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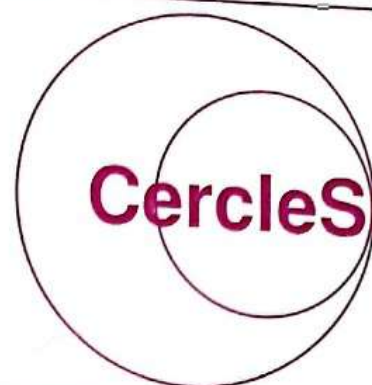
Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues de l'Enseignement Supérieur
European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education
Europäische Konföderation der Hochschulsprachenzentren

CercleS

Contents

Publication Details

Message from the Editors

Nicole Chenik, Mary Ruane & David Bickerton

The 6th CercleS European conference held in Antwerp in September 2000 saw the election of a new Executive Committee to run the Confederation for a two-year term. It is conscious of the great debt it owes to its predecessors and its first duty is to thank them for the many achievements over the past few years. Its role is to ensure continuity of the work so far accomplished, especially as regards the *Bulletin*, and members will find in this issue tangible results from the initiatives announced in Professor David Bickerton's last editorial: a contribution from Finland to the 'Going for Gold!' series of articles; the setting up of the new Czech and Slovak association, CASALC; and a new association in the making in Spain, with its first conference held in late January 2001 and a provisional management committee established. Promising contacts are also being made with colleagues in Finland and Hungary.

Most importantly, the General Meeting in Antwerp approved two initiatives that will have significant implications for language centre staff and students in the years ahead. These are the development of a CercleS version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the establishment of a CercleS Certification Scheme for university students.

The possibility of a CercleS role in both the ELP and the certification projects has been under active consideration since the Bergamo conference in 1998. The decisions taken at Antwerp were therefore the culmination of a great deal of planning, discussion and reflection. Now that the membership has fully committed its support to the new schemes, attention has shifted to the operational implications involved. In the first instance, appropriate models have to be developed and approved. Once the models have been agreed, it will be necessary to examine how disseminating, publicising and administering the schemes will be organised. To manage these projects and to ensure that momentum is maintained, two working groups have been established. The ELP working group will be chaired by former CercleS President Professor David Little and the Certification Scheme will be overseen by CercleS Treasurer, Professor Bernd Voss. David Little's contribution is published in this issue and Bernd Voss' report will appear in the next one. A version of the CercleS Portfolio for the university sector, developed in collaboration with the ELC, will be submitted to CercleS and the ELC for approval by the end of May.

The announcement of these initiatives came at the end of a very successful biennial CercleS conference. The backdrop for the conference was the historic, colourful and cosmopolitan city of Antwerp, and the hospitable hosts were the members of NUT, the Federation of University Language Centres in the Netherlands and Flanders. The theme of the conference was "Quality Issues for European Language Centres", and it attracted a large number of speakers across eight thematic groups. Assuring quality in a range of language teaching areas will clearly be a major focus in the years ahead.

New initiatives are underway and one of them involves setting up focus groups with a view to meeting the specific needs expressed by members at the General Meeting. Full details will be published in *Bulletin* 14 and the contact people are: Tony Stenton for ▶

VISIT THE CERCLES WEBSITE AT HTTP://WWW.CERCLES.ORG

Word from the President

Maurizio Gotti

My first words as new President of CercleS are words of thanks to my predecessor, David Little, for his invaluable contribution towards the enlargement of the Confederation and the strengthening of its international role. During his two terms of presidency, CercleS saw a huge growth both in size and in quality: several new full and associate members joined the Confederation, making it more representative of the work carried out by the academic and technical staff of university Language Centres situated all over the Continent. It is also thanks to David Little that the outstanding status of CercleS has now been fully recognised both by other associations and leading European organisations.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the other members of the previous Executive and Co-ordinating Committees, and in particular to David Bickerton for the excellence with which he carried out his role as General Secretary of CercleS in the past two terms, for giving greater strength and efficiency to the organisational structure and endowing the Confederation with a major website. He also made a considerable contribution towards improving the quality of CercleS services by redesigning the bulletin, increasing its size and broadening its scope. The international profile of CercleS was further enhanced by the high quality of the two volumes edited by David Little and David Bickerton (together with the local organisers) containing the proceedings of the CercleS conferences held at Dresden and Bergamo.

CercleS is now a strong and dynamic Confederation and plays a crucial role as one of the major European organisations representing over 250 university Language Centres and departments in 22 European countries. It offers many well-established initiatives, such as an excellent twice-yearly bulletin and high-quality biennial conferences. It also has an extensive network intended to function as an international communication channel, thus favouring the exchange of information and experiences among the Confederation members and the setting up of joint projects.

In taking up my new role as President of CercleS, I consider it my prime duty to guarantee continuity to the excellent work carried out so far by my predecessors, not only by consolidating existing ventures, but also by favouring the new initiatives outlined during the General Meeting at our conference in Antwerp.

These initiatives include setting up associations in other European countries, helping recent associations to grow and consolidate, as well as providing the longer-established associations belonging to our Confederation with further services and opportunities for co-ordination. I am convinced that only by stressing and facilitating co-operation between the various full members and associate members of CercleS shall we be able to better the quality of the services offered by our university language centres and improve our research programs in foreign language learning, thus strengthening our role both at a national and international level.

It is in view of these objectives that I have accepted the encouragement of colleagues and friends to take up this task. I am well aware that alone I can achieve very little, but have great confidence in the help, advice and co-operation of the other members of the new Executive and Co-ordinating Committees – whose enthusiasm and great personal qualities I have already had a chance to appreciate – and, on a larger scale, the support of all the members of CercleS. ∎

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Message from the Editors (cont. from p. 1)

New Technologies; Thomas Vogel for Structures and Organisations; Anne Gallagher for Minority Languages; and Sandra Kremer for Commercial Activities.

The co-editors wish to sincerely thank David Bickerton for his advice, for passing on to them his invaluable expertise and for his help. Members are invited to submit articles, language centre profiles, news from associations and reports on activities, books and software reviews for publication in the *Bulletin*. Contributions and reports on special activities for the European Year of Languages will be most welcome. All contributions should be sent to the Cercles Secretariat and Nicole Chenik.

We are pleased to announce that the next conference will be hosted by RANACLES and will be held in France, at Université Paris IX-Dauphine, in September 2002. An Organisation Committee (Alain Cazade, Nicole Chenik, Ray Satchell and Mary Ruane) has been established and suggestions from members are invited as regards the theme of the conference and the workshops. These should be sent to Nicole Chenik, and more detailed information will be available in the next *Bulletin* and on the CercleS web site (http://www.cercles.org).

While it has had many achievements to date, CercleS has still a substantial agenda of projects and plans to implement in support of its members. The implementation of the ELP and Accreditation projects are but two of the many tasks facing the newly elected CercleS Executive as it takes over its mandate.

Résumé

Le nouveau comité exécutif de CercleS, élu en Septembre 2000 à Anvers, lors de la conférence de CercleS, rendit hommage au comité exécutif sortant pour ses accomplissements. Le comité souligna son désir de continuer les efforts dans les différents domaines. Deux nouvelles initiatives furent annoncées lors de cette conférence organisée par NUT : le développement d'une version CercleS du portfolio et un programme de certification pour les étudiants. Merci d'envoyer vos suggestions / contributions pour les *Bulletins* et la conférence de CercleS (qui aura lieu à Paris en 2002) au secrétariat ou à Nicole Chenik.

Zusammenfassung

Das im September 2000 in Antwerpen neu gewählte CercleS Exekutiv Kommitee lobte die Leistungen und Erfolge des aus dem Amt scheidenden Kommitees, und hofft auf weitere gute Ergebnisse in verschiedensten Bereichen für die Zukunft. Auf der von NUT organisierten CercleS-Konferenz in Antwerpen wurden zwei wichtige neue Initiativen vorgestellt. Dies wäre zu einem die Entwicklung des Europäischen Sprachenportfolios von CercleS und zum anderen das Zertifikatssystem für Universitätsstudenten. Beiträge und Ideen für weitere Themen im CercleS-*Bulletin* und für die nächste CercleS Konferenz können ans Sekretariat oder an Nicole Chenik gesendet werden. ∎

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Towards a version of the European Language Portfolio for CercleS members

David Little
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Zusammenfassung

Seine verschiedenen Merkmale und Funktionen machen das Europäische Sprachenportfolio zu einem hochwertigen Instrument für die Förderung und das Unterrichten von Fremdsprachen an Hochschulen. Nach einer umfangreichen Pilotphase in verschiedenen Mitgliedstaaten und NGOs (regierungsunabhängige Organisationen) werden 2001 eine Reihe von Versionen von einem Kommittee des Europarats akkreditiert. CercleS arbeitet zusammen mit dem European Language Council an einer gemeinsamen Version, die voraussichtlich Ende 2001 zur Verfügung gestellt wird.

Résumé

En raison de la diversité de ses caractéristiques et de ses fonctions, le portfolio européen des langues (PEL) se révèle être un instrument particulièrement puissant pour la promotion et l'enseignement des langues étrangères dans l'enseignement supérieur. Plusieurs versions furent largement expérimentées dans divers pays membres, parfois sous la tutelle d'ONG. Après cette phase d'expérimentation, le Comité de Validation du Conseil de l'Europe accréditera certaines versions du PEL en 2001. CercleS accepta de travailler conjointement avec le Conseil Européen des Langues (CEL) sur une version commune du PEL. On espère que cette version de CercleS et du CEL sera disponible fin 2001.

