

LESLLA Symposium Proceedings



Recommended citation of this article

Markov, S. (2013). Counselling of L2 Literacy Learners in German Integration Courses with a Literacy Component. *LESLLA Symposium Proceedings*, 8(1), 65–83.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8021846>

Citation for LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

This article is part of a collection of articles based on presentations from the 2012 Symposium held at University of Jyväskylä in Jyväskylä, Finland. Please note that the year of publication is often different than the year the symposium was held. We recommend the following citation when referencing the edited collection.

Tammelin-Laine, T., Nieminen, L., & Martin, M. (Eds.) (2013). *Low-educated second language and literacy acquisition (LESLLA): Proceedings of the 8th symposium*. Jyväskylä University Printing House.

<https://lesllasp.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/lesllasp/issue/view/473>

About the Organization

LESLLA aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy.

LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

<https://lesllasp.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org>

Website

<https://www.leslla.org/>

4 COUNSELLING OF L2 LITERACY LEARNERS IN GERMAN INTEGRATION COURSES WITH A LITERACY COMPONENT

Stefan Markov & Christiane Scheithauer, Universität Leipzig

Abstract

Learning difficulties have been identified as one major reason for unsuccessful learning by teachers for German as a second language (GSL) within the field of integration courses. The authors of this paper argue that counselling L2 literacy learners is an effective opportunity for an individual handling of learning difficulties. Language counselling as an approach, which is widespread at universities, enables the individual development of learner autonomy. We consider the establishment and advancement of learning strategies as most promising variable within the counselling process. This paper presents a concept of counselling L2 literacy learners established within the project Leipzig learning counselling in integration courses with a literacy based component. Our approach combines a concept of preconditions of learning difficulties with central ideas of language counselling concepts.

Keywords: learning counselling, learning difficulties, learning strategies, L2 literacy learners

4.1 Introduction

With the establishment of an integration course system in 2005 by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) German as a Second Language (GSL) has been organized centrally for the first time in German history. LESLLA learners were not only left out of the conversation in the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). They were also not considered in the early stage of the development of the course system. Feldmeier (2008) points out, before the implementation of literacy integration courses, even with a tradition of L1 literacy education in Germany, nearly no scholarly publications existed in the field of L2 literacy learning.

According to a report (BAMF 2012), 1.2 billion Euros had been spent on establishing a national system of language courses until 2012. This high investment can be considered as an indicator of political willingness to integrate former guest-workers, who at this point had become long-term residents, but also new immigrants.⁷ Learners of German today have the opportunity, and in some cases, the obligation, to attend up to 660 course hours in general German language courses and up to 1260 course hours in literacy courses.⁸

Since the new established integration course system includes courses for learners with special needs, a systematic improvement of the opportunities for LESLLA learners has been planned in terms of quality and quantity, including an increased course volume of up to 1260 course hours, curricula for literacy courses (BAMF 2008), further qualification for literacy teachers, and comprehensive development of new course material. On the other hand, due to the relatively short existence of a separate offer for LESLLA learners, the development of more group-oriented materials is still at the onset and more research in the field of applied linguistics, socio-psychology, and didactics is needed. A recent study indicates that the literacy courses are not yet meeting the set goals (Schuller, Lochner, Rother, & Hörner 2012: 47). While the target of the regular integration courses is level B1 (CEFR) according to the BAMF (2008: 11), the level A2 is aimed for in literacy courses. According to Schuller et al. (2012), there are deficiencies especially in reading and writing. Only about half of the learners (reading 46.6%, writing 54.8%) are able to reach the level A1. Also literacy teachers report an unsatisfying outcome for several learners. If learners do not make the expected progress within the course, learning difficulties are usually cited as the cause.

In 2010, literacy teachers and language schools expressed this particular issue to researchers at the Herder-Institute at the Leipzig University, and intended to find a solution for learners with special needs. In order to meet

⁷ For a historical overview of German as a second language and L2 literacy in Germany see Feldmeier 2008 and Schramm 2011.

⁸ In 2007 new regulation became effective, taking the special needs of learners into account. As a result the course system can be divided into general integration courses, courses for young adults, remedial courses, intensive courses, courses for parents and/or mothers and literacy courses (see BAMF 2012).

these demands, we established a learning counselling program, and started the project *LeLeBe – Leipziger Lernberatung in Integrationskursen mit Alphabetisierung* [Leipzig learning counselling in integration courses with a literacy component] in April 2012 which is co-financed by the European Integration Fund and the Robert Bosch Foundation. Within a period of two years, the project plan is to develop a counselling concept to support potentials of autonomy for learners and their individual language acquisition process. Based on a resource-oriented approach, we plan to develop materials and procedures in the fields of diagnostics and counselling. We argue that most of the learning difficulties occurring in the integration and other L2 literacy courses are a result of the individual learning biographies. Consequently, the research question of the project is, whether a training of learning strategies within the counselling process will reduce learner's learning difficulties. The effect of the learning strategies will be evaluated within the project.

Defining the theoretical background of the project in the second section of this paper, we will give a brief introduction into the field of learning difficulties and present the counselling concepts that we found helpful for the development of the LeLeBe concept. In the third section, we will introduce the project with its goals and present sample materials involved in counselling.

