

# Bulletin

CercleS

Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues de l'Enseignement Supérieur  
European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education  
Europäischer Verband der Hochschulsprachzentren

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## Change and Continuity

### Secretariat moves from Dublin to Tübingen

Another important phase in the short history of CercleS came to a close at the highly successful 8th International Conference in Comenius University, Bratislava, on 9-11 September 2004.

After nearly five years at University College Dublin, the General Meeting approved the proposal to transfer the Secretariat to the Language Centre of Tübingen University. This is the third move for the Confederation's headquarters, and it marks a return to Germany where the first Secretariat was established at the seat of AKS, the University of Bochum, in 1991. Four years later the Secretariat moved to the University of Plymouth, and it remained based there until 2000. Now, after almost fifteen years, CercleS moves back to Germany and renews links with its early days as well as with AKS, one of the oldest and most highly effective networks of university language centres in European higher education.

Coinciding with these important developments, significant changes have taken place in the composition of the CercleS management. Having served two terms since 2000, the

Executive's period of office came to an end in Bratislava. The outgoing Committee has since handed over to a new team who take over for a two-year period and will put their own stamp on the future activities and standing of the Confederation.

A capacity for dynamic and effective change has been one of the hallmarks of the Confederation since its creation. It is a quality which has served it well. In a short space of time, CercleS has been able to support its members, respond quickly to events, attract and manage expansion, innovate effectively, and stay at the forefront of fast-moving changes in language learning in higher education.

In their turn, the outgoing Executive and the Dublin Secretariat have served the Confederation to the best of their ability. They step down after a successful period of transition for the Confederation. In bidding farewell, they above all want to express heartfelt thanks to the membership for the honour of serving and for all the support received to carry out their mandate. ■

Ed.



Conference delegates at the General Meeting, held during the 8th CercleS International Conference at Comenius University, Bratislava, on 10 September 2004.



# Using Blackboard to Support a Portfolio-based Unit

Helen Phillips

University of Bristol Language Centre

## Résumé

Dans cet article, Helen Phillips commente l'introduction, au Centre de Langue de l'Université de Bristol, d'une nouvelle unité de langue étrangère, "Langage pour la Science et la Technologie" basée sur le "Portfolio européen des langues" (PEL). En 2003/4, les résultats initiaux du projet pilote avaient identifié le besoin d'un soutien accru aux étudiants travaillant avec le PEL. Ce soutien sera ainsi mis en place à partir du système Blackboard de l'université. Un passeport électronique, des supports de cours et des outils de communication seront disponibles en ligne afin de faciliter une communication accrue entre tuteurs et étudiants.

## Introduction

The University of Bristol Language Centre's applied foreign language operation provides accredited units in French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish to students from all faculties across the university. This article highlights its most recent development, the introduction of an e-portfolio into an undergraduate language programme.

At the beginning of the 2003/4 academic year, the language centre<sup>1</sup> expanded its range of applied foreign language units by piloting Language for Science and Technology<sup>2</sup>, a portfolio-based unit for first-year students from the Science Faculty embarking on the university's Study in Continental Europe programme. The introduction of this unit represented an important development in the mode of delivery of language tuition at the language centre. Language for Science and Technology incorporates the CercleS version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and is based on a mix of tutorials and self-directed learning. From 2004/5, use of the university's Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE) will be integrated into the programme.

## Working with a paper-based portfolio

The ELP is designed for use in universities across Europe and consists of a set of documents that can be used by language learners to record and reflect upon their language learning development and cultural experiences. Reflective practice of this kind acts as a form of self-assessment, enabling the language learner to appreciate and acquire language learning strategies and to monitor his/her own progress over a period of time. The ELP defines language skills in terms of levels of proficiency as determined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and is accredited by the Council of Europe's validation committee<sup>3</sup>.

During the pilot year, students were issued with an individual paper-based portfolio, divided into the three main sections as defined by the

## Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel berichtet Helen Phillips über das am Sprachenzentrum der Universität Bristol neu eingeführte Fremdsprachenmodul für die Studienbereiche Naturwissenschaften und Technologie, das auf dem Europäischen Sprachenportfolio (ESP) basiert. Erste Ergebnisse des 2003/4 durchgeführten Pilotversuchs zeigen, dass die Studenten bei der Arbeit mit dem ESP intensivere Unterstützung benötigen. Folglich soll ab 2004/5 durch die universitätseigene virtuelle Lehr- und Lernumgebung Blackboard diese Hilfe geboten werden. In Zukunft sollen sowohl das e-Portfolio wie auch alle Begleitmaterialien online zur Verfügung stehen.

ELP: the Language Passport<sup>4</sup>, the Language Biography<sup>5</sup> and the Dossier<sup>6</sup>. Supported by a scheme of work and a set of guidelines developed by the language centre, students were expected to gather paper-based evidence of their language learning over the course of the academic year, in the form of learning targets, self-assessment of competencies and pieces of work demonstrating language proficiency. Our aim was to blend completion of the ELP documentation, guided self-study and tutorial contact, thus offering students a more flexible mode of study.

## Feedback

In order to evaluate user reaction, students were asked to submit feedback at regular intervals over the course of the unit, specifically on unit structure and the use of the portfolio. Evidence showed that students enjoyed the flexibility of being able to identify their individual language learning needs and appreciated the freedom to select materials, exercises, articles and topics which interested them. The ability to manage their own time, the flexible delivery and the opportunity to work at their own pace were regarded as the principal positive features of the unit. However, feedback also indicated that students wanted more regular support from staff to help develop their learning strategies, as well as more evidence of how the ELP was actually benefiting their progress in the target language. One issue that arose repeatedly over the course of the year was the requirement to complete the ELP documentation (checklists and target setting). Many students found these tasks time-consuming and impractical and, moreover, did not fully appreciate the need for them. We decided, therefore, to look for a way of providing more support and structure for the unit without compromising the core principle of self-directed learning.

## Moving on-line

Supporting the unit with a Blackboard site seemed a good way to address the main issues arising from the pilot course. Specifically, we wanted to use the features of the VLE to:

- Make clear the purpose of the ELP and make it easier for students to

Fig. 1: The main content areas of the Blackboard site correspond to the different sections of the portfolio - here the Dossier.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard VLE interface for the 'OLE' (Online Learning Environment) site. The top navigation bar includes 'Home Page', 'Courses', and 'System Admin'. The main content area is titled 'University of BRISTOL' and shows a breadcrumb trail: 'COURSES > ELP FRENCH > DOSSIER > HOMEWORK 1 - DUE DATE 12 NOVEMBER 2004'. The content is organized into sections: 'Grammar' (instructions to read explanations and do exercises), 'Summary: Le réchauffement de la planète' (instructions to read articles and write a summary), and 'Review / Analysis: le terrorisme' (instructions to write a review/analysis). A sidebar on the left contains a 'Course Map' and 'Control Panel'.



- use and manage the documentation
- Give greater structure to the unit while preserving a strong element of independent learning
- Provide a focal point for information and communication.

The main content areas of the Blackboard site correspond to the different sections of the portfolio, i.e. Passport, Bibliography and Dossier (see Fig. 1). Each area contains ELP documents that can be downloaded and printed or completed on-line, as well as related study materials. Our intention is to make the portfolio a more integral part of the course and thus help students understand its relationship with the work they are asked to do.

### The Dossier on-line

The following outlines how the Dossier section on Blackboard supports and contributes to various aspects of the course, in particular the areas of resources and materials, support and guidance, monitoring and assessment, and communication.

*Resources and materials:* Most of the study materials for the course are in the Dossier content area (see Fig. 1). For each topic covered on the course, there are links to selected on-line resources and task instructions. The exercises in the Dossier section encourage students to find their own texts, which they are required to summarise or use as sources for other pieces of writing. One of the first exercises students are asked to complete in the French portfolio, for example, is a grammar lesson followed by summary writing, analysis of written texts and questionnaires based on video extracts. The grammar lesson contains a selection of web links chosen by the tutor for the clarity of information presented and for the range of related exercises offered. The students' task is to visit these pages and study the grammar, reflecting, revising and practising according to their previous level of knowledge. When ready, students are then required to write an assessed essay in which they demonstrate their ability to use the reviewed grammar point(s) accurately and appropriately in the specific context. Similarly, when writing summaries, the Dossier enables students to choose from a pool of up-to-date newspaper articles provided by the tutor. The assessed part of the exercise is the finished summary that students send to their tutor via Blackboard.

*Support and guidance:* The provision of selected resources on-line functions as a form of guided self-study and is used throughout the content of the Dossier. Guidance is provided through the range of material selected by the tutor, yet affording students the freedom to approach the material at their own pace and in their own way. In the pilot course, feedback showed that some students spent a long time searching the web for suitable articles and grammar materials; by providing a pool of selected materials for them, the objective is to scaffold this often daunting process. Guidance is at times provided in a more direct manner too. For example, once students have chosen an article for summary writing purposes, they can access written guidelines posted on Blackboard offering advice on the techniques of summary writing.

*Assessment and monitoring:* Delivering the unit through Blackboard enables the tutor to regularly monitor both the students' progress and time management over the course of the year. Through the use of tools such as the 'grade book' or the 'course statistics', tutors have instant access to a student's portfolio, pattern of work and progress. For example by using the grade book, tutors are able to see whether students have started a specific task, whether it is in progress, completed or in need of grading. The course statistics provide tutors



Pictured from left to right: Ana Ramos (senior coordinator of Spanish for specific purposes), Hélène Duranton (coordinator of French for specific purposes), Helen Phillips (deputy director of the language centre, applied foreign languages) & Jo Parsons (e-learning coordinator).

with reports which detail how the site is being used, which areas are most visited, the regularity of a student's pattern of work etc. These aspects of the VLE are invaluable when managing a course that is based primarily on autonomous learning.

*Communication:* As student-tutor contact during the unit is limited, on-line communication tools and activities provide the possibility of ongoing contact as well as opportunities for further language practice. For example, students are encouraged to take part in forum discussions on topics in the Dossier section. There is also a Language Clinic, a forum where students can post language-related questions and receive answers from their tutor. Blackboard also makes it easier to manage frequent exchange of files between students and staff, i.e. submitting assignments, essays and presentations. During tutorials, students work together and with the tutor to complete the ELP documents. The collaborative element improves the chances that students will reflect upon their goals and progress; without engagement of this kind, completing the portfolio documents can seem like an empty administrative exercise.

### Conclusion

We hope that the on-line element of the unit will enable students to benefit from the full potential of portfolio-based study, a potential that is found in the processes that underlie the self-evaluations and checklists as much as the completed documentation itself. If this model of language study can be established, it can in the future be applied to any of the range of units available at the language centre, allowing us to offer students more flexible and individualised programmes of language study. ■

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### Notes

- 1 <http://www.bris.ac.uk/languagecentre>
- 2 Piloted in French and Spanish at post GCSE level and fully accredited. As a prerequisite, students must be simultaneously enrolled on Language for General Purposes (French LANG 12022 or Spanish LANG 12025).
- 3 Accreditation no. 29, 2002.
- 4 A personal record of exposure to different languages, prior language learning and qualifications.
- 5 An individual profile as learner and user of the target language.
- 6 Evidence of language progression, portfolio of work completed over the course of the academic year.



# The ELP Pilot Project at the University of Padua

Fiona Dalziel

University of Padua Language Centre

## Résumé

Cet article décrit un projet pilote du Centre de Langues de l'Université de Padoue, mettant en liaison l'utilisation du logiciel informatique de conférence FirstClass avec le PEL. En 2002, deux conférences ont été organisées: l'une, destinée aux étudiants, avait pour objectif d'informer les participants sur le PEL et de répondre à leurs interrogations concernant le projet. L'autre, destinée aux enseignants, mettait en place un forum en ligne sur lequel pouvaient être abordés, durant toute l'année académique, l'organisation du projet et tous les sujets traitant du PEL.