What is the European Language Portfolio?

The concept of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) was developed by the Council of Europe's modern languages project, Language Learning for European Citizenship (1989–96). The ELP has three components:

- a language passport, which summarises the owner's linguistic identity by briefly recording foreign languages learnt, formal language qualifications achieved, significant experiences of foreign language use, and the owner's assessment of his/her current proficiency in the foreign languages he/she knows;
- a language biography, which is used to set language learning targets, review progress, and record specially important language learning and intercultural experiences;
- a dossier, which contains a selection of work that in the owner's judgement best represents his/her foreign language abilities.

What are the ELP's functions?

The ELP has two functions. First, it supplements the certificates and diplomas that are awarded on the basis of formal examinations by presenting additional information about the owner's language learning experience and concrete evidence of his/her foreign language achievements. This reporting function reflects the Council of Europe's long-standing concern to facilitate individual mobility and promote linguistic diversity. Secondly, the ELP has a pedagogical function: it is designed to encourage reflective learning and to help learners overcome the barriers they often encounter between formal and experiential learning. In this function the ELP reflects the Council of Europe's long-standing interest in the promotion of learner autonomy and lifelong learning. (The ELP's pedagogical function is explored in Little and Perclová, to appear.)

The ELP's reporting and pedagogical functions come together in the ongoing process of self-assessment that is central to the language passport and the language biography. Self-assessment in the ELP is based on the scales and levels elaborated in the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference, a revised edition of which will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2001. These scales and levels were arrived at on the basis of empirical research funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (see North 2000, Schneider and North 2000).

The relevance of the ELP to the university sector

In principle, the ELP should be attractive to the university sector for two reasons. First, it offers added value to all university-level language learners, whether language specialists or students for whom learning a foreign language is a subsidiary interest. Secondly, because it uses internationally recognised proficiency scales, it provides an obvious focus for the development of international standards in the assessment of foreign language proficiency at university level (CercleS is currently seeking to launch a project in this area).

Piloting the ELP (1998–2000)

The concept of the ELP was presented at the conference which brought the Language Learning for European Citizenship project to a close (see Council of Europe 1997). The Council of Europe invited member states to explore the feasibility of the ELP by designing and implementing versions of it in various language learning domains. Pilot projects were conducted in fifteen member states at different educational levels and also under the aegis of three INGOs – CercleS, the European Language Council, and EAQUALS (the European Association for Quality Language Services).

The Centre for Language and Communication Studies contributed to the piloting process in two ways. First, we devised a version of the ELP for use with adult language learners and implemented it with (i) university students learning French or German as a minor or extracurricular option and (ii) adult refugees learning English at the interface with vocational training and employment. This project counted as the Irish contribution to the network of international pilot projects; it was the only one to include immigrants learning the language of their host community. Secondly, we made our ELP freely available as a Word file, downloadable from our web site. It was taken on in this form by colleagues at the University of Calabria, who adapted it to take account of local needs. Their project counted as the CercleS contribution to the piloting process.

The European Language Council's pilot project, co-ordinated by Brigitte Forster Vosicki (University of Lausanne), involved universities in several countries. It used the version of the ELP devised for use with secondary school learners in Switzerland, which was by far the most elaborate of the pilot versions and was strongly influenced by the Swiss research project mentioned above.

The outcomes of the various pilot projects – several very large, but most of them relatively small – are recorded in Schärer (to appear). One frequent finding was that learners came to value the ELP to the extent that it played a central role in their learning process; in other words, the ELP's reporting function was validated by its pedagogical function. In this regard it is worth noting that several pilot projects used the ELP as a focus for curriculum renewal of one kind or another.

Formalising the ELP

In September 2000 the Education Committee of the Council of Europe approved a set of rules governing the accreditation of ELP models and established a Validation Committee. Now that the piloting process is at an end, only versions of the ELP accredited by the Validation Committee will be allowed to carry the Council of Europe's ELP logo. In October 2000 the Standing Conference of the Ministers ▶

of Education of the Council of Europe adopted a series of resolutions commending the ELP to the governments of member states. In 2001, which has been designated the European Year of Languages by the European Union and the Council of Europe, the European Language Portfolio and the Common European Framework of Reference will be widely presented and promoted.

Developing a version of the ELP for CERCLES members

At the Sixth CercleS International Conference held in Antwerp in September 2000 the General Meeting approved the recommendation of the outgoing Co-ordinating Committee that CercleS should develop its own version of the ELP. I agreed to co-ordinate the development. Since then the European Language Council has proposed, and CercleS has agreed, that the two organisations should collaborate in the development of an ELP for use in the university sector. The idea is that the same version will be issued by CercleS and the ELP, though ELPs issued by CercleS will bear the CercleS logo, while those issued by the ELC will bear the ELC logo.

Towards the end of the pilot phase the Council of Europe developed a standard language passport for adults with a view to helping the ELP to gain international recognition. There is no good reason why CercleS and the ELC should not use this version of the passport, though we may wish to add some 'soft pages' that take account of language learning experiences and achievements that are specially characteristic of the university sector. The dossier is intended to be maximally flexible, so that we need to design little more than a contents page. This means that our chief task will be to design a biography section that meets the Validation Committee's criteria yet can accommodate the wide range of proficiency levels and learning goals to be found in the university sector across Europe.

In February 2001 Brigitte Forster Vosicki, Barbara Lazenby Simpson (Centre for Language and Communication Studies) and I will meet to work on a first draft, which we hope subsequently to discuss with colleagues in the university sector who have already worked with one or another version of the ELP. After whatever revision is necessary, this ELP will be submitted to the executive committees of CercleS and the ELC, and it will be up to them (separately or jointly) to submit it to the Validation Committee in Strasbourg. I hope this will happen in the autumn of 2001.

It will be for CercleS to decide how to make its ELP available to members. It could use it to generate income – this would be a matter of printing a stock of ELPs and selling them through the secretariat. Alternatively, it could decide to make its ELP available to members as a service – this would involve distributing the ELP, perhaps as a PDF file, on CD-ROM or via the internet so that it could be printed locally. A third possibility would be to combine both approaches, for example by selling copies of the standard adult passport bearing the CercleS logo and supplying the remaining components in digital form for local printing. Any member of CercleS who has worked with the ELP and wishes to be involved in the development of this new version, should contact me by e-mail. ■

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T'Qila!

Some images from the CercleS conference in Antwerp

Pictured left to right: Thomas Vogel (AKS), Mrs Voss, David Little (AULC) & Bernd Voss (AKS)

Right: David Little, who addressed the CercleS membership at the farewell dinner

(see p. 3 for his article on the European Language Portfolio)

Pictured left to right: Sven van Elst, Guust Meijers & Valère Meus (NUT)

Meet the Administrator!

Sandrine Pac B.A. Hons Mod, H.Dip in Ed. has been working as CercleS Administrator since her appointment in August 2000. She is a teacher of French and Spanish at second and third levels.

You can contact Sandrine by e-mail at cercles@alc.ucd.ie or by telephone at ++353-1-716 7921.

T'Qila: A view to a thrill

John H.A.L. de Jong
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Though I have known and come to respect quite a number of the members of CercleS and NUT for a long time as individual scholars, this was my first acquaintance with both these organisations. I was impressed by the level of expertise of the participants of the sixth CercleS Conference last year in Antwerp, and maybe even more by their commitment to raising the quality of language teaching. NUT, the local organiser of the conference set an example of conference organisation. The programme was varied, contained significant highlights, provided ample opportunity for the most important informal contacts, and was strictly conducted following a well-designed structure that, however, never seemed oppressive. Such an organisation leads almost automatically to the happy combination of fertile discussions and an enjoyable atmosphere. It makes people understand why they like their work and why they enjoy spending their free weekend discussing work with colleagues.

For the meeting's opening lecture, I was invited specifically to be provocative. I therefore offered the contention that education is a wasteful activity and that within education language teaching is exemplary of such waste, mainly because of deficient attention to planning and structure. I suggested that the adoption of European standards, derived from the Common European Framework for language learning, teaching and assessment might help to alter this situation and argued that quality comes with control. Defining explicit standards and setting verifiable goals would, in my opinion, serve to raise the effectiveness of language teaching. Assigning ten per cent of language teaching budgets to assessment would constitute a first condition. Joining efforts among language educators to design a coherent system of assessment and implement it across all language teaching would constitute the necessary further steps. Then we may conceive language teaching as an art, but based on science and yielding verifiable results.

Divided over eight substreams, contributors offered a range of ideas, new developments, hopes and perspectives:

1) With the growing awareness of the communicative function of language it has become clear that the intercultural context is an essential element in the acquisition of a new language. This awareness however has not yet led to a clear definition either of the domain to be covered, or of the selective principles to be observed. In the years to come, we hope to see progress in this area.

2) Though clearly language learners must be well aware of their own purpose for learning a language, and teachers must respond to the range of goals learners bring to language classes, the design of LSP teaching and testing has until now not been shown to produce any measurable effect. One might argue that priorities would better be set in other areas.

3) The teachers of the less widely taught languages particularly feel the need for more co-operation, especially in defining quality and standards.