4.2 Theoretical Framework of Preconditions of Learning Difficulties

This section presents the theoretical background of the project, starting with learning difficulties and their preconditions. This perspective helps to understand the background of psychological strain of learners with limited learning success and is a vantage point for a resource-oriented approach. Subsequently we will present the origins of learning counselling.

4.2.1 Learning Difficulties and Their Preconditions

According to Zielinski, learning difficulties occur when the performance of a learner is below the tolerable deviations of binding institutional, social and individual reference standards (Zielinski 1996: 370). In the context of L2 literacy learning, learning difficulties prevent learners from reaching their personal technical and functional goals (e.g., reading a process sheet at work) and/or the course goals (e.g., blending phonemes and syllables), even though the learner attends the course regularly. Difficulties may occur temporarily or last a long time and range from specific to comprehensive.

Terminology in the context of learning difficulties can be either typological or dimensional. During the last decades typological concepts dominated

academic discussions⁹. Even though borderline cases are difficult to handle within typologies and interventions are challenging to plan, when diagnostic results, for example, do not indicate whether someone is “still dyslexic” or “already learning-disabled”, this type of classification still dominates current terminology. We also argue that in the process of L2 literacy learning it is ethically problematic to categorise learners with problems, especially if there is no adequate intervention or educational follow-up support.

In contrast to typological conceptions, dimensional terminology organises learning difficulties or problems on a continuum. Klauer & Lauth (1997) suggest the systematisation of learning difficulties on two dimensions, independent of their severity: the dimension of amplitude (partial/area-specific vs. general/comprehensive) and the dimension of time (temporary vs. long-term).

According to Klauer & Lauth (1997: 704), long-term difficulties are resistant to successful intervention. This understanding has a direct impact on educational practice: on the one hand, teachers in literacy courses as well as counsellors need to set boundaries with regards to their educational responsibility. Learners can be partially assisted with adequate materials, as is the case for dyslexia, but the anticipated success must be appropriate. The more we know about how to handle specific difficulties, on the other hand, the better teachers and counsellors may confront difficulties within the classroom and improve the learners’ situation.

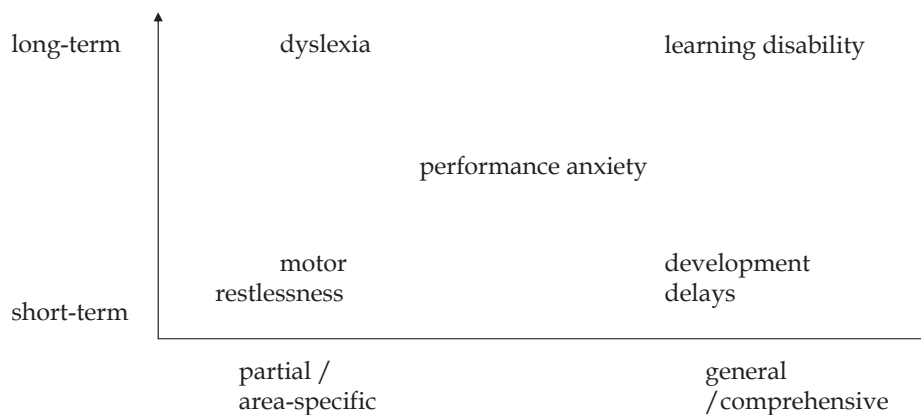


FIGURE 1 Dimensional classification of learning difficulties (Source: Klauer & Lauth 1997: 704, translated by the authors).

In educational practice or counselling sessions, there is a need (1) to identify the problem, and (2) to reflect its multifaceted preconditions. Within the project, learning difficulties range from grapho-motoric issues or permanent problems in reading consonant clusters to low motivation or attention deficits.

⁹ For a remedial education perspective in terms of terminological diversity, see Klauer & Lauth 1997:702.

The theoretical framework for the preconditions of learning difficulties in the project LeLeBe is based on central assumptions by Klauer & Lauth (1997). Their understanding of performance problems is widely accepted within the domain of remedial education and special education. Referring to the authors' analysis of preconditions, we also distinguish between four perspectives on preconditions:

1. cognitive and actional perspective
2. motivational perspective
3. socio-ecological perspective
4. clinical perspective.

Using these conditions as a frame for the analysis of occurring phenomena proved to be helpful in the practice of learning counselling. We assume that performance problems are in most cases not caused by one single aspect. Instead a combination of the conditions stemming from the four perspectives, such as a lack of learning strategies, deviating expectations and educational culture (socialisation), should be considered.

Cognition and Action

The quality of information processing and subsequent learning success primarily depend on the successful use of learning strategies (Gold 2011: 37). The development, use and monitoring of strategies are dependent mainly on metacognitive processes, which are responsible for the effective use of the strategies (Klauer & Lauth 1997: 707). We operate on the assumption that the authors' insight is also true for literacy learners. Accordingly, literacy learners possess a limited quantity of learning strategies as a result of comparably restricted support of metacognitive activity during the educational processes in the primary and secondary socialisation. In fact, inefficient learners are characterised by a limited number of learning strategies; their learning results are worse than those of learners who show a comparably high range of such strategies. Additionally, not only the knowledge *about*, but also the effective use *of* learning strategies is important for successful learning. Literacy learners might for instance not be able to use strategies spontaneously and situationally adequate but rather only when supported.

