide students through the thinking process and help them to

comprehend the questions, symbols and the purpose. For the final task, participants decided if statements about COOL were true or false and came up with two rules for a successful COOL lesson which were then discussed in class. These activities should prepare them for the first real COOL lessons.

In addition to the organisation of the general framework and careful preparation of the assignments and students, I planned the initiation of a class council since it is a fundamental element of COOL. Furthermore, it aims at the improvement of speaking skills which is vital for the target group and provides an opportunity to assume responsibility (Blum & Blum 2006: 14; Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 171-172).

5.2 Planning the Establishment of a Class Council

Although a class council is not a complex technique, there are different roles and methods the teacher should consider in advance. In the following, the implementation of a class council in this particular setting is discussed and suggestions on how to introduce the structure and most important procedures to the students are made.

It is imperative to hold the meeting on a regular basis at the same time and place to give the students security, establish its procedures and illustrate its importance. As I only had one month for testing COOL, I wanted to have a class council as often as possible. I scheduled it for the last lesson every Friday in November because I did not want to interrupt the open learning phases and the first period seemed unsuitable since students are not always punctual. Further preliminary considerations included defining the roles and choosing a method for collecting participants' concerns and taking the minutes. Apart from those students who participate in the discussion, there are three specific roles: the moderator who chairs the meeting which, at the beginning, should be the teacher, one minute taker and one observer who receives a specific task, for instance, focusing on the application of the conversation rules. Furthermore, I decided to let students choose between a box, pinboard or round of questions to raise their issues at the beginning of the meeting (Blum & Blum 2006: 30-33; Überegger & van Dellen 2010/11: 15-16, 40). Due to the participants' language levels and lack of computer skills, I adapted Überegger and van Dellen's (2010/11: 165) neatly

arranged template for the summary minutes and printed it for the students who should fill in the general information, discussion topics, and final decisions. This template is also included in the appendix of this paper.

To prepare the participants and ensure a smooth procedure of the initial class council, I planned an introductory double period. After a brief explanation of the aim and roles, the following meeting structure is presented: first of all, the moderator asks for volunteers for the roles of the observer and minute taker. Then, the previous minute taker reads the decisions reached during the last class council. If no further discussion or alterations are required, new matters can be raised, and the students vote on the order to address them. After a detailed discussion, participants should agree on an acceptable resolution and matters that could not be approached are postponed to the next class council. Then, the observer summarises his or her findings and the council is dismissed. After the presentation, students should establish their own conversation rules and write them on a poster. The teacher can put the options for collecting council topics to the vote and distribute copies of the template for the summary minutes. Each section should be briefly explained, and it should be stressed that the minute taker only has to make a note of the most important points (Blum & Blum 2006: 30-33, 61-63; Überegger & van Dellen 2010/11: 15-16, 40). My students formulated the rules to listen to each other, participate, converse in German and hear everybody out. In addition, they agreed on respecting other opinions, taking every comment seriously and they voted for the round of questions as it seemed straightforward and did not require preparation.

Setting the general framework, preparing COOL assignments and planning the procedures of a class council completes the first phase of action research. Before the practical implementation, appropriate methods of data collection have to be selected as they enable reflection and a better understanding of these actions. Hence, the next chapter focuses on the data techniques that are useful in relation to the research questions and manageable in this particular context (Burns 2010: 54-56).

5.3 Methods of Data Collection

During four weeks of preparing the students, COOL lessons and forming the class council, extensive data can be collected. Hence, it is essential to decide which data needs to be gathered and analysed to answer the research questions. At the beginning of this section, I briefly describe different types of data collection and introduce the concept of triangulation. Furthermore, I present the three methods I decided to use for this research project: observation, the analysis of classroom documents and a questionnaire for the students. These methods accompany the action phase and provide data from different points in time, namely during and after each lesson and at the end of the project.

There are numerous ways of collecting data, but the methods need to be carefully chosen. Action researchers “are limited to looking at what people do, examining what they produce, or asking them what they think. The first is done through observation; the second by inspecting [...] data; and the third through interviews, surveys, or questionnaires” (Feldman et al. 2018: 121). Burns (2010: 57) combines the second and third technique and distinguishes between observation and non-observation methods. The first category also includes recordings and pictures of lessons, while the second contains research journals, materials produced by the teacher, portfolios and other classroom documents. The processes of action research can be adapted to the particular teaching context, but the choice of data collection methods depends on the questions the researcher aims to answer. Additionally, the techniques must be manageable within the educational setting and should not be overwhelming or too time-consuming (Burns 2010: 56).

As action research is often criticised to be too subjective, methods triangulation is recommended which means that different types of data are collected. This provides more insights and the analysis of data can be compared to check whether the diverse sources support the findings. Triangulation can increase objectivity and improve the quality of research; therefore, I employed observation as well as non-observation methods in my classroom (Burns 2010: 95-97; Feldman et al. 2018: 168-170) which are discussed in the following chapters.

5.3.1 Observation

The first method of data collection I adopted is observation because it enabled me to study the students' actions during the open learning sequences and class councils. A further benefit is that this technique does not depend on the participants' language competences which can cause problems when employing other methods (Konrad & Traub 2015: 59-60). Monitoring students is natural for teachers and part of their daily routine, but observations for research purposes are different. There are certain issues the action researcher has to consider and varying observation roles and methods to choose from (Burns 2010: 57-72). In the following, the preliminary considerations are briefly discussed, and the mode of observation and the tools for data collection are presented.

In contrast to a teacher's daily lesson observation which is usually intuitive and rather general, observation for action research follows systematic procedures. First of all, the observation has a specific focus and should be objective. Hence, it is imperative that the observer is aware of his or her presumptions and prejudices and does not let them influence the data collection procedure. Additionally, the classroom events are recorded and carefully analysed to learn from them and improve the teaching practice. This requires planning as the researcher decides who needs to be observed by whom while also considering the focus, duration, frequency, place and tools to record the findings. The latter includes the use of observation sheets or protocols, notes, audio and video recording or photographs. Depending on the focus, context and implementation possibilities of the particular action research project, the observation can be carried out in different ways (Burns 2010: 57-72; Feldman et al. 2018: 121-140).

For my research project, I observed the ePSA participants during all COOL lessons and the three class councils using photographs and notes. There was no opportunity for peer observation since my colleagues had to teach the other courses during my COOL periods. Thus, I conducted other-observation, meaning that I observed the students myself (Burns 2010: 58). According to Feldman et al. (2018: 123), it can be difficult to observe and teach simultaneously, but it is possible when students are engaged in independent tasks which applies to COOL. To gain a better insight and document the students' development from the first to the last COOL lesson, I had to observe all of them. Since I was aware that it would be challenging to record the events while teaching, I considered video or audio recording but

decided against it. Apart from the ethical considerations and my lack of experience, the analysis would be too time-consuming for my project and it is not possible to film the whole classroom using a phone. Furthermore, the teaching situation should be as natural as possible, and a camera could influence the students' behaviour (Feldman et al. 2018: 139-140; 178-181). Therefore, I only took photographs which helped me to remember who was working with whom and where they positioned themselves in the classroom. As it can disrupt the students, I informed them beforehand and mainly took pictures of the whole room or small groups. These photographs captured the learning atmosphere and were a valuable supplement to my observation notes (Burns 2010: 72-73; Feldman et al. 2018: 138).

Since most of the data I aimed to collect could not be counted, I decided to use a more descriptive style and keep notes of the events in the classroom. There are different types of observation notes and the terminology is not always consistent. My notes can be defined as reflective observations which include the researcher's comments (Burns 2010: 62-68). I did not know how much assistance the students required and if it would be possible to record my observations immediately; therefore, my plan was to take brief notes on my laptop during the lesson and complete them directly afterwards. During the class council, I counted how often each individual participated in the conversation, and recorded challenges with the rules and roles. For the COOL lessons, my observation was mainly guided by the following questions:

- Who is working with whom?
- Which assignment/subject/task do they choose?
- How do the students cooperate?
- Do they understand the instructions/tasks?
- When do they need my assistance?
- How do they allot their time?

Although observation is essential to examine the students' actions and ascertain how they deal with a more autonomous approach, there are certain restrictions. Since it focuses on behaviour and quantitative aspects, observation tells little about the quality of independent learning and the researcher cannot draw inferences from the data about cognitive and metacognitive activities (Konrad & Traub 2015: 59-60). Furthermore, I would not be able to notice everything while teaching or moderating. Therefore, I required additional data to compare with my observations and gain more insights about the students' perceptions and thoughts (Burns 2010: 74).

5.3.2 Classroom Documents

A variety of written documents is produced in the classroom, for my research I focused on the learning logs and summary minutes of the class councils since they are a valuable source of data and complement my observation notes (Burns 2010: 74, 91). Apart from enabling me to analyse the performance of the minute taker, the summary minutes include the date and length of the class council as well as the distribution of roles. Additionally, they can be a helpful collection of the topics the students suggested and discussed. The students' learning logs help me to gain an overview which subject and level of difficulty every participant chose on a particular day, which is difficult to record during the lesson. They also provide relevant information about the learners' perception of the degree of difficulty, their general feelings after COOL lessons and how they reflect on their success or failure to complete the assignment on that day (Bartnitzky 2004: 33-34). As students kept the learning logs in their COOL folders which had to stay in the classroom, I could compile the data and analyse their entries.

