TNP LANGUAGES

Workshop of the TNP sub-project on New Learning Environments

In Copenhagen, Denmark
7-8 June 2002

by

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I. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The Workshop on New Learning Environments in Copenhagen was the culmination of year 2 of the TNP2 Subproject on New learning Environments (NLE) (for more information on the TNP project see: http:llwww.fu-berlin.de/elc/tnp2/index.html).

The workshop was in fact preceded by a meeting of the Scientific Committee of the subproject, which combines representatives from 21 countries. National reports were produced in 2001 to provide a survey of the situation with respect to NLEs in Europe and the information was then brought together in a synthesis report (see: http//www.taalnet.rug.ac.beltnp/NLEsynthesisreportdraft3.doc.
The aim throughout was also to come up with recommendations for policy makers at the institutional, national and European levels with respect to the fundamental issues on NLEs. Accordingly, one aim of the workshop was to discuss the implications of these recommendations.

The workshop brought together all the member-representatives of the subproject on NLEs, the coordinators of the other subprojects (on Quality Issues and Curriculum Innovation) and a number of external experts, who were asked to contribute their views to the issues at hand.

The students were represented as well through AEGEE.
An external evaluator, Victor the Kosinsky, was brought in to evaluate the activities of both the the TNP in general and the subproject in particular.

1.2. Aims and structure of the Workshop (brief sent out beforehand)

The aims of the workshop are

- To find consensus on the issues of importance in the Subproject on New learning Environments of TNP2 to set this out in workshop reports
- To discuss and revise the set of recommendations worked out in Year 1
- To set up plans for concrete action (e.g. project proposals) and identify areas that require additional work
- To relate our work to the Bologna process and to lifelong learning and autonomous learning
- To link NLEs to issues such as learning outcomes (in terms of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences)

There are to be 4 workshop sessions (90 min) + 1 introduction (60min) and a final discussion of 60 minutes.
Finally there will be a meeting on Saturday afternoon to discuss possible cooperation, followed by a reception

The proposed themes of the 4 sessions are:
1) Staff development and learner training
2) Methodology and materials development
3) Integration of CEF and Portfolio in NLEs
4) Technological environment (Virtual Learning Environment)

Throughout we will also be aware of the implications of our universities becoming European and the position of the LWULT languages (possibly including the use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education).

The workshop will start with a 30-minute introduction to the subproject by Anne Rasanen. There will also be a 30-minute presentation by a Maija Kalin on the Virtual University Language Centre of Finland, which will be a network language centre providing discipline-specific language and communication studies for virtual university degree students (lifelong learning and e-learning)

The workshop sessions will on average last 90 minutes each. In each there will be 1, 2 or 3 presentations of 25 minutes and 30 minutes of debate

Throughout the sessions special attention will be devoted to the LWULT countries.

1.3. Questions to be answered

1) Staff development and learner training in the light of e-learning and virtual universities
   a) What skills and competences are needed in teachers and learners (apart from the technical skills) so that they are ready for e-learning and virtual universities?
   b) What are the known problems and solutions with regard to teachers and learners in terms of NLEs?
   c) What about the changing roles of teachers (and learners)?
   d) To what extent do qualifications and job descriptions of teachers need to be reassessed?
   e) How do we set up the necessary methodological teacher development programmes?

2) Methodology and materials development (especially for LWULT languages)
   a) What are the elements of a good language pedagogy in terms of NLEs?
   b) How far can we go with language independent approaches (eg. for the LWULT languages)?
   c) How can we use existing VLEs such as Blackboard and WebCT? What can they do and where are their limits?
   d) To what extent does language learning methodology have to be adapted in order to accommodate lifelong learning and autonomous learning?
   e) How can we encourage the development of cross-platform materials and what are the criteria they have to fulfil?

3) Integration of CEF and Portfolio for assessment and programmes
   a) How can the CEF and the Portfolio lead to common European assessment criteria for language learning and teaching?
   b) How important is it to facilitate transparency and academic and professional recognition of language learning across Europe?
   c) To what extent can CEF and Portfolio be used in practice today in higher education? To what extent are its needs different from those in adult and continuing education?
   d) How to incorporate CEF descriptors in the description of learning materials and for the elaboration of language objectives?

4) Technological environment (Virtual Learning Environment)
   a) What are the technological elements needed to create a VLE?
   b) What are the required characteristics of these components?
   c) How can we cooperate by means of common technological platforms and learning spaces?
   d) To what extent can the social dimension of language learning be made part of the technological environment?

1.4. Present set of recommendations

(see Synthesis Report: http:llwww.taalnet.rug.ac.beltnpl).
(E-European level; N-national; I-institutional)

1) Development of national and institutional educational visions, policies, and strategies to recognise and foster the value of multilingualism and cultural competence, as well as ICT and lifelong learning skills, as integral parts of academic and professional competence. (NII)

2) Improvement, updating, and tailoring of the necessary infrastructure (technical, strategic, staff) to guarantee baseline conditions and to serve the purposes of using NLEs in a flexible way in teaching and for independent language learning (ILL). (I/N)

3) Tailored and continuous technical support for actors involved and interdisciplinary co-operation.

4) Continuous practical and methodological teacher development programmes and pedagogical support tailored particularly for the needs of higher education language teachers. (NII)

5) Reassessment and updating of pre-service education of all language professionals to ensure their future expertise in the field (NII).

6) Reassessment of qualifications and job descriptions and establishment of new qualifications programmes (e.g. linguistic engineer). (NII)

7) Systematic learner training for independent language learning (ILL) and use of NLEs and adequate support systems. (I)

8) Acknowledgement of language studies as an integral part of academic and professional qualifications in all fields, and accreditation and validation of such studies as well as independent language learning achievement. (NII)

9) Establishment of common standardised platforms and learning spaces to ensure easy access of resources and expertise. (EINII)

10) Joint institutional, national, and European projects and action research projects to evaluate existing, and to develop new programmes, materials and pedagogical approaches which promote multilingualism, use of NLEs and ILL. (IINIE)

11) Encouragement to use common European standards of reference and assessment to guarantee transparency and reciprocal recognition. (NII)

12) Creation of a European language teaching and learning network, which brings together all existing activities and organisations of European higher education institutions and serves as a main port of call for coordination and dissemination of information and experience. (EINII)

13) Creation of post-graduate and professional programmes whose validation can be recognised by European institutions and be included in universities' career structures. (E/NI)

14) Joint evaluation of effectiveness based on common criteria. (EINII)

15) Creation of a systematic approach to facilitating internationalisation at home and inclusion of mobile staff and students into the promotion of multilingualism and intercultural experience. (IIN)

II. <u>Programme</u>

<u>Thursday **6** June</u>
Scientific Committee meeting of the TNPII subproject on New Learning Environments
At 3 pm in the CBS Dalgas Have Building, Dalgas Have 15,2000 Copenhagen F, room 2V071 (2nd Floor – West End of Building)

<u>Friday 7 June</u>
<u>Introductory session (chair: Valère Meus)</u>

09.00 – 09.30	Introduction by Anne Rasanen
09.30 – 09.40	Short briefing on the Thenuce project by Victor de Kosinsky
09.40 – 10.10	Maija Kalin & Liisa Kallio, Jyvaskyla, Finland "Development of the Virtual University Language centre in Finland"
10.10 – 10.30	Preliminary Discussion on aims of the Workshop and Recommendations
10.30 – 11.00	Break
11.00 – 12.30	Session 1: staff development and learner training (chair: Anne Rasanen) Marina Mozzon-McPherson, Hull, UK John G. Pettit, The Open University, UK "Virtual spaces: preparing for real learning" (Report of the discussion by Bill Richardson)
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 16.00	Session **2:** Methodology and materials development (chair: Brigitte Forster-Vosicki) Willy Clijsters, Hasselt, Belgium "Trial and error on our way to paradise" Ole Lauridsen, Aarhus, Denmark "The integration of ICT on a faculty-wide basis: Challenges, Problems, Perspectives" Henrik Selsoe Sorensen, Denmark ·· Find, Enhance, Store, Share, Information (FESSI) – Introductory course for BA students in modern languages for international business communication and L S P (Report of the discussion by Ioanna Ziaka)
16.00 – 16.30	Break
16.30 – 17.30	Discussion of recommendations and future cooperation (chair Anne Rasanen)
17.30	Reception offered by the Copenhagen Business School

<u>Saturday **8 June**</u>

9.30 – 10.30	Session 3: integration of Common European Framework and Portfolio in NLEs (chair Marina Mozzon **McPherson** Brigitte Forster-Vosicki, Lausanne, Switzerland "Transparency and international comparability in languages: The role that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) and European Language Portfolio (ELP) can play" (Report of the discussion by Jurate Zdanyke) Brief introduction on AEGEE by Matina Magkou
10.30 – 11.00	Break
10.30 – 12.30	<u>Session **4:** The technological environment (chair Anne Rasanen)</u> Valere Meus and Sietze Looijenga, Gent, Belgium: "The I4LL online language learning environment" Jan Driesen, Brussels, Belgium on the Use of Blackboard (report of the discussion by Alessandra Corda)
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.30 – 16.00	Discussion of the Recommendations (chair **Valere Meus)**
Evening	Dinner hosted by Copenhagen Business School

