



## Foreign language learning, content learning, and negotiating meaning in mysteries

Trends and Issues in CLIL and ELT  
Narva, October 28-29, 2021

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## What is it about?

1. „Mysteries“
2. Learning by play
3. Misteries and CLIL



# 1. Mysteries

- Method for active, problem-focused, cooperative learning
- Origin: Geography teaching (David Leat, Thinking through Geography)
- Inspired by games played in a group: Solving a detective story, for instance, combining scattered pieces of information.
- Core idea: Groups work on a problem using small pieces of information they are given. Each group will find its own solution.



# Mysteries

Steps in the classroom:

1. Being confronted with a problem
2. Finding a guiding question
3. Group work with bits of material without obvious reference to each other (texts, charts, videos, guided internet inquiries ...). They will try to organize and restructure it.
4. Each group will find its own solution and prepare a presentation.
5. The groups will present and discuss their results.
6. Metacognition: Students will reflect on how they proceeded. Are there still open questions?
7. Follow up activities



# Mysteries – an example: „Unaccompanied refugee children“

## 1. Problem

1

worksheet

name: xx

date: xx

¶

### Bayan's story¶

“My parents are in Germany and I haven't seen them for more than a year.”¶

By Bayan, an 11-year-old girl from Syria, now living in Greece¶ Abschnittswechsel (Fortlaufend) .....

Before the war, my life in Syria was very nice. We had as much money as we wanted, a house in Deir Ez-Zor and food to eat. But the situation became very difficult, especially when the war and the bombings started and when ISIS came. You couldn't show your face or wear a T-shirt or jeans. You had to wear all black, everything black. Even boys could no longer go out on their

5 own. There were cars passing near the house telling people that they had to pray. One time they took my father, but they let him go quickly.¶

When the planes started coming, my siblings were afraid and hid under their beds and the TV stand. Sometimes they took their toy weapons and said that they would stop the planes, but I explained to them that they cannot do that.¶

10 In order to leave the country, we had to give up all our money and then borrow some more. It was very scary to come to Greece and we tried three times to make it. Now, I have been living in Skaramangas camp for seven months with my uncle and his family. My parents are in Germany and I haven't seen them for more than a year. We are all safe now, but everyone is in a different country.¶

15 When I grow up, I want to become a surgeon. I would like people to come to me, so that I can help them, just as my doctors helped me when I needed it. If someone helps me to make my dream come true, then I will be able to help this person, too. I will bring medicine to them and whatever else they need. I just need a little assistance to make it.¶