Although data produced by the students can provide significant insight, self-assessment is not always reliable (Burns 2010: 171). This certainly applies to the learning log as it cannot be guaranteed that the learners understand all questions correctly or answer them honestly. Due to the learners' language levels, their written answers can contain mistakes which requires a careful data analysis. Since the learning log is filled out at the end of the school day, students might rush and not take sufficient time to consider their answer or forget a question. To reduce these problems, I intended to indicate the end of the lesson to give them enough time for their reflection. Furthermore, I carefully introduced the learning log and its purpose as described in the section on planning. Similar issues arise using a questionnaire (Dörnyei 2003: 10-16; Gillham 2008: 9-13; Konrad & Traub 2015: 60-61) which is the third method I adopted and will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.3.3 Questionnaire

To learn about the whole group's experience and opinion on the implementation of COOL in their classroom, I constructed a questionnaire. The results were not only used to answer my research questions, they also formed the basis of a general evaluation process based on the students' feedback and meet the quality criteria (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes

Lernen 2019: 11). Therefore, the questionnaire is rather detailed and contains items that exceed the research questions. This section explores the advantages and disadvantages of using a questionnaire in this particular setting and also addresses the issue of anonymity. Furthermore, the design, structure and type of items used in the questionnaire are explained and the administration is discussed as it revealed difficulties with certain questions.

Questionnaires are widely used as they can be easily constructed, but there are serious limitations to this method of data collection. I decided to use a questionnaire because it can be designed, completed and analysed in a relatively short time and does not require additional financial resources. Since speaking in their L2 creates a barrier for a considerable number of my students, an additional advantage is that the pressure to reply immediately, as they would experience during an interview, is reduced (Gillham 2008: 1-7). When completing a questionnaire, students “can answer in their own time and at their own pace” (Gillham 2008: 7). The problem of a low response rate does not occur as I can hand out the questionnaire during a lesson and on the following days to ensure that all students complete it. Thus, the main issues are reliability and comprehension because it can never be assured that respondents fully understand the items. Additionally, they could be unmotivated, choose the answer that they consider as socially accepted, or get bored if the questionnaire is too long. Students could also overgeneralize their responses based on their general impression of me or COOL, which is known as the halo effect. To alleviate these problems, researchers highlight the value of honesty and construct their questionnaires carefully (Dörnyei 2003: 10-16; Gillham 2008: 9-13).

Advantages and disadvantages of anonymity are often discussed, but no agreement has been reached as it depends on the individual target group, content and setting. The main limitation of anonymity is that researchers cannot directly link the answers to other data which is essential in several studies (Dörnyei 2003: 24-25; Gillham 2008: 7). In relation to an educational context, Dörnyei (2003: 88) remarks that “[s]tudents cannot be expected to provide honest information and possibly make critical statements [...] unless we manage to convince them about the confidentiality of the investigation”. In this particular setting, anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed as I can recognise most of their handwritings, students might be aware of this fact which could influence their responses. As Gillham (2008: 7) points

out, with such a small group of respondents, anonymity only has a symbolic character. Nevertheless, I designed an anonymous questionnaire since participants tend to be more honest and less concerned about the answers I expect.

The questionnaire contained different types of questions and had an attractive layout to make it more interesting and appealing (Dörnyei 2003: 90). Students were asked to answer closed-ended questions including multiple choice, yes/no, and rating scales. The latter made up the majority of items and were based on a five-point Likert scale since it is frequently used and indicates the degree of agreement or disagreement (Burns 2010: 82-85). Additionally, open-ended questions were included to “complement closed items and take the responses further” (Burns 2010: 85), but they were confined to a small number as it is difficult for several students to express their thoughts in written language and I could not assure that their answers would be entirely comprehensible and therefore viable. According to Dörnyei (2003: 19), “the format and graphic layout carry a special significance and have an important impact on the responses”. Therefore, I added colours and divided the questionnaire into five themes: COOL in general, assignments, cooperation, learning log, and class council. The aim of the questionnaire was not only to collect additional data to answer the research questions, it also collected valuable information regarding the continuation and development of COOL in this ePSA course. Thus, I used behavioural questions to find out about students’ decisions and actions as well as attitudinal questions to learn about their opinions. The factual data at the end of the survey was collected to allow further comparisons between gender, attendance or duration of previous education (Dörnyei 2003: 8-9). After discussing the questionnaire with my colleagues, I distributed it one week after the final COOL lesson.

Administering the questionnaire offered insights about the difficulty of the items and limitations of the questionnaire. Group administration, which is common in educational settings (Dörnyei 2003: 82), was the most convenient option as I could distribute the questionnaire during one of my lessons. Before handing it out, I stated the purpose of the questionnaire to increase the students’ interest and motivation. In addition, I underlined the importance of reading the questions carefully and answering them honestly (Dörnyei 2003: 86-89). Since most students had no or little experience of filling out questionnaires and therefore might encounter difficulties understanding the scales, I explained them by using a

general declarative sentence as an example. Participants were given as much time and assistance as they needed, but I tried not to influence them. Some students misunderstood the question (*In welchen Fächern hättest du gerne COOL?*) because they confused the German conditional with the past tense. In addition, several students asked about the meaning of two particular items (*Ich konnte in meinem eigenen Tempo arbeiten. Die Arbeitsaufträge waren übersichtlich gestaltet.*) as the wording was too complicated. Thus, I would revise these items before using the questionnaire again with a similar target group. Including a limited number of open questions was the right decision as students were less motivated to answer them and experienced difficulties producing a response. Although students could ask for the clarification of difficult items and I encouraged them to be completely truthful, I cannot claim that everyone understood all questions properly and always answered correctly.

The construction and evaluation of a questionnaire is less time-consuming than conducting interviews with twenty students (Burns 2010: 81), especially when they have to speak in their L2. Regardless of the discussed limitations, it was the most practical method to receive feedback on the COOL lessons and gain insight into the students' perception and requests regarding the continuation of COOL. To obtain more objective results, the outcome can be compared and contrasted with the analysis of my observations and classroom documents (Burns 2010: 95-97), which is done in the next section.

5.4 Reflection

The fourth phase of action research includes discussing the data and reflecting on the impacts of the initiation of COOL (adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart 1988: 11–14 cited in Burns 2010: 7-8). To answer the research questions, I analysed and compared the data derived from my observations, the learning logs, the summary minutes and the questionnaire. In COOL, the development of autonomy is promoted through assignments, self-evaluation and self-reflection (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 176). Therefore, this chapter is divided into four parts. First of all, it is shown that students could assume responsibility for their own learning as the written assignments opened up several possibilities to decide and allot their own time. Furthermore, learners could choose their partners and benefited from working with heterogenous groups, whereas the importance of self-reflection and feedback was slightly

overlooked. The last chapter focuses on the evaluation of the class council which supports the implementation of COOL since it increases communication and can be used to discuss initial problems. Although this new approach allows ePSA students to be more self-determined, there are certain issues that can arise when introducing COOL to this target group.

5.4.1 Working With Assignments

COOL assignments encourage learner autonomy (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 11), but educators and students need to get used to this new form of teaching. Not only a lack of reading comprehension can lead to difficulties, students also have to read all information carefully and be familiar with the abbreviations. While the learners are responsible for allotting their time and completing their tasks, it is the teacher's responsibility to create assignments that can be finished within the given time frame and allow enough time for discussion, planning, and reflection. Since all assignments contain alternatives, students can choose independently which might not always be appropriate for their abilities.

Learners mostly understood the instructions and were therefore able to work independently. During the planning phase, I experienced difficulties in writing comprehensive and explicit instructions. They should not be too long which could be discouraging for slow readers but still contain all the information students need to complete the assignment as independently as possible. Therefore, I asked a colleague to assess if the wording is appropriate for our participants' abilities and adapted it accordingly. Students' responses to the questionnaire suggest that the majority understood the instructions. Five fully agreed to the statement, twelve agreed, two were neutral and only one participant indicated that he or she did not apprehend the explanations. This is mostly confirmed by their learning outcomes and my observations. During the first week, some participants immediately asked questions about the activities or particular words without reading the whole sentence or text. When asked to look at the entire task first, they could usually answer their own questions. The number of questions concerning instructions declined in the following weeks, but another issue relating to reading arose.

Working with written assignments further requires accuracy and familiarity with the general structure. Despite the introductory lesson and sample assignment, some participants encountered problems as they missed or misunderstood relevant information. The main issue was that several students did not check if a task was compulsory, they started with optional exercises and complained that there was not enough time to finish the obligatory tasks. Furthermore, some simply overlooked the conjunction 'or' when given a choice between two topics or tasks and therefore did both. When pointing it out to them, participants were annoyed with themselves but mostly learned from their mistake, especially because it resulted in additional workload. After I had realised that there was an issue, I tried to make it even clearer in the next assignment by adjusting the layout. It can also be helpful to create and display a poster with abbreviations and symbols, so learners can always check their meaning. Owing to their own inaccuracy, students did not always benefit from the alternatives provided and some experienced difficulties finishing the compulsory parts of the assignments on time.

Allowing students to allot their time and take breaks when needed increases their autonomy (Parkhurst 1922: 37-38) and the actual learning time. On the first day, students were guided by their normal lesson plan and usual break times. Gradually, this changed as they worked in small groups and were engaged in longer activities. The group dynamics played an important part: if their partners wanted to complete a task before taking a break, learners generally agreed. Compared to regular course days, they took less breaks, appeared to be more active and determined, and often lost track of time. Hence, I had to remind them of the end of the school day which rarely happens during regular lessons. These observations are supported by students' answers as the vast majority declared that they focused on their work and could approach the tasks at their own pace. Except for one, all learners agreed that they could choose when to do which assignment. This particular student experienced great difficulties during COOL lessons which are further discussed in the following chapter. However, the precondition for students to successfully organise their own work, is a manageable assignment.