III. <u>List of Participants</u>

Name	Institution	Country	Function
Victor de Kosinsky	Liege	BE	Thenuce-coordinator, TNP external evaluator
Valère Meus	Gent	BE	Sub-project co-ordinator "New Learning Environments (NLEs)"
Sietze Looijenga	Gent	BE	Speaker
Jan Driesen	Brussel	BE	Speaker
Willy Clijsters	Diepenbeek	BE	Speaker
Vania Simeonova	Plovdiv	BU	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Brigitte Foster-Vosicki	Lausanne	CH	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Alejandra Navas Mendez	Potsdam	DE	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Wolfgang Mackiewicz	Berlin	DE	TNP2 co-ordinator
Virginia Moukouli	Berlin	DE	TNP2 project manager
Christian Wentzlaff-Eggebert	Koln	DE	Sub-project co-ordinator "Quality Enhancement in Language Studies"
Ole Helmersen	Kobenhavn	DK	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Karen Lauridsen	Aarhus	DK	Representative of EAIE
Ole Lauridsen	Aarhus	DK	Speaker
Henrik Selsoe Sorensen	Kobenhavn	DK	Speaker
Birute Klaas	Tartu	EE	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Anne Rasanen	Jyvaaskyla	FI	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Maija Kalin	Jyvaaskyla	FI	Speaker
Liisa Kallio	Jyvaaskyla	FI	Speaker
Martina Magkou	AEGEE	GR	Vice-President AEGEE
Ioanna Ziaka	Thessaloniki	GR	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Bill Richardson	Dublin	IE	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Jurate Zdanyte	Kauna	LT	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Ilse Kangro	Riga	LV	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Alessandra Corda	Leiden	NL	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Tove Jacobsen	Bergen	NO	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Boguslaw Marek	Lubelski	PL	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Fatima Ferreira	Lisboa	PO	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Karina Vamling	Lund	SE	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
Petra Asic	ESIB	SI	Member of ESIB
Marina Mozzon-McPherson	Hull	UK	Member of Scientific Committee NLEs
John G. Pettit	London	UK	Speaker
Mike Kelly	Southampton	UK	Sub-project co-ordinator "Curriculum Innovation"

IV. Introductory Session

4.1. Introductory lecture: STATUS REPORT ON THE USE OF NEW LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND INDEPENDENT LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACHES IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION - based on the national reports and steering committee reports submitted within the TNP2 subproject on NLEs

by Anne Rasanen
University of Jyvaskyla Language Centre, Finland
rasanen@cc.jyu.fi

1. INTRODUCTION

Subproject 2 of the second Thematic Network Project in the area of languages concentrates on exploring the role of New (language) Learning Environments (NLEs) in Higher Education (HE) language teaching in Europe and on drawing recommendations as to how these new opportunities could be successfully integrated into language teaching practices. The report below is based on the synthesis report written in January 2002 on the basis of some 20 national reports provided by the scientific committee members at the end of year one of the project, ie. in 2001, and later synthesized by the steering committee of the project. In the present brief summary report the focus is on how we have defined the concepts of NLE and ILL (Independent Language Learning), what role they play in present HE language teaching practices, what main concerns were perceived by the project participants and what recommendations could be drawn for the future. These recommendations are to be discussed and developed further during this workshop.

2. DEFINING NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT and INDEPENDENT LANGUAGE LEARNING and the POTENTIAL THEY OFFER

The concept of New Learning Environment was defined by the scientific committee as follows: the term refers to two kinds of new learning contexts, each of which is extremely varied in its potential and in the learning and teaching approaches that it makes possible. These are

1) Learning contexts created by NEW TECHNOLOGIES, enabling e(lectronic)-learning and teaching, and later also m(obile)-learning and teaching; ie. ICT- ENHANCED LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING;

2) Learning contexts created by NEW HUMAN RESOURCES which become available through mobility, ie. systematic use of the presence and experience of multilingual and multicultural staff and students for language and culture learning purposes.

It should be noted here already that only a few, relatively unsystematic, attempts to indicate the use of the latter environment for language learning were documented in the national reports. Thus, the main part of what follows as survey findings refers to the ICT-enhanced learning and teaching environment, although the new mobility-created environment is also acknowledged.

Independent Language Learning was defined in the national reports either directly or indirectly, and the term was seen to refer either to the skills involved in self-directed learning or to the actual format or method of learning outside the classroom, he descriptions used most often were:
management of one's own learning (also called autonomous / self-direcfedlearning);
learning independently oufside regular classroom with or without teacher guidance *(eg.* in a self-access centre, abroad);
learning alone, with a partner, or *with* a *support* group;
using structured or unstructured (ie. authentic, natural) materials;
using NLEs for continuous, life-long language learning.

All in all, NLEs and ILL approaches were seen to have great potential in that they could play a key role at least in promoting multilingualism, cultural diversity and European co-operation, in enhancing student and staff mobility, in developing materials and delivering courses in less widely used and taught languages and in proficiency assessment, as well as life-long learning in general. This is because they can

- provide "natural", authentic language and culture input,
- provide a cost-effective way to offer on-line training in eg. LWULT languages,
- assist in becoming acquainted with host cultures,
  develop intercultural communication skills,
- provide experience in self-directed, independent learning,
- promote and develop critical thinking and other life-long learning skills,
- foster collaboration and sharing between individuals and institutions,
- provide reliable, comparable measures for assessment,
- can be used for effective and tailored dissemination and promotion,
- provide a channel for carrying out surveys and studies, and
  provide a powerful channel for disseminating research information and educational programmes.

3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURES AND POLICIES IN LANGUAGE-RELATED HIGHER EDUCATION

On the basis of the national reports the following trends seem to describe the present situation of the use of NLEs in European Higher Education.

- There is great variation between countries, between institutions, and even between departments.
- There is an increasing awareness of the potential, but lack of practical know-how.
- National policies regarding the use and integration of NLEs, ICT, and ILL are far more common than institutional policies.
- Language-related institutional policies and technological adaptations are still rare.
- Current trend seems to be to transform traditional language laboratories into multimedia learning, self-access, and resource centres.
  Funding tends to be more available for equipment than for user support (even in institutions with good infrastructures).
- Facilities typically provide the following:: Internet access, on-line courses and reference materials, digitised materials, video-conferencing and interactive communication opportunities, CD-Rom materials, TV+VHS+DVD.
- Many virtual campus ▌ university ▌ network university projects are being developed.

The main concerns expressed in the national reports included the following points:

- Facilities were not seen suitable for language learning – many were seen as outdated and inflexible.
- Although the facilities are good they lack technical support.
- Pedagogical guidance is also lacking, particularly as regards language learning and teaching.
- Advances in NLEs tend to be too simplistic, and there is an emphasis on economic issues.
- Too much of the use is based on traditional models of knowledge transmission.
- Collaboration and joint strategies are missing.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN INTEGRATING NLEs AND INDEPENDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The present situation in integrating NLEs and independent learning activities into higher education language provision was considered from the viewpoints of students majoring in languages (e.g. future language professionals – teachers, translators, interpreters, etc.), students of non-language disciplines, learner and staff training and changing profiles, and from the viewpoint of promoting multilingualism, mobility, cultural awareness, and co-operation. The general prerequisites for a successful use of NLEs and ILL approaches in language

learning and teaching suggested in the national reports are also listed below. In practice, there are two main "models" according to which NLEs are implemented in language education:

1) The ADD-ON model, which tends to consider the new environment as additional to the existing structure and practice, i.e. no changes in the existing system are necessary; and

2) The ADD-IN model, where NLEs are integrated into the existing system thus causing changes in its structure and content and in professional development.

The first model is characterised by a more unsystematic use of NLEs in the sense that the use is typically based on individual initiative. Often the existing practice is transferred to the NLE as it is, primarily for economic reasons. The second model is often a collaborative effort based on institutional strategies and the outcome is often some pedagogical innovation. There is a tendency for institutions to pass through the first model in their pursuit of the second, unless proper pedagogical preparation and training is available. The environments, however, are only as good as their underpinning learning ethos. Thus, many universities which emulate networked learning and the development of virtual campuses often end up trying to reproduce real university learning environments based on very traditional models of knowledge transmission. The same applies to language education. The changes in the attitudes, initiative, and approaches required from both learners and teachers in order to manage knowledge and skill construction together in a reciprocal partnership while using new technologies in a flexible way are substantial in nature and can only be implemented over a considerable time period

In connection with the use of NLEs the following trends and concerns were expressed:

- There is a general increase in use, but the full potential is not used.
- The mobility-created NLE is not used systematically, although there are good examples of tandem and buddy learning approaches.
- Mastery of technical aspects overshadows pedagogical issues, although new approaches do exist.
- The most common use of NLEs appears to be in the teaching of students of non-language disciplines and in the in-service training of professionals.
- Learner training for ILL and NLE use is in most cases unsystematic.
- New roles of "instructors" have not been sufficiently explored (eg. advising, facilitating, tutoring vs. teaching), although they affect both staff structures and pedagogical approaches.
- Funding and other support stops at the technical level (and is unequal).
- Efficient collaboration and joint development is lacking.

The national reports also identified prerequisites for a successful use of NLE and ILL approaches. In connection with this issue there is need to develop

- institutional policies to provide a framework for practice and development,
- appropriate *technological* infrastructures & continuous, tailored support,
- student training and support and strategies for ILL and the use of NLEs for lifelong language learning,
- new strategic management skills in order to facilitate mentality and attitude change,
- critical thinking and evaluation skills to make informed decisions about learning and teaching, and,
- co-operation and *collaboration,* as well as more systematic sharing of information and experience.

On the basis of their work within the national frameworks, the scientific committee then drew preliminary recommendations for the future. These recommendations are to be refined and prioritized in its future work.

5. SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEASURES

"In order to improve the quality of language teaching at HE level and to meet the challenge of new developments, NLEs and ILL have to be integrated into the teaching and learning process. First of all, the infrastructure has to be put in place to meet these new needs and policies established to provide a framework for practice. Then, teachers will have to be trained to use it and to develop didactically appropriate materials and methodologically

sound approaches to teaching and guiding learning in these new environments and to supporting students in their ILL efforts. Thirdly, students need to be trained in using NLEs for language learning purposes and in adopting and developing learning strategies needed in independent and self-directed language learning. Fourthly, dissemination of information on successful initiatives is necessary. This would promote both co-operation between different institutions with the aim to improve the quality of research, development and practice and to avoid the costly duplication of efforts, Interdisciplinary professional co-operation is also necessary, for instance, between language and content teachers and software and hardware designers in order to arrive at suitable applications and solutions for piloting. Finally, it is essential to ensure that graduates are properly equipped for the future. This focuses on the development of language graduates whose ability to communicate, teach, and interact in a foreign language is matched with the ability to do so in a variety of environments and through the intelligent use of a wide range of tools (e.g. authoring tools, computer-aided translation systems, computer and videoconferencing systems, electronic forums, online multilingual management systems, and other communications systems). Other graduates must also be equipped so that they have the necessary communication skills for internationalized workplaces and that they will be able to continue and direct their language studies on a lifelong basis in line with what their professional and social life requires."