## Introduction

The piloting of the CercleS version of the European Language Portfolio at the University of Padua began in December 2002 as a collaboration between the language centre, member of CercleS/AICLU, and the English Department of the Arts Faculty. In its first year it involved four language teachers, along with myself as coordinator, and about 100 first-year students studying English for language degrees (for a detailed description of this pilot project see CercleS Bulletin, Issue No. 17, Spring 2004). In the 2003/4 academic year, the ELP project was extended to involve 12 teachers and over 500 students on the following degree courses:

- First, second and third-year language students of English studying for language degrees
- First-year students of Dutch and Spanish studying for language degrees (the students of Spanish worked on the Dossier only)
- Erasmus students studying L2 Italian.

In the 2004/5 academic year, it is hoped that students of English in the Economics Faculty and those of French and Spanish in the Politics Faculty will also be involved.

## The conference for students

From the very first year of piloting it was decided to use the computer conferencing software FirstClass for work with the ELP. All the teachers involved were familiar with the software as they make extensive use of it both for teaching and administrative purposes (see the article 'Moving Ahead' in this issue). Given the large number of students involved in the piloting project, it was deemed necessary to find an easy way for them to receive answers to their questions whenever required. The conference ELP was designed to meet this

## Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel beschreibt ein Pilotprojekt des Sprachenzentrums der Universität Padua, Italien. Das Projekt befaßt sich mit der Computerkonferenz-Software FirstClass und der Nutzungsmöglichkeit bei der Arbeit mit dem Europäischen Sprachenportfolio (ESP). Zwei Konferenzen wurden zu Projektbeginn erstellt, eine für Lehrkräfte und eine für Studenten. Die Studenten sollten über FirstClass Informationen zum ESP übermittelt bekommen und Fragen zum Projekt stellen können. Auf der anderen Seite diente FirstClass beteiligten Lehrkräften während der Organisation des Projekts als Mittel zur online Diskussion.

need. The students' questions were often of a practical nature (see Fig. 1), concerning, for example, the availability of copies of the ELP. The teachers and coordinator also used the conference to provide students with internet links and other information about the ELP. One student, however, made use of the conference to suggest a possible project for inclusion in the Dossier (see Fig. 2). As her class was attended by a small group of Albanian students, she wanted to know if they could prepare a short report about their home country. This request was appreciated by teachers, who saw it both as an example of active student involvement in the project and as a way for the other members of the class to learn about the culture of a different country.

At the start of the 2004/5 academic year, a conference called *Portfolio Studenti* was put on the desktop of every student using FirstClass for language learning in whatever language. It is hoped that one of the newly-appointed tutors at the language centre will become a moderator for the conference.

## Conferences for teachers

In the first phase of the project, the conference *Portfolio Teachers* was only accessible to the four teachers of English involved in ELP piloting and the coordinator. The aim of the conference was to provide information about both practical and pedagogical issues related to the ELP. As a result of varying academic commitments, it was extremely difficult to fix regular meetings between the teachers, and so the conference provided an invaluable means of exchanging opinions. The teachers sent each other interesting links they had found and bibliographical references. In addition, they had the chance to tell each other about experiences with the ELP. Although they were all familiar

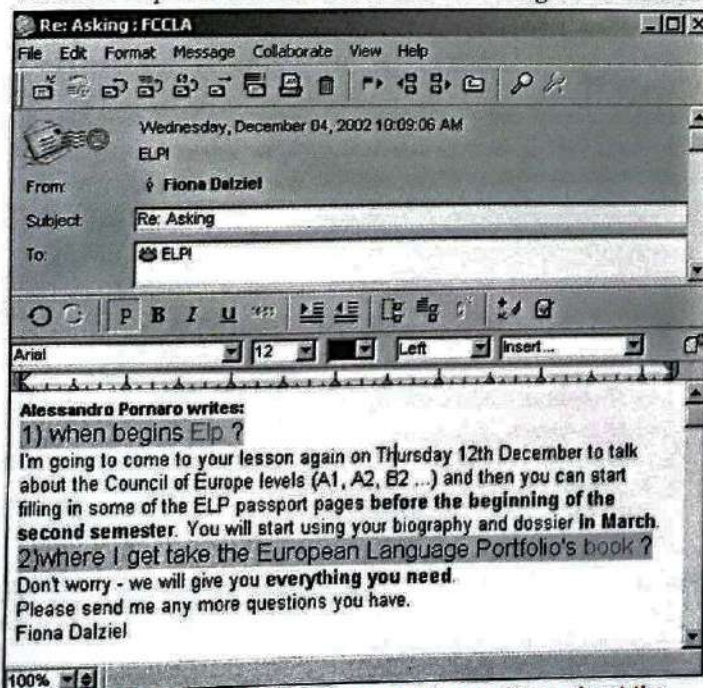


Fig. 1: A student receives answers to his questions about the ELP project by means of the conference ELP.

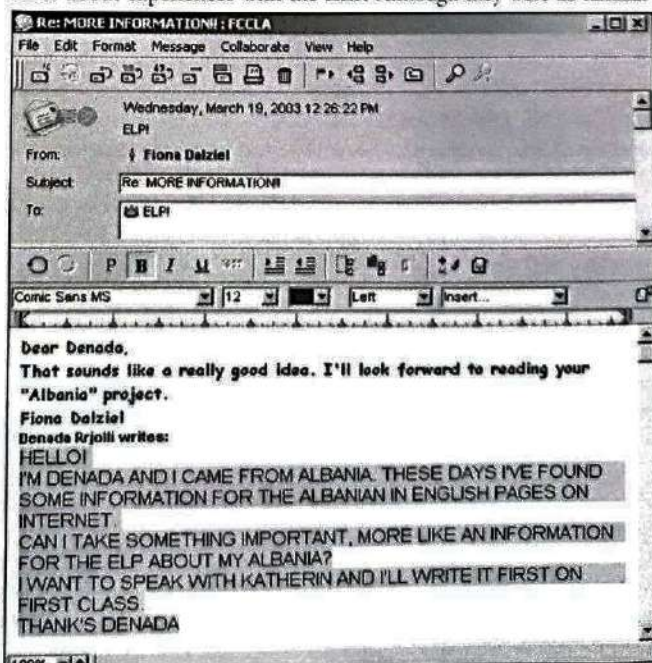


Fig. 2: A student suggests a possible project for the Dossier.



with it and had attended various talks and workshops about its use, this was the first time they had actually used the ELP with classes. Various things emerged from the on-line discussions, ranging from practical difficulties, as a result of the large number of students and their sporadic attendance at lessons, to issues related to the underlying principles of the ELP itself, such as that of self-assessment. Although each of the teachers had chosen to take part in the project and they had all expressed great interest in the ELP, in practice their approaches to it proved to be very different. For example, some felt that the ELP provided a sort of framework within which they could organise their classes, while others saw it more as an additional component to the course. Whatever their opinions, however, the conference provided a useful means of reflection both on the ELP and teaching languages in general (see Fig. 3).

In the second year of piloting, when more teachers became involved, it became all the more important to enable them to keep in contact via FirstClass, as they were all working in different parts of the university (and of the city). A conference called *Portfolio Europeo* was set up and access was given to all the language teachers of the language centre. Communication took place in Italian, as this was the language common to the participants. The conference was, for example, the means used by teachers to distribute the end-of-year questionnaire to their students.

The conference did not, however, give rise to the amount of debate that had occurred the previous year. Despite the fact that the teachers involved were used to on-line communication, it proved to be difficult to keep the dialogue going. Often messages were read but not replied to, teachers downloaded material sent by colleagues but failed to thank their colleagues for it. The reason for this may be that there are a number of conferences for teachers on FirstClass and it is sometimes difficult to keep up with everything. On the other hand, it might be helpful if the conference were moderated to a greater degree, with teachers asked to comment on one or two specific ELP-related questions. At the beginning of the 2004/5 academic year, a series of informal meetings to discuss the ELP was organised, and teachers expressed the desire for the teachers' conference to be used to facilitate the sharing of practical ideas and classroom activities relating to the ELP.

#### Working on the Biography and Dossier

FirstClass has also been used by teachers in connection with the Biography and the Dossier of the ELP. In many of the pilot classes, teachers get their students to compile regular diaries in which they are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences of language learning. If such activities are begun before the introduction of the ELP in these classes, teachers have found that it facilitates subsequent work on the Biography. For example, students have already started to reflect on issues such as valuable learning experiences, and looking back on their diary entries can also help them when compiling the page 'My next language learning target'.

Moreover, using computer conferencing has facilitated collaboration between peers in producing work for their Dossiers. Firstly, it has been possible to benefit from the advantages of peer assessment in the revision stage of written production. Secondly, FirstClass has made it easier for students to work together on group projects for their Dossiers. By sending messages via FirstClass they can keep in touch with members of their groups, exchanging ideas and materials for their projects. And all this can go on outside lesson times. FirstClass gives learners the opportunity to see their peers' work: this has meant that all

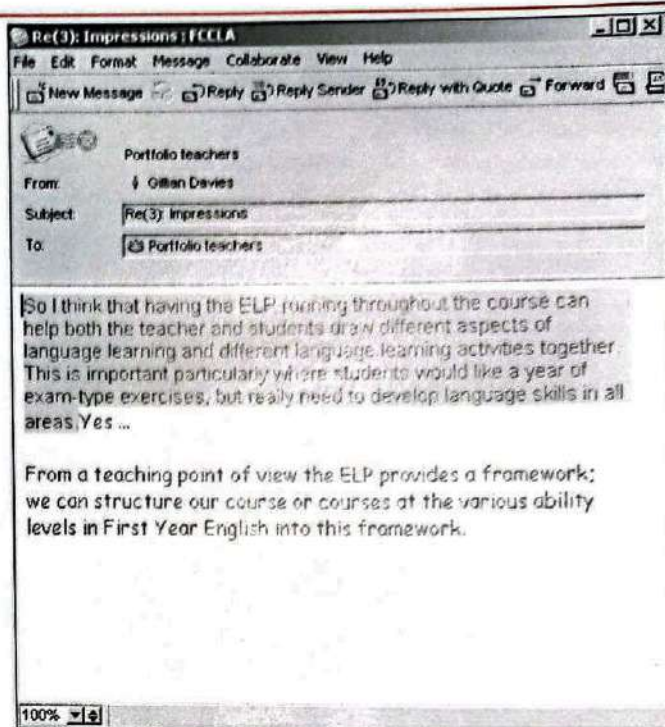


Fig. 3: Teachers discuss their first impressions of the ELP project.

work has a wider reading public, and gives students the chance to compare the contents of their Dossiers with those of their peers.

Recently, one group of teachers who hold on-line writing courses using FirstClass decided to get their students to produce an e-Dossier for their ELPs. They also felt it would be a good idea for this to include a title page, providing a list of work included and a description of this work. There was discussion as to what this title page should contain, and after various exchanges of opinions the group came up with the following headings: 'Title of object/file', 'Date produced', 'Type of object: audio, Word doc., . . .', 'Individual/group effort', 'Has it been peer revised?', 'Has it been corrected by the teacher?', 'Why did you choose to put this in your Dossier?'. This Dossier *table of contents* was then distributed by means of the teachers' conference.