It can be challenging to give assignments that can be completed by all students within the given time frame. As already mentioned, it was difficult to estimate what students can

accomplish within the COOL periods, especially because I had only taught the target group for two months and lacked teaching experience. Since I did not consider that students require time to organise the materials, find a partner, and complete the learning log, the assignments for the first week were too long. As a result, there was not enough time for the optional tasks, several students felt stressed and were in a rush to finish all tasks. This is also reflected in the students' replies as six stated that they did not have enough time to complete all tasks. Additionally, three participants wrote that the only thing they did not like about COOL was the time pressure. Although the amount of work was more appropriate during the following weeks, there is still room for improvement.

It cannot be assumed that all students automatically select the appropriate assignment for their language level. In the first week, students could choose between two German assignments. Despite offering support, learners did not consult me and three picked the one that was above their language levels. Hence, they were overwhelmed with the additional exercise and lost time they needed to complete the other assignments. In English, students' choices were more appropriate, a possible reason is that the instructions of the more challenging assignments were written in English which made the difference more obvious. This assumption is partly supported by students' responses to the question why they chose the easy or difficult assignment since two participants stated that the English instructions were too difficult for them. Although not all students answered this open question, the results suggest that some reflected on their abilities and chose accordingly. Five students who preferred the difficult option indicated that the other assignment was too easy, two stated that they wanted to learn more, one said that there was sufficient time to complete it and another participant mentioned that the decision was influenced by the partner. Nevertheless, reflecting on their choices with a teacher can be beneficial for all students which is discussed further in a subsequent chapter.

The preparation of compulsory tasks with options is less time-consuming, but learners still enjoy their freedom of choice. In German, students were given a choice between the ÖSD exercise and a different grammar, writing or reading task. Although only nine students had to prepare for the upcoming exam, the vast majority chose the first option. Possible reasons are that they wanted to practise for the next exam, were influenced by their partner's choice or

did not read/understand the instructions. Furthermore, students selected a topic for their presentation in biology. When they received individual feedback, I enquired why they had chosen the topic. Their replies differed considerably as some said that it was due to their foreknowledge, while others stated that the topic seemed easy, the text was short, or they selected it at random. A few answered that the topic appeared interesting. This shows that students reached their decisions based on diverse factors but at their own discretion.

In conclusion, COOL assignments offer diverse opportunities for ePSA students to make decisions and assume responsibility. In the beginning, teachers can encounter difficulties when creating assignments. Therefore, they should observe the learners during the lesson, reflect on their choices, and regularly adapt the assignments. To work independently, students need to read the instructions carefully and understand the tasks. In addition to allotting their time and selecting entire assignments or individual topics, students can choose their partners.

5.4.2 Cooperation

Cooperation in our teaching facility is often limited to informal cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec 1994: 7-9) and since students live in various accommodations, their social interaction is usually restricted to class time. Thus, increased formal cooperation (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec 1994: 7-9) which is encouraged in COOL, is appreciated by the majority of participants. It creates a learning environment in which ePSA students have the opportunity to help others as well as seek help from their peers instead of the teacher. At first, I was concerned that learners with a lower language level could be excluded but finding a partner or group did not cause a problem for most students. During COOL lessons, they chose different partners, offered support, and simply enjoyed cooperating with others. However, teachers should be aware that open social forms also enable students to seclude themselves which can be an issue when working with this particular target group.

Gradually, students began to choose different partners and various groups and pairs were formed. During the first two days, the teams were rather similar as most learners worked with their usual partners or seatmates. On the third day, some students had appointments or were sick, so those present had to find different partners which did not cause a problem. Once the

groups were mixed, several students continued to work with diverse partners. Based on the questionnaire's analysis, finding a partner or forming groups did not pose a problem for most students. When asked for the reason, they stated that they can work with everyone, all participants are friendly or that they cooperated with their friends. Only one student claimed that he or she always worked with the same person. Thirteen participants strongly agreed that they cooperated with different people, two agreed, three neither agreed nor disagreed and two strongly disagreed. The observations and students' answers illustrate that the majority used the opportunity to collaborate with diverse partners. Nevertheless, a friendly atmosphere is vital, and it is certainly beneficial to focus on cooperation from the beginning of the course.

Although the social form was written on the assignments, which should support the students and serve as a guideline, they frequently changed it as they adapted to the individual situation. It is possible that the learners did not read the instructions carefully, but based on my observations, it was not always feasible to adhere to the guidelines. For example, on the first day everyone started with the German assignment which included giving feedback to a partner. Since there was not an equal number of students, they had to form bigger groups which they did without hesitation. Furthermore, they often extended their groups to include students who had difficulties due to their low attendance or language level. Although some tasks were supposed to be individual work, it was the least common social form because the learners preferred to work with others. This observation is supported by the results of the questionnaire. When asked what they like about COOL, the majority wrote that they enjoyed working with a group or a partner because it was fun and helped them to understand the tasks. In addition, fourteen participants strongly agreed that they chose their partners themselves, three agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed and one disagreed. It shows that they took responsibility for themselves and others and enjoyed their liberty to decide with whom they want to cooperate.

Since the groups were rather heterogenous, students benefited from it in different ways. As participants extended their groups and included those who experienced difficulties, some group members required more assistance than others. Contrary to regular lessons, where faster students tend to get bored, COOL also engages them as they become the teacher.

Especially female participants worked with partners who required their assistance. One student formed a group with four participants who encounter difficulties in English and realised that she had to switch to the easier assignment which did not seem to bother her. I received the impression that she enjoyed being the expert because she patiently explained the task, moderated the conversation about food, provided vocabulary and corrected their mistakes. Another student wrote the dialogue with two learners who barely speak English, but she asked them what they wanted to say in German, tried to translate the sentences with them and ensured that they did not make any spelling mistakes. These observations are supported by the analysis of the questionnaire which showed that eleven students strongly agreed and six agreed that they could help others during COOL. In addition, the support from their partners was appreciated by most students as half of the group repeatedly wrote into their learning logs that they completed all tasks because they had a good partner or group.

The open structure of COOL lessons also allows students to distance themselves which is not beneficial for everyone. There were two participants who secluded themselves from the group for different reasons. One student cooperated with others during the first week but worked on his own for the rest of the time due to personal issues. He still communicated with me and especially our social worker but preferred to be left alone at school. This can be regarded as an advantage of open learning because he often appears to be mentally absent during regular lessons and was very productive during COOL. Since he has reached a high level of German and English and has received previous education, he was able to complete most assignments by himself. The second student who began to distance himself during COOL, is the exact opposite. In the beginning, he was included in English learning groups and explicitly asked by others if they could help him, but he started to decline their offers. According to him, his intention was not to burden anyone or hold others back as he was slower than most of his partners. As he could not be convinced otherwise, he continued to work on his own and struggled with several tasks. This student clearly did not benefit from COOL and also indicated that in the questionnaire. He strongly disagreed with most statements, for example, it was easy to find a partner, I enjoyed working with others or I felt comfortable during COOL. Since he also experiences difficulties during regular lessons and often isolates himself from the group, these issues are not necessarily related to the concept of COOL.

In short, the vast majority of students seized the opportunity to cooperate with others. They worked with diverse partners and formed small learning groups regardless of their language level or educational achievement. Hence, they benefited from the heterogeneity as some could share their knowledge while others received valuable assistance. COOL does not only allow ePSA participants to practise and improve their communication and interpersonal skills, it further encourages self-reflection (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 26).

5.4.3 Self-reflection and Feedback

Reflection and feedback processes are crucial to increase learners' autonomy (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 5). Thinking about the achievement of learning objectives and evaluating learning behaviour with a learning log can encourage self-reflection, but students need to get used to these procedures and may require assistance in the beginning. The same applies to giving and receiving feedback from peers which can be practised in a COOL context. I mainly focused on the learners' reflection process, but regular teacher feedback on learning progress and behaviour should not be neglected as it is essential for the students' development and part of the COOL quality criteria (Impulszentrum für Cooperatives Offenes Lernen 2019: 11).

Developing realistic self-evaluation is an important part of COOL (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 176) and reflecting on the accomplishment of learning objectives can stimulate that process, but teacher feedback should not be disregarded. The last instruction on every assignment was to reflect on the learning objectives. Some students forgot about it once or twice, but the majority filled out the scale. Their self-evaluation ranged from one (I reached it.) to three (I partly reached it.), two (I mostly reached it.) being the most common answer, and no one stated that he or she had not reached the learning objective. Although I mostly agree with their self-evaluation, I cannot ensure that students understood the statements and thought about their own development. Hence, individual conversations would have been beneficial gain insights into their thought processes and discuss their progress. In addition, I could have helped them to formulate their own learning objectives which was only attempted by four students who mainly repeated previous ones.

Another method for self-reflection is the learning log which was not always used correctly. Although the first question of the learning log asks students to set themselves a goal for the COOL sequence, all of them completed it at the end of the lesson and simply filled in the subjects they had actually covered. Additionally, I frequently had to remind the participants of the learning log towards the end of the lesson as self-reflection requires time, all the more if it is not in a person's L1. Some students still rushed through it and did not reply to all questions. This leads to the assumption that they did not fully understand its purpose and use, even though students' answers to the questionnaire suggested otherwise. Thirteen strongly agreed and six agreed that the learning log helped them to organise their work, and only one participant disagreed. These results contradict my observation, but there are certain issues about using a questionnaire in this context which were discussed in the previous section (Dörnyei 2003: 10-16; Gillham 2008: 1-13). Thus, it can be assumed that students require additional instructions and the teacher should carefully observe the use of the learning log during the initiation of COOL.