(Meus & Rasanen 2002: Synthesis Report on NLEs)

4.2. Lecture 2: The Finnish Language Centre Network: The Finnish Virtual Language Centre

by Maija Kalin

Background: The Finnish **system** of Language Centre instruction
In all universities and in all vocational training in Finland obligatory language studies are included in all degrees and diplomas. In university degrees the language studies, both mother tongue and second language, vary as to the number of languages and the amount of credit units according to the faculty and university. The faculty of natural sciences often has the lowest number of languages and credit units. At the university of Jyvaskyla the faculty of natural sciences requires 6 ECTS: two in the mother tongue, two in the other nationalldomestic language (Finnish/Swedish) and two in a foreign language whereas the faculty of Business and economics requires 40 -56 ECTS in at least four languages. The fact that obligatory language studies are included in all degrees means that all universities have an established institution for language instruction for professional purposes, a language centre (LC).

Within Finnish universities the language centres have had more cooperation than other units starting with material production and staff development in the 70s and 80s. The directors' council and annual meetings of other staff members - e.g. Swedish teachers - have formed a loose informal network between the different language centres. Last year, however, a new form of cooperation was initiated: The Finnish Virtual Language Centre (VLC). The most important aim for the virtual language centre is to strengthen cooperation between language centres in the Finnish universities. The project has been jointly funded by the Ministry of Education and the Language Centres.

Virtual Language Centre aims to meet the challenges of the information society by combining the resources and expertise of the language centres in an effort to further develop teaching, opportunities for learning and assessment practices, as well as to ensure quality. This will be done with joint efforts of tailored staff development, learner training and methodology and materials development. During the spring of 2002 a survey has been made about the attitudes and skills of LC-teachers. This was followed by drawing up ICT teaching strategies in all language centres, and during the autumn of 2002 VLC will be funding subprojects central to the activities of the Finnish language centres. The first shared theme is learner training.

Next year VLC should have a common ICT strategy for the Language Centre Network and as a concrete outcome of the work a Virtual Language Centre Portal which will be in full use in 2005. The work with various sub-projects continues; there will be an application round every year. The aims for further developmental work include

- enabling alternative completion of courses
- increasing course supply in less widely taught languages in Finland (e.g. Slovak, Dutch) and in teaching small disciplines (e.g. theology, pharmacy)
- finding out best practices and enhancing expertise in LC teaching both nationally and internationally through ICT
- providing special training in ICT for LC teachers with attention to special features and needs of LC teaching
- developing a common materials database
- developing possibilities to use the net for publishing and distributing course materials and other publications
- participating in the European cooperation especially in assessment (ELP)

The activities within the project will be evaluated throughout the project. It is important to know how well the Language Centres have been able to create really new and dynamic ways of action and cooperation in developing LC teaching. Although there have been forms of cooperation between groups and individuals apt to collaboration, it is an enormous challenge to establish collaboration as an integral part of most of the work done at the Language Centres. Funding is one problem, but there are problems to solve that do not necessarily require any money but a collective change of attitudes. How can a shared state of mind be created for a network that in fact consists of hundreds of individual teachers, counsellors and other support persons, who perhaps have worked alone most of their academic working life? What should be done to encourage the agents to be committed to shared goals and new working culture? How will the new culture be established when the project and the sub-projects lead to a growing amount of new services that the Language Centres will be responsible of? What kind of administration and legal position is needed for reaching the goals? How can a balance between national and international goals be found? And back to the funding: how will the developing areas and the new services be financed after 2005 when the support from the Ministry of Education ends? The time seems to be very short to enable any big changes. However, there are many factors at the same time directing the action towards networking and using ICT including but not restricted to student needs (e.g. national and international mobility, the students' new literacy and willingness to use the net), economical situation, and the general change of the working life towards networking: we cannot stay outside!

V. The Students' Point of View

5.1. What is AEGEE?

Name: AEGEE, The European Students' Forum
Location: 261 local groups all over the European continent.
Coordination: European Head office in Brussels. No National Level.
Members: more than 17.000. From all disciplines.

Activities: Pan-European projects in Higher Education, Active Citizenship, Cultural Exchange and Peace and Stability

AEGEE organised with the support of the European Commission the European Day of Languages during the 26th September 2001 in 48 European Cities with a great success and determined to carry on with the project in the following years.

"I've been a member of AEGEE for only one year, but this year changed my understanding of Europe. Before it was abstract, now it is full of life! I met so many interesting people and got to know so many different cultures and ways of thinking! I think, many other students should start seeing Europe that way."

Conny Reichel, AEGEE-Passau

AEGEE (Association des Etats Generaux des Etudiants de l´Europe –European Students' Forum) is Europe's largest interdisciplinary student association, which promotes a unified Europe, cross-border co-operation, communication, integration among students and strives to create an open and tolerant society of tomorrow. Founded in Paris in 1985, it takes its name from one of the birthplaces of democracy, the Aegean Sea, and the first parliament at the dawn of the French Revolution, Les Efafs *Généraux.*

AEGEE is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that operates without being linked to any political party. A widely spread student network **of 17.000** members in 261 local branches, so-called Antennae, provides the ideal platform where young people from over 40 European countries can work together, free from any national way of thinking.

AEGEE brings together European students of all study disciplines with activities such as international conferences, seminars, exchanges, training courses and case study trips where they analyse a broad variety of topics from a European point of view, and discuss them with different experts. The focus of the association lies within four main Fields of Action: Active Citizenship, Cultural Exchange, Higher Education and Peace and Stability. Every year, AEGEE devotes itself to carrying out a project on a European-wide scale, the Yearplan project. In 2000 "Borderless Europe" promoted student mobility, in 2001 "Quo Vadis Europe?" dealt with the EU Enlargement and in 2002 "EURECA will be conducted as "European Education Campaign". Furthermore AEGEE enables every year more than 2500 students to take part in the Summer University project, a platform for cultural exchange. By encouraging travel and mobility, stimulating thematic discussions in various Working Groups and organising common projects AEGEE attempts to overcome national, cultural and ethnic divisions and to create a vision of young people's Europe.

AEGEE operates without any national level of organisation, and relies solely on the local branches and a European level that consists of Working Groups, Commissions, Project Teams and the Comite Directeur, the European Board of Directors.

AEGEE has been co-operating on a regular basis with the European Commission for implementing projects and has been consulted on topics related to education, in particularly the SOCRATES program. AEGEE has Consultative Status in the Council of Europe and United Nations, Operational Status at UNESCO and is a member of the European Youth Forum. Among the organisations' patrons are: Mikhael Gorbachev, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize; Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic; Jacques Santer, member of the European Parliament; and Gyorgy Konrad, President of the German Academy of Arts.

More information on http://www.aegee.org

5.2. AEGEE Language Policy Paper

by Matina Magkou
Bruxelles, December 2001

Motivation

Being AEGEE the largest multidisciplinary Students' Association in Europe, whose main fields of action comprise Higher Education and Cultural Exchange (among others),
Experiencing in AEGEE the everyday problems that arise from the use of a language different than the mother tongue as a working language,
Bearing in mind the increasing importance that languages have in students' as well as in professionals' life, and taking advantage of the year 2001 being declared the European Year of Languages,

We, AEGEE, express our opinion on languages and language education like the following:

The importance of language learning in Europe
        a) languages are an essential tool that fosters mobility (travelling, studying abroad)

b) languages increase tolerance and open-mindedness among people, and contribute to the building of European Citizens as the knowledge of several languages raises European mindedness
c) languages are becoming a barrier for most people to become part of the Information Society
d) languages are one of the most important part of a foreign cultural heritage, a diversity that we cherish
e) languages are becoming a central part of education, especially Higher Education

AEGEE asks for:

HIGHER EDUCATION

Every student, at the end of hislher studies, should have communicative skills in English and another European Language other than hislher mother tongue. English will be considered as a language for communication among students of all countries, whereas the second European Language will be a vehicle to increase cross-border cultural exchange. To achieve this:

- Courses of foreign languages to be mandatory no matter what studies
- Academic credits to be recognised in languages (where not already existing)
- Parts of the studies to be taught in a different language, preferably in another country than the homeland
- Less widely spread languages to be made accessible

ADULTS – LIFE LONG LEARNING

- Access to language learning to be granted after the person has left formal education system
- Non-formal education: e.g. summer courses to be recognised. A concrete structure of National Recognition Agencies should be established in order to foster transparency and coherence within language diplomas among different countries
- The European Language Portfolio, which we consider a good initiative, to be promoted more widely as an important step towards recognition of non-formal language education

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

- The number of native speakers as teachers to be increased, especially in Higher Education
- Language students only to be allowed to teach if they have studies in the respective country (countries) for at least six months

As a result of this demands, we consider that Universities, Governments and all incumbent Institutions should provide the means and resources to achieve these aims.

VI. Workshop Sessions

6.1. Session 1: Staff development and learner training

6.1.1. Lecture I : 'On-line' and 'off-line' learning communities : creating the continuum

by Marina Mozzon-McPherson - University of Hull

Although practice in virtual education has often been driven more by the technologies and economics of electronic delivery than by the ideal of social learning, there is a growing body of work which focuses on community as a significant element in the pedagogical design of virtual learning environments. Much of the studies, though, are concerned with the relation of social interaction on individual learning outcomes (e.g. language performance, motivation, communication skills) rather than on the development of the learning community itself.

Starting from a working definition of learning communities as social constructs, this presentation described some of the features of an online professional group and analysed the extent to which they can be defined as a particular type of community, a community of practice and the extent to which by creating, within the new environment, a continuum between their off-line and on-line professional worlds, new professional practices develop. The group under study is constituted by language teachersladvisers who are following an online professional programme.
The presentation also showed another application of online learning community through a course in Dutch for beginners, Lagelands.