Moreover, learning strategies, rudimentary knowledge and previous experiences are important components in learning success. In our context, we expect that insufficient knowledge appears to correspond with the individual learning biography (Zielinski 1998) and an inconsistent educational background, which has a significant impact on literacy learning. In combination with deficient metacognitive knowledge, a learner might not reflect the reasons for acquiring learning strategies, setting personal learning goals or planning activities to achieve goals. In the context of L2 literacy learning, we also want to emphasise phonological awareness and learners L1 as additional factors that

affect learning. Phonological awareness is a precondition to reading and will impede language acquisition if not sufficiently developed (see section 4.3).

Motivation

While the lack of learning-relevant knowledge, strategies and previous experiences are important predictors of learning success or failure, motivation is one key component in the acquisition of cognitive factors. Consequently, we emphasise the close relationship between the two perspectives.

Therefore, if literacy learning is without success, negative attributions (“I fail, because I am unable to learn it”) will harm self-efficacy and the consequent acquisition of avoidance strategies will result in an increased probability in the future. These strategies fulfil the essential function of protecting self-efficacy (Grawe 2004: 278–280). Consequently, goal-oriented activities will become less probable and learning even less efficient and successful. However, there is evidence for a close correlation between learning strategies and the improvement of positive motivation. To break the vicious circle, teachers or learning counsellors need to reflect the learners’ specific learning situation and guide them to learn more about strategies and how to effectively use them. Klauer & Lauth, however, suggest training in problem solving. They developed their own training programs, inspired by Feuerstein’s Instrumental Enrichment Program¹⁰.

Socio-ecological Perspective

Considering that learning strategies and basic knowledge are imparted through social mediation processes, a socio-ecological perspective is given an important role concerning learning difficulties. Families, who do not ascribe a high value to education or do not have sufficient metacognitive learning strategies themselves as a result of their primary, secondary and tertiary socialisation, will most likely not support their own relatives in the learning process. In terms of social reproduction, the milieu of the learner will display a significant impact on the learners’ orientation, motivation, effective transfer of basic knowledge, learning strategies, as well as the direction of attentiveness. This, of course is a specifically Euro-centric perspective, as the theoretical construct of learning difficulties results from the social consensus of the “western” achievement-oriented society. Moreover “patterns of language learning in any community are in accord with and mutually reinforce other cultural patterns” (Heath 1983: 344). Reading and writing, for instance, may occur far less in interaction than oral conversation and the ways of learning, problem solving and use of strategies may differ from our cultural expectations, which can be misinterpreted as learning difficulties.

Even though the importance of the socio-ecological factors in language acquisition is no longer disputed, the impact of learning counselling on the social environment of learners, however, remains very limited.

¹⁰ For further explanation see also Feuerstein, Rand, & Tannenbaum (1979).

Clinical Perspective

Aside from the conditions that have been discussed previously, neurological (e.g. dementia, migraines) or psychological issues, such as traumata or depression can influence language acquisition. Furthermore, medication in case of mental or other diseases will also affect learning. This perspective, however, will not be considered within the project, as treatment is best provided by professionals in the domain of clinical psychology, medicine and other fields.

Conclusively, we expect that most of the learning difficulties occurring in integration and other L2 literacy courses are a result of the individual learning biographies. Consequently, we suggest counselling as an efficient opportunity to support the development of learners.

4.2.2 Origins of Learning Counselling

The concept of promoting learners' autonomy as a goal of the learning process can be traced back to Knowles' (1975: 18) idea of self-directed learning in the 1970s which could be seen as the origin of a variety of self-learning approaches, e.g., tandem language learning and language counselling/advising.¹¹ Several studies have shown the development of counselling approaches at self-access centres of universities (Kelly 1996; Voller, Martyn, & Pickard 1999; Pemberton, Toogood, Ho, & Lam 2001). Core-elements of these concepts are inter alia clarifying needs, goal-setting, monitoring the learning process and self-assessment. However, previous research in learning counselling has failed to address LESLLA learners with their individual needs. Developing a concept and materials for counselling L2 literacy learners, which are empirically tested, the project LeLeBe aims to fill this research gap.

In Germany, two types of learning counselling have been developed: On the one side, counselling concepts for the area of vocational training and education were developed, with primary focus on individuals with low education. Kemper & Klein (1998) linked their concept to Holzkamp's learning theory and his construct of expansive learning. It aims to support learning management competences, while considering the individual learning biography (Klein & Reutter 2011: 15). The authors argue that, aside from other aspects, learning conferences, learning diaries, learning counselling consultations, and feedback are the core-elements of a concept for learning counselling (Klein 2004: 93). On the other side, Kleppin & Mehlhorn (2006) developed a concept for learning counselling in the context of academic language acquisition. Similarly to the concept of Kemper & Klein (1998), counselling aims to support learners to take responsibility for their own learning. (See Kleppin & Mehlhorn 2006: 1.) Consequently, learning counselling can contribute to learners' autonomy by a) encouraging reflexion of learning b) supporting the reflexion of one's own needs and institutional requirements and c) encouraging collective learning

¹¹ The terms 'language counselling' and 'language advising' are used interchangeably (see Voller et al. 1999; Crabbe/ Hoffmann /Cotteral 2001).