Apart from the lack of teacher feedback in terms of learning behaviour, I had the opportunity to provide feedback on certain tasks and focus on their individual needs. While students worked independently on their assignments, there was enough time to discuss their revised texts with every single student, ask questions for clarification, highlight general issues, and explain grammar rules. While reading their texts out loud, some learners discovered and corrected their own mistakes, especially repetitive ones. For the biology assignment, the pairs showed me their draft of the poster, we discussed the topic and I could make suggestions for improvement or provide additional explanations if necessary. Another beneficial learning situation developed when I helped one participant with the English grammar task and we were joined by two students who did the same assignment and encountered difficulties. In the small group, it was easier for me to identify problems and meet their needs than it is when working with the whole class. During regular lessons, there is usually little time for such interactions, but students and teachers clearly benefit from them.

Students also had the opportunity to give feedback in different forms which they enjoyed but receiving feedback from other participants instead of the teacher was not always considered valuable. For a better understanding, both feedback templates are included in the appendix

of this paper. As part of a German assignment, students assessed their partners, who practised for the speaking exam, using a template and afterwards provided oral feedback. Since the long written instructions seemed to confuse the students, I joined the groups and accompanied the feedback process. The participants paid close attention and were able to give constructive feedback. They made suggestions for improvements, pointed out common mistakes and also focused on positive aspects. However, it was difficult for some to obtain feedback from their peers, especially from those with a lower language level, and they started to defend themselves. Their reactions were similar when they received the written feedback on their biology presentations. It was anonymous, but students took it seriously and expressed their honest opinion. The presenters were grateful for positive feedback but did not know how to deal with criticism. While giving feedback worked better than expected, receiving and valuing it presents a challenge to some learners and should therefore be discussed in class.

To summarise, my implementation of COOL also included possibilities to develop self-reflection and give feedback. As most ePSA participants are unfamiliar with these concepts, preparatory work is essential, and reflection and feedback processes should be accompanied by the teacher. It can be useful to schedule individual teacher feedback sessions when introducing COOL, otherwise it might be overlooked and neglected in favour of assignments and general procedures. In addition to COOL lessons, I established a class council as it enables students to discuss important issues and express their concerns (Blum & Blum 2006: 14).

5.4.4 Indications of an Effective Class Council

To answer the research question how an effective class council can be established in this ePSA course, I analysed the data derived from my observations, the summary minutes and the questionnaire and compared it to indications of a successful implementation which are discussed in the following paragraph. Furthermore, the adherence to rules, increasing participation and the variety of themes that emerged in the class council are examined. The challenges of the roles of the observer, minute taker and moderator and the issue of active listening are addressed, and the observations are compared to the students' answers in the questionnaire. It should be mentioned that observing three class councils only provides

limited insights and certain skills could have already been acquired before or at an earlier stage of the course.

During my literature review, I did not find a list of success criteria; therefore, the following principles that serve as the basis for analysis refer to potential benefits formulated by Blum and Blum (2006: 14) and are relevant in this specific teaching context. First, students understand and are familiar with the procedures and roles of the class council. Secondly, they contribute ideas and raise problems that they think should be discussed in the class council. Thirdly, they actively participate in the discussion which means that they pay attention, take a vote and, in the best case, talk. Fourth, participants are not afraid to express their opinion in their L2 in front of the whole group. And fifth, if an issue arises during the period that does not contribute to the current learning content, it can be postponed to the next class council and the teacher can focus on the actual lesson.

My observations of the three class councils indicated that the students got used to the procedures, followed the rules and increasingly joined the conversation. I asked several participants to move the tables and make a circle of chairs during the break as I knew that it would take a while. This process was almost automatic in the second week and already less time-consuming. As the overall procedure of the class council was straightforward, students quickly remembered and could tell me the next step when I asked them in the second and third week. The conversation rules were similar to their class rules, so they were not completely new to them. A few participants needed to be reminded to raise their hands when they wanted to speak and wait until it was their turn which was especially difficult when the topic was emotional or personal. Apart from that, they spoke German with the exception of translating a word for clarification and respected the others' problems and opinions even if they disagreed. Thus, they created a safe environment and participation increased in the course of the three sessions. Students who are generally more reserved simply observed and voted in the first class council and only half of the group talked, but by the last one, everyone had spoken at least once. Another reason for this could be the subjects of discussion since they were relevant or at least interesting for all of them.

The variety of themes discussed during these three meetings underlines the possibilities of a class council. In the first session, students focused on difficulties with COOL assignments, learning vocabulary and the new organisation of breaks. During the second meeting they brainstormed ideas for a class trip, expressed concern about the upcoming B1 exam and made the request to get no homework during the Winter break. The conversation about their cultural differences, greeting behaviour and religion in the third class council was generated by a preliminary theatre workshop where the group acted and analysed short scenes dealing with the refusal of a handshake. In addition, students also wanted to talk about the future of COOL as it was the last day of my test phase. As can be seen, not all concerns required a conclusive decision from the class, sometimes participants just wanted to express their opinion or share experiences. The diversity of topics discussed in the class council demonstrates that they understood that they have the possibility to share their ideas, address problems and express wishes. The individual concerns were taken seriously by everyone and helped me to gain a better understanding of their difficulties and interests and improve COOL assignments. The meetings also provided useful information and impulses for lesson planning and the organisation of the summer programme.

These discussions seemed to strengthen the class community and students could show empathy and tolerance. When the group shared ideas for excursions, one student suggested to organise activities in their free time but another interposed that some of the girls, referring to three Chechen sisters who came to Austria with their family, would probably not be allowed to join them when there was no teacher involved. The girls confirmed it and the idea was discarded as the others did not want to exclude them. During the discussion about cultural and religious differences in greeting, students attentively listened and were eager to share their thoughts. One female participant did not know that Muslim men and women are generally not allowed to shake hands with people of the opposite gender who are not relatives. As the majority of the group is Muslim, she was worried that she had made a serious mistake when touching male students during group work to reassure or congratulate them, but they assured her that they did not feel offended as most of them do not strictly adhere to this principle. When she asked what she could do in the future, one student told her that he always waits for the other person to initiate the handshake to ensure that it is appropriate. Furthermore, they shared personal experiences of cultural misunderstandings in Austria and

exclusion due to their religion. All agreed with one participant who declared that it does not matter where a person comes from as we are all humans and therefore everyone should respect and talk to each other. These conversations did not only increase cultural awareness and understanding of some students, they also improved their sense of community. Although there has never been a problem of male and female students working together during the lesson or playing volleyball in the break, for some of them this interaction is restricted to schooltime. This showed me how important it is to promote cooperation in class as well as the need to focus on the empowerment of female participants.

In terms of the distribution of roles, it was easy to find a volunteer for the observer, but students did not fully understand the task. This role was probably more popular as the observer could sit outside the circle just had to talk at the end of the class council. Nevertheless, some still participated in the discussion which was not an issue as it was vital for them to share their opinion. The actual task of observing how the conversation rules are applied was not adequately fulfilled since the three observers mainly focused on summarising the discussion and its outcomes. Only the first one stated that the other students respected and listened to each other, but some needed to be more patient as they started talking before it was their turn. The task's misinterpretation was primarily my fault because I only reminded the first observer and assumed that the others remembered. Since we overran time at the second meeting and students wanted to go home, I could not address this issue and forgot to mention it before the third one. As Überegger and van Dellen (2010/11: 40) state, it is essential to have enough time for the reflection; thus, the last period proved not to be entirely suitable. They further suggest that the group formulates questions or focal points for the observer and selects a different one for every meeting. Examples are body language, reaching a decision or the moderator's behaviour. In addition, observers could use an observation form to take notes which also helps to clarify their role.

Participants were more reluctant to take on the role of the minute taker, a possible reason for this could be that most of them feel rather insecure about their writing skills and do not want to make mistakes. This assumption is supported by the observation that the students who volunteered to take the summary minutes have a higher language level compared to others. Depending on the subjects of discussion, the templates were filled with more or less notes,

but I could read and understand all of them and it helped me to recall the conversations. At the next class council, students were able to briefly summarise the content and decisions of the last one with the help of their written comments. To encourage the rest of the group, it is vital to address this issue and emphasize that their notes are not graded. Furthermore, it is sufficient to record the topics collected at the beginning as well as the ideas and decisions made by the council and since I write most of the information on the board, they can simply copy it.

The role of the moderator was new to me and sometimes presented a challenge. After I had written the concerns and number of votes on the board, I joined the students in the circle of chairs and made sure that everyone had the chance to talk and followed the rules. During the first class council I asked too many questions to receive additional information and tried to steer the discussion or their thoughts in a certain direction. I realised that it was not easy for me to take a step back and let the students control the conversation. Thus, my intention for the following meetings was to interfere less and observe more. When a student's comment was not entirely comprehensible, I asked for clarification or repetition to avoid misunderstandings. Otherwise, I tried to keep track of the order in which the students raised their hands, wrote down their ideas and announced when it was time to vote. Students also asked me for my opinion or advice, for example, if a class trip to Salzburg was possible. Since the topics were not too sensitive, participants adhered to the rules and their decisions were realisable, except for the request to have no homework during the break which the school administration demanded as they need the practice, I could fulfil the role of the moderator. However, I am not sure if I would have reacted appropriately in a more difficult situation and therefore recommend further education about conflict resolution or conversation techniques.