This presentation addressed the specific question of how to prepare learners, developers and tutors in the creation of online learning communities. It looked at how certain activities, tasks are conducive to notions of formality or togetherness and informality, how specific features can contribute to create cohesion, to maintain or destroy a sense of community.

It concluded by providing a few suggestions for staff involved in e-tutoring. Useful links were provided at the end of the presentation.

Useful links were provided at the end of the presentation.

The social issues of interaction, collaboration and communication which constitute a key component of learning in general and language learning in particular were at length debated following this and John Petitt's presentation.

6.1.2. Lecture 2: 'Virtual spaces: preparing for real learning'

by John Pettit, Institute of Educational Technology, The Open University (UK)

How can we prepare ourselves - and our learners - for real learning in virtual spaces? That emphasis on learners is important, and it works in two directions:
1) Many of us at the TNP workshop spoke of the need to be learner-centred. Across our group we probably have a range of views about what being 'learner-centred' actually means. But we probably would agree that, however we apply it in the practice of our daily teaching, being learner-centred implies a general set of values – an emphasis on respect for the learners, for example, and a willingness to take account of the social and economic grain of their daily lives. We recognize that our learners face demands, and construct identities, outside our classrooms or new learning environments. Being learner-centred also means recognizing that people do not all learn in the same way – hence our emphasis on learning styles. And it means recognizing

that increasingly learners can move from one institution to another according to their preference.

2) If we are learner-centred, what are some of the implications for our work in new environments? I have in mind virtual learning environments (VLEs), where students can carry out a wide range of tasks: accessing online resources, reading material from their teacher, collaborating online with other students, meeting in an online cafe, and so on. I believe there is a paradox in being learner-centred, What is it? Well, how should we react if learners report that they do not enjoy working in a virtual learning environment? Do we say to the students, 'OK. You report you didn't like this style of learning – this collaborative work online, for instance. We won't ask you to do it again'? Or do we try a different route? We could, for example, continue to take the students' feedback very seriously, and develop our teaching materials accordingly, while also recognizing that...

It can take more than a year for a student to become an effective learner in a virtual learning environment **(VLE)** [Powerpoint slide *2].*

That's why I am suggesting that there is a paradox: although being learner-centred means, among other things, that we listen to students and find out where they are now, it also means that we may have to encourage them to move to somewhere else.

And during the year (or more) that the student is learning to learn in new ways, what is the teacher doing?

It can take more than a year for a teacher to become effective in a virtual learning environment **(VLE)** [slides 3 & *4].*

It looks as though it could be a tricky journey for both learners and teachers! And while certain of the new learning environments, particularly those developed from an instructivist perspective, may arouse fears that the machine will replace the teacher, this does not have to be the case. In relation to designing and facilitating online conferencing, for example, the new environments require teachers to 'upskill' rather than 'deskill'. I referred in my talk to an example from Oliver, who found that the combination of a VLE and assessment-related rewards resulted in some unexpected effects, leading him to research, reflect and revise – and to stay tuned to the unexpected[slide *5].*

At TNP2 we spoke at some length about the new skills that teachers will need. I'd like to mention two here very briefly, and then expand on a third. Teachers will need to:
- develop an online presence that supports learners [slide 6]
- learn how to manage their time; of course they already have to do this, but email and VLEs are notoriously time-consuming [slide 7], and so teachers need to develop new skills – and also guidelines, to ensure that learners do not make unreasonable demands.

In addition, teachers who are working in a campus-based institution need to learn how to blend their face-to-face classes with their use of virtual learning environments. For example, suppose as a teacher you wish to introduce your students to a new topic. You could do this in a number of ways, considering the pros and cons for your students in their circumstances. The sequence of five slides [slides *8–12]* is designed to present some of the options for real teachers trying to integrate virtual learning environments with their existing teaching. This down-to-earth approach is designed to build teachers' confidence, which is one of the most important issues as we move to new learning environments[slide *13].*

Finally, in addition to the Powerpoint slides, here are some suggestions for those who would like to use print – a very powerful medium still, as one of our TNP2 participants reminded us. Naturally I recommend the last one in the list :-)

Collis, B. and Moonen, J. (2001) Flexible Learning in a Digital World: experiences and expectations, Kogan Page, London.

Laurillard, D. (2002, 2nd edn) Rethinking University Teaching: a conversational framework for the effective use of learning technologies, RoutledgeFalmer, London and New York.

Oliver, R. (2001) 'It seemed like a good idea at the time' in Murphy, D., Walker, R. and Webb, G. (eds) *Online* Learning and Teaching with Technology: case sfudies, experience and practice, Kogan Page, London.

Pettit, J. and Mason, R. (2002 forthcoming) 'Virtual space, real learning: an introduction to VLEs' in Fry, H., Ketteridge, S, and Marshall, S. (eds) A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Educafion: enhancing academic practice, Kogan Page, London.

6.1.3. Summary & Discussion following session 1: Staff Development and Learner Training

Report by Bill Richardson

Chair: Anne Rasanen

John **Pettit** and Marina **Mozzon-McPherson:** "Virtual spaces: preparing for real learning"

John Pettit outlined the most salient features of an online community, using the example of a postgraduate course, which he chairs at the Open University in the UK. The course is an MA in learning online, which is aimed at professionals involved in education and training. The management of the course entails the creation of an online community where the learners work together over 32 weeks while never meeting up face-to-face, but communicating using the computer. The students write themselves into the course by discussing relevant issues with each other online. This discussion is facilitated by the teacher who has the task of encouraging the discussion to begin and must intervene and respond adequately and to an appropriate extent. The tutor needs to ensure that an atmosphere of trust is created, so that the course participants can feel confident in posting messages and responding to the online discussion. The tutor's responses enable learners' messages to be woven together and incorporated in commentary which can both refer to relevant published material and make specific reference to individual messages left by learners. The tutor's skill in knowing how to offer input is an important element of the course, as is the ability to help learners to build up their confidence in the requisite skills needed by them. While learners may feel secure in participating in chatrooms they may feel challenged by having to critique a paper presented to them. The latter is an example of an old skill which may be lacking –often the skills necessary for successful participation in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) are old ones rather than new ones.

Some of the skills, old and new, required of learners are:
- Keyboarding and other ICT skills
- Groupwork in an online conference
- Searching on the Web and evaluating results
- Reading & commenting
- Writing a 'public' critique
- Range of learning styles

On the other hand, the following are skills needed by teachers using VLE's:

- Keyboarding and other ICT skills
- Facilitating/teaching groupwork in an online conference
- Facilitating/teaching searching on the Web and evaluating results
- Facilitating/teaching reading & commenting
- Facilitating/teaching writing a 'public' critique

- Facilitatinglteachingin a range of learning styles
- Time! Using template text; sharing online activities with other teachers; FAQs; managing expectations about email; student self-help
- Thinking through how to integrate ftf and virtual (e.g., the five ways to introduce a topic)
- Presentational skills in VLEs; asset management
- Resisting unrealistic pressures: teachers
- Avoiding unrealistic expectations: managers

Many learners will already have well-developed ICT skills, while they may need to develop their skill in critical evaluation.

The main challenges faced by teachers will often be lack of time, and it will be important for teachers to make explicit what expectations are realistic for learners and which ones are not.

Finally, there will always be the need to assess realistically the degree to which the VLE should be used for a particular course and to achieve the appropriate balance between online and face-to-face work in any particular situation. It may take a long time for students to become confident in the use of ICT and to engage with this approach.

Marina Mozzon-McPherson outline the issues raised by the development of online communities of learners in the context of a postgraduate programme for language teachers called the "Postgraduate Certificate in Advising for Language Learning", organised at the Language Institute of the University of Hull. This course is delivered entirely by distance learning, using 'Merlin', the university's own electronic learning environment. The course consists of three modules, as follows:

1) Language Learning
2) Management of open learning for languages
3) Advising for language learning

The programme aims to develop new professional skills needed to perform an effective role regarding language learning support and promoting learner autonomy. Staff involved in this programme aim to generate a sense of community among the participants, who would all be language professionals. Thought and effort are therefore put into the management of the complete set of relations between the participants, the learning activity and the wider world. Participants need to develop a sense of ownership of the content of the course. Many societal functions of language become operational during the course, with much interaction taking place between the students themselves online. After a number of weeks, the students themselves take over the business of moderating and summarising discussions between participants, with the development of skills in relation to norms of online participation, including managing entries and exits in conversation and citing and referring to earlier interventions. Newcomers to the system are frequently helped and advised by more experienced users.

Discussion

In discussion, the following issues were raised:

- The importance of time management, especially in relation to the time devoted by tutors to reading and correcting the work of students. Thought needs to be put into establishing patterns of response and pacing of corrections.
- Evaluation of students is an important area for consideration. On the one hand, students (along with the tutor) form a supportive community; on the other hand, the tutor has the task of assessing students work including, possibly, their participation online.
- It can take a long time for students to become confident in the use of these approaches, although, when they do become confident, they often engage very enthusiastically with them.
- The formation of communities of users needs to be managed, in order to achieve an appropriate balance of gender and of native and non-native speakers of the language of

communication. This reflects the need for the tutor to develop sociological skills, as opposed to linguistic skills:

- In reality, many of the skills needed in order to manage virtual environments are the old skills required of teachers, including the ability to manage groups, ensure participation by all concerned, etc. Many of the skills developed are transferable skills to do with the ability to work in groups, including by online means.

6.2. Session 2: Methodology and materials development

6.2.1. Lecture 1: Happiness and disappointment on our way to heaven...

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The next lines of text will try to give an overview and some critical remarks on our experiences with ICT in teaching-learning and constructing-producing FL learning materials during the last fifteen years (as a teacher, as an author, as a coordinator of methods of FL, as a coordinator of research about ICT-enhanced methods of FLL (foreign language learning), as the coordinator of a big FL-contest by means of the internet[1]).

Our way to heaven - as we thought ICT should bring the solution of all our problems - started by trials with DOS-products sustaining existing methods of French business correspondance, went over a very succesful testsoftware reflecting exactly our exams, continued with an excellent product in the form of a CDi that was a big commercial failure, experienced the possibilities and the limits of ICT assisted FL learning for youngsters, sees now heaven in a cdrom or browser driven FL course for higher techical staff of enterprises, testing in the meanwhile a large MC-database for learners of FFL (French as a foreign language).