(Vogler 2011: 21). Overall, the authors' approach is based on Carl Rogers' (1994) principle of non-directiveness and voluntary participation.

LESLLA learners are at the intersection of the target groups of both concepts: While participants of the Kemper & Klein counselling concept are low educated but not in the process of L2 language acquisition, the Kleppin & Mehlhorn concept of learning counselling addresses highly educated L2 learners.

LeLeBe participants on the other hand, are basically low educated, illiterate and characterised by having learning difficulties. Therefore, counselling in integration courses requires a unique concept, which considers the preconditions for language learning of until now disregarded learners.

We argue that most of the principles of both concepts are valid in the LESLLA context as well, even though we consider a more directive treatment to be more effective, because metacognitive strategies that are needed for non-directive counselling, often need to be initiated first. LeLeBe includes different elements of both concepts:

- the aim of strengthening learning management competences and supporting self-directed learning with specific consideration of the learning biography (Kemper & Klein 1998)
- reflection of participants' attitudes towards learning in the L2 acquisition process, setting goals, a selection of learning strategies, self-evaluation of the learning process and the attempt to strengthen self-confidence and motivation (Kleppin & Mehlhorn 2006).

Owing to the demands of LESLLA learners, our concept is, moreover, diagnostically based, linguistically grounded and primarily directed towards written language acquisition (see section 4.4).

4.3 Project LeLeBe – Leipzig Learning Counselling in Integration Courses with a Literacy Component

In this section we introduce the project with its goals and present the learning counselling in practice.

4.3.1 Goals of the LeLeBe Project

We began the project LeLeBe in order to confront learning difficulties within individual semi-directive counselling sessions. As evident in the concepts above, we aim to improve autonomous learning and the transfer of learning strategies for further learning and to enable learners to more successfully participate in integration courses.

The LeLeBe project includes three phases: (1) development of diagnostics, (2) intervention/resource activation, and (3) program evaluation. We will

provide a brief overview of the project here and discuss its realisation in more detail in the subsequent section.

Development of Diagnostics

Because there is a lack of materials for our target group, we developed different diagnostic tools within the project or adjusted existing methods for our purposes and target group. The inventory includes observation sheets for mnemonic functions (attention and concentration), visual differentiation and grapho-motoric skills, a biography of learning¹², a learning progress assessment (assessment of reading and writing skills and of phonological awareness), a test for phonological awareness and a learning style assessment.

We are aware of the fact that most of the tests are culture-specific and results may be affected by the individual cultural background. Apart from the observation sheets, which are only used in very specific cases, diagnostics within the learning counselling is based on an intense, if necessary L1-based, communicative process in order to minimize these effects. Biographical data, for example, is strictly collected and evaluated in dialogue with the participants, and, if necessary, a translator.

Intervention/Resource Activation¹³

In section two, we focused on learning difficulties and their preconditions. We assume that only focusing on deficits and problem activation is not sufficient to improve the learners' situation. Consequently, we address learners' resources and focus on individual abilities in order to reduce learning difficulties.

Like Klauer & Lauth (1997), we also consider the training of learning strategies as an effective intervention. We distinguish between metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and social learning strategies. Metacognitive strategies include reflexion about one's own learning process and the use of strategies; cognitive strategies range from asking questions, using visualisations, to memory strategies, while affective strategies include motivation control or individual goal setting (Friedrich & Mandl 2005: 5), and social strategies involve the role of family in terms of family literacy. For each category, there are several examples. The categories of strategies, however, show an interesting correspondence with the Klauer & Lauth perspectives on learning difficulties, excluding the clinical perspective. We argue that self-directed learning can be prepared by developing the ability to reflect and use strategies.

¹² This instrument will be translated into the three most common languages in literacy courses: Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and it contains many visualisations to better enable conversation.

¹³ Medical socialist Aaron Antonovsky developed an alternative to the most common deficit oriented (pathogenesis) perspective in the early 1970s (see Antonovsky 1997). Not only the cause of disease but the cause of (mental) health was targeted for the first time. This perspective shows relevance for language acquisition, too. In the L2 learning process, a learner needs his existing abilities and knowledge to find a way through his individual labyrinth of difficulties in order to meet his personal goals. The findings described also provided evidence for the effectiveness of therapy. Klaus Grawe & Daniel Gassmann (2006) show in one experiment that therapy which includes resource analysis and resource activation is more effective than therapy with only problem analysis.

Evaluation

In the third phase of the project, we will evaluate the collected data. Furthermore, we plan to edit a guide for learning counsellors in Germany, which shall include diagnostic tools and materials for treatment or course-immanent counselling.

4.4 Learning Counselling in Practice

Here we focus on the process and the materials involved in counselling. First, we will present a possible time schedule for counselling L2 literacy learners. Following, we will discuss the materials used for the counselling.