4) Autonomous and life-long learning have introduced new requirements to teachers. Technical means may help teachers to meet these requirements, provided they are willing to acquaint themselves with these means as also to engage into interaction with the learners.

5) The Council of Europe Framework indeed is starting to have an impact on the teaching of languages. It would seem that training teachers in using the Framework and in familiarising themselves with the parameters of the descriptive system is called for. Language educators recognise the value of the Framework but would welcome more support in implementing it.

6) Language centre management is confronted with the need to operate cost-effectively. Money is the motor. Managers of language centres are juggling to balance, organisational requirements, and staff potential, quality of service and economic principles.

7) Testing, evaluating and accrediting can have negative effects if felt as an obligation from outside. On the other hand quality control is essential, and stimulates development. Furthermore, effective quality control is essential in order to be accountable towards the stakeholders both within and outside the language centres. The design and implementation of quality control should therefore come forth from inside the institutions, but must sufficiently robust to hold up against outside requirements.

8) Multimedia authoring, though at times attractive and impressive in appearance, has not yet brought about the so badly needed radical change in language education. Instead of fostering true interactional language use, many programmes force learners to step back into a decompositional approach to language learning, offering solutions and training at the level of the elements of language rather than at the level of integration in communication.

Issues of quality then clearly formed the thread across the eight substreams. Indeed, this was the theme that the organisers of the conference had chosen, but many conferences set a theme as a pure formality. Not so for CercleS 2000. The general picture that can be seen across the substreams is that language educators will have to compete for quality to maintain the position of their institutions. Assuring quality, however, is possible only by agreeing among institutions on the design and implementation of quality control, and therefore will require collaboration. By recognising this paradoxical situation, language education shows it has become mature. Competition and collaboration together are the forces that drive business outside, in the 'real' world. CercleS 2000 put these forces to work inside education. ■

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T'Qila: Today's Quality Issues for European Language Centres

Tony Stenton
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A breeze of healthy scepticism blew in from the North Sea as the CercleS Conference got under way in Antwerp hosted by the Dutch Speaking University Language Centres in Holland and Flanders (NUT). If the introduction of quality assurance in language centres doesn't mean exchanging tried and trusted educational norms for those of the dynamic, modern but profit-oriented market place just what does it mean? Braving the great diversity of national contexts, eight thematic workshops set out to explore the issues.

Substream 1 discussed the difficulties of acquiring intercultural communicative competence and, within this field where reliable research is often lacking, cast doubt on the adequacy of goal definitions and foreign language textbooks.

The LSP workshop tackled the problem of targeting varying audiences and the limits to trainer adaptability. A prospective three-year University of Maastricht study of psychology and international business students should further the debate on the value of specific language training for writing in English.

Substream 3 dealt with empowering less widely taught languages. It was argued that improved certification, an increased use of new technologies and greater cooperation could contribute to preserving the values of multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism.

A workshop on the changing role of language teachers underlined important psychological aspects. Teacher development should be in-situ and non-threatening. Similarly, tact and diplomacy are required by Language Advisers who could usefully employ, for example, indirect 'echoing and mirroring' techniques when dealing with learners.

The European Framework and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) continues to play an important in language planning. Piloting projects of the ELP have taken place in 14 countries with 30,000 learners at all educational levels from 1998-2000. Experience in CLCS, Trinity College Dublin suggests that the effective use of the ELP as a pedagogical tool is dependent on the implementation of regular processes of self-assessment.
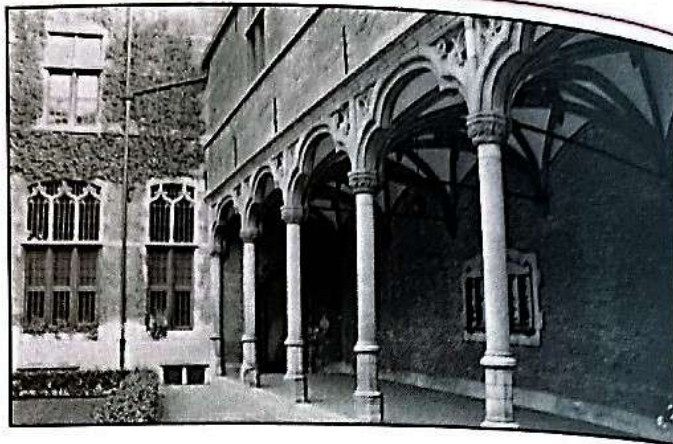
Workshop 6 discussed new challenges for language centre management. The question of the type and appropriateness of the organisational structure of language centres has become a critical issue. Centres must learn to juggle with institutional requirements on the one hand and continuous innovation and change on the other. By pursuing a path of learning and self-development for all its members, a language centre creates optimal conditions for the pursuit and achievement of quality.

Transparency is a fundamental component of testing, evaluating and accrediting. Justice must be done and it must be seen to be done. Important papers in this workshop revealed considerable progress. The BALEAP accreditation scheme in Britain and the UNIcert accreditation system in Germany have both attracted a fairly wide following. An evaluation of a computer-based English language placement system (StartUP) was presented while the question of computer-based testing in general deserved a more detailed discussion.

The workshop on multimedia authoring systems produced fascinating demonstrations (Help Yourself, Lavac, Sygmax) and an interesting discussion on the necessary trade-off between ease of use and functional richness in out programming tools. Can an authoring system combine power and simplicity or are we eternally condemned to steep learning curves and mind-boggling codes? Should Web-based solutions be allowed to sweep away all competition because their software platforms are universal or should universities stand their ground, resist the steamroller and insist on preserving quality? And indeed how is in-house software quality defined? Do language centres carry out software audits and respect the principles of independent validation, early validation, maintainability, traceability, incrementalism or other international standards such as ISO 9001? As the move towards distance learning gathers momentum it is time for CercleS to provide software quality assurance guidelines.

David Bickerton has argued that as the largest organisation representing university Language Teaching in Europe, CercleS is in a position to make things change. The wide-ranging professionalism and quality of T'Qila papers was a timely and convincing demonstration that some of these changes are already taking place. ■

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CercleS-ing the Internet

Yvonne Woods, University College Dublin

The CercleS website (www.cercles.org) recently emigrated to Dublin from Plymouth, which had been home to the General Secretariat previously. The website has served as a repository of contact information for CercleS members as well as important documents and details of how to join CercleS or obtain past publications.

However, plans are afoot to add new strings to the CercleS bow, offering more services to member institutions and providing specialised information on CercleS and its activities for interested parties. We would like to set up discussion or focus groups, mailing lists and other forums for information exchange on the web which would be open to CercleS national associations and their members.

CercleS is now being hosted by Anu, an Internet Services Provider based in Westport, on the far western coast of Ireland, proving that the remotest outpost can serve as a hub for international information exchange (check their site at www.anu.ie). As always, input from our members is more than welcome. You can reach the Secretariat by e-mail to cercles@alc.ucd.ie or by post to the Dublin address. The next issue of the *Bulletin* will provide a 'sneak preview' of what's on offer in the new site, so stay tuned! ■

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Going for Gold!
The University of Helsinki Language Centre & the commercial challenge

Pirkko Forsman Svensson

University of Helsinki Language Centre

Zusammenfassung

Die Language Services-Abteilung am Helsinki University Language Centre (HULC) wurde 1991 auf die Nachfrage für Kurse in Finnisch als Fremdsprache hin eingerichtet. Durch die Rezession der finnischen Wirtschaft Mitte der 90er Jahre war die Abteilung gezwingen, Ihr Angebot auszuweiten, um profitabel zu arbeiten. Sie finanziert sich heute selbst und erwirtschaftet durch eine breite Palette von Angeboten einen schenswerten Überschuss, der dem HULC zugute kommt. Der Erfolg der Language Services-Abteilung in einem wettbewerbsintensiven Fremdsprachenmarkt basiert auf der Verpflichtung zur Erhaltung und Ausweitung der Qualität der Leistungen.

Résumé

En 1991, le centre de langues de l'université de Helsinki décida de créer une unité de services linguistiques afin de répondre à une demande de cours de finlandais langue étrangère. Le déclin économique finlandais du milieu des années 90 obligea l'unité de services linguistiques à chercher de nouvelles sources de revenu. De nos jours, le centre de langue offre de nombreux services. L'unité s'autofinance et dégage un excédent conséquent pour HULC. L'unité a permis de financer l'installation des équipements multimédia ainsi que les laboratoires de langues, la formation du personnel et d'autres initiatives. Au sein d'un environnement linguistique concurrentiel, le centre de langues de HULC base son succès sur son engagement à développer et maintenir un service de qualité.

The University of Helsinki Language Centre (HULC) was founded in 1977 and its paid services unit, Language Services, came into being some ten years later (see CercleS *Bulletin* 8, 1998). At the time when language centres were founded at Finnish universities, in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, there was no thought of financial gain on the part of universities through LC activities. The centres were created in order to tend to the satisfaction of university students' language requirements – free of charge. Today, some twenty years later, money making activities, albeit of a modest nature, are a current feature of most of Finland's fifteen university LCs. This state of affairs has, however, attained a degree of a financial significance at only very few universities, for instance those of Helsinki and Tampere. The University of Tampere LC is less than half of HULC in size and the annual turnover for the paid services thereafter. Today university administration in Finland seems to be keen on having paid services at their LCs, obviously thinking that the profit gained might be a remedy for the universities' budget cuts. (See articles on the 'Going for Gold' theme in the CercleS *Bulletin*, 11 and 12.)