#### Conclusion

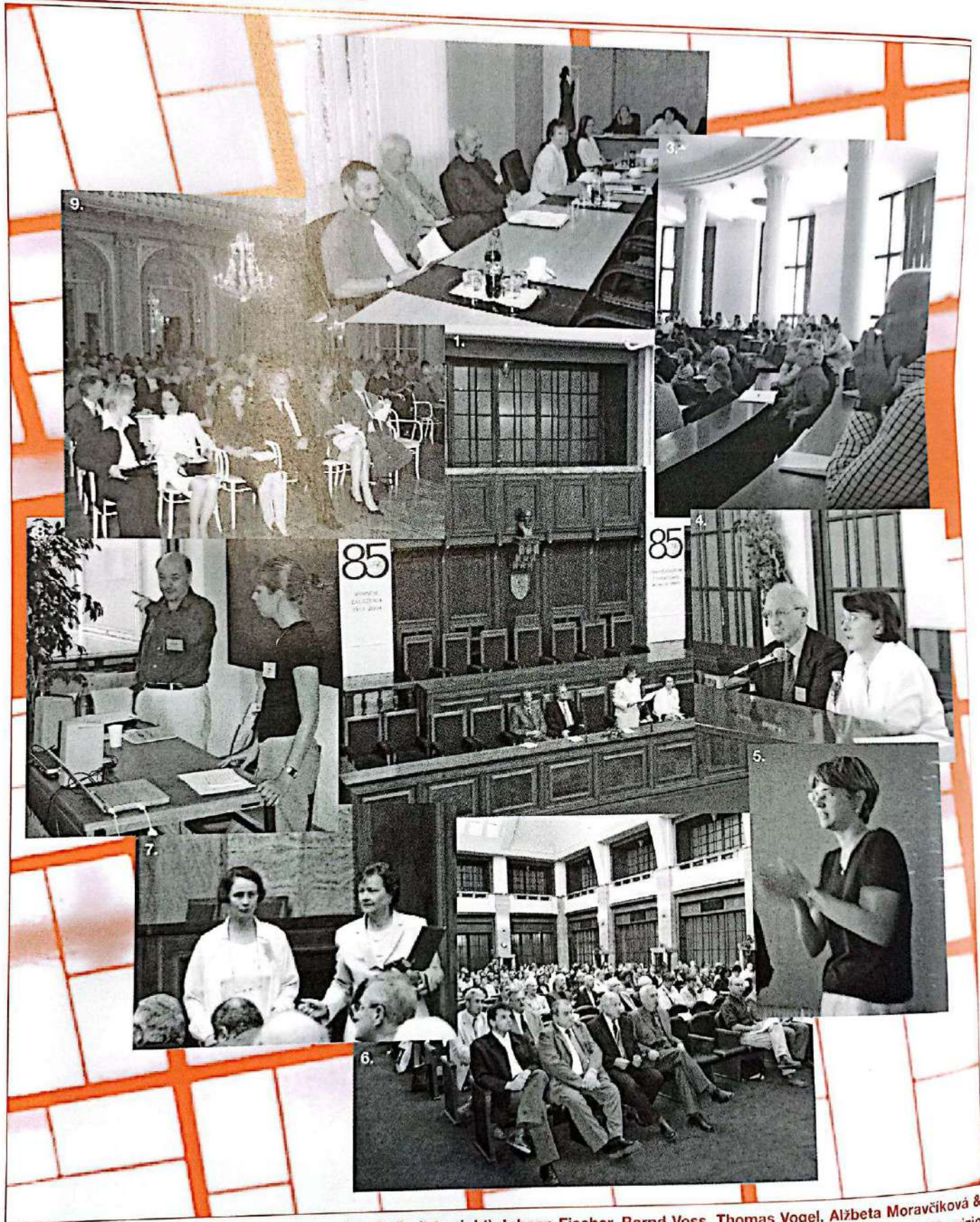
To sum up, our experiences in Padua have shown us how the use of computer conferencing can help to make ELP piloting into more of a social event. It can give learners and teachers alike the chance to question and discuss the ELP on-line. As well as dealing with problems of a practical nature, it can help to create an ELP community for students. They need to feel that they are not alone when filling in their Passport and Biography pages, but part of a group learning experience. As for the teachers, our first two years of piloting have revealed that implementing the ELP is not an easy business; teachers may be fraught with doubts and feel insecure about how best to use the ELP with their classes. On-line debate can be a way of getting these things out into the open, and in doing so provide a kind of continuing form of professional development. Our initial impressions are therefore that computer conferencing can play an important role in ELP piloting and, as coordinator of the project, I would like to see even greater exploitation of this excellent tool in years to come. ■

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# 8th CercleS International Conference

University Language Centres: Broadening Horizons, Expanding Networks  
Comenius University, Bratislava



1. Conference opening at Comenius University 2. (Left to right) Johann Fischer, Bernd Voss, Thomas Vogel, Alžbeta Moravčíková & Nicole Chenik at CercleS Coordinating Committee Meeting 3. Delegates at CercleS General Meeting 4. Outgoing President, Maurizio Gotti & outgoing Secretary General, Mary Ruane 5. Fiona Dalziel, University of Padua 6. Delegates at the conference opening 7. CASALC representatives Maria Hanzlíková & Alžbeta Moravčíková (also main conference organiser) 8. Anthony Stenton, University of Toulouse 1 & Ulrike Mosig, University College Dublin 9. Delegates & dignitaries at a concert in the Primatial Palace.



# Bratislava 2004: A Conference Report

Anthony Stenton

University of Toulouse 1

## Introduction

Under the title 'Broadening Horizons, Expanding Networks', the 8th CercleS International Conference got underway in Bratislava, Slovakia, hosted by CASALC at Comenius University, in an atmosphere of excitement mixed with a certain trepidation.

Broadening horizons is generally welcome, but would the agenda of an enlarged CercleS remain the same? Would unity or divergence dominate debates and would expanding networks offer more choice or merely more confusion as language centres struggle to find their feet in information swamps, whether virtual or otherwise? Would the momentum built up from previous conferences and focus groups be maintained and would the working languages of CercleS remain English, French and German, or would monolingual pressures prevail?

With a mixture of music, warm hospitality and impressive technical efficiency, our Slovak hosts soon helped to provide a variety of multilingual answers. This was a professionally organised conference that belied such doubts; Bratislava is a mainstream European capital on Europe's largest river. A walk through the historic centre revealed houses where Mozart, Beethoven and Liszt had played, and the concert given in the Hall of Mirrors of the Primatial Palace was proof of thriving European musical traditions. Our colleagues in Comenius University were equally at ease with the challenge of new technologies. The seven thematic workshops ran smoothly and provided insights into how Europe's language centres are facing up to the real challenge of expanding networks which can involve radically new approaches to distribution and certification. Distributed learning via ultra-fast wireless broadband internet, in-house CDs, DVDs, MP3 players, PDAs and USB keys is developing faster than the capacity of most universities to keep up. Whether it is necessary to keep up and what training, administrative, certification and technical innovations are entailed, were all keenly debated questions.

## Conference keynotes

Paul Sweeney, as first keynote speaker, sounded a cautionary note as he looked back on seven years of blended e-learning in British Council Schools and explained how the potential of such learning often remains tantalisingly unrealised. His call for a regular review of goals and an exploration of ways to simplify, complement and facilitate existing models of teaching was a useful reminder of priorities.

Clearly, 'paving the way with good intentions' is insufficient, as Peter Medgyes also pointed out. His penetrating and realistic analysis of language learning in Hungarian secondary education revealed ambitious medium-term plans to improve the situation by radical changes of curriculum. An extra year is to be inserted into the programme for children aged 14, allowing for an intensive 15 hours per week of language lessons, with special attention paid to the socially disadvantaged. Which languages will be taught? Professor Medgyes was careful to be non-prescriptive but explained, in impeccable English, that he anticipated 56% English, 44% German, 5% others.

The final keynote speaker was Professor Bernd Voss, who reminded us of the indispensable historical dimension needed to understand and implement networking successfully. Language centres have played, and continue to play, a crucial role in the development of professionalism within universities. The process is frequently linked to successful bottom-up initiatives which have provided fruitful environments for programme design and staff development. CercleS is one of the few professional bodies to unite the knowledge and know-how to forge essential support systems for language learning in the 21st century.

## Conference workshops

The thematic workshops included the European Language Portfolio, learner autonomy, testing and certification, LSP/LAP, e-learning and multimedia environments, issues in management, quality and accreditation, teacher education and development. A large Finnish delegation once again made its presence felt with lively contributions in most sessions. A demand expressed in a plenary session for a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) workshop in a future conference evoked interest as CLIL has received support from the European Commission and an increasing number of European universities now practice CLIL, perhaps from marketing motives, rather like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain speaks in prose - with little self-awareness and even less research into learning outcomes.

As in Paris (2002), the e-learning workshop was particularly large with papers on Flash animations for pronunciation, innovative use of forums for beginners, SMIL-based karaoke-type synchronisation, and tandem learning, amongst many others. The professionalism of the presentations and the innovative distribution systems employed were further proof of growing ICT skills and of a developing capacity to exploit the internet for addressing real problems, such as helping Erasmus students bound for Italy acquire an A2 level in Italian before arriving for their year of study. E-learning without ICT training for teaching staff is condemned in advance, but should teachers be paid to attend such courses? Helsinki, Cambridge and Toulouse are examples of centres trying to grapple experimentally with this issue and have managed to find the necessary finance.

Other workshops revealed the difficulties, not to say growing pains, of adapting to the professional needs of 21st century students in often old-fashioned, academic environments. Creating flexible and responsive centres that can adapt to urgent local needs, such as providing specialist language training for foreign nurses when given only two months of notice, is often impossible in a context where inter-department competition for finance is too intense. By diverting human resources to fund-raising activities, however, it is all too easy to lose sight of educational goals as a new managerial or entrepreneurial culture takes over. The debate may be an old one but in forging specifically European answers to the question the role of CercleS is significant.

## Some general problems and suggested solutions

A recurrent criticism of European language centres is that of excessive pragmatism: the daily quest for the quick-fix solutions leaves little time for the time-consuming academic exploration of linguistic principles and their theoretical underpinning. By contrast, an abiding criticism of applied research is that, with the exception of financially-rewarding fields, such as voice recognition, it is in fact far too rarely applied and gathers dust in dusky basements of archives making insufficient contribution to either knowledge or know-how. Both criticisms may seem unjust given the high quality of papers in Bratislava and important steps towards European-wide sharing of resources such as [Lingu@net](mailto:Lingu@net). A solution for greater transparency through CercleS would perhaps lie in the creation of two European prizes: one for the most original application of research in linguistics, and another for the most practical contribution to language learning. If the second prize had existed in Bratislava then the simple solution to video streaming problems proposed by Tom Dickinson of World Interactive News would have been a likely candidate. Language centres would do well to examine this product, which is freeware for universities, as it offers not only regular access to scripted BBC World news items, but it bypasses the problem of painfully slow video playback by downloading film and



scripts via university intranet servers directly onto the student's PC, where the files are stored temporarily during consultation.

A further contribution to international academic research in language learning lies in the CercleS' role as a partner in European projects. TNP 3, Lingu@net, LATE, PICTURE and, of course, the widely distributed CercleS ELP (though criticised by some for layout and translations) validated by the Council of Europe in May 2002, are evidence of an increasingly significant participation in this field.

#### Concluding words

Creating innovative and more adaptable, finely-tuned on-line resources, sharing them between centres and evaluating learning outcomes in new,

different ways through the European Framework and the ELP, are clearly major steps towards professionalism which indicate that CercleS is more than a mere provider of 'good intentions'. We should thank our hosts for putting on such a convincing demonstration of broadened horizons and new networks.

Our congratulations to Alžbeta Moravčíková and her team for their warm hospitality and a successful conference. We look forward to the 9th CercleS International Conference, which will be hosted by the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, and will take place in September 2006. ■

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## La fin du multilinguisme à CercleS

Pierre Frath

Marc Bloch University, Strasbourg

### L'anglais à CercleS

Jusqu'à présent la domination de l'anglais aux colloques de CercleS était écrasante. A Bratislava, elle fut absolue. Seules trois communications furent annoncées dans les deux autres langues officielles de CercleS, deux en allemand, prononcées par des Tchèques, et une en français, dont, à ma grande honte, je dois dire que ce n'était pas la mienne, mais celle d'une collègue, tchèque également. Pour tenter de me justifier, j'ai argué qu'en tant qu'angliciste, parler dans la langue de la Reine Elisabeth et de David Beckham est une chose naturelle et que j'espérais toucher un public plus grand. Il y a une autre raison, que je n'ai pas avancée : la faiblesse de mon niveau de masochisme. Un Français qui parle sa langue dans une rencontre de ce type est l'illustration ridicule d'un cliché anglo-saxon particulièrement bien ancré, celui du Français chauvin et borné prêt à tout pour défendre sa langue, y compris l'infliger cruellement à des non francophones. Qu'on se rappelle les réactions hostiles à Anvers en 2000, lorsque Michel Perrin, qui occupait à l'époque des fonctions au bureau de CercleS, fit son rapport en français.