Process of Counselling

For the initial phase of the project a counselling schedule including the sessions and the corresponding materials has been developed (see Figure 2).

Following traditional counselling concepts we decided on 12 to 15 counselling sessions per learner. The frontal situation of the counselling sessions requires much attention and concentration from the learners, in particular from L2 literacy learners. Thus, the sessions last 30 to 45 minutes and take place once a week. Depending on the learner's needs, an interpreter supports the counselling sessions.

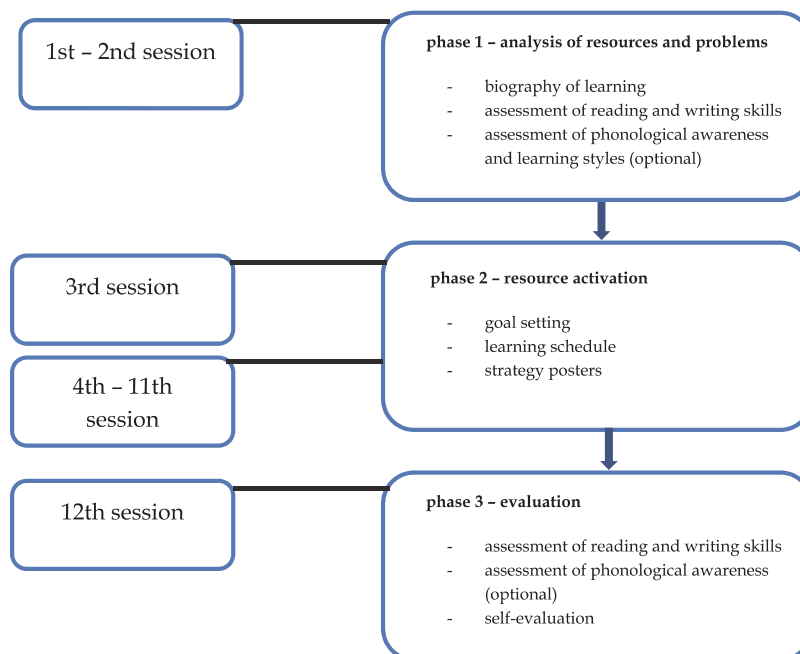


FIGURE 2 Phases of the 12-hour counselling process.

As can be seen from Figure 2, the counselling process consists of three phases. The first phase (1st – 2nd session) focuses on the analysis of resources and problems starting with a conversation about the learner’s learning biography. The first small task for the learner within the counselling is to write a short text about himself. This text forms the basis for the assessment of the writing skills. The assessment of the reading skills is based on a recording in which the learner reads aloud during the first counselling session. Phonological skills and learning styles can be assessed during the 2nd session as well.

During the second phase (3rd – 11th session) we concentrate on resource activation. In the 3rd session we discuss the learners’ goals using a collection of pictures (see more in detail in section Counselling materials). Accordingly, up to three goals are determined. Subsequently, a learning schedule based on the goals is developed and discussed with the learner during the 4th session. The sessions following the goal setting are determined by the introduction and training of learning strategies. According to the goals various strategies including cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies are established by the counsellor. From counselling session to counselling session the learner is asked to fulfil small tasks, e.g., take photos, collect words or texts, and to try out a strategy at home.

The purpose of the last phase (12th session) is to evaluate the counselling process. This includes an assessment of the learning progress (reading and writing skills, possibly phonological awareness) and a self-evaluation about the learner’s satisfaction with regard to achieving the set goals and the counselling process in general.

Counselling Materials

Due to the lack of suitable materials for LESLLA learners we developed most of the counselling materials during the initial phase of the project. We distinguish two kinds of materials for the counselling of L2 literacy learners: Diagnostic materials, which aim to identify resources and problems of the learners, are mostly used at the beginning of the counselling and interventional materials for resource activation are used during the second phase of counselling – the interventional phase. Considering the learners L1 as a great resource and an aid in completing tasks as well, some counselling materials are bilingual. According to the three most frequent first languages of learners in German integration courses with a literacy component, translations in Arabic, Kurdish (Sorani), and Turkish are included in the materials. Table 1 illustrates the developed materials:

TABLE 1 Counselling materials

Diagnostic materials	Interventional materials
- Observation sheets	- Goal setting
- Biography of learning	- Learning schedule
- Learning style assessment	- Learning contract
- Learning progress assessment: <i>Assessment of reading and writing skills</i> <i>Assessment of phonological awareness</i>	- Strategy posters and training materials

In terms of the preconditions of learning difficulties observation sheets for mnemonic functions, such as attention and concentration, visual differentiation and grapho-motoric skills were developed. Because the tool aims to reveal deficits in basic knowledge and abilities, it is used if needed in class by the counsellor or during the counselling sessions.