Although I expected that the main issue would be the participants' speaking skills, my observations showed that their listening skills also required improvement. Several students of this course feel self-conscious about speaking German as they mainly concentrate on grammar and do not want to make mistakes; therefore, we constantly emphasize that mistakes are normal, and they can learn from them. This is imperative in relation to the class council as they should not be afraid to talk and just focus on communicating their ideas. I observed that even students with a lower level of German actively participated, were honest about their

problems and usually got their main point across. Plausible reasons for this could be the congenial atmosphere and the topics of conversation which were relevant to them. The main issue was that although they listened to each other, some did not pay attention to what was actually said as they primarily concentrated on remembering their own idea or sharing their experience. This suggests that they require additional exercises which focus on active listening. Two oral activities that are suitable for German lessons are the alternating continuation of a short story or the reproduction of a partner's narrative about his or her weekend, family or opinion on a certain topic (Blum & Blum 2006: 106). To further develop their communicative competence, students should learn common phrases to support or counter an argument and practice them; hence, they can refer to comments made by other students.

The analysis of the questionnaire shows that these findings are mainly supported by the participants' answers about the class council. The vast majority strongly agreed with the statements that they can talk about their problems and share their ideas in the class council. In addition, sixteen students strongly agreed and four agreed that they can express their own opinion which implies that they feel comfortable to do so. The following question had the same results which confirmed that student listened to each other during the group discussions. However, this refers to the students' understanding of listening which usually means being quiet when someone else talks but does not imply active listening. As might be expected, fourteen participants replied that they want to continue having a class council, one negated the question and five said that they are not sure but still answered the item about the desired frequency. Thus, the majority would like to hold it every other week. Since the questionnaire does not include further explanations, the reasons for maintaining the class council are not given but the results suggest that the students enjoy the conversations and appreciate the possibility of participation. Those who selected a different answer might regard it as less important than regular lessons, especially in terms of exam preparation.

As can be seen from this analysis, the establishment of the class council proved successful and had advantages for the students as well as the teacher. The criteria for success were mainly fulfilled as students used the opportunity to raise and discuss their own issues. They understood the procedures, openly talked about their problems and shared personal

experiences regardless of their language level. Hence, students could show and practise social as well as conversation skills. Additionally, I received feedback on COOL assignments as well as valuable information for lesson planning and the organisation of workshops and trips. Nevertheless, the performance of roles can be improved through further explanation and practice and students should exercise their listening skills. Regarding the fifth criteria, it was convenient to have a specific place to discuss topics that were significant to the group but did not concern the actual lesson content. Without a class council, these issues can only be briefly discussed during a lesson or break. Furthermore, the good class community and conversation atmosphere was confirmed through positive feedback from several people who held workshops for our students after the COOL phase. These findings and the students' positive feedback support the regular implementation of a class council in this ePSA course.

6 CONCLUSION

As was demonstrated in the first part of this thesis, there are issues with our ePSA course and a successful implementation of COOL requires certain changes. Owing to this research, I realised that the ePSA programme is not properly implemented in our teaching facility and examination school which might be the result of the lack of data and quality management (Brückner et al. 2017: 9) combined with deficient teacher training and experience. To adhere to COOL principles, ePSA practice must be consistent with its theoretical foundations while also considering the abilities and needs of the actual target group. Thus, the competent authority has to adjust the curriculum and consider more transparent assessment forms which include the learners' performances throughout the year. Additionally, all participants should be able to assert their right to choose competence areas and exam formats. Above all, improved cooperation and communication within the ePSA community is crucial. Regardless of COOL, these changes would make this form of second-chance education more suitable for the actual target group.

The second part showed that COOL provided more possibilities to make decisions and work independently compared to previous ePSA courses. It allowed students to be more self-determined and assume responsibility for their own learning as they could choose when to do which assignment, with whom and where in the classroom. In contrast to regular lessons, they

seemed more engaged and active, and could work at their own pace. Furthermore, the class council allowed them to practise communication skills, express opinions, share ideas and discuss problems. The vast majority of participants noticed and enjoyed the benefits of COOL which is illustrated by their answers to the open question what they like about COOL. Most students wrote that they like working with others, the second most common answer was allotting their own time, and two stated that it helps them to be more independent. However, the initiation of COOL is time-consuming since it requires careful preparation and regular evaluation of the lesson material and the students, especially in terms of learning competence, cooperation, reading competency, and self-reflection.

This teaching concept entails several new processes and should be gradually introduced; therefore, the methods and content of assignments were still restricted. According to Peschel's (2009: 83-85) five-point scale to evaluate the openness of teaching sequences, the organisational openness ranged between three and four because students could choose the place and social form, but assignments had to be completed until the end of the week. In my opinion, it is easier for students to meet a short deadline when initiating COOL. Furthermore, the content-related openness only reaches the first step. All options were limited to certain topics owing to the short preparation time for the upcoming exams. Apart from single tasks, for example, creating an online vocabulary game, the methodical openness was the most restricted since the assignments included explicit instructions. My intention was to avoid overwhelming the participants as most of them lacked previous education and learning competence. Whereas the content-related openness can only be increased by changing examination regulations, the degree of methodical openness depends on the abilities of the target group. Teachers can foster the development of learning competence throughout the course and gradually extend the methodical openness.

It should be noted that this study is highly limited in terms of range and duration. Since it only refers to our teaching facility and this small ePSA class, the findings cannot be generalised to other organisations, which is not unusual in action research (Burns 2010: 95). Furthermore, the composition of ePSA groups is changing due to the decreasing number of asylum seekers who arrive in Austria (BMI 2020). For small course providers like this one it is increasingly difficult to offer ePSA courses as the funding is based on the number of participants (IEB 2019: 29). As a result, this course was the last one for now and the insights gained from my research

cannot be applied to following ones. Another issue is the short duration of this study. Because of the final exams the practical application had to be limited to four weeks, but the development of soft skills takes time and it is possible that the effect of COOL is only shown after two to three years (Neuhauser & Wittwer 2002: 183). Depending on the outcome, I could have continued with COOL, but a combination of internal and external factors made it difficult. First of all, changes in personnel heightened my administrative activities and reduced preparation time. In addition, the first examination was brought forward, and students requested more teacher-centred lessons to introduce unknown exam topics. Finally, teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic posed a new and more serious challenge.

These limitations should not discourage other ePSA teachers from reflecting on their practice and adopting new approaches to increase their students' autonomy. Although the implementation ultimately depends on the individual setting and target group, they can consider the following recommendations. First of all, the study "needs to be compatible with the work and life of the action researcher" (Feldman et al. 2018: 181). Thus, small changes should be made over a longer period. COOL can be gradually introduced from the beginning of the course, and the amount of COOL sequences and regular lessons should be well-balanced as students prefer more teacher assistance when dealing with certain topics. Establishing a class council on a monthly basis is sufficient (Hölbling, Neuhauser & Wittwer 2008: 26) to formulate rules, discuss concerns, practise conflict-resolution and improve social cohesion (Blum & Blum 2006: 27). Furthermore, compulsory tasks with options and additional exercises are less time-consuming to prepare and enable cooperation, whereas creating assignments for different levels can be unnecessary as students often choose the same as their partner(s), regardless of their own abilities. Teachers should continuously focus on the development of reading competency, self-evaluation, and learning competence since they are vital for a successful implementation of COOL. If possible, the whole project should be carried out in a team to reduce the amount of work, and it is recommendable to seek support from experienced COOL educators (Neuhauser 2012: 231). In conclusion, COOL can be beneficial and suitable for ePSA participants, but it must be viable within the particular setting. However, it is one approach to cooperative and open learning and researchers might find that other concepts have similar advantages but are easier to implement and less time-consuming.

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8 APPENDIX

8.1 Sample Assignment

Arbeitsbeginn: Fr, 08. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 1	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 08. Nov. 2019 12:20	Wie funktioniert COOL?	
	Fächer: Englisch / COOL Erklärung	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1. Kontrolliere deine Hausübung im Buch auf S. 16. Die Lösung findest du auf S. 156.	P	☺	SK	☐
2. Suche dir eine(n) Partner(in) und kontrolliert zusammen die Hausübungen: – adverbs of frequency (always, usually, often, sometimes, never) – reading	P	☺☺	SK	☐
3. Suche dir eine(n) neue(n) Partner(in) und übt zusammen das englische Alphabet. Ihr braucht dafür die Arbeitsblätter „Spelling Bee 1“ und „Spelling Bee 2“. Kontrolliert, ob ihr alles richtig geschrieben habt.	P	☺☺	SK	☐
4. Macht die Aufgaben 1+2 im Buch auf S. 18 und 1+2 auf S. 19. Die deutschen Übersetzungen findet ihr auf S.19. Für die Listening könnt ihr eure Handys oder den CD-Player (mit Kopfhörern) benutzen.	P	☺☺	L	☐
5. Gehe auf Learningapps.org und suche dir ein paar Lernspiele aus dem Klassenordner aus.	W	☺	SK	☐
6. Suche dir eine(n) neue(n) Partner(in) und bearbeitet das Arbeitsblatt „Was ist COOL und was ist es nicht?“. Überlegt euch 2 Regeln für eine gute COOL-Stunde.	P	☺☺	P	☐
7. Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	☺	L	☐
Material: Buch, AB Spelling Bee 1 + 2, AB „Was ist COOL und was ist es nicht?“, Handy, Kopfhörer, CD-Player				

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kann meinen Arbeitsauftrag verstehen und eigenständig ausführen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann problemlos MitschülerInnen für Partnerarbeiten finden.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann auf Englisch buchstabieren.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann mir besser vorstellen, wie die COOL-Stunden ablaufen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