Reading through the two recent articles on language centres 'Going for Gold' (published in 1999 and 2000) made me aware of the different reasons for creating paid language services within university LCs. The impression I got was that either the whole LC functioned as a paid services unit (University of Maastricht), or that the profit from these services constituted an essential part of the LC budget (University of Surrey). Not so at HULC, where the paid services unit, under the auspices of the LC, as it were, is more or less operationally independent. There are even other differences between the paid services system of HULC and other European universities, which will be discussed in this paper. The story goes as follows.

The appearance of Language Services at HULC

Finnish has been taught to foreigners at the Department of Finnish, University of Helsinki, since 1952. Traditionally the courses were open-enrolment programmes and free of charge, which was no problem as long as the number of foreigners staying in Finland remained relatively small. The 1980s saw a huge increase in student numbers and, from 1986 onwards, the University refused to offer instruction in Finnish to those outside the University. In the late 1980s, the Summer University of Helsinki (an independent unit that cooperates both with the University of Helsinki and other institutions of higher education) took over the instruction of Finnish to non-university students, at the same time employing the teachers who had been in charge of this instruction at the University. Despite its name, the Summer University ran throughout the year and, contrary to normal practice at the University in those days, it charged fees for tuition provided.

In the late 1980s the number of foreigners in Helsinki not connected with the University multiplied, and the teachers of Finnish for foreigners, all of them employed as part-time teachers – on an hourly basis – found themselves doing the same job, i.e. having the same annual workload counted in hours as full-time teachers at the departments, but at a lower rate of pay. This problem remained unsolved because the Summer University was not in a position to tackle it. What happened was that the head teacher of the Finnish instructors, the present Head of the HULC Language Services, contacted the Language Centre and suggested that the Centre take over the open-enrolment courses of Finnish for foreigners. Thus, in 1991, the HULC Language Services unit was created, mainly because there was an urgent need to guarantee a higher degree of job security in the form of full-time positions for the free-lance teachers of Finnish. Consequently, the original objective was not to improve the Centre's economy by 'going for gold'. The Language Services section was actually initiated in order to carry out teaching tasks for which no state resources had been allotted.

Since 1991, Finnish for foreigners courses have been taught at the University of Helsinki by way of two channels: staff and students of the University are offered instruction free of charge by the Department of Finnish, whereas students outside the University (e.g., those working in companies and their family members) may attend courses arranged by the HULC Language Services unit. This state of affairs at the HULC ▶

Self-Access at HULC, University of Helsinki

University of Helsinki, Finland

differs from the policy of other Finnish universities, in which either all courses of Finnish for foreigners or part of them are offered by the LCs. The academic year of 1991-2 saw the first Finnish for foreigners programmes at the HULC, and ever since this activity has been running uninterruptedly.

Unfortunately (or rather, fortunately for the HULC, as it has turned out), the economic depression in Finland deepened after the establishment of the HULC Language Services. This also happened elsewhere in Europe as outlined in the description of the University of Surrey LC (see *Bulletin* 11). Immigrants who arrived in Helsinki could no longer afford to pay for the Finnish courses that the Language Services was offering. In order to save the section and its existing palette of Finnish courses for foreigners, its programme had to be expanded. This was in the mid-1990s. Accordingly, courses in several foreign languages were developed and offered to both the private and the public sector.

Language Services today

In 2000, HULC Language Services offered instruction and interpretation in more than twenty languages: Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Vietnamese. Important customers, in addition to companies and private persons, are the University of Helsinki, several Finnish polytechnics and other institutions of further education, as well as some research institutes and authorities. The University of Helsinki contracts for tailored courses for its personnel, and other institutions purchase courses for their own students or their staff. Offerings include open-enrolment courses and language training tailored to meet the clients' specific needs.

Examples of courses offered:
- Effective cross-cultural communication
- Effective face-to-face communication
- Effective communication in writing
- Language of meetings and negotiations
- Language of presentations
- Business language
- Legal language
- Customer service
- Scientific language skills
- Classroom writing and lesson presentation

Besides offering language courses, the service unit provides translations of certificates, abstracts, theses, articles, etc., into foreign languages or, when necessary, corrects language usage in such documents.

From modest beginnings in the early 1990s, when one person held the function of secretary and planning officer while at the same time teaching courses and heading up a team of part-time teachers of Finnish, Language Services has grown into a unit in its own right. In 1999, the paid unit employed four full-time administrative staff (Head of Languages Services, Planning Officer and two secretaries), five full-time teachers (of Finnish and English) and nearly 80 part-time teachers, translators, language editors and interpreters. Language Services has a budget of its own, totally separate from that of the LC. While the Language Centre, like the nine faculties of the University of Helsinki, depends on the University for its resources, the paid services unit depends on the income earned through business transactions only. The turnover for 1999 was some 5 million FIM (around Euro 840,940.00), which can be compared to the LC's annual budget of some 20 million. More than one fifth of the Language Services turnover for 1999, i.e. well over one million FIM, was profit, and the outcome was about the same even in 1998.

Language Services today has an essential role within the HULC inasmuch as it contributes significantly to the Centre's 'extra' financial well-being. Last year (1999), for example, Language Services financed the acquisition of a new multimedia classroom that the LC could not otherwise have afforded. The new equipment replaced the old computer laboratory (which itself had been financed by Language Services five years previously). Apart from new technology, Language Services contributes to the LC's resources by occasionally sponsoring parallel courses for university students (i.e., an overcrowded language course is split into two, and the extra teacher is paid by Language Services), as well as workshops and other educational events for the LC staff, and by financing a number of unplanned expenses such as brochures, small publications, office equipment, etc.

In principle, Language Services have their own staff. Many HULC teachers, however, teach a few Language Services courses as part of their total teaching load. In such cases, Language Services repay the LC for the loss of teaching hours by financing another course or teacher. Working outside the university in a different environment gives the teachers a chance to renew or even increase their skills and to concentrate on their specific fields of interest. In addition to holding degrees in linguistics, quite a few staff members hold academic credentials in a second field (chemistry, biology, economy, etc.), which enables them to offer instruction and language revision to a variety of companies and research institutions.

In order to ensure security for the Languages Services unit's employees, clients are expected to sign a contract thereby guaranteeing to pay in case participation is cancelled very close to the starting date of the course. Private persons pay the course fee in advance, and will be refunded if the course for some reason does not take place. Naturally, cancellations from companies sometimes occur at an inopportune time. University teachers are in fact paid well for taking on the demanding extramural courses, which means that the course fees for participants will in most cases be higher than those of competing language schools. But in Helsinki, with its strong profile as the country's best and largest university town, quality will be associated with the University, and of course with the University Language Centre. The established position of Language Services is based on its profile as an institution of quality. Offering quality is the only way to compete in a city like Helsinki, with dozens of language schools with varying prices and varying quality. It is up to the HULC Language Services to live up to its image, i.e. to maintain high standards. ■

News from the national associations

AICLU

3rd AICLU Seminar

On 7 & 8 April 2000, the 3rd AICLU Seminar took place at the Interfaculty Centre for Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (CILTA) at the University of Bologna. The theme was Linguistics and Computer Science: Multimedia, Corpora and Learning Processes. The Bologna Workshop provided the participants with the opportunity of evaluating state-of-the-art computer applications for research in linguistics.

The welcoming ceremony was performed by Fabio Roversi Monaco, Bologna University Rector, Maurizio Gotti, AICLU President and Rema Rossini Favretti, the workshop convenor. Gagliardi (Verona) discussed the relationship between multimedia technology and language teaching as a peripheral discipline with a variable epistemological structure . Bromwich (Bologna) spoke about two CILTA projects, the CD-ROM *Diapason for Science*, and MISSILE (Military Service Special Initiative in Language Education). Mansfield (Parma) focussed on aspects of CALL, while Capra (Vercelli) examined the need for new technologies adapted to the complexity of the learning process. The use of the internet for teaching purposes was the subject of Guidorzi's presentation. Poppi, Greenwood and Bonvino discussed the problem of language advising in a self-access context, and Crowle, Conrad and Gauthier made a presentation on evaluation. Carraro (Padua) spoke about a new kind of language professional with competence in both computer science and applied linguistics. Zanfei discussed the use of artificial intelligence in evaluating and monitoring the learning process.

Several papers considered the application of web facilities to language learning/teaching, text composition (Dalziel & Helm/Padua, and Brute/Pisa), and self-learning (Calabrese & Foragani/Parma). Maxwell (Lancaster) dealt with the subject of computer-mediated communication and Sours reviewed the issue of intercultural exchanges. There was lively interest in the presentation of Accietto, Des Jardins and Gasser who spoke about the SPRINT project for the creation of e-books at CILTA, and in the VESPE virtual class project. Lincoln presented the content of a CD-ROM entitled *Diapason for Humanities*, while Lister highlighted issues in the teaching of legal English. The corpora section included a talk by John Sinclair about current issues in corpus linguistics, and Ferrari's paper dealt with different levels of text analysis. Tognini Bonelli (Lecce) examined the pedagogic implications of the use of corpora, while Facchinetti (Verona) considered the complexity and heterogeneity of programs for textual analysis which can stimulate and accelerate learning. Coffey (no institution given) suggested some practical applications of corpora in the teaching of foreign languages, while Philip (Bologna) explained the use of bilingual concordances in the teaching of 'false friends'. Baldry (Pavia) concentrated on a contrastive analysis of scientific texts through the use of parallel corpora in English and Italian (ACADI project). Ambroso (Rome) outlined a proposal for using corpora for the creation of

testing items, while Puglielli (Rome) identified corpora as a means of extending vocabulary items in a dictionary of Somali language. Spanu (Pisa) explained the CITATAL project for the expression of the conditional mood in Italian, while Tamburini and DeSantis (Bologna) considered the implications of integrating an Italian written corpus (CoRIS/CoDIS project) into dictionary format. Rossini Favretti (Bologna) outlined the features of the CoRIS project which has a corpus of 80 million words and a dynamic monitoring corpus for the selection of textual varieties (CoDIS).

