

ASL

France

Language Training



Good Practice Executive Summary

The file is about Agence “ASL Formations Linguistiques”, a private agency, member of UNOSEL, which organises language training abroad. ASL was founded in 1978, which means that it has now 32 years of expertise in the field of language travel. <http://www.asl-linguistique.com/sejours-linguistiques/>

The main target population is university students, young adults and more and more executives who are looking for an up-skilling as well as re-training for professional purposes. ASL also has programmes based on requests from Human Resources Departments willing to re-train their employees; ASL is therefore really aware of the expectations of the companies they work with.

Interestingly, the trend over the past few years has been the development of more and more programmes focusing on both improving linguistic and cultural skills and developing employability.

Their programmes for students improve language skills and thus complement and enhance what students have learnt at university, and help them achieve fluency. Moreover, the training and the work experience abroad offers them an interesting multicultural experience, developing abilities such as adaptability, curiosity, tolerance, international contacts that students may make effective use of, whether in the course of their studies, or to enter the job market.

The company promotes employability in relation with foreign language mastery, more specifically by developing skills during work experience. For this purpose, the company has developed a network of partnerships with prestigious schools in many countries, mainly English speaking, but also Germany and Spain.



The screenshot shows the ASL Language Training website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: 'Qui sommes-nous?', 'Nos séjours', 'Nous contacter', and 'Nos brochures'. Below this, there is a main banner with a photo of three people and the text: 'En 9 mois, devenez bilingue anglais avec notre programme spécial : ASL DIPLOMA OF ENGLISH !'. To the left of the banner is a yellow box with the text: 'votre conseiller en ligne vous aide à choisir votre séjour linguistique cliquez ici'. Below the banner, there is a green box with 'NOS PROMOTIONS' and 'PROMO SPECIALE ANNÉE D'ETUDE !'. To the right of this is a blue box with 'ASL : le spécialiste du séjour linguistique pour étudiants (à partir de 16 ans) et adultes, depuis 1978 !'. Below the blue box is a white box with the heading 'Cours de langues en immersion totale : Le seul moyen de vraiment progresser' and several bullet points describing the program. To the left of the white box are three blue boxes: 'Par langue' (listing Anglais, Espagnol, Allemand), 'Par destination' (listing Angleterre, Irlande, Malte, U.S.A, Canada, Australie, Espagne, Equateur, Allemagne), and 'Par catégorie' (listing Séjours linguistiques de 1 semaine à 3 mois, Un Semestre / Une Année à...). At the bottom of the white box are three yellow buttons: 'Recevez une proposition personnalisée par e-mail', 'Suivez les conseils de l'UNOSEL !', and 'Testez votre niveau'.

1. The needs analysis is based on a complete, up-to-date conceptual framework.

The training is specific and needs-focused.

- Content of training is really geared towards students' needs. They are taught effective communication, working on task-based activities. It is a fully 'hand-on' course of study. Students preparing for a work experience will typically be taught how to write a CV, a cover letter and then be prepared for job interviews.
- Classes are multinational and made of students of a similar level.
- Language level is assessed after a written and oral test on arrival.
- A final test is given on departure and a Language Ability Assessment is given to the students when they return to their home countries.
- The Common European Framework for Languages is used to establish their students' end-of- course language assessment report.

2. Training is focused on the acquisition of the needed competencies identified through the needs analysis.

- Language level is assessed after a written and oral test on arrival.
- Language training abroad is geared at improving language skills that complement and enhance what students have already learned and help them achieve fluency.
- Teaching conditions are said to be excellent: qualified teachers, high tech equipment with language labs, Smart board technology and a maximum of 12 to 15 students per class.

3. Training objectives are realistic within the timeframe.

Objectives vary according to students' needs and in keeping with the time frame in their centres. If we take the example of certification, T.O.E.I.C preparation can be achieved within 4 weeks or more, T.O.E.F.L, between 2 and 12 weeks (along with English classes aimed at fluency development). Intensive courses (4 to 52 weeks) in order to prepare a language certification are very popular, as well as 'Business communication' courses aimed at adapting the students' language skills, according to needs and possibilities, within a short period.

4. Training is based on an updated didactic framework.

All courses can be tailor-made. More specifically, they can combine an English course with work experience. For example, ASL is the exclusive partner of the Ministry of Education in Monaco: they organise a combined Language teaching + work experience every year for 20 of their students.

In some centres, they have specialised English training dedicated to young lawyers, politicians, public administrators, etc., focussing on their specific needs.

Some intensive courses for adults and professionals, called 'Platinum' are done in small groups (5 trainees). Such courses are customised to fit with the needs.

5. Training incorporates some element of retroaction.

At the end of each training session, students have to give their feedback on specific evaluative questionnaires.

If they were on work placements, their employer also gives a full feedback. Matching these evaluations enables ASL to always stick to the needs of both employers and students.

In each centre, the agency works with a French language teacher who acts as their academic advisor. She/he visits the centres and makes sure the curriculum is clearly adapted, stimulating and motivating for the students.

In each of their centres abroad, they have a 'work experience coordinator' who is the link between the students' requirements and employers' requirements.

6. Training takes into account a maximal number of constraints: absence, diversity, time and place.

- Constraints have to be taken into account, since the target group is diversified. Courses abroad are targeted to university students, to young adults and more and more to executives who are looking for an up-skilling as well as re-training for professional purposes. Diversity has also to be catered for, since ASL also has programmes based on requests from Human Resources Departments willing to re-train their employees.

- Constraints can be tackled all the more easily as ASL is a small structure, located in Bordeaux, and thus able to communicate with local partners.

- Adaptability means that some courses are also given in one-to-one forms, when necessary.

7. Transferability assessment

The project/Part of the project has been repeated (with evolutions) for more than 30 years.

7.1. Evidence of transfer

The transfer possibility is quite high because ASL has developed resources and skills over their 32 years of experience.

7.2. Innovation

Innovations can be traced in terms of course planning which has progressively incorporated various needs for the job market, such as languages courses combined with work experience abroad. In this domain, integration in the local company meant that students were not only improving their linguistic competence but that they had also an insight into different cultures. They were also discovering countries and experiencing mobility. Pedagogical innovations can also be highlighted, both in the use of information and communication technologies and in the flexibility of the courses.

7.3. Dependence on political context

ASL, which is located in Bordeaux, has permanent contacts with local partners and organisers, whom they have actually met in person. Needs in terms of linguistic policy tend thus to be catered for easily, in particular needs of the job market. A clear trend over the past few years has been the development of more and more programmes focusing on both improving language skills and developing employability.

7.4. Flexibility

This training programme was developed on a wide scale and has shown that it was flexible to be adapted, according to needs, language learnt and taught, regions and job prospects. It can be done throughout the year, start dates are totally flexible. Lessons are also totally flexible and their contents are adapted to each student's needs, based on the initial language level test done on the first day at school. Work placements are flexible, and can always be adapted to the students requests and field of studies. Especially so when the work placement is an integral part of an end-of-year exam or graduation in the students home countries.

7.5. Multi-region transfer

The programme allows for multi-regional transfer, in principle, to any region within the EU. Students originate from practically anywhere in the EU, and follow the same programme while in the destination country, combining language improvement, work experience preparation, and the work experience itself.