8.2 German Assignments

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 11. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 3	 ePSA-Klasse
Abgabetermin: Fr, 15. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Deutsch	
	Schreiben und Sachtexte verstehen	

Name:

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1a) Verbessere den Text, den du bei der Probeprüfung geschrieben hast. ¹ Wenn du nicht weißt, warum etwas falsch ist, hilft dir der Zettel „Erklärung Korrekturzeichen ÖSD“ weiter.	P	☺	L	☐
1b) Suche dir eine(n) Partner(in), egal ob B1 oder B2, und kontrolliert gemeinsam eure neuen Texte. Achtet darauf, dass ihr alle Fragen beantwortet habt.	P	☺☺	L	☐
1c) Gehe mit dem alten und dem verbesserten Text zu deiner Lehrerin und hole dir Feedback. Wenn nötig, überarbeite den Text nochmal.	P	☺+L	L	☐
2) Hole dir die Arbeitsblätter “Sachtexte lesen und verstehen“ und erledige alle Aufgaben auf den S. 16-19. Lass dir Zeit und folge den Anweisungen Schritt für Schritt. Die Lösungen findest du in der gelben Mappe.	P	☺☺	SK	☐
3) Gehe auf Learningapps.org, öffne den Klassenordner „Deutsch“ und mache mind. 5 Übungen.	P	☺	SK+L	☐
4) Suche dir ein ZiS-Leseheft aus. Schreibe deinen Namen in das Heft und mache eine Leseübung. Die Lösung findest du auf der letzten Seite.	W	☺	SK	☐
5) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	☺	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: Erklärung Korrekturzeichen ÖSD, AB “Sachtexte lesen und verstehen“, Learningapps.org, Handy, Computer, Wörterbücher, ZiS-Lesehefte				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i>				
<i>Leoben, am</i>		<i>Unterschrift</i>		

¹ Wenn du die Probeprüfung für B2 geschrieben hast, kannst du dir einen Text aussuchen. Wenn du bei der Probeprüfung nicht da warst, schreibst du den Text während der COOL-Stunden und verbesserst ihn mit deinem/deiner Partner(in).

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kann meine Fehler erkennen und korrigieren.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann gut mit einem/einer Partner(in) arbeiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann mich Schritt für Schritt mit einem Sachtext beschäftigen und ihn dadurch besser verstehen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 11. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 3+	
Abgabetermin: Fr, 15. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Deutsch Schreiben, Konjunktionen und Sachtexte verstehen	
		Name:

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1a) Verbessere den Text, den du bei der Probeprüfung geschrieben hast. ² Wenn du nicht weißt, warum etwas falsch ist, hilft dir der Zettel „Erklärung Korrekturzeichen ÖSD“ weiter.	P	☺	L	☐
1b) Suche dir eine(n) Partner(in), egal ob B1 oder B2, und kontrolliert gemeinsam eure neuen Texte. Achtet darauf, dass ihr alle Fragen beantwortet habt.	P	☺☺	L	☐
1c) Gehe mit dem alten und dem verbesserten Text zu deiner Lehrerin und hole dir Feedback. Wenn nötig, überarbeite den Text nochmal.	P	☺+L	L	☐
2) Fülle das Arbeitsblatt „Zweiteilige Konnektoren“ aus, die Lösung findest du in der gelben Mappe. Vervollständige die Sätze auf dem Arbeitsblatt „Konnektoren“ und vergleiche deine Ergebnisse mit einem/einer Partner(in).	P	☺☺	SK	☐
3) Hole dir die Arbeitsblätter „Sachtexte lesen und verstehen“ und erledige alle Aufgaben auf den S. 16-19. Lass dir Zeit und folge den Anweisungen Schritt für Schritt. Die Lösungen findest du in der gelben Mappe.	P	☺☺	SK	☐

² Wenn du die Probeprüfung für B2 geschrieben hast, kannst du dir einen Text aussuchen. Wenn du bei der Probeprüfung nicht da warst, schreibst du den Text während der COOL-Stunden und verbesserst ihn mit deinem/deiner Partner(in).

4) Gehe auf Learningapps.org, öffne den Klassenordner „Deutsch“ und mache mind. 3 Übungen.	P	😊	SK+L	☐
5) Suche dir ein ZiS-Leseheft aus. Schreibe deinen Namen in das Heft und mache eine Leseübung. Die Lösung findest du auf der letzten Seite.	W	😊	SK	☐
6) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	😊	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: Erklärung Korrekturzeichen ÖSD, AB „Zweiteilige Konnektoren“, „Konnektoren“, „Sachtexte lesen und verstehen“, Learningapps.org, Handy, Computer, Wörterbücher, ZiS-Lesehefte				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i>				
Leoben, am		Unterschrift		

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kann meine Fehler erkennen und korrigieren.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann gut mit einem/einer Partner(in) arbeiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kenne verschiedene Konjunktionen und kann sie richtig anwenden.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann mich Schritt für Schritt mit einem Sachtext beschäftigen und ihn dadurch besser verstehen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 18. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 5 Fach: Deutsch Sprechen, Ernährung, Sprachbausteine	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 22. Nov. 2019 um 12:20		

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1a) Sucht euch gemeinsam das AB „Sprechen“ aus (Thema 1, 2 oder 3). Ihr braucht 1xA und 1xB. Lest gemeinsam alle 3 Aufgaben durch. Wenn ihr alles verstanden habt, habt ihr 10 Minuten Zeit, euch allein Notizen zu machen.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
1b) Sucht euch zwei Personen, die gerade Deutsch lernen. Es ist egal, welches Thema sie gewählt haben. Holt euch den Zettel „Feedback“ und besprecht ihn gemeinsam.	P	😊😊😊😊	SK	☐

1c) Das erste Paar macht alle 3 Sprechaufgaben. Das zweite Paar hört gut zu. Jeder füllt einen Feedbackzettel für eine Person aus. Entscheidet vorher, wer wem Feedback gibt. Eine Prüfung dauert 15 Minuten. Stoppt die Zeit! Ihr könnt das Gespräch auch mit dem Handy aufnehmen und später nochmal anhören. Alle müssen damit einverstanden sein!	P	😊😊😊😊	SK	☐
1d) Gib der Person Feedback, der du zugehört hast. Besprecht alle drei Aufgaben und Fehler, die du gehört hast. Erkläre der Person, was sie gut gemacht hat.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
1e) Wechselt die Rollen. Jetzt spricht das zweite Paar und das erste Paar hört zu, stoppt die Zeit, füllt die Feedbackzettel aus und gibt danach mündlich Feedback.	P	😊😊😊😊	SK	☐
2) Fülle das Kreuzworträtsel „Nahrungsmittel“ aus. Die Lösung findest du in der gelben Mappe.	P	😊	SK	☐
3) Mache die Übungen auf dem AB „Sprachbausteine“ oder bearbeite das AB „Nebensätze“. Die Lösungen findest du in der gelben Mappe.	P	😊 (😊)	SK	☐
4) Nimm dein ZiS-Leseheft und mache eine Leseübung. Wenn du noch kein Heft hast, suche dir eins aus, schreibe deinen Namen hinein und mache eine Leseübung. Die Lösung findest du auf der letzten Seite.	W	😊	SK	☐
5) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	😊	L	☐
Material: AB „Sprechen“, „Feedback“, „Nahrungsmittel“, „Sprachbausteine“, „Nebensätze“, ZiS-Lesehefte, Handy				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i>				
Leoben, am		Unterschrift		

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich verstehe die Sprechaufgaben für die Prüfung B1.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann gut zuhören und spontan Fragen beantworten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann Fragen zu einem bestimmten Thema stellen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann mit einem/einer Partner/in problemlos über ein vorbereitetes Thema sprechen	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann hilfreiches Feedback geben.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kenne die Übung „Sprachbausteine“ und weiß, worauf ich bei der Prüfung achten muss.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann <i>dass</i> und <i>ob</i> in Nebensätzen richtig verwenden.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 25. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 8	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 29. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Deutsch Lesen und Schreiben	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1) Lesen Hole dir die Leseübung für die B1-Prüfung und mache die beiden Aufgaben. Die Lösungen findest du in der gelben Mappe. oder Nimm dein Deutschbuch und mache die Leseaufgaben auf den Seiten 32, 45 und 92. Die Lösungen findest du in der gelben Mappe.	P	☺(☺)	SK	☐
2) Schreiben Hole dir die Schreibübung für die B1-Prüfung. Suche dir Variante A oder B aus und schreibe ein E-Mail. oder Hole dir das AB „Schreiben“ und schreibe zwei kurze Texte mit verschiedenen Textanfängen.	P	☺	L	☐
3) Verbessere deinen Text.	P	☺	L	☐
4) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	☺	L	☐
Material: AB „Schreiben“, „B1 Schreiben“, „B1 Lesen“, Buch „Schritte Plus B1.1“				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i> Leoben, am Unterschrift				

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kann verschiedene Leseaufgaben auf dem Niveau B1 selbstständig bearbeiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ein E-Mail schreiben und verschieden Fragen beantworten. oder – Ich kann meine Meinung in einem kurzen Text erklären.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