Which obstacles did we meet?

Software and ICT offer some interesting possibilities for
- Vocabulary training
- Grammar exercises
- Imitation of pronunciation
- Tracking and (limited) remedial teaching, especially if good help files are given, e.g. an e-dictionary adapted for e-learning

but have serious intrinsic restrictions:
- No written creative texts can be corrected automatically
- No written creative interaction
- No oral production can be recognised or corrected
- No oral creative interaction, i.e. dialogue
- Limited possibilities for voice and sound transmission by means of the internet
- Limited possibilities for images and movie sequences... (too little band width)

and even meet a lot of environmental problems:
- Haves and havenots
- Not enough computers or terminals at our disposal (often they are out of service)
- No or not enough support (for hard- and even software)
- A lack of flexibility (see the flexibility of traditional schoolbooks: price, place)
- A lack of compatibility (different releases of O.S., browsers...)
- Not user friendly enough

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[1] See http:llwww.luc.ac.belcttl and http://www.olyfran.com.

- No computer reading strategies
- Little added value...
- Problems of compatibility with the overall learning management system

Which requirements does a good ICT product have to meet?

A series of elements are given (actual possibilities of the equipment, technical state of the local equipment, local help…; quality of the programmes, software, methods) and cannot be changed by language teachers.
But a lot of others are in our own hands:

- Environmental elements (machines, O.S., browsers...)
- Maximum compatibility
- Easy accessibility = user friendliness (on-line help, clear-simple instructions...; in-built didactic vocabulary, language and culture grammar)
- Real added value or even irreplacibility (content and style)(compared to traditional learning materials)
- Really multimedia (text, sound-voice, picture-drawing-movie sequences)
- Adequate content (needs analysis= communicative situations > corpus composition and analysis > didactic scenario > progressive elaboration and continuous return possibilities > authentic language and environments...)
- (Young and) changing style (compared to all these attractive computer games)

More teacher independent learning:

"Learner is an economic being =he is *continuously* looking for fhe best results *with the* leasf effort."

  1   Learners have to learn how to learn autonomously (discipline, organisation…)
1.1 Clear traject book
1.2 Regular follow-up
1.3 Intermediate and final tests clearly reflecting the learning activities

  2   Teachers have to learn how to:
2.1 Prepare the learning process
2.2 Guide-coach the learning process.
     New tasks:

- Conceive challenging learning materials in multidisciplinary teams (e.g. movie producers... + linguistic-didactic specialists)
- Rethink their role during the learning activity:
    - Assist individual learners with problems
    - Organise creative activities (computers cannot) and give (creative) feedback (computers cannot)

An ICT (enhanced) FL method can only succeed if:

1) for the learner:
- the method meets the normal standards of a good FL method (clear objectives as result of a needs analysis, authentic language, didactic scenario, progressive elaboration, authentic situations)
- ICT gives a real added value (text, sound and voice, images of all kind)
- ICT is not only complementary but is an integrative part of the method (ICT as the only support of the part of the method brought by means of ICT)
- the ICT enhanced part of the course is technically (extremely user friendly) and stylisticly (young and changing) comparable to the products of the normal consumor market
- learning by ICT is a part of the learning culture of the institute, so learners have the necessary discipline and organisation (learner's autonomy) and the school organisation is conceived for an integrative use of ICT. Mostly learners, certainly in the beginning, need a regular follow-up

(tests clearly reflecting the learning activities), a clearly elaborated learning traject (a kind of agenda with their learning tasks and final objectives and the way they will be evaluated).

2) for the teacher-author:
- he gets a fair fee for his work
- different competences can be brought together to make a technically and stylisticly competitive product (see the list of collaborators of a picture)
  the problem of copyrights can be solved in a sufficient way

3) for the teacher-coach
- he doesn't have to fear for his job
- he is trained to integrate ICT-applications in his course
- he has easily access to the necessary technical equipment without disturbing the school organisation
- he can use an integrated method where ICT takes an essential and irreplaceable part

6.2.2. Lecture 2: "The integration of ICT on a faculty-wide basis: Challenges, Problems, Perspectives"

Ole Laurisen, Aarhus, Denmark

Slides to be found on website: http://www.taalnet.rug.ac.be/tnp/Faculty%20of%20the%20Future.ppt

6.2.3. Lecture 3: "Find, Enhance, Store, Share, Information (FESSI) – Introductory course for BA students in modern languages for international business communication and LSP"

Henrik Selsoe Sorensen, Denmark

My contribution focuses on the use by students of ICT as a tool to improve the quality of their work as students as well as lifelong learners and professional practicians (ICT_2). Competences in multilingual information retrieval and related areas are crucial to but reach far beyond pure language learning. In this perspective, ICT_2 could help promote language studies as an integral part of academic and professional qualifications in all fields.

The methodology presented here under the heading of **FESSI** are recent developments made for a new introductory course for BA-students at the Copenhagen Business School of all programmes in modern languages for international business communication and LSP. The approach is illustrated by a few samples of practice taught in the course.

Finding information
While learning and using foreign languages students very often need to search for relevant information in one ore more languages: knowledge building blocks, facts, encyclopaedic knowledge, in short raw material for their comparative studies of language and culture which are not available in a ready-made form. Traditional hunting fields are the library, the library's information resources, dictionaries, web catalogues etc. The FESSI approach includes touching books and getting instructions on how to make a bibliography, getting acquainted with electronic resources such as the European Union's on-line terminology bank Eurodicautom, the British National Corpus, Newspapers and magazines on the web etc. Information and Documentation has its own section of the course. An important part is dedicated to Smart Search Strategies on the wild web, i.e. how to use the advanced searches of Google, how to plan for efficient parallel text search. Finally, a methodology called "Dictionary on Demand" method (**DoD**) is introduced: how to find a foreign language term without a bilingual dictionary and make equivalence verifications just by using Google.

Enhancing information
Once knowledge building blocks have been located, the next step is to search for definitions, illustrations and collocation patterns - and permanently employ appropriate quality assessment procedures. If more than one language is involved, the procedure must include equivalence check, all according to well-known methods for terminology field work.

Storing and sharing information
MuliTerm (a Trados product) is used for storing information. Although MultiTerm is specially designed for terminology work, it is flexible enough for being used at the same time as a beginner's knowledge base. Groups of students access and maintain a small multilingual knowledge base simultaneously. Methods and techniques to share knowledge are key elements in the course, students must experience to which extent discipline is needed for   managing   and   updating   a   shared   database.

Conclusion
The course was launched in 2001 on a face-to-face basis with ICT_1 support, but was not an immediate success because the students tended to focus on content and communicative skills more than on ICT tools. Only while making their final project they got carried away and started becoming enthusiastic realising that they were actually able to improve the quality of their preparation for their other courses - and collaborate thanks to ICT_2. The course is obviously transferable to an ICT_1 based New Learning Environment.

The **DoD** approach in particular would be relevant for LWULT languages in need of compensation for insufficient ▮ outdated bilingual dictionary resources.

Slides to be found on website: http://www.taalnet.rug.ac.be/tnp/VIDen.ppt

6.2.4. Summary & Discussion of session 2

Report by Ioanna Ziaka

Willy Clijsters gave an overview of the practitioners' experience concerning ICT constructed FL learning materials from the point of view of both teachers and learners commenting on the possibilities offered and obstacles met. First efforts to experiment on the possibilities of ICT assisted FL learning started with DOS-products that included vocabulary exercises mostly and were very complicated while at the same time sustaining existing methods of practice. This was succeeded by the production of a test software that was successful once its use gave learners credits for their final exams. The effort ended in the production of a Cdi that was a commercial failure. Since then, efforts have continued and experience has led to the production of a very successful cdrom or browser driven FL course for higher technical staff of enterprises and a large MC-database for learners of EFL is currently being tested. The above highlighted areas of interesting possibilities of application of ICT and its serious restrictions and raised environmental questions. The requirements that a good ICT product should meet are therefore presented as follows:
Interesting possibilities lie in the area of:
- Vocabulary training
- Grammar exercises
- Pronunciation (in the form of simple imitation)
- Multimedia
- Multiple choice testing

Serious restrictions lie in the area of:
- Correction of creative texts
- Written creative interaction
- Correction of oral production (e.g. pitch, speed, intonation)
- Oral creative interaction
- Voice and sound transmission (technical problems)

- Images and movie sequences (limited possibilities)

Environmental problems met:
- Haves and have-nots
- Number of computers or terminals at our disposal
- Technical support at our disposal
- Flexibility (spatial, etc.)
- Compatibility (different configurations, releases of software, etc.)
- User friendliness
- Computer reading strategies (reading on a screen is different to that of a book)
- Added value (if there is any, which that is)

The requirements that should be met by a good ICT product include:
- Environmental elements (machines, browsers, etc.)
- Maximum compatibility
- Easy accessibility (user friendly including elements such as clear and simple instructions, on-line help, ...)
- Real added value/irreplacibility (content and style compared to traditional to traditional learning materials)
- Multimedia (use of all the possibilities offered by ICT including sound, image, movie sequences, ...)
- Adequate content (that should be based on needs analysis and should include: 1. communicative situations, 2. corpus composition and analysis, 3. appropriate didactic scenario, 4. progressive elaboration taking into consideration the different levels of language competence, 5. continuous return possibilities, 6. authentic language and environments, 7. young and changing style comparable to the attractive computer games available)

The above demand not only a multi-disciplinary effort but also a change in the traditional role of teachers to one of teachers-coaches. The problems arising for teachers include the following:
- The production of innovative and challenging ICT-based exercises and tasks using multimedia
- Learning how to guide learners by assisting individual learning, organizing creative activities and giving creative feedback

As for learners, they have to learn how to learn autonomously (discipline and organization of their own learning), there should be regular follow-up and their intermediate and final tests should reflect the learning activities they are involved with through the whole course.

Ole Laurisen presented the 2F Project, an attempt to create a platform for the management of the whole faculty of the university he works at, the investigation, evaluation and development of learning methods and environments, research networks and knowledge sharing and management with the help of ICT.