Pourtant, CercleS est un lieu de rencontre d'enseignants de langues. On pourrait penser que tout enseignant natif d'une langue en parle au moins une autre, celle qu'il enseigne. Dans ce cas, puisque les anglophones sont très nombreux, une grande partie des communications devrait concerner d'autres langues que l'anglais. Or, pas du tout. Il semble que les anglophones ne s'intéressent plus aux autres langues. CercleS est devenu un club pour l'anglais langue étrangère, où des anglicistes parlent à d'autres anglicistes de problèmes d'anglicistes. L'enseignant d'espagnol en France ou d'allemand en Italie n'a plus sa place à CercleS.

Cependant, d'autres langues sont aussi en plein développement. C'est le cas de l'espagnol, dont l'apprentissage se développe *urbi et orbi*. C'est aussi le cas du français, surtout dans des régions où il était peu implanté jusqu'ici. Mais que diraient les anglophones si des Espagnols ou des Français monopolisaient les débats dans leurs langues et imposaient leurs problématiques et leurs visions des choses ? Car c'est bien aussi une question de vision du monde. Toute langue présente comme naturels et universels des présupposés culturels particuliers, et l'anglais, toute *lingua franca* qu'il soit, n'échappe pas à la règle.

### L'anglais en Hongrie

L'absence de réaction à la présentation M. Peter Medgyes, secrétaire adjoint au ministère de l'éducation en Hongrie, est peut-être révélatrice de l'abandon par CercleS du multilinguisme au profit du tout anglais.

Son intervention fut prononcée dans un anglais excellent, délicieusement teinté de cet humour de bon aloi qui est de rigueur lorsqu'on s'exprime dans la langue de Bernard Shaw, de P. G. Wodehouse et de Mark Twain. J'ai trouvé très intéressante l'idée de consacrer une année supplémentaire d'étude aux langues dans certaines classes. Je n'ai pas été surpris lorsqu'il a précisé que le bénéficiaire principal de cette mesure est l'anglais. Je l'ai été, en revanche, par sa satisfaction lorsqu'il nous a annoncé avec une certaine connivence (comme si nous devions tous nous en réjouir) que l'anglais était en passe de surpasser l'allemand, la langue traditionnellement la plus enseignée en Hongrie, et la *lingua franca* d'Europe centrale. Que les autres langues doivent se partager à peine deux pour cent des élèves ne l'a pas ému plus que cela. A une question concernant l'apprentissage des langues des pays voisins de la Hongrie, il fut répondu que les parents ne le souhaitent pas. La question du russe, que les Hongrois ont dû apprendre dans un passé récent, n'a même pas été évoquée. Donc résumons cela. Le ministère hongrois de l'éducation œuvre à transformer le pays en un îlot linguistique incapable de communiquer directement avec ses voisins, à le couper de ses liens traditionnels avec les germanophones dont il partagea longtemps la destinée au sein de l'empire austro-hongrois, et à considérer comme marginales les autres langues européennes.

### L'anglais dans le Devon

Il serait bon qu'à l'avenir CercleS ait une politique volontariste pour tenter de sauver le multilinguisme en son sein, un premier pas pour tenter de le sauver ailleurs. Pour cela, il faudrait inciter les participants à communiquer dans d'autres langues que l'anglais, à propos d'autres sujets que l'anglais. Il serait bon également que CercleS se préoccupe de la sauvegarde d'une espèce rarissime, celle de l'anglophone désireux de faire une conférence dans une autre langue que la sienne. Sinon, je propose que CercleS devienne la Cecaes, la Confédération européenne des centres d'apprentissage de l'anglais dans l'enseignement Supérieur. Mais alors, tant qu'à faire, nous pourrions prendre un sigle en anglais, par exemple EcpEhewL (European club for the promotion of English in higher education and the world at Large). Ce serait moins joli et moins prononçable. Certes. Mais les choses étant désormais claires, nous pourrions décider par vote que les colloques de CercleS auraient tous lieu en Grande-Bretagne. Quelle plaisir ineffable ce serait d'évoquer nos préoccupations d'anglicistes dans le parc d'un hôtel du Devon, devant une bonne théière de thé à la bergamote, des scones tout frais, de la confiture de fraises, et de l'excellente 'clotted cream' ! ■

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# Passing the Baton to a New Team

## CercleS elects its next Executive

Mary Ruane

The Bratislava conference saw the election of a new Executive which will run the Confederation for a two-year term, up until 2006. The three senior members - President, Secretary General and Treasurer - are new to the Executive. They bring with them a fresh approach to shaping the Confederation's future and substantial knowledge and experience from their own National Associations. Three members of the outgoing Executive will continue to serve, thus ensuring a valuable transfer of information and continuity. Outgoing Executive members have also been coopted. The members of the new CercleS Executive Committee are:

- Carol Taylor Torsello, Director of the Language Centre at the University of Padua (AICLU)
- Johann Fischer, Director of the Language Centre of Tübingen University (AKS)
- Nick Byrne, Director of the Language Centre at the London School of Economics & Political Science (AULC)
- Alžbeta Moravčíková, Director of the Language Centre of Comenius University, Bratislava (CASALC)
- Thomas Vogel, Director of the Language Centre at the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder) (AKS)
- Nicole Chenik, *Maitre de Conference* at the University of Paris Dauphine (RANACLES)

### President 2004 to 2006



#### Prof. Carol Taylor Torsello

Prof. Carol Taylor Torsello has held the chair of English Literature and Linguistics at the University of Padua since 1997. Since that year she has also been Director of the university language centre. She was President of AICLU in 2001-2004. Amongst her research interests are systemic functional linguistics, linguistic approaches to literature, English language teaching and testing, and e-learning. She has coordinated three important interuniversity projects relevant to the activities of university language centres. Prof. Taylor Torsello is the author of eight books and editor of seven collected works. She has been an active member of CercleS for several years; this is her first time as a member of the Executive.

### Secretary General 2004 to 2006



#### Dr. Johann Fischer

Dr. Johann Fischer has been Director of the Language Centre of Tübingen University, Germany since 2001. He is an executive member of AKS and member of the UNICert® committee. His areas of interest include LSP/LAP, task-oriented language teaching, language testing and teacher training. He has been involved in various projects funded by the European Commission and by the Council of Europe (European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz). He has carried out teacher training courses in Austria, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Poland, Portugal, Russia and Slovakia. Dr. Fischer has been involved with CercleS for several years; he is now for the first time a member of the Executive.

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### Ending on a high note!

A memorable moment at the Bratislava Conference Dinner with all members of the outgoing CercleS Executive 'singing from the same hymn-sheet' as they celebrate the end of their four-year mandate. From left to right, Nicole Chenik, Ray Satchell (who penned the satirical lyrics) Alžbeta Moravčíková, Thomas Vogel, Mary Ruane and Maurizio Gotti. After a job well done, the Executive bows out in a harmonious finale.



# FINELC: Our Past Is Our Prologue

Raija Elsinen, Pirkko Forsman Svensson & Tuija Nikko

## Résumé

Suite à une collaboration étroite avec CercleS lors de la mise en place d'un programme stratégique national pour l'enseignement des langues et l'internationalisation de l'éducation en Finlande, le Réseau Finnois des Centres de Langues (FINELC), a été formé en 2003 avant de devenir member de CercleS en 2004. Cet article souligne les étapes qui ont mené à la formation de FINELC et décrit les objectifs et réalisations de cette organisation.

## Introduction

The Finnish language centres (LCs) entered a new phase in September 2004, when the Finnish Network of Language Centres (Network) was accepted by the CercleS General Meeting in Bratislava as a full member of CercleS. The 17 university LCs that constitute FINELC were introduced in CercleS *Bulletin*, Issue No. 18, Summer 2004. Most of the centres' mother universities are multidisciplinary (10), others represent economics (3) or technology (3), while the Defence College is in a category of its own. The LCs, as they stand today, have a well-established and independent position in the university administration, similar to that of the faculties. The staff, whether they are teachers, administrators or other non-teaching experts, usually hold permanent full-time posts.

## From budget cuts to project funding

In the mid-90s, severe budget cuts made at the Finnish universities and their language centres resulted in reductions in the numbers of teaching posts and contact hours. Teaching at the language centres was so adversely affected by these measures that something had to be done. In 1995, the Ministry of Education decided to review the tasks and teaching programmes of the language centres and to compare their work to that of language departments. Professor Lauri Carlson was appointed to complete this review. In his report, he gave an overview of the role and activities of the LCs and suggested some improvements. The most important suggestions were as follows:

- More resources were needed for the development of teaching, ministry funding should be allocated to joint projects, and regular meetings should be scheduled by various groups of LC staff
- The use of ICT and teaching technology should be increased in order to offer an alternative to face-to-face instruction
- The choice of languages and the profile of teaching programmes should be based on the needs of professional expertise and the labour market
- Research support for teaching should be encouraged.

Prompted by Carlson's report, the ministry published a strategy programme for language teaching and internationalisation of education, entitled *Rising to the Challenge: Language Teaching in the New International Finland* (1997). This document covered all levels of education from schools to polytechnics and universities. The selection of languages was to be expanded: while everyone should learn Finnish, Swedish and English, additional resources were foreseen for instruction in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Instruction in non-European languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Japanese was also considered important. The programme included such items as additional implementation of ICTs and the development of quality assurance procedures for programmes in which a foreign language is the language of instruction; it also recognised the importance of enabling the universities to strengthen the LCs' resources and create modules for language and culture studies for non-specialist students.

This strategy was implemented with three years of 'language strategy funding' allocated to all university language centres in 1998. The extra resources allocated to an individual LC were defined by the annual admission of new students into the mother university, varying from approx. €33,000 to €167,000 per annum. After the first three years

## Zusammenfassung

Das Finnische Netzwerk von Sprachenzentren (FINELC) wurde im September 2004 Mitglied von CercleS. FINELC wurde 2003 nach einer Phase enger Zusammenarbeit mit CercleS bei der Implementierung einer nationalen Strategie für den Sprachunterricht und der Internationalisierung des Bildungswesens in Finland gegründet. Dieser Artikel skizziert die Ereignisse, die zur Gründung führten und beschreibt die Ziele und bisherigen Leistungen FINELCs.



**FINELC members pictured at the Helsinki School of Economics in October 2004. More than 100 of them gathered there in order to learn more about CEF skills levels.**

(1998-2000) the ministry extended this funding for another three-year period on the basis of a joint application submitted by the LC directors.

This strategy funding boosted all the LCs. With the extra resources they were able to widen their language programmes: the numbers of classes in French, Spanish, Italian and in other less frequently taught languages were increased, and new positions for experts in CALL and for language tutors/counsellors were created and filled.

## From cooperation to FINELC

The recent years could be characterised as years of intensified cooperation among the Finnish LCs. Our shared problems and the joint projects obviously called for the LCs to increase their cooperation. Besides engaging in joint projects, the LCs have conducted several innovative teaching experiments and pursued research in teaching and learning in accordance with the objectives set forth in the strategies of the language centres. Accordingly, in recent years the LCs have also qualified as research institutes.

In 1999 the Finnish LCs readopted the policy calling for biannual conferences, and this tradition continues today. The directors' mailing list became an efficient forum for solving acute problems and distributing information about best practices. The fact that the LC directors now meet more frequently has made it possible to balance the previous emphasis on mere practical issues by dealing with more specialised topics in management and leadership.