8.3 English Assignments

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 11. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 4	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 15. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Englisch <i>Ordering at a restaurant</i>	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1) Schreibe dir 3-5 englische Wörter für jede Stufe der Ernährungspyramide auf. Die Vokabeln im Buch auf S. 218-219 helfen dir dabei.	P	☺☺	L	☐
2a) Fülle die Arbeitsblätter vom British Council aus. Den Link für die Listening findest du im Kästchen Material und Hilfsmittel. Die Lösungen sind in der roten Mappe.	P	☺(☺)	SK	☐
2b) Erledige die Aufgaben im Buch auf S. 72.	P	☺☺	SK	☐
3a) Lerne die Vokabeln aus dem Wortfeld „Food & drink“ auf S. 218-219 im Buch.	P	☺(☺)	T (29.11.)	☐
3b) Gehe auf Learningapps.org und mache die Übungen im Ordner „Food“.	W	☺	SK	☐
3c) Erstelle deine eigene Learningapp zum Thema „Food“.	W	☺(☺)	L	☐
4a) Schreibe einen Dialog mit 2-3 Personen in einem Restaurant. Jeder Gast soll mind. ein Getränk, eine Hauptspeise und ein Dessert bestellen. Die Phrasen im Buch auf S. 72-73 helfen dir dabei. Du kannst die Speisekarte auf S. 136 oder vom Arbeitsblatt verwenden.	P	☺☺(☺)	L	☐
4b) Übe den Dialog und spiele ihn in der nächsten Englischstunde der Klasse vor.	W	☺☺(☺)	L	☐
5) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	☺	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: AB “Vocabulary: restaurants”, “Listening skills practice: Eating out”, https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening/elementary-a2-listening/eating-out , Buch, Learningapps.org, Handy, Wörterbücher				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i>				
Leoben, am		Unterschrift		

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kenne viele englische Wörter für Essen und Trinken und kann sie schreiben und aussprechen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann englische Speisekarten verstehen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann auf Englisch in einem Restaurant bestellen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 18. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 6	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 22. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Englisch Food & drinks, Grammar revision	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1a) Hole dir die Vokabelliste „Food & drinks“ aus dem Fach. Suche dir 10-15 neue Wörter aus, markiere sie und schreibe sie in dein Vokabelheft. Das sind deine Lernwörter.	P	☺	SK	☐
1b) Hole dir das AB „Vocabulary exercise“ und ordne die Wörter aus der Liste den Gruppen zu. Die Lösung findest du in der roten Mappe.	P	☺	SK	☐
1c) Nimm einen leeren Zettel, schreibe deine Lernwörter auf und zeichne ein Bild von jedem Wort. Drehe den Zettel um und schreibe mit jedem Wort einen Satz. Lies dir die Sätze laut vor. Wenn du nicht weißt, wie man ein Wort ausspricht, kannst du es dir in einem Online-Wörterbuch anhören (de.pons.com, dict.cc).	P	☺	SK	☐
1d) Suche dir eine/n Partner/in und kontrolliert gemeinsam eure Sätze. Fragt euch gegenseitig eure Lernwörter ab.	P	☺☺	SK	☐
2a) Gehe auf Learningapps.org und mache alle Übungen im Klassenordner „Englisch – Vocabulary – Food“.	P	☺	SK	☐
2b) Erstelle deine eigene Learningapp. Benutze die Wörter von der Vokabelliste.	W	☺(☺)	L	☐
3) Hole dir das AB „Exercises Unit 5“ und mache die Grammatikübungen. Die Lösung findest du im Buch „Essential Grammar in Use“.	P	☺☺	SK	☐

4) Schreibe deine Lernwörter nochmal auf und kontrolliere sie. Wenn du ein Wort falsch geschrieben hast, schreib es 3 Mal richtig auf.	P	😊	SK	☐
5) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	😊	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: Vokabelliste „Food & drinks“, Vokabelheft, AB „Vocabulary exercise“, Learningapps.org, Handy, Buch „Essential Grammar in Use“				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i>				
Leoben, am		Unterschrift		

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kenne verschiedene Methoden, um Vokabeln zu lernen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann meine Lernwörter schreiben und aussprechen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann Fragen, Verneinungen und Aussagesätze in der Simple Present schreiben.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 18. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 6+	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 22. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Englisch	
	Food & drinks, Grammar revision	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1a) Take the vocabulary list „Food & drinks“ and choose 15 new words. Highlight these words and write them in your vocabulary notebook. Those are your study words.	P	😊	SK	☐
1b) Take an empty paper, write down your study words and draw a picture of each word. Turn the paper around and use each word in a sentence. Read the sentences out loud. If you are not sure how to say a word, you can listen to it online (de.pons.com, dict.cc).	P	😊	SK	☐
1c) Find a partner and check your sentences. Ask each other your study words.	P	😊😊	SK	☐

1d) Think about 5-6 groups for the words on the vocabulary list. Write down the groups and the words. If you know more words for a group, you can also write them down.	P	😊😊	L	☐
2a) Go on Learningapps.org and do all the exercises in the folder „English – Vocabulary - Food“.	P	😊	SK	☐
2b) Create your own Learningapp. Use the words from the vocabulary list.	W	😊(😊)	L	☐
3) Choose a grammar exercise: “word order” or “and, but, or, so because”. Read the explanation and do the exercises. You can find the solution in the back of the book „Essential Grammar in Use“.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
4) Write down your study words and check them. If you made a mistake, write the correct word 3 times.	P	😊	SK	☐
5) Read the learning goals and tick.	P	😊	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: Vokabelliste „Food & drinks“, Vokabelheft, AB „Vocabulary exercise“, Learningapps.org, Handy, Buch „Essential Grammar in Use“				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i>				
Leoben, am		Unterschrift		

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich verstehe die Aufgabenstellungen in Englisch.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kenne verschiedene Methoden, um Vokabeln zu lernen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann meine Lernwörter schreiben und aussprechen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann mich selbstständig mit einem Grammatikthema auseinandersetzen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 25. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 9	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 29. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Englisch Food & Family, Speaking	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1) Hole dir das AB „Let’s talk about food“. Suche dir 6 Fragen aus. Frage deine/n Partner/in und beantworte seine/ihre Fragen. Wechselt euch ab.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
2) Hole dir die AB vom British Council und mache alle Aufgaben. Das Video findest du unter: https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/speaking/elementary-a2-speaking/talking-about-your-family Die Lösung findest du in der roten Mappe.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
3) Sucht euch ein Spiel zum Thema „family“ oder „food“ aus und übt die Vokabeln für den Test.	W	😊😊(😊)	SK	☐
4) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	😊	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: AB „Let’s talk about food“, „British Council“, Handy, Laptop, Kopfhörer, Wortspiele (Quiz, Memory, Board game etc.)				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i> Leoben, am Unterschrift				

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kann gut mit einem/r Partner/in zusammenarbeiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann Fragen zum Thema Essen auf Englisch beantworten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann die wichtigsten Informationen in einem kurzen Gespräch über Familie verstehen.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 25. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 9+	 ePSA-Klasse Name:
Abgabetermin: Fr, 29. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fach: Englisch Food & Family, Speaking	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1) Take the worksheets from the British Council and do all exercises. Here is the link for the video: https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/speaking/elementary-a2-speaking/talking-about-your-family You can find the solution in the red folder.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
2) Take the worksheet „Let’s talk about food & drinks”. Choose 8 questions for your partner and answer his/her questions. You can also make up your own questions.	P	😊😊	SK	☐
3) Choose one of the games about „family“ or „food“ and practise the words for the vocabulary quiz.	W	😊😊😊	SK	☐
4) Read the learning goals and tick.	P	😊	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: AB „Let’s talk about food & drinks”, “British Council”, Handy, Laptop, Kopfhörer, Wortspiele (Quiz, Memory, Board game etc.)				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i> Leoben, am Unterschrift				

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich verstehe die Aufgabenstellungen in Englisch.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann gut mit einem/r Partner/in zusammenarbeiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann Fragen über Essen und Trinken auf Englisch beantworten.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich verstehe ein kurzes Gespräch über das Thema Familie.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann ...	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

8.4 Biology Assignments

Arbeitsbeginn: Mo, 11. Nov. 2019	Cooperatives Offenes Lernen Arbeitsauftrag 2	 ePSA-Klasse
Abgabetermin: Fr, 15. Nov. 2019 um 12:20	Fächer: <i>Gesundheit & Soziales / Natur</i> Ernährung und Organe	

Aufgabenstellungen	Art	Sozialform	Kontrolle	Erfüllt
1a) Bearbeite das Arbeitsblatt „Wiederholung Ernährung“. Die Lösung findest du in der grünen Mappe.	P	☺	SK	☐
1b) Suche dir eine(n) Partner(in) und erkläre ihm/ihr die Ernährungspyramide. Nenne Beispiele für jede Stufe. Du kannst sie dir vorher gerne aufzeichnen, wenn das einfacher für dich ist.	P	☺☺	SK	☐
1c) Fülle das Arbeitsblatt „Getreide benennen“ aus. Beschrifte zuerst die Getreidearten, die du schon kennst. Danach kannst du im Internet nachschauen. Das Lösungsblatt findest du in der grünen Mappe.	W	☺(☺)	SK	☐
2a) Bearbeite die Arbeitsblätter „Wiederholung Herz und Lunge“ ohne Hilfsmittel! Die Lösungen findest du in der grünen Mappe.	P	☺☺	SK	☐
2b) Wenn du die Atmung und den Blutkreislauf noch nicht ganz verstanden hast, schau dir die Bilder im Buch „Der Körper“ an und lies dir die Texte durch. Du kannst dir auch auf YouTube die Videos „KIT for Kids: Wie funktioniert das Herz?“ und „Lern-Videoclip 2: Wir atmen“ anschauen.	W	☺(☺)	SK	☐
3) Lies die Lernziele durch und kreuze ehrlich an, was zutrifft.	P	☺	L	☐
Material und Hilfsmittel: AB „Wiederholung Ernährung“, „Wiederholung Herz und Lunge“, „Getreide benennen“, Lösungsblätter, Buch „Der Körper“, YouTube				
<i>Ich habe den Arbeitsauftrag gelesen, verstanden und gewissenhaft durchgeführt.</i> Leoben, am Unterschrift				