4th AICLU Seminar

The keynote address by Prof. David Little at the 4th AICLU Seminar held at the University of Calabria 29-30 September 2000, introduced participants to the numerous facets of learner autonomy. In outlining the relationship between learner autonomy and autonomous learning systems, Prof. Little stated that human cognition and learning entail processes that are both individual-cognitive and social-interactive. Human beings possess an innate drive to autonomy but traditional pedagogy has placed an artificial constraint on learners, thus inhibiting and prohibiting learner autonomy. The university language teaching/learning environment should urgently come to terms with the pursuit of the three basic principles that together enhance learner autonomy – learner empowerment, reflectivity and appropriate target language use,

The first session was chaired by Prof. Maurizio Gotti, Cercles President. It focused mainly on how the process of learner autonomy can be shaped and modified by different institutional contexts and pragmatic constraints. As shown by Ladomery (Roma III), the burden of coping with 3,000 students per year results in a set of internal/external conditions which in turn leads to a form of autonomous learning quite different to that found elsewhere. Despite an enormous number of everyday obstacles, Vincent (Napoli) strives to achieve quality in learning by incorporating ergonomic principles. Bilotto (Calabria) provided a broad historical perspective on autonomy, while new and effective models for autonomous learners/instructors were effectively investigated by Landolfi/Sanniti (Napoli). The social-interactive process of autonomous learning illustrated by Little in the opening session was further investigated in two contributions. Laugier (Calabria), reported on a pilot project for the use of European Language Portfolio as a tool in developing learner autonomy. Mansfield (Parma) proposed a number of possible distance learning links between the classroom/laboratory and the external world.

The first session was, therefore, a crucial lead-in to the two which followed. On the one hand, theoretical principles underlying learner counselling paved the way to presentations of research undertaken throughout Italy. On the other, an examination of the fundamental principles of FL learner autonomy was followed by demonstrations of virtual learning environments. During the second session, chaired by Prof. Carol Taylor Torsello, there was a detailed presentation by Gagliardi (Verona) of a statistically-based research

project on the use of self-access with self-assessment. The resulting insights provided a cohesive link to other practical demonstrations which took the form of case studies and data presentations. They also highlighted the contribution of research to this field. Taylor (Trieste) and Pennarola (Napoli), for instance, engaged learners in constructing and maintaining multiple scaffolding, respectively in speech (multi-modal self-access to dynamic texts) and writing (a self-access course in 'reflective' summarisation). Other papers focussed on the experience of tutorial situations (Lambert/Roma) and of the Tandem approach to FL learning (Anderson, Siena and Matteucci & Panichi/Pisa) where the individual-cognitive process (casual conversation, meta-communication in Tandem encounters) is interwoven with the social-interactive one (bilingual, bicultural encounters, European project mobility) to promote self-directed learning. The principle of learner empowerment, as underlined by Little, requires involving learners in "planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning". In this perspective, Argondizzo (Calabria) provided data analysis on the language of students' presentations. Also from Calabria, Ting offered analytical insights into learners' reflection on morphological issues.

The final session, chaired by Prof. Paola Evangelisti, showed how the application of theory and research can invigorate the process of materials production. Particular stress was laid on the creation of innovative technological materials which demonstrate how computer-mediated communication can 'operationalise' the theoretical tenets of learner autonomy. In particular, CLA experts Nalon & Marangon and Canapero (Padova), and Zanca (Siena) proposed using the web as an effective and efficient resource (in terms of time, space and costs) to facilitate the process of autonomy. At the IULM (Carbone, Milano), hypertext, virtual classrooms, and e-groups are used to create a virtual environment and to promote and consolidate digital know-how. In turn, this can trigger off the creation of web-academies. Particular attention was paid to 'less used languages' such as Swahili. Aiello (Napoli) showed that virtual learning reduces distances and allows access to databases and previously unimaginable resources. Lastly, the seminar touched on learner autonomy and ESP. The case of CLAs in self-access within Faculties of Political Science (Vigo, Catania & Donadio/Napoli) provided insights into investigating autonomy in terms of learners' special needs. Besides language and academic skills, learners ought to be encouraged to develop autonomy in terms of specific professional competencies. Practical examples of how this can be achieved were outlined by Martin & Pinna (Sassari) and Serrago (Calabria).

In general, the atmosphere that prevailed during the two-day meeting of Italian CLAs in Calabria was one of 'work in progress'. The combination of mature experience and youthful enthusiasm provided opportunities for everyone to share experiences and to clarify uncertainties. The expertise of academic professionals and the enthusiasm of young professionals harmoniously intermingled to share experiences and clarify ▶

News from national associations (cont.)

AICLU (cont)

doubts. The common objective for all was to seek out paths for autonomous learning.

2nd AICLU Conference
The 2nd AICLU Conference will be held from 31 May to 2 June 2001 at the CLA-University Language Centre of the University of Siena. The theme will be "2001: European year of languages: Proposals of the new Italian university". It will be divided into four sections: Pluri-lingualism and multi-culturalism; Languages in the new Italian university; Innovative experiences in language teaching; and Evaluation and certification of linguistic competence. Three plenary papers will be delivered by Michel Perrin (Bordeaux), Giovanni Bogliolo (Urbino) and Ray Satchell (Bristol). For further information you are welcome to visit the AICLU website at /www.univr.it/cla/.

Proceedings of the 1st AICLU Conference
The proceedings of the 1st AICLU Conference, held at the University of Udine in May 2000, have been published. Copies may now be obtained from anna.olivo@amm.uniud.it. ■

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RANACLES

VIIIe congrès de RANACLES – Nice 30/11 au 2/12/2000
La faculté des Lettres de Nice a accueilli le VIIIe congrès de RANACLES dont le thème s'intitulait "Evaluation et Evaluation de l'Evaluation". Ce thème était particulièrement pertinent dans la mesure où le CLES (Certificat de Compétence en Langues pour l'Enseignement Supérieur) a été créé par arrêté ministériel en date du 22 mai 2000 pour "attester la capacité des étudiants du secteur LANSAD – langues pour les spécialistes d'autres disciplines d'utiliser les langues étrangères".

Afin de mieux connaître les systèmes d'évaluation existant et de bénéficier de la réflexion déjà engagée, les conférenciers invités étaient

- Brigitte Forster-Vosicki, Université de Lausanne, portfolio européen des langues (Conseil de l'Europe)
- Michel Laurier, Faculté des Sciences de l'Education, Université de Montréal, (laurierm@SCEDU.Umontreal.CA)
- Ray Satchell, responsable du Centre de Langues de l'Université de Bristol, Président de l'Association of University Language Centres in the UK and Ireland (AULC) et membre de la British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes, BALEAP. (http://www.aulc.org)
- Bernd Voss, Université de Dresden, Président de AKS, Allemagne, responsable de UNIcert® (http://rcswww.urz.tu-dresden.de/~unicert/index-english.htm)

La conférence "BALEAP accreditation scheme and quality assurance issues in the UK" fut l'occasion pour Ray Satchell de faire un panorama complet de la démarche qualité, entreprise depuis déjà quelques années par les centres de langues des universités britanniques. Cette démarche implique, pour les centres qui souhaitent être accrédités dans le cadre du projet BALEAP, l'obligation de se soumettre à une procédure d'évaluation très complète. Ce n'est pas le centre lui-même qui est accrédité mais les formations, évaluées indépendamment les unes des autres. Les critères d'habilitation sont les suivants :
➤Gestion et administration : vérification de la connaissance de la structure en général (l'Université) et des liens existant entre la structure et le CDL, étude des profils de postes.
➤Le personnel : vérification des qualifications des enseignants (types de concours, grade …) et de leurs contrats.
➤Ressources et équipements : si des cours d'été sont proposés, toutes les installations de l'Université doivent être mises à disposition (bibliothèque, gymnase), vérification de la présence d'équipements appropriés (multimédia, vidéo), vérification du respect des règles du copyright.
➤Conception des programmes : étude de la cohérence des programmes et de leur progression.
➤Enseignement et apprentissage : les effectifs ne doivent pas dépasser 16 élèves/cours, les évaluateurs assistent aux cours et jouent le rôle d'inspecteurs.
➤Contrôle des connaissances : vérification de l'adaptation contenu/contrôle
➤Soutien aux étudiants : vérification de la prise en compte globale de l'étudiant y compris au plan social, ses loisirs.
➤Évaluation des cours : le CDL doit préciser son mode d'auto-évaluation, des questionnaires sont remis aux étudiants.

Le système est qualifié de stressant pour le centre concerné mais certaines conclusions peuvent servir d'arguments auprès des autorités pour obtenir par exemple des moyens financiers supplémentaires.