Web based learning experiments involving the faculty and library had shown that:
- The use of ICT would upgrade the study programs
- New learning methods were needed
- Changing learning methods would imply changes for the whole organization

The funding of the project was through the Ministry of Education and the Faculty.

The goals of the project were:
- To move from teaching (instructivism) to learning (constructivism)
- To support the individual learning process with ICT
- To replace traditional lessons and timetables with the just-in-time|just-in-place concept

What the project team felt was necessary was:
- Adequate infrastructure
- Round the clock access to learning resources
- ICT support for colleagues and students
- Look-out persons (for programs, web sites, etc.)
- Research
- Knowledge-sharing

- Co-operation

What has been accomplished so far is:

- Setting up of a learning resource center that provides 64 PCs and 10 Macs, the Office Packet, hard-disk dictionaries and encyclopedias, free web access and access to library resources round the clock.
- Setting up a portal for all students, the METRO.

Results have shown, however, that few people in the faculty use the METRO because it:

- Has a complex structure
- Includes a virtual library for the whole Faculty (includes "everything" and "nothing")
- Is not properly profiled or positioned
- Has access limitations for dictionaries
- Has competition from "Google"

The solutions suggested by the project team have been the following:

- The contents of the METRO must be adapted to the individual user (via CampusNet). The issues of autonomy and personalization must be taken seriously
- Its structure must be simplified
- The electronic resources must be accessible off-campus
- Teachers are more active in finding relevant material for the various stops on the lines of the METRO

Further solutions that develop new learning methods are:

- Develop personllevelldiscipline-specificand targeted information retrieval routines made by the learners themselves and coached by the teachers/librarians
- Let the learners take ownership by creating a web site for the course for which all participants are responsible, making it dynamic so that the learners can participate in managing it without problems

All this must be done because:

- New learning methods cannot be implemented unless the learners understand the changes, since they have been brought up to be passive receptors and expect edutainment
- To introduce constructivism (coaching, autonomy, objectives of the course leading to professional and personal development, and collaboration)

Further actions to be taken include:

- The introduction and use of learning styles (based on sensation, perception and personality typology) that can be diagnosed through the use of questionnaires, observations and interviews
- The introduction of communication styles for use in conference systems (learners must be trained to the rules of communication in cyber space including the frequency, length, language and style of contributions and the use of emotions)

The demands made on the teachers are: readiness to be coaches/facilitators and to stimulate the learning process, readiness to interact empathetically with the learners and to undergo changes and implement ICT and self-insight.

The demands on the learners are: readiness to accept autonomy, to participate in teamwork and undergo changes to implement ICT and self-insight.

To create a well functioning learning environment technicians should "listen" to teachers and courses must be currently evaluated so that mismatches can be identified and repaired immediately.

Henrik Selsoe Sorensen outlined a face-to-face course at the Copenhagen Business School backed by e-environment aiming at giving learners ICT tools to improve their performance while studying.

First learners are requested to find information (in some resource book such as a dictionary or encyclopedia, by accessing the library or by using the advanced searches of Google, etc.)

The second step is to enhance the information found by verifying it (through number of occurrences, variations, changes, connotations, etc.)

Thirdly, information is stored.

Then, learners are requested to share this information with other learners. The didactic effect is to acquire the discipline needed for managing and updating a database. This can be significant help for prospective translators.

The first evaluation carried out for the above course showed that learners focused more on content and communicative rather than ICT skills and as a result found the course irrelevant. When the course was integrated with other subjects (in projects), learners found it useful.

In the discussion that followed it was noted that teachers' styles should be considered as well and that unfortunately there was no cooperation with other universities.

There was the question of whether the use of the web should become obligatory for various courses to which the answer was that in such a case it should be done gradually since there is no previous experience.

A further question raised involved the explanation of the phrase "just-in-time, just-in-place". The answer was that it meant the availability of the course any time on the web and this could solve the problem of lack of time that learners may be facing. On a further question referring to the benefit of this for the learners the answer was that this way of learning is going to be tested but it has not been done yet since ICT is part of daily life and as such there may be no need to evaluate. On being asked whether it is a tool that brings better results the answer was that learners are positive to ICT and feel they are being given attention.

At this point Wolfgang Mackiewicz noted that participants need to consider the implications of ICT and its applications and the way people can get to know these initiatives at a time when there are significant differences among EU countries in these matters. Spreading the knowledge, the level at which implementation should start, whether such efforts should be networked and the way this can be achieved, integrating all the above, shaping e-learning in Europe and the proposals to be made are issues that should be considered by the participants.

Mike Kelly, commenting on interoperability and wondering how knowledge should be shared, expressed the view that this should not be left to individual universities but that it is the responsibility of the E.U. to set the direction.

Anne Rasanen pointed that learners should be involved in such efforts because it is an issue that involves them and because it is important for dissemination reasons.

Marina Mozzon-McPherson pointed out that there are different issues involved and that this is an experimental stage. So far there has been no systematic research on which informative decisions concerning platforms, effects on learners and teachers and other issues can be based. She added that research should be supported and wondered whether the pioneers in this field are properly rewarded for what they do.

On answering this issue, Wolfgang Mackiewicz said that if funding is needed, research should be connected to the policy of the E.U. adding that languages, which are very high on the E.U. agenda and ICT, which is close behind, should meet. The E.U. should be made aware of the need for research into this field and the existence of a multilingual community within the space of universities can be used as a strong argument for directing attention and funding research in the field.

6.3. Session 3: Integration of Common European Framework

6.3.1. Lecture 1: Transparency and international comparability in languages: The role that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) and European Language Portfolio (ELP) can play

by Brigitte Forster-Vosicki

Within a European learning space in the field of languages, cooperation among higher education institutions needs a common basis, and coherent, recognised standards for all those involved in the processes of learning, teaching and assessment, and management of languages.

At present, in many institutions of higher education, it is difficult to ascertain students' real language levels, since these are often ill-defined in vague terms with no accurate description of the level, objectives, and content of the courses followed or levels, content and evaluation criteria of examinations passed or of other language achievements gained in different learning contexts. All of this precludes comparison and hinders, if not prevents, academic and professional recognition from one country to another or even one institution to another.

The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a global reference system applicable to all languages, which can introduce greater transparency and coherence between different institutions and sectors of education and has great potential for encouraging a new approach to teaching and learning. It

- promotes standards comparable all over Europe which give a common language to all the persons active in the field of languages in order to help them to reflect on their current practice;
- provides a language- and institution-independent description of six reference levels for describing learners' proficiency related to language in use in that they describe what a learner can do at a given level;
- fosters a pedagogical approach that bases language teaching and learning on the learner's needs, motivations, characteristics, and resources; on the analysis of the learning situation; and on the definition of realistic and explicit learning objectives from the perspectives of language in use and the development of plurilingualism, learner autonomy, and lifelong language learning.

When higher education institutions describe their programmes, teaching material, attestations, examinations, and other qualifications according to the Council of Europe's common reference levels and descriptions -thus clearly stating objectives, contents, procedures, and criteria - competences become not only transferable from one system to another, but also clear and understandable for all learners, teachers, institutions, and employers.

In this context, the European Language Portfolio, a practical application of the CEF, plays an important role by, ideally, acquainting every single language learner in Europe with the ideas and standards of the CEF.

The ELP is a personal document for the use of the learner. It is at the same time an information tool and a companion to language learning, because it allows all language proficiency – whether acquired within or outside of formal educational settings – and intercultural experience to be presented in a comprehensible, complete, and internationally comparable way. It also contains help for thinking about one's own language learning and for planning further learning.

The European Language Portfolio exists in numerous versions in various countries and languages. There are ELP versions for a variety of target groups and contexts. Nevertheless, all ELPs have the same structure and pursue the same objectives. A version for higher education has to take into account, in addition to general language, the specific fields of language learning and usage in higher education and beyond, which is to say language for academic and professional purposes and to enhance mobility.

When entries are made responsibly and transparently, the Portfolio can be the basis for mutual recognition of language achievements and its use may trigger and support changes in learning and teaching practice.

Slides to be found on Website: http://www.taalnet.rug.ac.be/tnp/CEF_et_ELP-Brigitte.ppt

6.3.2. Summary & Discussion following session 3

Report by Jurate Zdanyte

It has been generally acknowledged that in order to achieve better results in the field of languages, cooperation among European higher education institutions needs a common basis and coherent, recognized standards for all those involved in the processes of learning, teaching and assessment, and management of languages.
At present, in many institutions of higher education it is difficult to ascertain students' real language levels since these are often ill-defined in vague terms with no accurate description of the level, objectives and content of the courses followed, or levels, content and evaluation criteria of the examinations passed or of other language achievements gained in different learning contexts. All of this precludes comparison and hinders, if not prevents, academic and professional recognition from one country to another or even one institution to another.
The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a global reference system applicable to all languages, which can introduce greater transparency and coherence between

different institutions and sectors of education and has great potential for encouraging a new approach to teaching and learning. Its objectives are:

- to promote standards comparable all over Europe which give a common language to all the persons active in the field of languages in order to help them to reflect on their current practice;
- to foster a pedagogical approach that bases language teaching and learning on the learner's needs, motivations, characteristics and resources, on the analysis of the learning situation and on the definition of realistic and explicit learning objectives from the perspectives of the language in use and the development of pluralingualism, learner autonomy and lifelong language learning.
- to provide a language- and institution-independent description of six reference levels for describing learners' proficiency related to language in use in that they describe what a learner can do at a given level, e.g.:
  B1: "Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects related to her/his own fields of interest or study."
  C2: "Can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it, structuring and adapting the talk flexibly to meet the audience's needs."

Consequently, higher education institutions should describe their programmes, teaching materials, attestations, examinations and other qualifications according to the Council of Europe's common reference levels and descriptions, thus clearly stating objectives, contents, procedures and criteria.

Integration of the Common European Framework (CEF) into higher education introduces common standards for examination\qualification levels, objectives, contents, methods and procedures, as well as evaluation criteria.