LERNZIELE	1	2	3	4
– Ich kenne die wichtigsten Wörter zu den Themen Ernährung, Herz und Lunge.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann die Ernährungspyramide erklären.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann den Blutkreislauf aufzeichnen und erklären.	☐	☐	☐	☐
– Ich kann die Atmung erklären.	☐	☐	☐	☐
1 = erreicht 2 = weitgehend erreicht 3 = teilweise erreicht 4 = nicht erreicht				

8.5 Templates for Peer Feedback

Feedback Sprechen

von _____ für _____

Aufgabe 1

	Ja	Nein
Er/Sie stellt mindestens eine Frage.	☐	☐
Er/Sie hört gut zu und kann die Fragen beantworten.	☐	☐

Aufgabe 2

	Ja	Nein
Er/Sie kann die 3 Aussagen in eigenen Worten zusammenfassen.	☐	☐
Er/Sie kann seine/ihre Meinung über das Thema sagen.	☐	☐

Aufgabe 3

	Ja	Nein
Er/Sie kann seine/ihre Ideen erklären.	☐	☐
Er/Sie hört gut zu und reagiert auf den/die Partner/in.	☐	☐

Das könntest du verbessern:

Das hast du gut gemacht:

Feedback zum Thema:

Er/Sie hat das Thema gut erklärt.



Er/Sie hat meine Fragen gut beantwortet.

Das Plakat hat mir gut gefallen.

Warum? _____

Eine Information, die ich mir gemerkt habe:

8.6 Learning Log

Lernprotokoll von _____ am _____

1. Was will ich heute machen?

2. Was habe ich heute gemacht?

Arbeitsauftrag Nr. _____ Aufgabe(n) Nr. _____

3. Wie schwer war das für mich?



4. Was war schwierig?

5. Wie sehr habe ich mich angestrengt?



6. Habe ich geschafft, was ich wollte?



7. Warum habe ich (nicht) alles geschafft?

Weil _____

8. Wie fühle ich mich jetzt?



8.7 Template for the Class Council

Cooperatives Offenes Lernen		 talente ENTWICKLUNG ePSA-Klasse
Klassenratsprotokoll Nr.		
Datum:	von: bis:	

Moderator/in:	
Protokollführer/innen:	
Beobachter/innen:	
Abwesend:	
Ablauf:	1. Protokoll vorlesen 2. Themen sammeln 3. Diskussion, Lösungsvorschläge, Beschlüsse 4. Zusammenfassung

Protokoll	
Unterschrift Protokollführer/in	Unterschrift Moderator/in

8.8 Questionnaire

Lies die Fragen genau durch und beantworte sie so ehrlich wie möglich.

Allgemein

	<i>stimme völlig zu</i>	<i>stimme eher zu</i>	<i>weder noch</i>	<i>stimme eher nicht zu</i>	<i>stimme nicht zu</i>
Ich mag COOL.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe mich in den COOL Stunden wohl gefühlt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich konnte mir selbst aussuchen, wann ich welche Aufgabe mache.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich konnte mir meinen Arbeitsplatz selbst aussuchen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe in den COOL Stunden konzentriert gearbeitet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich konnte in meinem eigenen Tempo arbeiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich kann mich durch COOL besser an das Gelernte erinnern.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Arbeitsaufträge

	<i>stimme völlig zu</i>	<i>stimme eher zu</i>	<i>weder noch</i>	<i>stimme eher nicht zu</i>	<i>stimme nicht zu</i>
Die Arbeitsaufträge waren übersichtlich gestaltet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe die Aufgabenstellungen/ Erklärungen verstanden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Aufgaben waren einfach.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich hatte genug Zeit, um alle Aufgaben zu erledigen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Es war einfach, zu sagen, wie gut ich die Lernziele erreicht habe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1. Welche Arbeitsaufträge hast du meistens gewählt?

- ☐ Einfach ☐ Schwierig (z.B. 9+ in Englisch)

2. Warum hast du diese Arbeitsaufträge gewählt?

Kooperatives Lernen

	<i>stimme völlig zu</i>	<i>stimme eher zu</i>	<i>weder noch</i>	<i>stimme eher nicht zu</i>	<i>stimme nicht zu</i>
Ich habe mir meine PartnerInnen selbst ausgesucht.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe mit unterschiedlichen Personen zusammengearbeitet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Es war einfach, jemanden für die Partnerarbeit/Gruppenarbeit zu finden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Warum war es einfach/schwierig?					
Zusammen konnten wir die Aufgaben schneller erledigen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich konnte den anderen helfen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Partnerarbeit/Gruppenarbeit hat mir Spaß gemacht.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Lernprotokoll

	<i>stimme völlig zu</i>	<i>stimme eher zu</i>	<i>weder noch</i>	<i>stimme eher nicht zu</i>	<i>stimme nicht zu</i>
Ich habe alle Fragen im Lernprotokoll verstanden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Das Lernprotokoll hat mir geholfen, meine Arbeit zu organisieren.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Das Lernprotokoll hat mir geholfen, über mein Lernverhalten nachzudenken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Fazit

1. Was magst du an COOL?

2. Was magst du nicht an COOL?

3. Möchtest du mit COOL weitermachen?

☐ Ja ☐ Weiß nicht ☐ Nein

Wenn du „Ja“ angekreuzt hast, beantworte bitte die nächsten zwei Fragen.

4. In welchen Fächern hättest du gerne COOL?

☐ Deutsch ☐ Gesundheit & Soziales ☐ Geografie
☐ Mathematik ☐ Natur ☐ Geschichte
☐ Berufsorientierung ☐ Technik ☐ Englisch

5. Wie viele Stunden pro Woche hättest du gerne COOL?

_____ Stunden

Klassenrat

	<i>stimme völlig zu</i>	<i>stimme eher zu</i>	<i>weder noch</i>	<i>stimme eher nicht zu</i>	<i>stimme nicht zu</i>
Im Klassenrat können wir gut über unsere Ideen sprechen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Klassenrat können wir gut über Probleme in der Klasse sprechen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Klassenrat kann ich meine eigene Meinung sagen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Im Klassenrat hören wir einander gut zu.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1. Möchtest du weiterhin einen Klassenrat haben?

- ☐ Ja ☐ Weiß nicht ☐ Nein

Wenn du „Ja“ angekreuzt hast, beantworte bitte die nächste Frage.

2. Wie oft hättest du gerne einen Klassenrat?

- ☐ Einmal pro Woche
☐ Alle zwei Wochen
☐ Einmal pro Monat
☐ Sonstiges: _____

Angaben zur Person

1. Geschlecht:

- ☐ männlich ☐ weiblich

2. Alter:

_____ Jahre

3. Wie lange bist du in deinem Heimatland in die Schule gegangen?

ca. _____ Jahre

4. An wie vielen COOL-Tagen warst du in der Schule? (siehe Anwesenheitsliste)

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ 2 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 6 | ☐ 8 (immer) |
| ☐ 3 | ☐ 5 | ☐ 7 | |

Falls du noch etwas über COOL sagen möchtest, kannst du das hier tun:

Vielen Dank für deine Hilfe!

8.9 English Abstract

This diploma thesis describes an attempt to establish the pedagogical concept of COOL in a preparatory course for the ePSA. The course was mainly attended by asylum seekers who have limited opportunities to work or receive an education in Austria. To satisfy the requirements and needs of COOL and this particular target group, certain structures and procedures of the ePSA must be changed, which is discussed in the first section of this paper. The second part focuses on the practical implementation of COOL in an ePSA course on the basis of action research. The benefits of COOL for heterogenous groups as well as the positive effect on the participants' autonomy are examined. In addition, the preparatory and follow-up work for teachers is addressed. The findings show that an effective implementation of COOL in preparatory courses for the ePSA requires careful consideration of the effort and benefit.

8.10 German Abstract

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschreibt einen Praxisversuch, dem das pädagogische Konzept COOL zugrunde liegt. Im Zuge eines Vorbereitungskurses für den ePSA, der fast ausschließlich von AsylwerberInnen besucht wurde, welche in Österreich nur geringe Beschäftigungs- und Bildungsmöglichkeiten haben, konnte COOL ausprobiert werden. Um den Ansprüchen von COOL und dieser besonderen Zielgruppe gerecht zu werden, müssen die Abläufe und Strukturen innerhalb des ePSA allerdings in einigen Bereichen abgeändert werden, was im ersten Teil der Arbeit erläutert wird. Im zweiten Teil wird auf Basis der Aktionsforschung gezeigt, wie COOL in einem ePSA Kurs implementiert werden kann. Vorteile dieses Konzeptes für heterogene Gruppen sowie positive Auswirkungen auf die Eigenverantwortung und Selbstständigkeit der SchülerInnen werden ebenso beschrieben. Zudem wird auf die Vor- und Nachbereitungsarbeit der Lehrpersonen eingegangen. Schlussendlich zeigt das Fazit, dass eine gründliche Abwägung des Aufwandes und des Nutzens nötig ist, um in dieser Bildungsmaßnahme das Konzept COOL zielführend anwenden zu können.