¶

📄 (Strg) ▾



# **Mysteries: example „Unaccompanied refugee children“**

## **2. Guiding question**

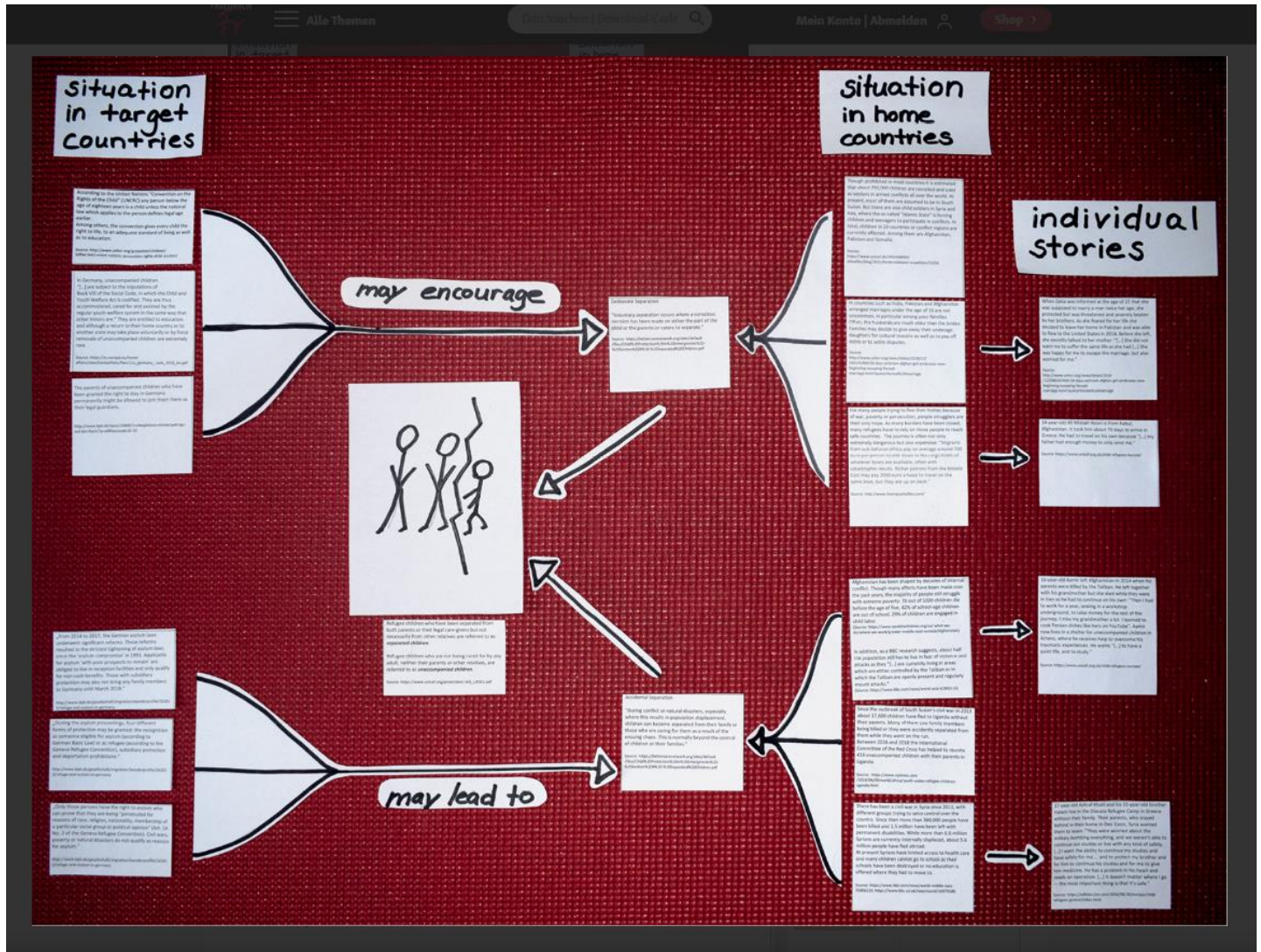
Why are child refugees like Bayan unaccompanied or separated from their parents?







## 4., 5. Group results and presentation







# **Mysteries: example „Unaccompanied refugee children“**

6., 7. Reflecting, follow-up:

## **Reflecting on the learning process**

- **Take a look at the different sources at the bottom of the different mystery cards.**
- **Do you consider them to be reliable?**
- **What could be the intentions of the different organizations, newspapers, platforms etc. the information were taken from?**
- **Which other sources would you (not) use in order to learn more about the topic? Explain why.**

**The mystery cards can only provide a brief insight into different aspects that are relevant for the question of why some child refugees are unaccompanied or separated from their parents.**

**Choose one or two aspects you would like to explore further. Do some research online and get ready to report back in class.**



# 1. Mysteries

Learning opportunities:

- Focus on content *and* language
- Cognitive activation, cooperation, communication
- Provides multiple opportunities for all skills, for language from BICS to CALP
- Provides multiperspective views and requires appropriate language to express them
- Benefits from the joy of playing games *and* curiosity about content
- ... but needs carefull preparation of scaffolding!



## 2. Learning by play

**game objective >>>>>>>><<<<<<<< learning objective**



## 2. Learning by play

### Playing

1. Self determination
2. Purpose in itself
3. Experience of reality
4. Mock reality
5. Active involvement
6. Activation cycles
7. Positive emotions





### 3. Mysteries and CLIL

Characteristics of CLIL (Ball, Kelly & Clegg 2015, 31-45):

1. Conceptual sequencing
2. Conceptual fronting
3. Tasks as priority, language as a vehicle
4. Making key language salient for students
5. CLIL in three dimensions (conceptual aim, carried out by procedural decisions, supported by language)
6. Text-task relationship (prioritizing tasks)
7. Enhancing peer communication
8. Guiding multimedia input
9. Supporting student output
10. Supporting thinking skills



## Conclusion

- Mysteries match the approaches in a CLIL classroom.
- Mysteries can contribute the benefits of learning by play.
- Mysteries come from Geography education – as language teachers we should be ready to learn from content subjects!



Thank you  
very much!



## References

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