The biography of learning as a traditional counselling material (Kemper & Klein 1998; Mehlhorn 2005) is to be used during the first counselling sessions. This diagnostic tool aims for the learner and counsellor to become acquainted with each other, mutually build confidence and to learn about the educational background of the learners, their attitude towards learning and as well their learning strategies. The information from the biography may also reveal causes for learning difficulties. As we know, learning does not only occur at school but also in non-educational contexts; the biography, therefore, includes information about the social circumstances of the learners and their profession. The biography of learning consists of three parts: *Me and my family - My first language, My work, My German course*. The material includes questions and statements for the mentioned subjects, is bilingual and includes pictures, which helps to facilitate conversation during the first sessions.

Figure 3 illustrates an example of the tasks in the Turkish - German biography of learning. The task belongs to the part *Me and my family - My first language*. As can be seen in the example, the learner is asked to reflect on his/her written language skills in the first language. The learner can select between *I can read and write: very good - good - bad* by circling the smiley in the table.

5. Anadilim Türkçe.

Meine Muttersprache ist Türkisch.

Neyi ne kadar iyi beceriyorsunuz?
Ich kann ...









yazı okumak lesen 	çok iyi  sehr gut	iyi  gut	iyi değil  nicht gut
yazı yazmak schreiben 	çok iyi  sehr gut	iyi  gut	iyi değil  nicht gut

FIGURE 3 Example of the Turkish-German biography of learning.

To determine learners' perceptual preferences, a learning style assessment was developed which can be used during the first counselling sessions. This tool consists of a bilingual questionnaire based on the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Survey from Reid (1998), an observation of cognitive learning styles according to Ehrmann (1996) and a memory test. Firstly, the results of the assessment aim to stimulate the learner's reflection about his/her learning styles and preferences. Secondly, they allow us to develop materials and strategies based on perceptual preferences.

Within the learning progress assessment we focus on the reading and writing skills and on phonological awareness. In assessing reading and writing skills of learners, we decided to work with a framework composed of can-do-statements, which enables us to identify competences and difficulties at a certain reading and writing level. Because the CEFR was developed for foreign language learners who are able to read and write in their first language, it overlooks the necessary skills for literacy learning such as technical skills, e. g. analysing phonemes of words and blending them. Therefore, the CEFR is not a suitable tool for assessing reading and writing skills. Stockmann (2005: 154) proposes a Framework Literacy for Dutch as a Second language¹⁴ "splitting up level A1 into three smaller parts: Alfa A, Alfa B and Alfa C" and including

¹⁴ Stockmann, Willemijn (2008): Raamwerk Alfabetisering NT2. Arnhem: Citogroup.

technical and functional skills. This Framework can be used for the assessment of reading and writing skills. To assess learners' reading and writing skills, we analyse recordings from the first counselling sessions and written material from the learners.

Due to the fact that phonological awareness is a strong predictor of reading and writing skills (Goswami & Bryant 1990; Küspert 1998), the assessment of phonological skills includes the learning progress assessment as well. It aims to identify potential causes for learning difficulties. Additionally, with the help of the assessment of phonological awareness an individual training programme for phonological skills can be developed. Previous research has shown that phonological awareness of low-literate adult learners – as well as of young children's – develops from syllables, over onsets and rimes to phonemes (Young-Scholten & Strom 2005: 62). Referring to the different levels of phonological awareness and following Schnitzler (2008) and her two-dimensional model of phonological awareness, seven tasks for assessing phonological skills in the first and second language were developed. Furthermore, the tasks were recorded in the learners' first language and in German. Embedding the tasks into the context "My life in Germany", a "learning board" similar to a game board with seven situations, e.g., *my flat* and *at work*, was developed. These materials for the learning progress assessment are used at the beginning of the counselling and during the last sessions as well.

Because we believe that individual goals are very important for learners' motivation, goal setting is a core element in the counselling process. Setting goals for learning is a metacognitive strategy and the basis of every learning process, in particular in autonomous learning. The goals set by the participants form the basis and the context for working on learning difficulties. According to goal setting theory (Latham/Locke 1990), setting demanding and concrete goals in combination with a high degree of goal commitment influence the achievement of the goals. Facing the problem that goals are often unconscious, we developed a method according to the Zurich-Resource-Model (Storch & Krause 2007) using pictures to determine the learners' goals. The focus of the goal setting is a collection of pictures presented to the learner. The selection of the pictures is based on the various life domains of migrants mentioned in the curriculum for German integration courses (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2008). Looking at the pictures the learner is asked to choose the three most important pictures out of the collection. Subsequently, during a conversation about the pictures concrete goals are set in cooperation with the learner. Afterward the learners and counselor discuss potential and existing problems in achieving the set goals.

A learning schedule as a traditional counselling tool is strongly connected with goal setting. First, it aims to organise the learning process for achieving set goals. Secondly, according to Friedrich & Mandl (2006) who emphasised the role of self-controlled learning, planning the learning process is an important step towards the development of metacognitive strategies. Planning includes splitting up the goals into small, feasible tasks, monitoring the learning process

(“Up to what date do I need to complete the tasks?”), evaluating the fulfilled tasks (“How did I manage the tasks?”) and self-regulation (“Do I have to do the task again?”). These processes should be considered while establishing the learning schedule. As can be seen in the sample learning schedule in Figure 4 it was designed like a table consisting of three columns, and split up into tasks (first column: “Das ist zu tun:”), the date until the learner has to complete the task (second column: “Bis wann?”) and a self-evaluation of the completed tasks using the traffic-light-system (third column: “Geschafft?”). The learning schedule is implemented after the goal setting.




