

# Limits and Opportunities of Multilingualism – Seminar “Theory and Practice of Learning and Teaching”

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<b>Aims of the activity/of the project</b>	The seminar “Limits and Opportunities of Multilingualism” focuses on the generation of skills in the field of multilingualism, especially regarding the promotion of the educational language, for teacher education students. Based on theoretical inputs students develop educational offers for adolescent refugees. These are intended to provide adolescents with learning opportunities beyond the school context and, at the same time, promote the language development.
<b>Persons responsible for the project</b>	Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Eva Vetter (University of Vienna, Deputy Head of the Department for Teacher Education, Department of Linguistics)
<b>Cooperation partners</b>	UniClub (person responsible: Mag. Daniela Marzoch, Vienna University Children's Office GmbH)

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## Project description

The seminar “Limits and Opportunities of multilingualism” aims at preparing teacher education students from all fields for the considerable challenge multilingualism can pose in educational institutions. The students are being introduced to the theoretical background: What constitutes a language? What does multilingualism mean? At this, the focus is on promoting the educational language.

An important element of this seminar is the practice phase – students are offered the possibility to put the theoretical inputs to test in the context of the UniClub. The UniClub (organized by the Vienna University Children's Office GmbH) started in October 2015. On two afternoons per week, adolescent refugees (13-19 years of age) have the opportunity to practice German, study, meet other adolescents and receive support. Each afternoon, around 30 adolescents visit the UniClub. The Department of Linguistics supports the UniClub with educational offers designed by students of the seminar “Limits and Opportunities of multilingualism” for the adolescents. The topics are very diverse and range from winter sports to ancient Rome. The offers are being linguistically prepared so that persons, who only recently came to Austria, can learn from them.

After assisting in the UniClub for at least two hours, the students autonomously conduct a lesson using the learning materials they developed. After the lesson, the learning materials are handed over to the UniClub in the form of learning boxes. These can be used by the adolescents to deepen or revise what they have learned.

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## Results/Impact

The seminar is an important learning opportunity for students to enhance their language didactics skills, and for their personal development and their dealing with adolescent refugees. The adolescent refugees receive important learning incentives in the context of the UniClub. At this, they are perceived as young people who are eager to learn, in accordance with their developmental phase. They are being supported and do not have to fight for an opportunity to participate in education.

The activity at the UniClub stimulated subsequent projects. Children and adolescents from the UniClub face diverse challenges at schools, where they have been placed. Thus, as of 2017 regular discussion rounds are planned (once a month) in order to create an opportunity for teachers to share experiences. Each meeting is intended to have a specific focus, such as multilingualism or trauma,

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which will be explored together with experts. This activity will be implemented in close cooperation with the UniClub.

Furthermore, it is planned to develop an APP in cooperation with Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Renate Motschnig (University of Vienna, Faculty of Computer Science, research group Educational Technologies), which enables adolescents to translate words from their surrounding and save these words automatically in a learning library.

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### **Quality assurance/Achievement of objectives**

The students' feedback regarding the seminar is very positive, despite the very challenging work. The students also receive feedback on their learning offers, with a specific focus on teaching the content in this specific context.

In the course of the first seminar, it became apparent that the learning boxes are not self-explanatory in their current form. Thus, in future seminars the boxes will be brought to the UniClub in combination with coaching on how to use them.

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### **Webpage/Publications**

Seminar Theory and Practice of Teaching and Learning – Limits and Opportunities of Multilingualism: <https://ufind.univie.ac.at/de/course.html?lv=490063&semester=2016S> [only available in German]

UniClub: <http://www.uniclub.at/> [only available in German]