Michel Laurier dans son exposé "Evaluer l'évaluation en langues : quelles questions poser ?" a fait un rappel détaillé des différentes fonctions de l'évaluation et des contraintes sur la conception des instruments, ainsi que des critères à prendre en compte pour évaluer les instruments permettant d'évaluer la compétence langagière. Il a mentionné six "critères d'utilité" (cf. Bachman et Palmer, 1996) :
➤ Fidélité : se vérifie par la courbe d'information d'un test, l'homogénéité des items ou des tâches, l'accord inter-juges …
➤ Validité : les éléments évalués doivent être en correspondance avec les éléments de compétence, adéquation du test entre ce que l'on pense qu'il mesure et ce qu'il mesure vraiment, détection des biais (culturels ou autres) …
➤ Authenticité : une tâche authentique est une tâche complexe, contextualisée et signifiante (qui motive) ; le test doit reproduire une situation réelle, mobiliser les ressources d'une situation réelle.
➤ Interactivité : interactions interpersonnelles (échanges), interactions avec l'instrument (l'interface), interactions entre les composantes de la compétence (l'intégration).
➤ Impact positif : impact sur les individus et impact sur le système (évaluer le risque de bachotage)
➤ Valeur pratique du test : durée, coût (de correction, de mise à jour …), formation des examinateurs, organisation matérielle …

La conférence de Bernd Voss intitulée "UNIcert® : A Contribution to Quality Assurance in Foreign Language Training and Certification Programmes at German Universities" a détaillé le système d'accréditation allemand créé au début des années 90 dans le but d'harmoniser les programmes d'enseignement et les certifications internes. Il s'agit d'un cadre pour toutes les langues dans lequel les institutions développent leurs programmes et reçoivent alors le label Unicert®. L'objectif recherché est la qualité ainsi que des programmes d'enseignement et des certifications comparables (mais non pas identiques ou uniformes). Le cadre précise les conditions d'enseignement, d'équipement, la structure des programmes, des certifications. Trente-deux universités ont adhéré à ce système et l'accréditation est valable trois ans.

Le portfolio européen des langues (PEL) vivantes a été présenté par Brigitte Forster-Vosicki, missionnée par le Conseil de l'Europe. Il ne s'agit pas d'une certification officielle, mais d'un instrument. Les caractéristiques sont les suivantes:
➤Raisons pour le développement du PEL : encourager le plurilinguisme et la pluri-culturalité, évaluation élargie des compétences.
➤Apprentissage en autonomie, un aspect important, avec responsabilisation de l'étudiant.
➤Fonctions : pédagogique (motiver l'apprenant) et fonction de présentation et de documentation (évaluation sommative, transparence et comparabilité)
➤Public cible : l'apprenant, l'employeur, les enseignants, les institutions.
➤Différents portfolios pour différents publics : selon l'âge, les objectifs d'apprentissage et la diversité des contextes éducatifs. Jusqu'à présent 4 portfolios ont été validés.
➤Contenu en trois parties : le passeport, qui donne une vue d'ensemble du profil d'une personne, la biographie langagière et le dossier, qui contient les travaux qui illustrent les compétences.
➤Au niveau européen, création d'un passeport standardisé, avec un profil linguistique basé sur l'auto-évaluation. Quinze pays européens ont participé au projet pilote ainsi que des ONG comme CercleS, le CEL (Conseil Européen pour les Langues), les Eurocentres.
➤Pour 2001, projet de faire expérimenter le portfolio dans les 42 pays européens.

Jean-Claude Bouvier, chargé de mission au Ministère pour le CLES, fait le point de la situation : ce certificat s'adresse à tous les étudiants de l'enseignement supérieur, a vocation à devenir obligatoire dans deux langues étrangères, est déconnecté du diplôme de spécialité et n'est l'aboutissement d'aucun cursus spécifique. Il se compose de trois niveaux : pour l'année 2000/1, le niveau 1 pourra être délivré par les universités qui en feront la demande auprès du Ministère sur validation

RANACLES (cont)

des acquis et cinq universités pilotes expériment-eront les niveaux 2 et 3.

Une commission nationale de coordination a été créée pour assurer le suivi de la mise en œuvre et pour coordonner les établissements organisateurs ; elle a un rôle de contrôle, d'animation et d'aide. Les universités sont encouragées à développer des dispositifs pédagogiques appropriés pour permettre aux étudiants de préparer ce certificat : le développement des centres de langues est fortement encouragé et recevra un soutien financier.

L'assemblée générale est l'occasion pour Michel

Perrin, au terme d'un mandat de huit ans, de faire le bilan de sa présidence. Point essentiel : la reconnaissance de notre domaine d'action et de recherche est maintenant bien établie et RANACLES, pour les instances de décision, est un interlocuteur reconnu et entendu. Les membres du CA remercient chaleureusement Michel Perrin pour sa présidence "humaine" et "éclairée" et proposent de le nommer Président d'Honneur de RANACLES. Alain Cazade, MCF, HDR à Paris IX-Dauphine, est candidat à la succession de Michel Perrin et est élu Président lors d'un vote par acclamation.

Le nouveau Président fait une brève déclaration dans laquelle il souhaite que toutes les complémentarités se manifestent au sein de RANACLES pour faire avancer l'association et les

causes qu'elle promeut et défend. Il souligne son attachement à la recherche et la nécessité d'afficher clairement cette dimension. ■

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Michel Perrin (Bordeaux II), président sortant, après huit ans au service de RANACLES

AULC

At the meeting in December 2000 in London, the Chair presented the considerable achievements of the organisation in its first two years:

* The merging of two very different organisations (DULC and ALSS) and the successful launch of the Association at the University of Bristol under the theme 'Strength through Diversity'
* A regional focus to meetings. Since AULC is an association of University Language Centres in the UK and Ireland, there has been a policy of arranging meetings and seminars to cater for members in all regions. Meetings have been held in the South West of England (University of Bristol), Scotland (University of Edinburgh), Ireland (University College Dublin) and London (London School of Economics). Further activities are planned during 2001 in Northern Ireland and Wales.
* Interest groups in the areas of management, teaching/advising, technical applications and research are now well established. The system caters well for the diverse activities which take place in university Language Centres and the model was adopted by CercleS at the September 2000 Antwerp conference.
* The treasurer's report showed that the membership had increased to 65 institutional members and that

the organisation was in a strong financial situation.
* Through CercleS, AULC and its members were forging strong links with RANACLES, NUT, AICLU, AKS and other sister organisations in Europe.
* The Association has enhanced its UK national reputation through representation on organisations such as the University Council for Modern Languages and the Advisory Board of the new Subject Centre for Modern Languages.

The two-day December meeting was jointly hosted by the LSE and the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT). The meeting was well attended and offered presentations and workshops in the following areas:

* The plenary speaker, Pat Semple from CILT, presented the European Year of Languages. Planned projects were included from all sectors of education and AULC members were given useful information on funding rules and application procedures. For further information, please contact http://www.cilt.org.uk/eyl2001/
* A presentation and tour of the new Higher Education Information Centre for Modern Languages at CILT was given by Dawn Ebrell and the new Subject Centre for Language Teaching, Linguistics and Area Studies was presented by Vicky Wright from the University of Southampton. For

further information, please contact http://www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/
* The new Socrates programme, with particular reference to Lingua I, was presented by Linda Parker from CILT. Lingua I makes particular reference to university Language Centres and AULC/CercleS members were encouraged to obtain further information on funding and application procedures (http://www.cilt.org.uk/socrates/).
* Laura Rundle presented a paper on 'Digital Language Laboratories – What and Why?' and Roger Frisby one on 'Digital Audio'. These papers dealt with the logistic and practical issues surrounding the application of new technologies for Language Learning.
* The Multimedia Authoring for Language Tutors and Education Development project (MALTED) was presented by Christine Hoffman, University College London. MALTED will offer, telematically, a new generation of authoring tools specially created for the requirements of the language tutor.
* British Council – Accreditation and New Directions. Cherry Gough presented new accreditation procedures for English Language programmes, the 'English in Britain' scheme and the new Education @UK branding project (http://www.britcoun.org/education/). ■

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ACLES

Spain is currently one of the few major Western European countries which does not have a national association affiliated to CercleS. This is about to change, however. At a meeting of representatives from CercleS and universities from different parts of Spain, it was decided to create the Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior (ACLES). The meeting, held at the venerable

University of Salamanca on 19 June 2000, was attended by representatives of language centres at universities all over Spain.

The statutes of the association have been drawn up, were approved by the representatives attending the final Salamanca meeting, and are now awaiting final approval from the Spanish authorities and from CercleS. Meanwhile, the first annual congress will be held in February 2001 in Barcelona. It will be attended by the CercleS Executive Committee, which will hold

its own annual meeting there. At the congress, which will take place in ESADE from 1 to 3 February, the association will be formally constituted and the first Executive Committee elected.

For further information about the congress, contact Stuart Dyke (**stuart.dyke@uab.es**) or Gerry Sweeney (**sweeney@esade.edu**). A full report on the congress will appear in the next edition of the Bulletin. ■

Ordering CercleS Proceedings

Copies of the CercleS Proceedings may now be purchased from the Secretariat. Price list as follows:

* **Hull** Conference (1994) ed. Aub-Buscher. Price: £IR19.00 / ¤ 24.12
* **Dresden** Conference (1996) ed. Little & Voss. Price: £IR20.00 / ¤ 25.39
* **Bergamo** Conference (1998) ed. Bickerton & Gotti. Price: £IR20.00 / ¤ 25.39
* **Complete** set of all three Conference Proceedings: £IR43.00 / ¤ 54.60

An order form can be obtained from the CercleS website at www.cercles.org or by contacting the Secretariat.

