

## Learning through practice: a toolbox for teachers

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Based on our past experience in the field of staff training in blended learning, this contribution aims to present the current stages of the CLA Siena project in-course, which proposes to offer teacher training in online collaborative language learning methodologies within the Lifelong Learning Program for European co-operation, in the field of education and training through inservice grants to staff working in the field of school and adult education. First, the main elements and the collaborative approach of the teacher-training course *OLE, Online Language Education*, offered in six editions from 2004 to 2012, will be outlined. The course was developed in support of the wide-ranging blended learning program offered throughout the university in preparation for obligatory English exams from CEFR levels A2 to C1. An integrated approach to language learning requires a toolbox of media-rich collaborative applications implemented through effective pedagogical strategies that can offer flexibility for meeting the learning needs of each group. The presentation will cover the main topic areas introduced to teachers during the course, ranging from practical applications of discourse development through computer mediated communication (CMC); to the pedagogical differences between online tutoring and teaching languages in class; methods for the creation of online collaborative activities using web 2.0 applications; approaches to feedback, correction and evaluation; as well as the use of open courseware for language learning. The two salient pedagogical approaches of the teacher-training course *OLE* will be highlighted, which are the dual processes of collaborative construction through which teachers build a shared understanding and peer modeling, in which the participants generate

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something new as a result of moving beyond the differences in their roles, knowledge and previous teaching experiences. In particular, the developmental process of the current project will be explained, with a view towards offering the teacher-training course in blended learning for language teachers through the LLP program at a European level.