Lernplan		
Name:		
Ziel 1: Wörter und Texte für die Schneiderei kennen⁶		
Das ist zu tun: ⁹	Bis wann? ¹⁰	Geschafft? ¹¹
 Wörter und Texte aus der Schneiderei in Afghanistan sammeln ¹²		● ● ●
 Deutsche Wörter und Texte aus der Schneiderei suchen ¹³		
 Deutsche und afghanische Texte vergleichen ¹⁴		

FIGURE 4 Example of a learning schedule¹⁵.

In the course of developing counselling materials a counselling contract with the aim of fixing the goals and creating transparency with regard to the expectations of the learner and counsellor was developed. However, during the counselling sessions it became apparent that this tool is not necessary for our target group.¹⁶¹⁷¹⁸¹⁹²⁰²¹

Since we focus on learning strategies in the counselling concept, methods to present strategies to learners need to be identified. In our opinion, the use of strategy posters is a promising way to introduce and explain new learning strategies to our target group. Due to the kind of media, strategy posters are useful in their visuality and durability in contrast to oral explanations of learning strategies (Schramm 2009: 109–110). In particular these aspects are

¹⁵ Translation: “Goal 1: to know words and texts about tailoring”.

¹⁶ Translation: “This is what I have to do:”

¹⁷ Translation: “Until when?”

¹⁸ Translation: “How did I manage the task?”

¹⁹ Translation: “Collect words and texts about tailoring in Afghanistan”

²⁰ Translation: “Collect German words and texts about tailoring”

²¹ Translation: “Compare German and Afghan texts”

essential in working with L2 literacy learners. The following characteristics should be considered when developing strategy posters for our target group: title of the learning strategy on the poster, using little text on the posters, organising the strategy into small and clear instructions, using meaningful pictures or photos, considering font size and font type with regard to L2 literacy learners (Schramm 2009).

4.5 Conclusion

Facing learning problems and developing self-regulated learning among LESLLA learners, a new approach suggested in this article is the counselling of L2 literacy learners. The central ideas of counselling concepts – regardless of the target group – are the strengthening of autonomous learning, finding new ways for learning, taking responsibility for one's own learning process, as well as recognising and using one's own competences.

Counselling materials such as goal setting and a learning schedule aim to promote the use of metacognitive strategies. During the counselling sessions the introduction and training of learning strategies with regard to the set goals are emphasised. This improves the opportunity to stimulate and encourage learners' autonomy, which plays an important role especially after completing the German course. The counselling materials are tested during the counselling sessions and the project will be empirically evaluated and discussed after having finished the counselling sessions.

Concluding, one great advantage of our counselling concept is its individual character. Based on the reflecting of one's own learning process, improving learning difficulties becomes possible. Thereby, competences of the learners can be uncovered and harnessed to positively promote the literacy process.

REFERENCES

- Antonovsky, A. 1997. *Salutogenese. Zur Entmystifizierung der Gesundheit*. Tübingen: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Verhaltenstherapie.
- BAMF 2012. *Bericht zur Integrationskursgeschäftsstatistik für das Jahr 2011*. [Retrieved 20.01.2013]. Available at http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/Statistiken/2011-quartal4_integrationskursgeschaefsstatistik_bund.pdf?__blob=publicationFile
- Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2008. *Konzept für einen bundesweiten Integrationskurs*. Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.

- Crabbe, D., Hoffmann, A., & Cotteral, S. 2001. Examining the discourse of learner advisory sessions. In L. Dam (ed.), *Learner autonomy: new insights. AILA Review 15*, 2-15.
- Ehrmann, M. E. 1996. *Understanding Second Language Learning Difficulties*. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.
- Feldmeier, A. 2008. The Case of Germany: Literacy Instruction for Adult Immigrants. In: Young-Scholten, Martha (ed.), *Low-educated second language and literacy acquisition. Proceedings of the third annual forum*. Durham: Roundtuit Publishing, 7-16.
- Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y., & Tannenbam, A. 1979. Effects of Instrumental Enrichment on the Psychoeducational Development of Low-Functioning Adolescents. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 71, 751-763.
- Friedrich, H. F. & Mandl, H. 2005. Lernstrategien: Zur Strukturierung des Forschungsfeldes. In H. Mandl & H. F. Friedrich (eds.), *Handbuch Lernstrategien*. Göttingen: Hogrefe, 1-23.
- Gassmann, D. & Grawe, K. 2006. General Change Mechanisms: The Relation Between Problem Activation and Resource Activation in Successful and Unsuccessful Therapeutic Interactions. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 13, 1-11.
- Grawe, K. 2004. *Neuropsychotherapie*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.
- Gold, A. 2011. *Lernschwierigkeiten. Ursachen, Diagnostik, Intervention*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Goswami, U. & Bryant, P. 1990. *Phonological Skills and Learning to Read*. Hove: Erlbaum.
- Kelly, R. 1996. Language counselling for learner autonomy: the skilled helper in self-access language learning. In R. Pemberton, E. S. L. Li, W. W. F. Or, & H. D. Pierson (eds.), *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 93-113.
- Kemper, M. & Klein, R. 1998. *Lernberatung. Gestaltung von Lernprozessen in der beruflichen Weiterbildung*. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verlag Hohengehren.
- Klauer, K. J. & Lauth, G. W. 1997. Lernbehinderungen und Leistungsschwierigkeiten bei Schülern. *Psychologie des Unterrichts und der Schule*. In F. E. Weinert (ed.), *Enzyklopädie der Psychologie*. Göttingen: Hogrefe, 701-738.
- Klein, R. & Reutter, G. 2011. Begründungen für Lernberatung und konzeptionelles Verständnis. In R. Klein & G. Reutter (eds.), *Die Lernberatungskonzeption. Grundlagen und Praxis*. Göttingen: Institut für angewandte Kulturforschung e.V., 11-28.
- Kleppin, K. & Mehlhorn, G. 2006. Sprachlernberatung: Einführung in den Themenschwerpunkt. *Zeitschrift für den Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht*, 11 (2). [Retrieved 22.02.2013]. Available at <http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-11-2/beitrag/MehlhornKleppin1.htm>.
- Knowles, M. 1975. *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers*. New York: Association Press.