In 2001 the LCs created a common network, primarily in order to implement the national Virtual Language Centre project. The issue of a national association and full membership of CercleS had been on the agenda for a couple of years, but it was not until 2003 that the matter was given real priority. That same year, the Network's regulations were modified into statutes, and the reshaped Network was to be called FINELC (from Finnish NETwork of Language Centres).

## National vs. foreign language requirements

Language and communication skills needed in academic and professional fields are by tradition a well-established part of all the Finnish university degrees. We hope this will continue. The on-going



degree reform that follows the guidelines of the Bologna model and is supposed to come into effect on 1 August 2005 relies on the new *Universities Act* and the *Decree on Degrees*, both approved by the Government in 2004.

The new *Decree on Degrees* states that each student must fulfil two language requirements in order to earn a Bachelor's or Master's degree. The student must, firstly, demonstrate a proficiency in Finnish and Swedish which, on the basis of the *Act 424/2003*, is required of civil servants in bilingual districts and which is necessary in his/her field and profession. Secondly, the student must demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language sufficient to enable him/her to follow the development of his/her own professional field and to function in international contexts in that language.

As far as the two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, are concerned, the criteria for required skills are specified in three separate documents, namely the *Language Act (423/2003)*, the *Act on the Knowledge of Languages Required of Personnel in Public Bodies (424/2003)*, and the *Government Decree on Demonstrating Proficiency in Finnish and Swedish Required for Civil Service (481/2003)*. It is noteworthy that the legislators, when formulating the language requirement in the *Decree 481/2003*, applied the CEF skills levels. As far as we know, Finland is the first country to do this. Consequently, an excellent command of the mother tongue (either Finnish or Swedish), which according to the *Act 424/2003* is the requirement, is the equivalent of CEF levels C1 and C2. A good command of the second national language of Finland is the equivalent of CEF levels C1 and B2, and a satisfactory command of the second official language, which is the minimum requirement, is the equivalent of CEF level B1. These descriptions offer good guidelines for LC teaching and assessing, and they also facilitate comparability.

When it comes to skills in foreign languages, Finnish legislation does not offer the same solid support that it provides for the national languages: neither specific objectives nor criteria are mentioned. Therefore the LCs have joined together in efforts to create a set of common guidelines for teaching and assessing on the basis of the CEF.

#### Facing new challenges

The present challenges that FINELC, like many other European university LCs, faces today are connected with the Bologna process and the Common European Framework. In late 2003 a national reform



Pictured at the reception in the Primatial Palace in Bratislava, from left to right: Kenneth Kidd, Flis Kjisik, Joan Nordlund, Tom Toepfer, Ray Satchell & Pirkko Forsman Svensson.

committee for language studies was set up in order to meet the challenges of the degree reform, work out common strategies and organise training for LC teachers. In spring 2004 the following recommendations were listed by the committee as objectives for all Finnish universities:

- Language and communication skills should be seen as an essential element in the professional expertise of all graduates, irrespective of the field of specialisation
- Language and communication studies required for the degree should be field-specific
- Time and resources reserved for the language studies in the curriculum should be realistic
- Development of both societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism should be guaranteed; studies in 'less-taught' languages have to be encouraged and offered extra support
- The language and communication studies of different universities should be transparent so that they are comparable in terms of achievements and encourage the students to pursue life-long learning of languages
- The CEF should be implemented as a comprehensive tool; accordingly, while the entrance levels of all courses should be described in terms of CEF skills levels, some common field-specific descriptors should be agreed.

Another response to the challenges was the creation of KORU, an on-going joint project of the Finnish university LCs and polytechnics that is being funded by the Ministry of Education. The first objective of this project is to develop a common framework concerning the standards and criteria for evaluating and assessing Swedish language skills as part of university or polytechnic degrees, and the second is to develop the evaluation skills and practices of teachers of Swedish.

#### Conclusion

Language and communication skills have always been highly esteemed in Finnish society and in our educational system. A proof of this is our LC network which, as a matter of fact, dates back to the 1970s. Now we are looking forward to more intensive and transparent international cooperation under the auspices of CercleS. With our united effort we can successfully promote LSP teaching, assessment and research. ■

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Colleagues from HULC (Helsinki University Language Centre) pictured at the traditional Christmas party, in December 2003.



# Language Centre Profiles: Padua: Moving Ahead

Carol Taylor Torsello

In collaboration with S. Cloke, F. Dalziel, I. Fratter, D. Griggio, C. Whigham & G. Tonello

## Résumé

Le Centre de Langues de l'Université de Padoue, inauguré en 1997, est devenu une structure dynamique importante, offrant ses propres cours en ligne, des contrôles sur le web, des activités d'apprentissage en tandem et d'auto-formation dans 12 langues étrangères, ainsi qu'en italien deuxième langue. Parmi les développements récents, il faut compter un nouveau laboratoire de langues et une réorganisation structurelle divisant le centre en unités opérationnelles étroitement coordonnées afin d'offrir un service efficace répondant aux besoins de ses utilisateurs.

## Introduction

The University of Padua founded its language centre (<http://www.unipd.it/cla>) in 1997 to make language learning and teaching in this 800-year-old university more effective, while rationalising the use of the human and financial resources devoted to bettering the language competence of its 60,000 plus students. It was inaugurated with 90 computers in five labs. The first three years of its existence were devoted to recruiting administrative and technical staff; retraining the university's existing language assistants for CALL; putting in place equipment, software, corpora, reference works and multimedia teaching materials; setting up facilities for autonomous learning; providing technical support and advice on technologically enhanced language research; and language teaching to those in charge of curricular language teaching as well as to students needing such support for their degree theses.

Today, the centre offers its own on-line and blended courses, tandem learning, web-based testing and self-study facilities in 12 foreign languages in addition to a rich programme of on-line and classroom activities for Italian as a second language. Students have access to 165 computers in five multimedia laboratories from 8.30 am to 7.00 pm Monday to Friday. The centre houses a multimedia library, where students and teachers can consult or borrow a wide range of resources, including audio and video cassettes, DVDs, textbooks, reference works and journals relating to language teaching and testing, and electronic resources. Corpora and concordancing software are also made available and are used in teaching and in language research. Whenever possible, the materials are made accessible through the intranet. Satellite TV is also available in all the labs for individual or group viewing. The staff consists of over 50 language assistants, five language-advising technicians, four computer technicians, one audio/video technician, two administrators, a general secretary and a teaching secretary, two

## Zusammenfassung

Das Sprachzentrum der Universität Padua hat sich nach seiner Gründung 1997 zu einer großen, dynamischen Einrichtung entwickelt. Es bietet on-line Kurse, kooperative Lernstrukturen, Testverfahren im Internet, das Selbststudium von zwölf Fremdsprachen und Italienisch als Zweitsprache an. Neueste Entwicklungen umfassen ein modernes Sprachlabor sowie eine strukturelle Umorganisation, die zu gut durchorganisierten Abteilungen geführt hat. Die effizienten Dienstleistungen des Sprachzentrums sind auf die speziellen Bedürfnisse der Benutzer zugeschnitten.

multimedia librarians, four tutors and a number of part-time student assistants (57 per year doing 150 hours each). There is also a Director (Carol Taylor Torsello) and a Vice Director (Maria Teresa Musacchio), both of whom are language professors, an Executive Board, and a General Assembly on which all the faculties of the university are represented.

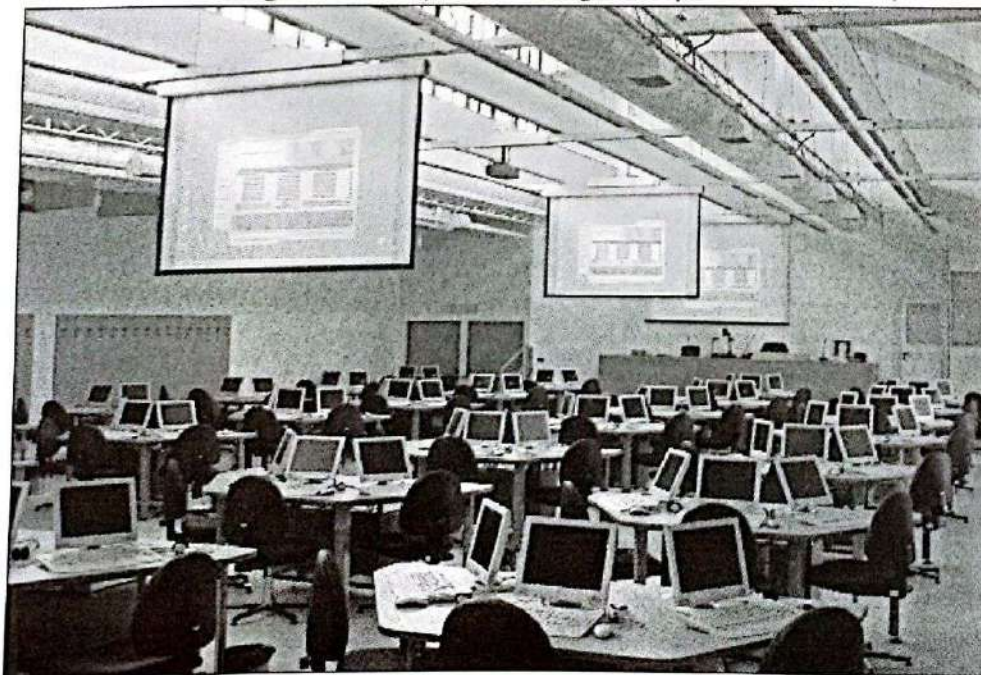
## New language laboratory

The newest and most spacious of the language laboratories opened in the spring of 2004, with an innovative seating arrangement that lends itself to collaborative activities and active participation despite its 90 student capacity. In June, July and September it was used for administering the DIALANG diagnostic tests in five languages with over 400 students on the Socrates/Erasmus exchange programmes, for the testing of about 600 first-year language degree students, and for a day-long seminar on collaborative learning and computer conferencing. It is fully booked for the autumn and spring semesters for the lab-based components of curricular language courses for various degrees and those of the centre's blended-learning language courses, for various types of language tests, and for some workshops.

The language centre also has four classrooms for from 15 to 50 students, which allows it to cater for the needs of incoming Socrates/Erasmus students and to provide language courses for students from the University of Padua leaving for a period of study abroad. It is used for the classroom components of all the centre's blended-learning courses.

## On-line courses

In 2000, the language centre started developing on-line language courses, initially for English and French, later for Portuguese, Spanish and German, and most recently for Italian as a second language. The



The newest language laboratory at the University of Padua Language Centre has a 90-student capacity and an innovative seating arrangement. It was opened in the spring of 2004 and has been in constant use ever since.



entire content of the courses – audio, video, graphics, Flash animations, interactive exercises – has been created in-house by the language centre's teaching staff and web experts. Designed to make use of the new pedagogical opportunities that the internet offers, these courses aim to improve language learning by offering a multidimensional approach to the delivery of language learning materials, thus exploiting the potential that the web offers for providing students with choice and flexibility. The courses have been designed for complete beginners and provide resources up to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference. At present they are used primarily as a component of blended-learning initiatives. As a platform for its on-line courses, the centre has been experimenting with Lotus Learning Space 5 as well as with the use of its own web site, CLAWEB (see Fig. 1), with a tracking system incorporated into it.

### FirstClass

FirstClass was introduced at the language centre in 1998, and since then this computer conferencing software has been increasingly widely adopted. There are currently over 3,000 users among teachers, students and technical and administrative staff. FirstClass is adopted for communication and exchange of information between members of staff and for language teaching. There are seven languages being taught with the support of FirstClass: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, in about 30 different courses.