Thus, competences will become not only transferable from one system to another, but also clear and understandable for all learners, teachers, institutions and employers. The implementation of the CEF in higher education will be of great significance in promoting European mobility, lifelong learning, pluralingualism and learner autonomy.

In this context the European Language Portfolio, a practical application of the CEF, plays an important role by, ideally, acquainting every single language learner in Europe with the ideas and standards of the CEF.

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a personal document for the use of the learner, an instrument that facilitates the recording, planning and validation of lifelong language learning both within and beyond the educational context.

It is at the same time an information tool (the reporting function) and a companion to language learning (the pedagogic function) because it allows all language proficiency – whether acquired within or outside of formal education settings – and intercultural experience to be presented in a comprehensible, complete and internationally comparable way. It also contains help for thinking about one's own language learning and for planning further learning.

A version for higher education has to take into account, in addition to general language, the specific fields of language learning and usage in higher education and beyond, which is to say language for academic and professional purposes to enhance mobility.

The European Language Portfolio exists in numerous versions in various countries and languages. There are ELP versions for a variety of target groups and contexts. Nevertheless, every ELP has the same structure and pursues the same objectives. It consists of three parts:

- Language Passport
- Language Biography
- Dossier

The Language Passport is a record of language skills, qualifications and experiences. It lists the languages that the holder has competence in and shows at a glance the person's current level of language proficiency and intercultural experience.

In the passport there are different forms and worksheets to fill in:

- Self-assessment grid;
- Self-assessment checklists from A1 to C2;
- Overview of language and intercultural experience in the context of higher education studies;
- List of attestations for language and intercultural experiences;

- Attestation form: Language learning experiences and language use in the region where the language is spoken;
- Attestation form: Language learning experiences and use in the region where the language is not spoken;
- Global Scale – calibration of certificates and qualifications to Common European Framework levels;
- Examination description.

The learners can document different achievements. They can relate the certificates they have obtained to the Framework and make their achievement level transparent. For example, a certificate from the University of Lausanne is supposed to correspond Level B2. If a student intends to apply to another institution, he/she may supply more detailed information for more transparency.

The Language Biography helps learners to document and reflect on previous language learning, intercultural experience and learning processes, and to assess their own language skills, set learning goals and plan future learning activities.

The Language Biography is meant for the learner development and contains worksheets with awareness-raising questions related to the learner's personal experience:

- My language learning biography;
- My significant intercultural experiences;
- Self-assessment checklists A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 with specific descriptors for the field of higher education;
- My objectives;
- Language learning journal;
- My mobility stay.

These tools give the learners cognitive means they need to improve their ability of autonomous language learning.

The Dossier illustrates the development and current level of the learner's language proficiency and intercultural experience through examples of personal work. It contains:

- a working dossier of the learner's language development,
- a dossier for presentation.

The document comprises a list of pieces of work included in the Dossier for Presentation.

The advantages of using the European Language Portfolio are many-sided:

- for higher educational institutions – it contributes to quality development, enhances the pedagogical potential, improves the work of languages centres and self-study centres, facilitates the work of admission officers as well as organisers of mobility programmes;
- for learners – who can clearly define their proficiency level;
- for employers – who can better describe job requirements, organise in-service training.

When entries are made responsibly and transparently, the Portfolio can be the basis for mutual recognition of language achievements and its use may trigger and support changes in learning and teaching practice.

The presentation was followed by a discussion:

W.Mackiewicz:

In Bologna process the issue of primary importance is comparability of degrees and levels. In the area of languages we are quite fortunate. A benchmark for languages related to the European framework has been proposed at the European Council of Languages. In other subjects there are still lots of discussions about the contents.

In Berlin we are defining the learning outputs concerning B degree.

We have to recognise the value of the scales. There is currently proliferation of descriptors. It is difficult to define generic descriptors, so more specific descriptors have to be worked out.

Finland and the Netherlands have already worked out an objective assessment scale, Germany has started doing that, as well as France.

The problem is to set the indicators – but how can we make sure people are there? We need to develop awareness.

Another question is – how do we apply the system, which ensures transparency and comparability?

A.Rasanen:
A question to the speaker: How do you use the Portfolio?

B.ForsterVosicki:
The Portfolio materials can be used either from time to time or you could base your whole organisation, teaching and assessment methods on it and this way introduce new forms of language learning. Initial training and ongoing reflection is necessary in order to integrate the Portfolio in a useful way.
The approach is quite new, so it is difficult for the teachers to integrate the Portfolio in the learning process. It is a long process for the teachers to learn all the requirements and ways of application. Students also need some introduction, but they are convinced about the usefulness of the Portfolio for future life.

W.Mackiewicz:
First of all, the Portfolio is a perfect instrument for encouraging people to reflect upon their language learning. It promotes the concept of multilingualism. Grading is done on the basis of 'being perfect', but you may arrive at completely different grading. We say: you have three years – what are you going to achieve with these descriptors?

A.Mendez:
In our practice, introducing the Portfolio was not a great success, students perceived that there was too much work there.

B.Forster Vosicki:
The reason may have been that there was no training for piloting. It has to be a permanent process, it has to be integrated and it needs teacher training. It is hard the first time, later it is easier and it helps the learner.

B.Richardson:
How widely is it used?

B.Forster Vosicki:
In Switzerland it is used in a large number of secondary schools in all the cantons. In France they have started introducing it in primary schools, in Finland – in secondary education.

W.Mackiewicz:
In France everybody received it, but teachers were not prepared. Unless teachers and institutions are prepared, it won't work. In some regions of Italy it has worked well.

A.Rasanen:
In Finland an extensive teacher training programme has started and the portfolio will be used extensively. The School Leaving Matriculation Board is going to base the requirements on the Portfolio.

A.Corda:
In the Netherlands the final level of competence in secondary education is related to the scale of the Portfolio. In tertiary level experts are asked to relate the requirements to the scale. All the universities have agreed to have level C as the final level to be reached.

M.Kelly:
In the UK there are a lot of workshops about the Portfolio, primary education and vocational education portfolios are being introduced, there may be changes in the degree programmes.

6.4. Session 4: The technological environment

6.4.1. Lecture 1: I4LL: an eLearning Environment for language learning

by Valère Meus and Sietze Looijenga
Talencentrum Universiteit Gent

I4LL (an abbreviation for 'Integrated Internet-based Interactive Independent Language Learning') is the name of the eLearning Environment which is being developed at the Language Centre of the University of Ghent. I4LL aims specifically at language learning.

The final version of the learning environment will have the following components:

- The **I4LL** Authoring Tool, a tool for creating interactive learning materials. This also includes a scenario tool.
- The **I4LL** Repository Tool, a tool for storing and managing information about learning materials (metadata). The information is stored in a database using standards which are internationally recognized, among them standards developed by IMS.
- The **I4LL** Repository Preparation Tool, a tool for creating language objectives for complex learning materials (modules, courses), using the metadata which are stored in the database.
- The **I4LL** Server Environment, a web and database server.
- The **I4LL** Scoring and Tracking Tool, a tool for registering learners' activities. The data gathered are stored in a database.
- The **I4LL** Communication Platform, a forum with various spaces, including a personal space for every learner registered for a course.
- The **I4LL** Administration Tool, a tool for organising and managing the data concerning the learners who registered for one of the I4LL courses.

The first and still incomplete version of the I4LL learning environment was released in October 2001. Initially, three courses were offered within this learning environment. The learning materials used in these courses were created with Toolbook Instructor, which turned out to be unsuitable for use in an online environment. The ideas that serve as a starting point for the development of I4LL are nevertheless apparent in these courses.

Since October 2001, much time and effort has been put into the realisation of the various I4LL components. Most attention has been given to the development of the I4LL Authoring Tool, a first version of which is currently being tested at the Language Centre. We also spent a considerable amount of time setting up and fine-tuning a communication platform for the three courses that started in October 2001.

If you would like to get a better idea of the possibilities offered by the I4LL Authoring Tool, please take a look at our demo page at http:lli4ll.rug.ac.beldemolindex.html. Please note that you will only be able to view the demos if you have a number of plug-ins installed on your computer. You can download an installer package containing all the necessary plug-ins from the demo page.

This website will keep you informed about the progress we make. It will be updated on a regular basis.

To see the whole environment at work go to: http:lltalenc29.rug.ac.beli4ll and login with the username jantest (one word) and the password jantest. You should choose the English for Law course.

For a full description of the system, see the website:
http:llwww.taalnet.rug.ac.beltnplGentsumm.doc

6.4.2. Lecture 2: The use of Blackboard

Jan Driesen, Erasmushogeschool Brussel

Slides: http:llwww.taalnet.rug.ac.beltnplJ Driesen.ppt

6.4.3. Summary & Discussion of session 4 (the I4LL presentation)

Report by Alessandra Corda

I4LL is currently under development developed at the Language Centre of Gent University. ICT materials are far more expensive than the traditional ones, cooperation and the possibility of sharing experiences are therefore crucial for further development of electronic learning environments and language teaching content. The most

important reason why we have to invest in ICT, despite of well-known obstacles like reluctance of staff and high maintenance costs, is that ICT is a part of our society. If we reflect on language teaching, we should also reflect on the role of ICT in language pedagogy, to find out which elements really enhance language pedagogy (the added value of ICT).

The components of the I4LL learning environment are:

1) Authoring Tool, supported by a Scenario Tool. In this way the teacher is also being trained in producing CALL materials. The teacher can use predefined templates (at the present moment 20 templates have been produced; every template corresponds to a particular exercise type), but he can also change the template (e.g. by giving the feedback at the end of the exercise and not after every answer). A lot of work has also been spent in formulating the messages given by the computer to the students. Through the Preview function teachers may see the exercises as they will appear to the students.

2) Repository Tool, a database where the materials are stored and described by metadata, based both on IMS standards and on the CEF. This means that it is much easier to share materials with other teachers and to look for materials (e.g. materials for a specific language skill at a certain level), a great advantage for both students and teachers. To ensure uniformity, only the last 2 parts of the codes are language dependent. In the system everything is an object: imagines, exercises and courses. Information at all levels can be provided. To keep teachers' work simple, a distinction has been made between two categories information: what a teacher should|would normally know and "advanced". For the materials of the Language Centre the basc work unit is a 30 minutes one; every unit must be described with metadata.