What can be obtained from the Secretariat

* *Confederation publicity leaflets*
* *Constitution (English only at present)*
* *Minutes of latest Executive Meetings*
* *Publications: Proceedings & Bulletins*

CASALC

The history of foreign language teaching at Czech and Slovak universities is long and eventful. There has always been a tendency to promote and teach at least one compulsory foreign language in addition to the main degree subject. For some time, this had been German, then Russian (those who know the history and situation of our countries can see why and when), but from the late 1960s until 1989, Russian was compulsory and either English or German the usual second choice.

Since November 1989, language centres at universities have gone through several 'ups & downs', starting with the total rejection of English as the sole language suitable for academic purposes in LSP teaching at universities. Nowadays most universities offer different choices of LSP. Most universities and faculties have their language centres specialised in LSP teaching, very many of them have some kind of multimedia or self-access centres, and they also have access to the Internet.

Because of all the various types, differences and aforementioned ups & downs we feel a strong urge to understand our problems and achievements in this field and to cooperate with other European universities. This is why we started to think about joining the CercleS association a few years ago. In September 1999 during the international conference on LSP in Prague it was decided to establish a joint national association in both republics - CASALC Czech and Slovak Association of Language Centres at Universities (or CASAJC – Česká a slovenska asociace ucitelu jazykovych center na vysokych skolach). This association has been registered in both republics and it is now ready to begin work. The secretarial office is in Prague at Charles University Faculty of Arts, Language Centre, Celetna 20, Praha 1, Czech Republic. The contact persons are: PhDr. Marie Hanzlikova (Czech Republic) and PhDr. Alzbeta Moravcikova (Slovak Republic).

Today CASALC has a membership of about 20 university language centres and about 60 individuals in the Czech Republic and 12 centres and 50 individuals in the Slovak Republic.

CASALC promoted a teacher-training seminar on Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students at University and Secondary Levels of Education in November 2000. This is a brand new field in ESP teaching in the Czech Republic and is being developed by PhDr. Daniela Janakova and Mgr. Helena Tvrdikova (contact: Daniela.Janakova@ff.cuni.cz or tvrdikoh@ff.cuni.cz).

Our language centres also cooperate on the Central and Eastern European project on LSP curriculum innovation for universities in German. This project is a part of the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages II and it has university partners from all states participating in the Socrates Programme. CASALC in the Slovak Republic became involved in all three themes of TNP II, which are coordinated from the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany (http://www.fu-berlin.de/elc, blaskovas@rec.uniba.sk):
- Curriculum innovation
- New Learning Environments – the European learning space
- Quality Enhancement

An e-mail conference will be set up on the Prague Faculty of Arts server in early 2001, to be used for CASALC purposes (to subscribe, write to casajc-subscribe@ff.cuni.cz). As it is intended for the CASALC national association, the main languages used will be Czech and Slovak. For the year 2001, it was decided that the main theme will be teaching LSP to postgraduate and doctorate students. The conference has been accepted as an official part of the European Year of Languages in the Czech Republic. There will also be a national information webpage (in Czech) about CercleS on the UK FA Language Centre home page, which can be viewed at: www.ff.cuni.cz/ustavy/jc/ casajc.htm ■

Marie.Hanzlikova@ff.cuni.cz
amoravcikova@rec.uniba.sk

BioData

President of CASALC:
PhDr. Marie Hanzlikova

Place of work: Faculty of Arts, Language Centre, Charles University, Celetna 20, 116 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic

Position: Assistant professor

Areas of interest: teaching ESP, EAP at universities; Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking methods; CALL methodology

Recent publications:
Hanzlikova M.: CALL Reader, DeskTop, UK FF Praha, 1999
Hanzlikova M., Drnkova L.: CALL Mini Dictionary, DeskTop, UK FF Praha, 2000;
Hanzlikova M.: Pocitace ve vyuce cizich jazyku – CALL, In: Chodera R. ed.: Vyuka cizich jazyku na prahu noveho stoleti (II), pp 115-147, Ostravska univerzita, Ostrava, 2001

Vice-President of CASALC:
PhDr. Alzbeta Moravcikova, CSc.

Place of work: Comenius University Language Centre, Laurinska 14, 811 01 Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Position: Director

Areas of interest:
- teaching Slovak to foreign learners
- language centre management
- oral presentations in ESP

Visiting Fulbright Lecturer: University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA (1980, 1981); John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA (1985-1987).

European Year of Languages:
Some CercleS member initiatives

An AULC initiative for EYL:
Project competition (LSP)

Students are invited to submit a 2000 word project in French, German, Italian or Spanish. The topic chosen should be related to the area of study (e.g. Engineering, Science, Medicine, Economics). Oxford University Press have kindly agreed to donate a range of dictionaries, books and software as prizes.

For further details, see the AULC website:
http://www.aulc.org/ ■

Eine AKS-Initiative fürs EJS

Der AKS, die Interessenvertretung der Sprachlehre an Hochschulen, sieht das Europäische Jahr der Sprachen als eine einmalige Chance auf die Probleme und Herausforderungen der Fremdsprachenvermittlung an Hochschulen in Deutschland aufmerksam zu machen. Aus diesem Grunde hat der AKS auf seiner letzten Arbeitstagung eine Resolution zur Sprachausbildung verabschiedet, die inzwischen an alle politischen und gesellschaftlichen Gruppen und Interessenverbände geschickt wurden. Darüber hinaus erklärt der AKS den 3. Juli zum Aktionstag. An diesem Tag werden die Mitgliedsorganisationen des AKS per Fax eine Presseerklärung des AKS in ihrer Region verbreiten und durch phantasievolle, individuelle Aktionen auf die Situation der Fremdsprachenausbildung an Universitäten und Fachhochschulen aufmerksam machen.

AKS-Webseite: http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/aks/ ■

CASALC Statutes

Czech and Slovak Association of Language Centres in Higher Education

ARTICLE 1 – Name and Headquarters

The Czech and Slovak Association of Language Centres in Higher Education, to be known as CASALC (the Czech and Slovak abbreviation being CASAJC), will operate within the territory of the Czech and Slovak Republics. The headquarters of the Association will be established at the home University of the Secretary of the Association.

ARTICLE 2 – Legal Standing

The Association shall be registered according to the provisions of the law on associations and has legal personality. The Association may be a member of foreign and international organisations. It is a full member of CercleS – the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education – for the Czech and Slovak Republics.

ARTICLE 3 – Aims

The main objectives of the Association shall be as follows:

- to support the work of teachers in language centres within Higher Education and to represent their interest at home, abroad and in international organisations.
- to promote learning opportunities in languages for non-specialist learners and thus enable them to meet Europe's objectives for a plurilingual democracy.
- to aim at harmonisation and standardisation of teaching programmes and evaluation.
- to facilitate the exchange of information and professional experience between staff in Language Centres in different countries.
- to represent the activities of members locally, nationally and internationally.

ARTICLE 4 – Means

The Association shall employ the following means in pursuit of its aims:

- meetings and conferences,
- voluntary and social activities for members,
- cooperation with other national and international language teaching organisations and institutions,
- cooperation with relevant authorities and institutions of higher education in order to resolve matters of concern to the language teaching community,
- newsletters and other forms of networked information.

ARTICLE 5 – Membership

The Association shall have four classes of member:

Institutional Members

Membership shall be granted to Language Centres and similar bodies teaching language for specific purposes in Higher Education upon application by an appropriate responsible person.

Individual Members

Membership shall be granted to any adult citizen of the Czech or Slovak Republics or a foreign resident provided that he/she

- is a member of an institutional member,
- has applied for membership in writing,
- agrees with the statutes of CASALC.

Supporting Members

Persons or organisations subscribing to CASALC's aims and wishing to provide material or moral support for the Association.

Honorary Members

Persons so invited by the Association on the basis of their reputation or their services to the Association.

ARTICLE 6 – Members' rights and duties

Institutional Members, when represented by a responsible person, shall have a single vote in the General Meeting of CercleS. They shall be represented on the Executive and Coordinating Committee as determined by the Confederation's statutes.

Individual members shall belong to an institutional member. They shall have the right to:

- stand for office on the CercleS Executive,
- vote and be elected to office within CASALC,
- submit motions concerning activities of the Association to the General Meeting,
- take part in any activity of the Association,
- be informed about all the activities of the Association,
- ask for assistance from the Association.

Individual members shall have the following duties:

- participation in the work of the Association, in their capacity as members or officers of the Association,
- payment of fees.

Supporting and Honorary Members

Supporting and Honorary Members shall have the right to attend the General Meeting. They may not vote or hold office.

ARTICLE 7 – Cessation of Membership

Membership shall cease in the event of:

- voluntary resignation sent in writing
- non-payment of fees
- dissolution of the Association
- death
- acts which infringe the general policy of the Association.

ARTICLE 8 – Structure

The Association's authority shall be invested in the following:

1. The General Meeting
2. The Executive Committee
3. The Supervisory Board

The Executive Committee and Supervisory Board shall be elected in open ballot at the General Meeting and shall hold office for two years. They may co-opt new members to fill vacancies provided these do not exceed 50% of their membership.