### Tandem learning

For four years the language centre has offered a system of tandem learning. Over 2,000 students, including part-time and working students with reduced opportunities for attendance at lessons, have taken advantage of this opportunity for learning another language through face-to-face interaction and collaboration with a native speaker of that language. The tandem programme lets them improve their oral skills while learning about a culture other than their own. Students sign up on-line and are encouraged to complete a tandem learning diary which can be inserted into their European Language Portfolio and C.V.

### Testing

Over the last few years the language centre has done a great deal of work on the development of on-line tests using the QuestionMark Perception software. The tests produced are being used with students from most of the university's 13 faculties. In 2004, a B2-level on-line test was created for the 600 first-year language degree students, replacing the traditional pen-and-paper test. The centre's work on testing has involved the adaptation of the software to the specific needs of the university, regarding authoring, administration, security and data analysis. The language centre is also the coordinating site of the Italian certification system for B1 and B2 level competence in English and Italian, CERCLU (<http://www.aiclu.it/cerclu/>).

### Projects

The centre is involved in a number of national and international projects such as the CERCLU testing project and the piloting of the CercleS version of the ELP (see pages 4 & 5 in this issue).

### AICLU and CercleS membership

Padua's Language Centre is an active member of AICLU (nine participants with papers at the last AICLU conference in Trieste) and of CercleS (14 participants with papers at the last CercleS conference in Bratislava), gaining much from its contact with these associations. Centre staff have also given papers at Eurocall, Worldcall and other important conferences, reporting back to colleagues on what they have learnt there.

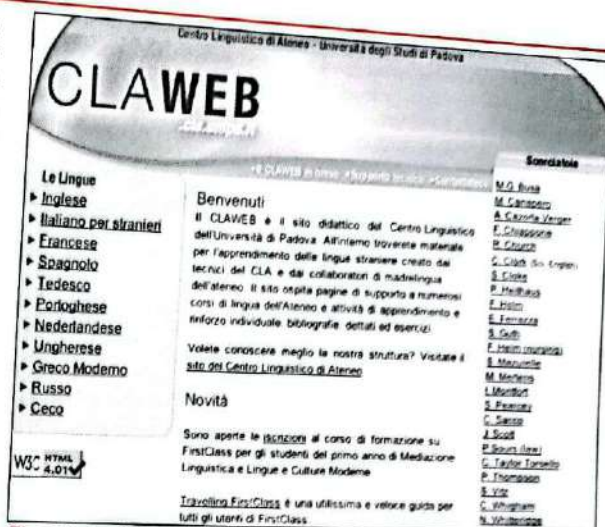


Fig. 1: <http://claweb.cla.unipd.it>

### CLAWEB

CLAWEB, the centre's language teaching web site, is an important tool in blended courses and for self-study, providing interactive and multimedia materials for the study of 11 languages. At present CLAWEB has more than 12,000 pages, all created in-house, which have received 4,500,000 visits since 1999.

### Seminars and publications

Every two years since it was founded, the University of Padua Language Centre has held a two or three-day seminar in which its staff have given presentations on the innovative projects they have been involved in. The *Proceedings* of these seminars are published in a special series (*Il C.L.A. per le lingue straniere: Esperienze e prospettive*, Padua: Cleup), which is also open to monographs by the centre's personnel (see Katherine Ackerley, *Using Computer-Mediated Communication for Autonomous and Collaborative Language Learning*, 2003).

### Reorganisation

From a small albeit very dynamic centre that could solve its problems around a table at weekly staff meetings, the language centre has grown into a relatively large and complex entity, resulting in the recent reorganisation into operative units with layers of coordination. The Director and Vice-Director rely on an overall Coordinator to mediate between them and the operative units. One unit includes the whole area of administration, management and technical support. The second operative unit corresponds to the media library. The most complex area is the one devoted to language teaching, learning and testing, now divided into three operative units, one for the CLA's language courses and its teaching web site, another for language testing and the third for support for the curricular language courses, including portfolio experimentation, tandem learning, language syllabus design, guided self-access paths, collaboration and technical support for teaching, support to teachers and students for research requiring technology. Each of these three units has a coordinator, and all three rely on a general coordinator for the whole language teaching area, who refers the needs of the three units to the overall Coordinator. This is the new structure with which the Language Centre of the University of Padua now plans to move ahead. ■

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# Language Centre Profiles: University of Tampere Language Centre

Ulla-Kristiina Tuomi

## Résumé

Depuis sa création en 1975, le Centre de Langues de l'Université de Tampere propose des services spécialisés pour répondre aux besoins éducatifs et professionnels de ses étudiants et universitaires. En plus de ses 18000 heures d'enseignement annuel d'un grand nombre de langues, le Centre coordonne le Projet National de Centre de Langues Virtuel. Il est également impliqué dans plusieurs organisations internationales et propose des services payants.



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communication skills, including mastery of the mother tongue, proficiency in other languages and an understanding of other cultures, are an integral part of university degrees and academic education.

The University of Tampere Language Centre is located at the heart of the university campus in the Main Building, in premises which have been recently renovated in the light, modern style characteristic of Scandinavia, to give a lively impression. Personnel currently number 84, over 70 of whom are teachers, with approximately half of these being native speakers of the languages they teach. Our centre is a truly multilingual and multicultural working environment, with teaching facilities including state-of-art AV and IT equipment; two new language studio-cum-multimedia classrooms, and a modern self-access centre.

## Languages and levels

Contact teaching for undergraduates amounts to approximately 18,000 hours per year, in about 600 groups. Degree programmes in Finland include a compulsory language proficiency component, namely both the official domestic languages and at least one other language. The languages taught most at the University of Tampere Language Centre are Finnish, Swedish and English, while other languages offered are German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Latin. Depending on the language, tuition is given from level A1 right up to C2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEF). In the curriculum all languages are described in these terms, making course levels transparent and universally comprehensible, for example in job recruitment and farther afield. The language centre also offers teaching up to minor subject level in intercultural communication studies (30 ECTS credits) and Finnish for foreigners (30 ECTS credits).

Relatively little LSP-based teaching material exists in textbook form, thus the teachers at the centre create much of their teaching materials themselves. Modes of instruction vary; there are courses integrating contact teaching, supervised independent study and one-on-one or group tutoring, while net-based options are also used. The centre also uses team teaching, cooperative learning, portfolios, and learning diaries.

## Projects and cooperation

The University of Tampere Language Centre serves as coordinator of the national Virtual Language Centre Project, which started up in 2001 on funding from the Ministry of Education. This entails pedagogical

## Zusammenfassung

Das Sprachzentrum der Universität Tampere wurde 1975 gegründet, um die Sprach- und Kommunikationsbedürfnisse der Universität zu decken. Neben jährlich 18000 Unterrichtsstunden in den verschiedensten Sprachen koordiniert das Zentrum zudem das staatliche Virtuelle Sprachenzentrumprojekt Finnlands. Ferner beteiligt es sich an der Arbeit zahlreicher internationaler Organisationen und bietet zusätzlich kommerzielle Dienstleistungen an.

cooperation with 17 universities, and includes the production of materials for virtual language teaching.

International cooperation is flourishing indeed, with 14 active ERASMUS exchange agreements and regular training cooperation with the University of Cincinnati. The language centre is actively involved in the European Association for International Education (EAIE) and is the base of the CircleS Finnish member association, the Finnish Network of Language Centres (FINELC) (17 universities). The centre is, moreover, working on two European EU-funded projects.

Commercial services offered to internal and external clients include open university teaching, continuing education for teachers, and language and culture training for companies and other clients. A busy translation service offers translation and language checking in more than 10 languages to both university and external clients.

## Looking to the future

Current and future challenges are many and varied. The Bologna Process stresses the need for intensified integration of language teaching with subject matter. Support for the internationalisation of the university, maintaining high quality services, developing teaching content and methods, increasing personnel expertise, and promoting both national and international cooperation all have a part to play on our future agenda. Another important issue is the advancement of plurilingualism and multilingualism. As a small language area, Finland may not rely on a narrow language base: in addition to encouraging widespread proficiency in English, care must be taken to ensure the training of competent users of other languages. ■

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The University of Tampere Language Centre, where Ulla-Kristiina Tuomi (pictured above) is the director, currently serves as the headquarters of FINELC. There are many languages taught at the centre, the main ones being Finnish, Swedish and English.



# Language Centre Profiles: Universidad Antonio de Nebrija

Marta Genís

## Résumé

L'université Antonio de Nebrija (Madrid) propose à ses étudiants une large gamme de programmes dans des domaines aussi divers que les sciences humaines, le droit, le commerce, la communication et l'informatique. Le Centre de Langues procure à tous les étudiants de nombreux programmes de langues. L'ambition internationale de l'université se reflète dans les activités du Centre de Langues qui favorise les liens avec un grand nombre d'institutions et d'organisations internationales et collabore activement avec celles-ci.

## Introduction

The Antonio de Nebrija University is a private university established in 1988 under the auspices of the *Antonio de Nebrija* academic foundation. It has its origins in the *Centro de Estudios Hispánicos*, an institution dedicated to the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language and established in 1985. Since 1995, Antonio de Nebrija University has been an officially recognised institution of higher learning providing professional qualifications in a range of areas. It offers graduate and postgraduate courses in the fields of humanities, languages, tourism, business, law, communication and computer and industrial engineering. The university is an independent, non-denominational institution, with strong international links. Located in Madrid, the university is based on two campuses, the Dehesa Campus, which is located in an area known as *Ciudad Universitaria*, in the *Dehesa de la Villa* park, and the Berzosa Campus, located in *Hoyo de Manzanares*, a residential area just outside Madrid.

## Our students

The university is committed to achieving and maintaining the highest standards in its teaching and in academic research within all of its areas of specialisation. With a total of 2,975 students registered for the academic year 2003/4 (260 of whom were postgraduates), the university provides a student-centred teaching environment in which students flourish both academically and in terms of their personal development. Places at the university are limited and students are selected on the basis of a comprehensive admissions procedure.

## Fostering national and international links

The university attracts a large number of overseas students each year (800 overseas students were registered with the university during the last academic year) and actively cooperates on exchange programmes with numerous foreign universities including institutions in Europe (University of Limerick, *Fachhochschule Münster*, *Universität Duisburg*, *Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt*, *Fachhochschule Deggendorf*, Copenhagen Business School), the USA (Lock Haven University, California), Kalamazoo College, Michigan; San Diego State University, California), Canada (Carleton University, Ottawa) and Mexico (*Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey*; *Universidad La Salle, Cancún*). Foreign students are welcome to take any of the Modern Languages Centre programmes either in Spanish as a foreign language or any other language programme.

The university also fosters links with a large number of companies, both national and international, and can offer students the opportunity to acquire professional experience during their course of study, with some 750 organisations. These include IBM España, *Telefónica*, *Iberdrola*, BLC Human, Microsoft, Airtel, *Camper*, Oracle, Landwell-PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Mercedes Benz. Active cooperation is fostered with over 250 organisations, both national and international, including *Cámara de Comercio e Industria de Madrid*, WTO (World Tourism Organisation), USA Embassy, *Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid*, Cervantes Institute, *Fundación Cotec para la Innovación Tecnológica*, Anadif, ACLES (*Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior*) and CercleS.

## Zusammenfassung

Die Universität Antonio de Nebrija in Madrid wurde 1988 gegründet und 1995 offiziell als Universität anerkannt. Angeboten wird eine Reihe von Studiengängen wie zum Beispiel Geisteswissenschaften, Jura, Informatik sowie Wirtschafts- als auch Kommunikationswissenschaften. Das Sprachzentrum der Universität bietet allen Studenten Sprachkurse an. Zudem pflegt das Zentrum Kontakt zu einer Reihe internationaler Organisationen und Institutionen und arbeitet aktiv mit diesen zusammen.

## The university language centre

The Modern Languages Centre in *Universidad Antonio de Nebrija* was founded in 1995, the same year in which the institution received official status. It was conceived as a centre to provide language teaching to students of all faculties and departments within the university. All students at the university, irrespective of their course of study, are required to learn English.