3) Repository Preparation Tool, a tool which helps the teacher to code the materials and create a structured learning path.

4) Scoring and Tracking Tool, to keep track of students' activities and achievements. Apparently this seems paradoxical, but tracking can help the implementation of autonomous learning, because the teacher has a clear overview of the learners' progress.

5) Communication Platform, a forum containing different spaces (e.g. for communication on class, group and personal level)

6) Administration Tool, to manage the information about registration and payment. Systems like Blackboard or Web-CT have particularly strong communication and administration tools, this is way the Language Centre decided to give priority to the Authoring Tool and the other parts of the I4LL system.

I4LL is among other used for a project between the Flemish Government and Slowakija. For this project three versions of the exercises have been produced: very similar to the book, tailored for self-access and with a high degree of interactivity.

Some final thoughts about students' attitude towards these programs. The experience is that young students lack computer experiences, despite of what is normally believed. This is something to take into account by deciding to introduce ICT materials in the curriculum. Secondly, such a course costs students much more time than a traditional course. Usually students wait until the end of the year, then they start studying for the exam, but this way of working is not compatible with the use of an electronic environment.

Summary of the discussion

The reason why the Language Centre decided to develop the I4LL system is because existing tools lacked the needed sophisticated authoring possibilities of I4LL in combination with the repository tools and the tracking system.

Students at the Language Centre follow three weeks courses: in week 1 they work with the computer, in week 2 there is classroom work, in week 3 computer work. There was a lot of fall-out due to technical reasons (lack of familiarity with ICT). Therefore next year orientation sessions at the beginning of the course will be introduced.

<u>Summary of the presentation</u> *Belgium on* the *Use of Blackboard,* by Jan Driessen, Erasmus Hogeschool <u>Brussels</u>

Blackboard was introduced at the Erasmus Hogeschool in Brussel at the beginning of 2000. The secret of the success of this digital learning environment is the user-friendliness; it is very easy to learn to use it. The features of Blackboard 5 Learning System are: course management, building blocks, advanced integration and system management, community portal system, transaction system. (see http:llproducts.blackboard.com/ for more information). The Course Management System of Blackboard has course and content authoring tools, assessment tools and management tools. For communication there are different possibilities:

E-mail
Virtual Classroom
Discussion Board
Group pages
- group discussion board
- group virtual classroom
- file exchange
Dropbox

It is possible to create different groups, which have access to specific communication facilities. Interesting to know, the synchronous communication function (Virtual Classroom) will be changed in the next version of Blackboard, because it is not used. The new strategy of Blackboard is: plug-in the software that you need ("add-ons", see also http://buildingblocks.blackboard.com). Among the software that you can plug in there asynchronous voice tools (www.wimba.com), web conferencing (www.centra.com) and support for Problem Based Learning (Polaris). There are now 30-40 projects dealing with building blocks.

The release of Blackboard Multilingual Edition is expected for the summer 2002; now the interface is only in English, but with the Multilingual Edition it will be possible to "translate" the interface (features: language customisation for user interface, language preference for content, local specification) in German, Japanese, Chinese, French and Spanish (Portuguese, Italian and other languages are currently under development).

Blackboard is used at the Erasmus Hogeschool also for language teaching, in a 4-years Master in translation and interpreting (different Inguages). Teachers use Blackboard to distribute handouts of lectures and for project-oriented activities. They also use Question Mark Perception, now building block for Blackboard: in the past years 6000 questions for 7 languages have been developed. Every student must complete 2 exercises every week; these self study exercises (20 items each) are a supplement for the classroom teaching. The advantages are clear: students can make the exercises as many times as they want, they get immediate feedback and can consult their results online. An interesting example of the use of Blackboard is the course on bilingualism and multimedia. Objectives of these course are to increase bilingual vocabulary (Dutch/French) and to appeal to the young television generation through the use of video excerpts. For instance, in the unit about bank and finance (see handout) students first have to look a short videofilm with subtitles, then look again without subtitles and then they get specific vocabulary activities and exercises, and they also have to take part in a discussion forum.

Conclusion: Blackboard offers a lot of possibilities for language teaching:
- communication
- organization of course
- flexible in time and place
- building blocks offer opportunities to create plug-ins for authoring, content management, assessment

<u>Summary of the discussion</u>

Some issues related to the use of Blackboard for language teaching:

- Time investment. In the example of the course on bilingualism and multimedia the teacher got 30% of his time free to develop the materials. It is clear that a lot of investment is needed to produce sophisticated teaching materials.
- Software costs. A Blackboard license is expensive.

- Pedagogical issues. These systems are teacher-centred. The trend now is putting the learner at the centre. In deciding how to use Blackboard and similar programs for language teaching, the learner perspective should be chosen. Can students for instance choose a learning path? It is certainly possible to structure Blackboard courses in a learner-oriented way, but it is very attractive to use Blackboard in a traditional way. As a consequence, the drill & kill approach tends to dominate. The point is that these systems are used by teachers who apply traditional pedagogical approaches; so the problem is not so much in the system, but in the user. However, even for language teachers with a good pedagogical background it may be difficult to implement new pedagogical views within these systems. There is a clear need for examples of good-practices.
- Reuse of materials. In Blackboard is possible to copy courses and to reuse them, which saves time: once you have designed the course structure, you can apply it many times, but every time you have to upload new documents.

VII.<u>Recommendations</u>

During the workshop the existing recommendations were discussed and further elaborated in small working groups. They led to the following new recommendations:

1. A European Information Centre should be established for learning and teaching in the area of languages with the task of collecting and disseminating the following information on NLEs
   - Database of existing software platforms in Europe
   - Database of learning materials
   - Examples of good practice, case studies and guidelines for development of learning environments and learning materials

   The centre should be established as a small permanent info service and disselinate through the following channels:
   - Website
   - Discussion forum (online)
   - Workshops
   - Staff development initiatives
   - Publications

   The overall aim has to be to inform and enhance quality of learning ad teaching in languages throughout Europe

2. The establishment of a (pre-servicelin-service) teacher portfolio showing evidence of knowledge and skills related to
   - Design
   - Development
   - Implementation of New Learning environments

3. Structured independent and co-operative learning has to be taken into consideration when calculating student workload

4. In describing learning outcomes proper emphasis should be given to learning, ICT, and interpersonal skills

5. Access should be given to European funding programmes for research projects regarding the use of ICT in language studies

6. Creation of a European clearing house facilitating the exchange of examples of good practice as well as European co-operation in this field

7. In creating strategic alliances, universities should give consideration to virtual mobility, for example as a means of preparing the ground for physical mobility

8. The use of ICT for language learning has to be embedded in a general institutional ICT policy and effort.

9. The NLEs should be used in a systematic and structured manner to prepare students for LLL. and for language use in real-life situations (employability!)

10. The scales of the CEF and the ELP should be used for structuring HE programmes and provision, for describing learning outcomes and for validating and recognizing linguistic skills and cornpetences acquired elsewhere in the European learning space

11. Creation of a framework for the development and implementation of NLEs, utilizing mobile staff and students and ICT for the promotion of multilingual and intercultural skills and competences among students.

12. Development and implementation of postgraduate programmes and modules for initial and continuing education of HE language teachers, preferably at a European level, to redress the shortage of qualified HE language education staff

13. Identification of core elements constituting the professional profile of staff engaged in HE language education

14. Identification of reference points for the assessment of NLEs implemented at departmental/institutional level

15. Systematic learner training for independent language learning and use of NLEs.

16. Encouraging lifelong learning by means of follow-up opportunities and adequate support systems.

17. Acknowledgement of both mother tongue and foreign language studies

18. Identifying communicative prerequisites implied by job descriptions in real life and designing concrete materials for it.

VIII. <u>Evaluation</u>

Prof. Victor de Kosinsky, external evaluator

(Abstract of a larger document)

This is the second one in a series of evaluations, started with the Curriculum Innovation Subgroup and continued with the New Learning Environments Subgroup. Though these first steps give some indications, the full picture can only be obtained when all three subgroups will be evaluated. It is certainly too early to provide a more general assessment of the responses obtained and this should wait until September

The evaluator knew, already before attending the first meeting, that the TNP is doing a good job and the two days in Copenhagen confirmed this. The meeting corresponded to expectations and was a good learning experience for everybody.

As always, the Copenhagen meeting had good and less good aspects. After all "nobody is perfect", but we hope that the following remarks will be helpful and constructive.

The good points were:

- Good preparation
    background documents

> list of questions
> set of recommendations
> status report

- Presentations
  > limited in number, which left time for discussion
  > not only local aspects were presented, but also general issues, useful for everybody, such as skills, working in a group, group dynamics, tools, etc.
- Working in smaller groups

What could be qualified as "less good" was, that:

- much has been said about "innovation" in training, in teaching, but very little about learning. Most participants spoke about "their problems", the provision of language teaching envisaged, but the accent should not have been on local problems and input but on European level and on output.
- there was very little said about the "learner" as a social and human resource (do we suddenly all try to appear to be ICT & ODL technicians when we are in such a closed group?)
- there was no reference, no apparent links to:
  - other TNP Subprojects (Curriculum Development, Quality Enhancement)
  - other networks, projects
- there was no explicit reference to Europe-wide:
  - dissemination of 'local' initiatives
  - added value
  - policy making (institutions)
  - Lifelong Learning
  - mobility
  - new projects
  - priorities, even if it was supposed to be on the agenda

The meeting could have been even more productive considering the following remarks:

- It seems that the aims and objectives of the meeting were still not clear to all participants, in spite of the efforts of the convenors.
- The material organisation of the meeting was very good but the relation between the number of hours of lecturingllistening in plenary sessions and working in smaller groups was not ideal. The method of plenary sessions most of the time may not have been the best environment to encourage everybody to participate. There should have been more time allowed for the brainstorming session in small sub-groups with a mechanism involving everybody independently of herlhis language competencies. As it was, the small groups 'produced' a considerable amount of ideas in a very short time.