- Küspert, P. 1998. *Phonologische Bewußtheit und Schriftspracherwerb: zu den Effekten vorschulischer Förderung der phonologischen Bewußtheit auf den Erwerb des Lesens und Rechtschreibens*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang.
- Locke, E. & Latham, G. 1990. *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Perntice Hall.
- Mehlhorn, G. 2005. "Studienbegleitung für ausländische Studierende an deutschen Hochschulen. Teil 1: Handreichungen für Kursleiter zum Studierstrategien-Kurs. Teil 2: Individuelle Lernberatung – Ein Leitfaden für die Beratungspraxis". Iudicium: München. Unveränderte Auflage 2009.
- Pemberton, R., Toogood, S., Ho, S., & Lam, J. 2001. Approaches to advising for self-directed learning. *Learner autonomy: new insights. AILA Review* 15, 16–25.
- Reid, J. M. 1998. Teachers as Perceptual Learning Styles Researchers. In J. M. Reid (ed.), *Understanding Learning Styles in the Second Language Classroom*. Wyoming: Prentice Hall Regents, 15–26.
- Rogers, C. 1994. *Die nicht-direktive Beratung*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Schnitzler, C. D. 2008. *Phonologische Bewusstheit und Schriftspracherwerb*. Stuttgart/New York: Thieme.
- Schuller, K., Lochner, S., Rother, N., & Hörner D. 2012. *Das Integrationspanel. Entwicklung der Deutschkenntnisse und Fortschritte der Integration bei Teilnehmenden an Alphabetisierungskurses*. Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.
- Schramm, K. 2009. Sprachlernstrategieplakate. In C. Gnutzmann, F. G. Königs, & E. Zöfgen (eds.), *Fremdsprachen lehren und lernen*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 107–122.
- Schramm, K. 2011. Video-based teacher education material for German-as-a-second-language literacy teachers. In C. Schöneberger, I. van de Craats, & J. Kurvers (eds.), *Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition. Proceedings of the 6th symposium*. Nijmegen: Centre for Language Studies (CLS), 89–102.
- Statistisches Bundesamt. 2013. *Bevölkerung*. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt. [Retrieved April 01, 2013]. Available at <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/Indikatoren/LangeReihen/Bevoelkerung/lrbev02.html>
- Stockmann, W. 2006. Portfolio Methodology for Literacy Learners: the Dutch Case. In I. van de Craats, J. Kurvers, & M. Young-Scholten (eds.), *Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition. Proceedings of the inaugural symposium*. Utrecht: LOT, 152–163.
- Storch, M. & Krause, F. 2010. *Selbstmanagement – ressourcenorientiert. Grundlagen und Trainingsmanual für die Arbeit mit dem Zürcher Ressourcen Modell (ZRM)*. Zürich: Huber.
- Vogler, S. 2011. Theoretische Grundlagen der Sprachlernberatung und kulturell bedingte Unterschiede in der Praxis. In S. Vogler (ed.), *Sprachlernberatung für DaF*. Berlin: Frank und Timme, 11–32.
- Voller, P., Martyn, E., & Pickard, V. 1999. One-to-one counselling for autonomous learning in a self-access centre: final report on action learning

- project. In S. Cotteral & D. Crabbe (eds.), *Learner autonomy in language learning: defining the field and effecting change*. Frankfurt/Main et al.: Lang, 111-126.
- Young-Scholten, M. & Strom, N. 2006. First-Time L2 Readers: Is there a Critical Period? In I. van de Craats, J. Kurvers, & M. Young-Scholten (eds.), *Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition. Proceedings of the inaugural symposium*. Utrecht: LOT, 45-68.
- Zielinski, Werner. 1996. Lernschwierigkeiten. In F.E. Weinert (ed.), *Enzyklopädie der Psychologie*. Vol. 2: Psychologie des Lerners und der Instruktion. Göttingen: Hogrefe, 369-402.