## Language programmes

Over the years, the language centre has developed a range of courses specifically tailored to the different academic and professional needs of students. English language programmes have been designed and implemented for students in the areas of business, cinema and television, marketing, technology, computer science, advertising, journalism, tourism and law. Foreign language modules with an extensive cultural component are offered in French and German. The centre is also responsible for the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language, an area which is growing each year.

## Resources

The centre has established a self-access multimedia centre offering students of all faculties access to resources for self-study. Resources and materials are available in a wide range of media, including printed materials (newspapers, magazines and books) and audio-visual resources, including a videotheque. The centre, furthermore, operates a television studio offering students the use of cameras as a language learning tool.

## International involvement

Language centre teachers are also active in many international fora (ACLES, ELIA, AELFE, TESOL, *Jornadas de Lenguas para Fines Específicos*) and contribute regularly to international conferences and seminars. Teaching staff benefit greatly from participation in the Erasmus Teaching Exchange Programme.



Pictured here is the attractive La Berzosa Campus, just outside Madrid, where the university language centre is situated. Language classes are also held on the other campus of the university, the Dehesa Campus.



### Recent developments and projects

The language centre has been involved in a number of projects, both internally and internationally. During the academic year 2003/4, the CercleS portfolio was piloted in two classes of English for advertising. The project was evaluated by means of student feedback which is currently being analysed. It is hoped to have results available in the near future. Teachers of the centre have developed new multimedia materials and have subsequently devised a project with the aim of evaluating the materials used by students. Results have highlighted, in particular, the need for further software-based resources for upper intermediate students. A further initiative has involved the development of an internet-based linguistic and cultural exchange project with the University of Massachusetts. The project has the objective of engaging students in activities promoting cultural understanding.

Fourth-year students of English for advertising carried out a bilingual project examining the representation of elderly people in prime time television commercials in Spain and in Britain. The main purpose of the study was to examine representational trends and the use of stereotypical images of elderly people in both countries. The students' language teacher facilitated and supported the students' project work.

Using ADOCENS, an interactive language web site designed to facilitate teacher collaboration, the German Department within the

language centre worked on a research project together with teaching staff of UCM (*Universidad Complutense de Madrid*). The centre's French Department has recently engaged in work on the development of skills in multicultural situations. This work has been the subject of publication and has formed the basis of contributions to a number of seminars and conferences.



Applied languages students at the end-of-term dinner with their teachers.

### Looking to the future

The language centre, with the university as a whole, has just undergone a quality review by the National Agency for Quality Evaluation (*Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación*). The very positive report of the assessing committee in general, and the specific endorsement of efforts in the areas of international cooperation and the fostering of multicultural understanding, in particular, have provided much impetus for the further development in these areas of university and language centre activity. ■

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## Minutes of CercleS General Meeting

### Univerzita Komenského (Comenius University), Bratislava

10 September 2004

The President opened the meeting at 4.15 pm and asked for approval of the Agenda. This was given unanimously.

#### 1. Apologies

None was recorded.

#### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the General Meeting on 20 September 2002 in Paris were approved.

#### 3. There were no Matters Arising.

#### 4. President's Report

The President, Maurizio Gotti, reviewed the achievements of CercleS during the second term of his mandate. His report focussed on membership issues, management of the Secretariat, conferences, proceedings and special projects. He began by welcoming the FINELC application for membership commenting that expansion in CercleS was the result of increased interest in the Confederation's activities especially in northern and central Europe. Referring to the work of the Secretariat, he said that business had been conducted efficiently and services (including the production of the bulletin) had been managed very well. He thanked the Secretary General, Mary Ruane, and the staff at UCD for all their work. The Confederation finances were generally healthy although it had not been possible to reach targets for sponsorship. He thanked the Treasurer, Nicole Chenik, and Deputy Treasurer, Alžbeta Moravčíková, for all their work in monitoring financial matters.

On behalf of the membership, the President paid particular tribute to Alžbeta Moravčíková and her colleagues in CASALC and

Comenius University for organising the Bratislava conference which had proved to be an outstanding success. He said he felt confident that the tradition of successful CercleS conferences would continue into the future, stating that the next conference would be held in Frankfurt (Oder) in 2006. He thanked Thomas Vogel and AKS for their offer to host it. He also expressed the Confederation's thanks to Ray Satchell and Nicole Chenik for their very fine work in editing the Paris Conference *Proceedings* which would shortly be distributed.

The President went on to refer to key CercleS projects. Further progress had been made on the CercleS ELP, and the canonical version had been distributed to National Associations in electronic format. There were plans for follow-up activities to ensure greater dissemination and use of the ELP in European higher education. Another key CercleS initiative concerned the development of a common scheme of international certification and work on this was in train. A recent development was CercleS' involvement in European projects which provided many benefits. LATE and Lingu@net were two successful examples. CercleS had also been requested to participate in a number of other projects in the future and the feasibility of this was being considered.

At the end of his report, the President thanked the outgoing Executive for their cooperation and commitment. He concluded by expressing good wishes to the new Executive for the future.

#### 5. Secretary's Report

Under the heading 'Five eventful years in Cercles 2000-4' Secretary General Mary Ruane reviewed the developments and changes that she had seen during her period of office in the Confederation and gave her views on future challenges.



There had been two different periods corresponding with the two terms of office. In hindsight, the first phase seemed busy but relatively settled as tasks such as transferring the Secretariat, and ensuring continuity in the management of projects were brought to a successful conclusion. In the two previous years, however, the shifting pattern of world events had led to greater uncertainty and pressures in every aspect of life including higher education. Changes had occurred in CercleS as elsewhere. There was now greater awareness of the need for cooperation, pedagogic innovation (especially through projects) and the importance of developing representational influence at European level.

Looking to the future, Mary Ruane outlined what she saw were some of the managerial challenges facing CercleS. Its key strengths included the support of a broad membership base with shared concerns and interests, a growing record of achievement, and a strong but flexible management structure which combined opportunities for both central and devolved decision-making. However, these strong points had to be set against increasing challenges which included coping with growing volumes of work, pressure of deadlines (especially in projects and publications), limited financial resources, and the increasingly fast-moving pace of developments in language learning. Overcoming these obstacles would present demands but ultimately great benefits.

Mary Ruane ended by thanking the President, Executive and Coordinating Committees, membership and her colleagues in UCD for all their support. She wished the incoming Executive well for the future, promising full support to the new Secretariat in Tübingen.

## 6. Treasurer's Report

The Deputy Treasurer reported on the financial standing of CercleS during the period 1 Jan 2002 - 31 Dec 2004. The main body of the report summarised income and expenditure for this period and reviewed their implications. The report also included a synopsis of CercleS project finances for the period 1 Jan 2002 - 31 Dec 2004.

### Financial Statement 2002

Accounts for the period Jan 2002 - Dec 2002 (see Table 1: Financial Statement Jan-Dec 2002) showed a closing deficit of €5,826.85. This deficit was the result of significant expenditure incurred in the course of the year.

Table 1: Financial Statement Jan-Dec 2002

Income	Euro	Expenditure	Euro
Membership	23,589.62	Balance forward	755.45
Publications	273.48	Salary of administrator	17,000.00
Advertisement	976.15	Phone	257.00
Sponsorship	0.00	Stationery	640.54
Grants	0.00	Printing (Bulletin 14 & 15)	3,857.91
Paris (Conference)	0.00	Production (Bulletin 14 & 15)	842.09
Bank Interest	237.21	Printing (Proceedings)	2,115.00
		Production (Proceedings)	1,169.77
		Production (Posters & flyers)	1,094.00
		Postage	152.47
		Travel	1,543.54
		Printing & photocopying	400.00
		Services	1,072.66
		Bank Charges	2.88
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>30,903.31</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25,076.46</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>30,903.31</b>
		<b>Grand Total for 2002: -Euro 5,826.85</b>	

Income had been generated from membership fees received from 9 National Associations and 12 Associate Members. A deposit account had been opened and was earning interest.

Expenditure in 2002 was primarily attributed to the salary costs of the full-time administrator. There were also administrator travel costs. Service costs were high as they incorporated internet service charges for 2001 and 2002. The printing and production costs of the conference proceedings and two bulletins (14 & 15) had also contributed to expenditure costs for 2002.

The financial statement for 2002 had been approved by the Coordinating Committee in Trieste in June 2003.

### Financial Statement 2003

The figures for the period Jan 2003 - Dec 2003 (see Table 2: Financial Statement Jan-Dec 2003) reflected a surplus of €2,708.33. It had been possible to achieve this surplus as a result of offsetting decreased costs against stable income.

Table 2: Financial Statement Jan-Dec 2003

Income	Euro	Expenditure	Euro
Membership	24,558.30	Balance forward	5,826.85
Publications	147.59	Salary of administrator	11,500.00
Advertisement	380.00	Extra payment administrator	156.85
Sponsorship	0.00	Phone	350.00
Grants	0.00	Stationery	760.34
Paris (Conference)	0.00	Printing (Bulletin 16)	2,311.00
Bank Interest	93.82	Production (Bulletin 16)	400.00
		Printing (Proceedings)	0.00
		Production (Proceedings)	0.00
		Production (Posters & flyers)	0.00
		Postage	155.00
		Travel	0.00
		Printing & photocopying	470.00
		Services	536.02
		Bank Charges	5.32
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25,179.71</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>22,471.38</b>
		<b>Grand Total for 2003: +Euro 2,708.33</b>	

Income had been generated largely from membership fees received from 8 National Associations and 11 Associate Members. Two membership fees of €3,930 were outstanding at the end of 2003.

Expenditure in 2003 had declined as a result of careful cost management and the reduction of printing costs. Administrator salary costs of €8,500 had been incurred for a six month period only (from Jan - Jun). There was a charge of €3,000 for administrative support services from Jul - Dec. Service charges had decreased due to the drop in the internet service provider costs. One bulletin was produced in 2003 and there had been no proceedings.

### Financial Statement January-June 2004

Exact accounts were available for the period Jan 2004 - Jun 2004 only (see Table 3: Financial Statement Jan-Jun 2004). They reflected a surplus of €2,306.01.

Income and expenditure were broadly in line with the first half of 2003. Membership fee arrears for 2003 (€3,500) contributed to achieving the surplus. Cost management measures continued to be applied, however administration costs had grown as a result of increased activity in the Secretariat, including the production of one issue of the bulletin.



Table 3: Financial Statement Jan-Jun 2004

Income	Euro	Expenditure	Euro
Balance forward	2,708.33	Administrative support	7,945.00
Membership	11,441.20	Phone	430.00
Publications	25.69	Stationery	500.00
Advertisement	0.00	Printing (Bulletin 17)	1,966.00
Sponsorship	0.00	Production (Bulletin 17)	600.00
Grants	0.00	Printing (Proceedings)	0.00
Paris (Conference)	0.00	Production (Proceedings)	0.00
Bank Interest	34.04	Production (Posters & flyers)	0.00
		Postage	100.00
		Travel	0.00
		Printing & photocopying	360.00
		Services	0.00
		Bank Charges	2.25
		Hand over costs	0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14,209.26</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,903.25</b>
<i>Grand Total for first six months of 2004: +Euro 2,306.01</i>			

#### Projected Financial Statement July-December 2004

The Deputy Treasurer then reported on the projected figures for Jul - Dec (Table 4: Projected Financial Statement Jul - Dec 2004 is not reproduced here for space reasons. It had been circulated to members in advance).

Income and expenditure were expected to be on target resulting in a projected surplus of €2,328.85 by the end of 2004. The CercleS deposit account had been closed in August 2004.

Expenditure was expected to remain high in the latter half of the year. In addition to the bulletin produced early in 2004, two further issues were in preparation. This meant additional production and printing costs. There would also be extra costs associated with the hand over to the new secretariat. The final out-turns for 2004 would be submitted for initial approval by the Coordinating Committee.

