



## **The Berlin Project: A Marriage between Professional Competences and Authentic Language Acquisition**

**Carine De Pau, Bea Paelman, Peter Michels**

[carine.depau@arteveldehs.be](mailto:carine.depau@arteveldehs.be), [bea.paelman@arteveldehs.be](mailto:bea.paelman@arteveldehs.be), [peter.michels@arteveldehs.be](mailto:peter.michels@arteveldehs.be),

Artevelde University College Ghent (Belgium)

### **Abstract**

This project aims at increasing the German communicative skills of our Flemish students (professional Bachelor Communication), resulting in a 4 days' stay in Berlin. The project concentrates on intercultural communication, learning to work in team, providing the students with professional competences and last but not least increasing the students' knowledge of German with respect to oral fluency and basic vocabulary and grammar.

Preparing for the trip to Berlin, the students have tasks ranging from research on the internet on specific topics, reading authentic texts, writing, summarizing and structuring texts, research into the historical and cultural background of the city and oral presentation of this in class. They also explore a subject of their own interest for which they have to conduct at least two interviews with native speaking specialists in Berlin. Per class they set up a facebook group and communicate with the students of partner schools in Berlin. Last but not least they recapitulate basic grammar and vocabulary.

The activities in Berlin concentrate on communication with native speakers. Our students are guided in Berlin, both by their German-speaking peers of the partner schools and by professionals. Next to all this we have synergies with other subjects of the educational programme such as contemporary history, public relations, marketing, interpersonal competences... Whilst exploring their self-chosen topic (e.g. street theatre), they "encounter" several media. This need for information will lead to authentic communication, a higher level of the students' activity and frequently generates a higher motivation.

Thus, most of the students overcome their prejudices towards German(s) and Germany, the threshold to speak, and improve their language skills considerably. Students also become aware of the necessity of communication and foreign languages. This project and the trip even result in about 10% of our students doing an internship in Berlin/Germany in the last grade.