



DIY² Lab – Summary Report

Language Animation in the Digital Space

In March 2021, IJAB launched its new project DIY² Lab: Do-it-Yourself in Digital International Youth Work for experts, project managers and team leaders who want to explore the possibilities afforded by digital international youth work. The DIY² Labs are an opportunity for experts and team leaders to try out digital tools and methods and discuss practical as well as more fundamental issues associated with digital international youth work in the group. The events were all held on [Zoom](#).

The first DIY² Lab event was all about Language Animation in the digital space, designed for all those who have always wanted to know how Language Animation works in the context of youth exchanges – also, where necessary, at the virtual level. The event was an opportunity to try out some new methods, adapt existing ones and discuss their advantages and drawbacks.

DIY² Lab

From January 2022, further DIY² Labs will take place monthly, one month in English, the next in German.

17 February 2022 (German)

20 March 2022 (English)

7 April 2022 (German)

Programme

Check-in activity

To break the ice, the facilitators can ask a number of questions that the participants can either answer yes or no, such as: “Who’s joining us today from southern Germany?” Those who can answer “yes” to a given question leave their cameras on; all others are requested to switch them off. This is one way to get participants to learn a little about each other. As the check-in exercise begins, facilitators can ask whether anyone does not understand the task. If everyone has understood, this is the moment all cameras ought to go dark. The questions can build on each other. The first questions are designed to get everyone acquainted (e.g., where is everyone from?). The next ones can relate to the subject matter at hand (e.g., who knows what Language Animation is all about?). The last question can be a surprise one (e.g., who really needs to get a post-lockdown haircut?). If participants are present whose camera does not work, they can be asked to say “no” or “yes” into their mics.

Presentation “Language Animation in the Digital Space”

Bettina Wissing, Language Unit, IJAB

For detailed information on Language Animation in the digital space, refer to the IJAB publication [“Language Animation in Online Youth Meetings”](#)

Language Animation methods

Memory game with “internationalisms”

(led by Bettina Wissing, IJAB)

The rules are based on those of the memory card game. The aim is to find pairs of “internationalisms” – words that sound similar in the two languages (here, Greek and German, e.g., Musik (*music*) vs. μουσική/*mussiki*). Two participants play against each other. The remaining participants are each sent one word in one of the two languages via the private chat. If one of the languages uses an unknown alphabet, the words must be provided in simple phonetic spelling too. Care should be taken to have an even number of players so that all pairs of terms can be distributed. If the group is of an uneven number, one facilitator can join the game.

Once all participants have received an internationalism via the private chat, the game can begin. The two main players alternate, asking two other participants at a time to share their internationalism. Once a pair of internationalisms has been found, the participants in question need to switch their cameras off and the first player gets a point. Then the other player takes over. The game is played until all pairs of internationalisms have been found.

It takes some time to send out all the words via the private chat, so it is helpful if a second facilitator can take care of this while the first facilitator explains the rules of the game.

The Ambassadors

(led by Anastasia Protopsalti, national Language Animation coordinator for German-Greek youth exchanges, 2017-2020)

Description: <http://languageanimation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Die-Botschafter-.pdf>

Video explainer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvcZ3jUrreQ&feature=youtu.be>

The 18 participants of the DIY² Lab were assigned to breakout sessions, because the game is best played in small groups. Each group was joined by one project team member. Five pairs of German and Greek verbs associated with leisure activities were chosen in advance:

1. lesen (*to read*) vs. διαβάζω - thiavaso
2. Tennis spielen (*to play tennis*) vs. παίζω τένις – peso tennis
3. angeln (*to fish*) vs. ψαρεύω – psarewo
4. kochen (*to cook*) vs. μαγειρεύω – majirevo
5. rennen (*to run*) vs. τρέχω – trecho

The game begins with the project leader(s) sending one person in their session one of the verb pairs via private chat. This person then has to “mime” that verb while the others guess what verb they mean; once they think they know, they say the verb in the language of the partner (in this case Greek) out loud into the room. It was recommended that the PONS online dictionary <https://de.pons.com> be used to find the translations. The first person to successfully guess the verb is sent the next verb pair by the facilitator.