Finally, the Deputy Treasurer presented short financial reports for two projects (LATE and Lingu@net) coordinated by CercleS during the period 2002 - 2004. The LATE project financial report had been prepared by the Secretariat in conjunction with Cor Koster (project coordinator). As the project had successfully concluded in 2004, the report provided a summary of its three-year term. A final payment was expected in 2005 and would be transferred to the new Secretariat. The Lingu@net project was in the first year of its three-year term, 2004-7, so the report covered the period of 1 Jan 2004 - 31 Dec 2004. Funds allocated to CercleS for this project covered direct costs of travel and administration only.

Following discussion, all financial reports presented were approved.

#### 7. Election of Officers

The President reported on the outcome of the CercleS elections which had taken place the previous day at the Coordinating Committee Meeting. He thanked all candidates who had presented for election and expressed particular gratitude to Prof Bernd Voss who had acted as Returning Officer. The results of the ballot were then announced.

As required by the Statutes and Standing Orders, the election of the President, Carol Taylor Torsello, was ratified by the General Meeting. The new President thanked Confederation members for their confidence and support.

Office	Candidate	Full member
President	Carol Taylor Torsello (Padua)	AICLU
Secretary General	Johann Fischer (Tübingen)	AKS
Treasurer	Nick Byrne (London)	AULC
Vice-President	Alžbeta Moravčíková (Bratislava)	CASALC
Deputy Sec Gen	Thomas Vogel (Frankfurt (Oder))	AKS
Deputy Treasurer	Nicole Chenik (Paris Dauphine)	RANACLES

#### 8. Annual subscriptions

A proposal to raise the annual subscription fee had been considered by the Coordinating Committee. As the subscription fee had not been raised for four years, the Committee believed that it was an appropriate step. They recommended an overall increase of 10%, i.e. for National Associations from 90 to 100 Euro, and from 45 to 50 Euro. Associate Members currently paying 120 Euro would see no change but those paying 45 would see an increase to 50 Euro. This proposal was approved by the Meeting.

#### 9. Applications for membership

The Coordinating Committee had considered the final documents (including the draft Statutes) relating to the FINELC application for full membership of CercleS. The Committee had approved the FINELC application and was now submitting it to the General Meeting for their endorsement. The proposal was warmly approved and FINELC was welcomed into the Confederation. On behalf of the new National Association, Pirkko Forsman-Svensson thanked the Meeting and CercleS members for all their support.

#### 10. Time and place for the next General Meeting

The President of AKS, Thomas Vogel, had submitted a proposal to host the 9th CercleS conference at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) in 2006. The proposal had received full backing from the Coordinating Committee and, following a short presentation by the AKS President, was fully approved. The next General Meeting would take place in Frankfurt (Oder) during the 9th conference.

A proposal from ACLES to hold the 2008 conference at the University of Madrid was received from the floor. This was warmly welcomed and it was agreed there would be further discussions with the Spanish colleagues. Other proposals to host the 2008 or subsequent conferences were invited.

#### 11. AOB

A delegate proposed that CercleS should promote its activities more widely in order to enhance links with organisations and institutions in Europe. Existing dissemination channels (conference proceedings, bulletins and web) have worked well but need to be extended. A suggestion was made that information about National Association meetings and regional events should be disseminated through the CercleS network. The proposed CEF conference in Helsinki was mentioned as an example of one such event. All suggestions would be given to the new Executive for consideration.

At the end of the meeting, Johann Fischer proposed a vote of thanks to all members of the outgoing Executive for their achievements and commitment over the years.

The meeting was drawn to a close at 5.45 pm. ■



## Book Review

### *Multilingual Approaches in University Education: Challenges and Practices*, by C. van Leeuwen & R. Wilkinson (eds)

William Bromwich

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

The editors of this book, both at Maastricht University Language Centre, have provided a useful and timely survey of multilingual higher education, with cases from Denmark, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Multilingual programmes are found mainly in the smaller European countries, so there are no reports for Germany, the UK, Italy, France and Spain. The aim of multilingual education, as pointed out in the Preface by Aric Nieuwenhuijzen Kruseman (Maastricht), is not to create a university in which the two languages (Dutch and English in this case) form two distinct educational programmes, as if they were separate entities, but to offer a fully bilingual programme. The editors then present a stimulating discussion of some of the issues arising from the organisation of foreign-medium-language education in the various national contexts, in response to the needs of both EU and non-EU students.

Charles van Leeuwen traces the origins of university language centres to the *collegium trilingue* founded by Erasmus in Louvain in 1519, where teaching took place *In De Dry Tonghen*, and argues that European students should acquire proficiency in three languages even today. However, even in countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland, language teaching in secondary schools appears to be in decline, and many students become aware of their language needs only at a later stage. Hence the importance of the Common European Framework of the Council of Europe.

In his report on the bilingual French and German programmes at Freiburg, Switzerland, Michael Langner points out that they are part of a long tradition, but quality assurance and due recognition in the European Credit Transfer System are needed. The report by Glenn Ole Hellekjaer (Oslo) and Marit Richardsen Westergaard (Tromsø) presents the results of a questionnaire survey of undergraduate and postgraduate English-language programmes in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Then Hellekjaer and Wilkinson examine trends in content learning in English, and mention the risk of certain languages losing academic and professional domains. They also discuss the relation between language and context knowledge, showing that the hardest tasks are those in which both conceptual and linguistic contents are unfamiliar. They identify the Faculties where content and language goals are more closely intertwined (Psychology, Arts and Culture, and Economics and Business Administration), adding that in some cases students are dissatisfied with the lecturers' language skills. The introduction of the Bachelors-Masters structure following the Bologna Declaration is generating increased competition between

universities at the Masters level, where writing skills in the target language are problematic.

The Finnish case is examined by Tuula Lehtonen, Pearl Lönnfors and Anu Virkkunen-Fullenwider, who report a sharp increase in courses offered in English. The authors used course evaluation questionnaires and found that Finnish lecturers tended to be more critical in the assessment of their language ability than other non-native teachers. Classroom management skills were sometimes inadequate, and students showed a particular talent for picking up the terms their teachers mispronounced.

In her report on Delft University of Technology, Renate Klaassen considers the contextual variables required for English-medium degree programmes to be successful, highlighting the aims of the Bologna Declaration: mobility, employability, and competitiveness in higher education. She points out the higher costs involved, and the fact that mere exposure to English-language content does not necessarily improve the students' English language proficiency. One interesting issue she raises is the impact of extensive student recruitment from Asia due to cultural differences in learning and teaching styles.

Zsuzsa Kurtán (University of Veszprém, Hungary) presents a plan for academic staff training for the purposes of English-medium teaching, underlining the importance of identifying discourse practices in the various disciplines.

Finally, Robert Wilkinson (Maastricht) examines the gradual acquisition of writing skills by psychology students, with collaboration between domain specialists and English-writing specialists being seen as the most effective approach.

Overall this survey raises a number of issues that universities will only be able to deal with by paying close attention to staff and student needs in a system of higher education undergoing fundamental change. ■

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Van Leeuwen, C. & Wilkinson, R. (eds) (2003) *Multilingual Approaches in University Education: Challenges and Practices*. Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Valkhof Pers & Maastricht: Talencentrum Universiteit Maastricht. pp. 1-189.

Editor's note:

This book may be ordered from [talencentrum@languages.unimaas.nl](mailto:talencentrum@languages.unimaas.nl)

### Call for Papers

**CercleS Seminar: 'CEF in European Universities'**  
University of Helsinki, Finland, 31 Aug - 1 Sep 2005

Papers (10/20 mins) are invited for the above seminar focussing on the application of the CEF (Common European Framework) in European universities with special emphasis on problem areas such as LSP.

Papers are also invited for the Bi- and Multilingual Universities Conference, 1-3 Sep 2005, which is linked with the CEF Seminar.

For information on both events please see:  
[www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005](http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005)  
or e-mail: [Eija.Adjers@helsinki.fi](mailto:Eija.Adjers@helsinki.fi)

### CercleS ELP Translation Workshop

Via 8 Febbraio, 2 - Aula Nievo  
University of Padua, Italy  
24 Jun 2005, 9.30 am - 6.00 pm

This workshop is for all those who are or intend to be involved in translating the CercleS ELP and for those users of the ELP who are interested in questions regarding its translation.

For information on the workshop please e-mail:  
Carol Taylor <[carol.taylor@unipd.it](mailto:carol.taylor@unipd.it)>  
Christopher Taylor <[ctaylor@units.it](mailto:ctaylor@units.it)>



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Web: <http://www.ranacles.org>

# Forthcoming events

11-12 May 2005: FINELC Conference, 'New Degrees and Language & Communication Courses', University of Joensuu, Finland. E-mail: Raija.Elsinen@joensuu.fi  
Web: <http://www.joensuu.fi/kielikeskus/kielikeskupaivat/le.htm>

26-28 May 2005: 4th AICLU Conference, 'Sperimentazione, ricerca e didattica nei Centri Linguistici universitari italiani', Centro Linguistico di Ateneo Federico II, Naples, Italy.  
E-mail: centrolinguistico.ateneo@unina.it Web: <http://www.centrolinguistico.unina.it>

30 May 2005: CASALC Seminar, 'Item Development for University Entrance Tests', University of Defence, Brno, Czech Republic. E-mail: maria.sikolova@unob.cz

2-4 June 2005: APPLIUT Conference, 'Mémoire et mémorisation dans l'apprentissage des langues', University of Sud-Toulon Var à La Garde, France. Web: <http://iut.univ-tln.fr/apliut/index.htm>

\* 24 June 2005: CercleS ELP Translation Workshop, University of Padua, Italy.  
E-mail: carol.taylor@unipd.it OR ctaylor@units.it

4-8 July 2005: RANACLES Multimedia Seminar, 'Séminaire d'échange de compétences multimédia', Grenoble, France. E-mail: Josiane.Hay@ujf-grenoble.fr

5-10 August 2005: IALLT & LET Conference, 'FLEAT 5 (Foreign Language Education and Technology) - Uniting the World', Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA.  
Web: <http://ce.byu.edu/cw/fleat5/>

24-27 August 2005: EUROCALL 2005, 'Fostering Autonomy', Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. Web: <http://www.eurocall-languages.org.pl>

\* 31 August - 1 September 2005: CercleS Seminar, 'CEF (Common European Framework) in European Universities', University of Helsinki, Finland. E-mail: Eija.Adjers@helsinki.fi  
Web: [www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005](http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005)

1-3 September 2005: Bi- and Multilingual Universities Conference, 'Challenges and Future Prospects', University of Helsinki, Finland.  
Web: [www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005](http://www.helsinki.fi/palmenia/congress/bilingual2005)

22-23 September 2005: Lingua Summit 2005, 'Innovative Trends in Language Teaching in Multilingual Environment', Alexander Dubcek University of Trencin, Slovakia.  
E-mail: nekorancova@tuni.sk Web: <http://www.tuni.sk>

29 September - 1 October 2005: 9th AICLU Seminar, 'Presenza e impatto del Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue sul sistema formativo universitario italiano', CLAM (Centro Linguistico di Ateneo Università di Messina), University of Messina, Italy. E-mail: giovanni.bonanno@unime.it

28 October 2005: 6th UNICert®-Fortbildungsworkshop 2005, Kufstein, Austria.  
E-mail: verena.hotter@fh-kufstein.ac.at

10-12 November 2005: AKS-Workshop for Leiterinnen und Leiter von Sprachenzentren, Aachen, Germany. E-mail: hoffmann@as.rwth-aachen.de

24-26 November 2005: RANACLES National Conference, University of Caen, France.  
E-mail: denis.guezais@labo-langues.unicaen.fr

8-10 February 2006: 'Multilingualism & Applied Comparative Linguistics' Conference, Free University of Brussels, Belgium. Web: [www.macl.be](http://www.macl.be) ■

\* For more information on CercleS ELP Translation Workshop, 24 June 2005, and CercleS CEF Seminar, 31 August - 1 September, see page 19.