This game is best played using the www.wonder.me platform, because it allows the participants’ avatars to “run” to the project leaders to collect their verb pair.

Language Animation Paradise (also known as Leading Blind)

(led by Steffen Spandler, Language Animation coach of the German-Polish Youth Office)

- Start by practicing the words in front of the camera (hoch [up] – w górę; runter [down] – w dół; rechts [right]– w prawo; links [left] – w lewo).
- In addition, copy-paste the words into the chat box.
- Select a volunteer who has agreed to be led blind to the Language Animation Paradise (they should have a fast computer and a stable internet connection).
- Copy-paste the link to the Labyrinth in the chat box: <https://wordwall.net/pl/resource/5214083>.
- The volunteer shares their screen (having been given permission to do so), then switches to full-screen view, then starts. They close their eyes.
- The other participants guide the volunteer to the exit of the Labyrinth.
- Towards the end, the volunteer stops sharing their screen. The game can be repeated with a new volunteer.

Source: <https://dpiw.org/publikationen/abc-buch-der-deutsch-polnischen-sprachanimation-ringbuch/>

Outcome of the discussion

Feedback on the methods

Memory game with “internationalisms”

Sending the words to the participants can take a little more time than anticipated.

The Ambassadors

- The online dictionary offers a variety of translations for one verb. This can produce interesting discussions during the game (e.g., why Greek has different verbs for boiling water and cooking food, whereas German has just one verb for both – kochen). Participants can explore the semantic field of the verbs together. Should this be a challenge for the group in question, consider practicing with the selection of verbs in advance.
- Some groups may find it challenging to use an online dictionary.
- The online dictionary has a pronunciation function.
- A participant in one of the groups was unable to use their camera. They were asked to circumscribe the term in question rather than mime it.
- The method is suitable for small groups (the game can get chaotic if played in larger groups).

Language Animation Paradise

- “Stop” should be chosen as an additional term and practised beforehand.
- The use of arrow keys to move about should be practised briefly.
- This method is great for team-building.

General points

- Equal access: When preparing the programme/project, it is vital to consider how to ensure diversity and equal access, and how to prevent participants from being excluded from the games because their cameras are not working, for instance.
- Type of digital tool/platform: When adapting games or methods for use in the digital space, remember this will be influenced by the tool or platform you are using (e.g., Zoom, Big Blue Button). This information needs to be provided when describing the game or method, because if a different tool or platform is used, this may mean that the game cannot be played as intended, or even not at all. For instance, there are differences in terms of how many participants are visible in gallery view, or what functions are available in the breakout rooms. And whatever platform or tool is used, the project team needs to be very familiar with it.
- Group dynamics: The greatest challenge when online is to get a feel for the group dynamics. This is best done by incorporating suitable methods, such as more frequent feedback opportunities.
- Exercise: It is a good idea to include physical exercise in the methods. For instance, an item can be identified in various languages which all participants have to get up and retrieve. No tools are necessary for this, but a time limit should be set, e.g., 60 seconds.
- Language settings of the tool/platform: Some tools/platforms allow users to set a preferred language. This needs to be considered when describing how the methods work. Some functions or buttons may be known under a variety of names. When providing instructions to a group in several languages, it is very helpful to have a list of the most important functions in these languages handy.

Digital Tools

Zoom (video conferencing tool): <https://zoom.us>

Typeform (evaluation tool): <https://www.typeform.com/>

Wonder (communication platform): www.wonder.me

www.wordwall.net (interactive classroom activities); here, the Labyrinth for the game “Language Animation Paradise”: <https://wordwall.net/pl/resource/5214083/labirynt>

Links/Literature

IJAB publication [“Language Animation in Online Youth Meetings”](#)

IJAB publication [“Sprachanimation - inklusiv gedacht/Language Animation - the inclusive way”](#) (German/English bilingual edition)

“Language Animation Online” project <http://languageanimation.org/online>

DPJW publication [“ABC-Buch der deutsch-polnischen Sprachanimation”](#) (ring binder; German/Polish)

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