ARTICLE 9 – The General Meeting

The General Meeting:

- is open to all members.
- meets at least once every two years and is convened by the Executive Committee.
- shall be quorate when attended by at least 25% of individual members
- shall receive reports from the officers and establishes the strategy of the Association
- elects members of the Executive Committee [Board] and Supervisory Board.
- may amend the Statutes of the Association and dissolve the Association.
- agrees the accounts and budget of the Association.

Decisions of the General Meetings will be minuted by the Secretary.

ARTICLE 10 – The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected by the General Meeting in an open ballot and by a simple majority. The Executive shall:

- represent the Association and act on its behalf.
- be responsible for the general management of the affairs of the Association.
- meet at least twice a year, and its meetings will be minuted.

The Executive Committee shall consist of seven officers – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and three additional members drawn from the Supervisory Board of the Association.

The Chair and Vice Chair shall be from each of the Republics represented in the Association. Officers may be re-elected once only to the same office.

ARTICLE 11 – Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board shall consist of the three additional members of the Executive Committee.

They shall meet at least once a year and be responsible for auditing the financial report of the Treasurer. The audit shall be signed by at least two members of the Supervisory Board. Members may be re-elected once.

ARTICLE 12 – Assets

The Association may possess moveable and immovable assets and funds.

The funds shall be composed of:

- membership fees
- any donations, bequests, subsidies
- income from activities of the Association conducted in compliance with the law
- income from the assets of the Association and public generosity

ARTICLE 13 – Dissolution

In the event of the General Meeting deciding to dissolve the Association, a committee shall be appointed to dispose of its assets. ■

Minutes of CercleS Co-ordinating Committee Meeting
UFSIA, Antwerp, Belgium
14-16 September 2000

Present:

Prof. David Little, President (Dublin)

Prof. David Bickerton, Secretary General (Plymouth)

Prof. Bernd Voss, Treasurer (Dresden)

Prof. Michel Perrin, Vice-President and RANACLES President (Bordeaux)

Prof. Maurizio Gotti, Deputy Secretary (Bergamo)

Jolanta Urbanikowa, Deputy Treasurer (Warsaw)

Prof. Carol Taylor Torsello, AICLU (Padua)

Ray Satchell, President of AULC (Bristol)

Mary Ruane, AULC (Dublin)

Dr Thomas Vogel, President of AKS (Frankfurt (Oder))

Apologies:

None.

David Little opened the meeting at 9.40 a.m.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 23 June 2000 were approved. It was later agreed that procedure required the Committee to have agreed the minutes of the previous Co-ordinating Committee meeting held in Prague, 16-17 September 1999, as published in Bulletin 11, rather than the previous Executive minutes.

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Elections

David Bickerton reported that no nomination had been received since the Executive had last met for the position of Deputy Secretary General. It was agreed that the President-Elect should hold discussions with possible candidates at the conference and that the committee would re-convene on 16 September prior to the General Meeting (GM) to consider late nominations and to complete its business.

Discussion engaged upon the roles of Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer. It was agreed that the present arrangement should continue whereby the Secretariat issues all invoices and handles finances for CercleS, but the Treasurer should operate an internal audit. To this end, the Treasurer should receive monthly financial reports from the Secretariat and prepare, on this basis, the consolidated reports required by the Executive and GM. The internal accounting procedures of the Secretariat's host university should continue to be relied upon to guarantee the accuracy of the figures.

4. CercleS Budget

The Secretary General reported that the records of the University of Plymouth showed a positive balance of GB£264.00 in the CercleS account at the end of the university's financial year (31 July 2000). The account had been closed, there were no outstanding commitments, and there were assets in the form of unpaid subscriptions for 1999-2000 and a promised reimbursement of excess salary (approximately GB£2,000.00) paid to the Administrator, as reported in the minutes of 23 June.

David Bickerton undertook to pass to Bernd Voss a spreadsheet showing the current financial position for report to the GM. This would be reproduced in the Minutes of the GM.

The lack of synchrony between the financial year of many universities, the calendar year, the CercleS Conference (at which the Treasurer is required to give a report) and the receipt of annual subscriptions from full members, was perceived as hindering budgetary transparency. It was agreed that the situation could best be remedied by publishing up-to-date figures in each Bulletin, with the first Bulletin of the year (e.g. in the spring) publishing the accounts for the previous calendar year, and the second (e.g. in the autumn) publishing interim accounts.

5. Subscriptions

There was wide-ranging discussion both in favour and against the proposals of the Executive Committee of 23 June for an increase in subscription fees, and it was agreed to return to the issue after discussion of strategy (item 6). The proposed subscription rates for 2001-02 were as follows:

Category	New sub in Euros	Current	% Rise
Ass. mems	120	100	20%
Members (via full mems)	90	80	12%
East. European associates	45	40	12%
East. European members	45	40	12%

6. CercleS Strategy

A major objective for CercleS, in addition to its existing disseminatory and networking role, was seen as the need to raise its international profile and increase its impact. Measures to achieve this were discussed, and it was agreed that in the short term CercleS should:

6.1 Bring forward an accreditation scheme for Language Centres in which either the institutions themselves, their activities, or the systems they use, or a combination of two or more of these features, would form the focus of the accreditation by CercleS. Bernd Voss agreed to take forward this initiative and place a plan of action before the GM. He reported that the application to the Rockefeller Foundation for a venue at which to discuss accreditation had been unsuccessful, and that those participating would require to be self-funded.

6.2 Publish a CercleS version of the European Language Portfolio, validated by the Council of Europe, for use in Language Centres. David Little agreed to take forward this initiative and place a plan of action before the GM. He reported on recent developments in the validation process which indicated that CercleS would be well-placed to achieve this objective.

6.3 Increase the activity and representation of CercleS by encouraging associate members in Northern and Eastern Europe to follow the lead of the Czech and Slovak republics and Spain in creating new national/ transnational associations.

It was also agreed that in the longer term CercleS should develop and operate internationally recognised certification schemes.

7. Applications for Full Membership

David Bickerton tabled the draft statutes of CASALC (Czech And Slovak Association of Language Centres in Higher Education, the Czech and Slovak abbreviation being CASAJC) and a statement received from the constitutional steering committee for ACLES (the Spanish Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior) comprising Stuart Dyke (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Paul Miller (University of Navarra), Montse Corrius (University of Vic), Gerry Sweeney (ESADE) and Isabel Jaschek (University of Salamanca). A set of statutes for ACLES in Spanish had been received by the Secretary General on the eve of his departure for Antwerp.

It was proposed that David Bickerton and Jolanta Urbanikowa should meet Alzbeta Moravcikova during the Conference to discuss amendments which would bring the CASALC Statutes into line with those of CercleS. Similarly, the Secretary General-Elect would require to take forward discussions with ACLES as soon as an English version of their statutes had been received. David Bickerton

Minutes of CercleS Executive Committee Meeting

UFSIA, Antwerp, Belgium
16 September 2000

Present
Prof. Maurizio Gotti, President (Bergamo)
Ray Satchell, Vice-President (Bristol)
Mary Ruane, Secretary General, (Dublin)
Prof. Bernd Voss, Treasurer (Dresden)
Dr Nicole Chenik, Deputy Secretary General (Paris IX)
Dr Charles van Leeuwen, Deputy Treasurer (Maastricht)
Sandrine Pac, CercleS Administrator (Dublin)

Apologies
None.

The first meeting of the new Executive Committee took place immediately following the closure of the CercleS conference at Antwerp University. The meeting began at 4.45 p.m.

1 President's opening statement
The President welcomed members of the new Executive to the first meeting.

2 Agenda
A draft agenda, having been prepared by the President and General Secretary, was tabled. The agenda was approved.

3 Distributions of tasks
The President said that the first task of the new Executive should be to agree the distribution of some initial duties among members.

Secretariat: It was agreed that the Secretariat, based at the Applied Language Centre in University College Dublin, would be responsible for general organisational and financial matters.

Bulletin: It was agreed that an editorial committee of three members – Mary Ruane, Nicole Chenik and David Bickerton (as adviser) – would be responsible for the production of *Bulletin* 13. This arrangement would be reviewed at the next meeting.

It was agreed that the Secretariat in Dublin would prepare the *Bulletin* for printing. Quotes for printing 2000 copies will be sought in Ireland and France. The editorial would be written jointly by Mary Ruane and Nicole Chenik. Sandrine Pac would draw up a list of potential advertisers to include print and software publishers, hardware specialists, airlines and others.

Treasurer: As day-to-day management of the finances would take place in Dublin, the role and responsibilities of the Treasurer (based in Dresden) were considered. It was agreed to implement the recommendation of the Co-ordinating Committee that the Treasurer should receive more regular financial information from the Secretariat by means of monthly reports and twice-yearly financial statements. The Treasurer should prepare the reports required by the Executive, Co-ordinating Committee and General meetings.

The immediate financial priority was to oversee the transfer of the CercleS account from Plymouth to UCD. The present balance in the Plymouth account was GB£264.13. However, a rebate to CercleS was due from Plymouth University and the former General Secretary, David Bickerton, had agreed to follow this up.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would invoice national associations for membership subscriptions for the second half of 2000. This would involve cross-referencing with invoices for the first half of 2000. Copies of invoices had to be transferred from Plymouth. The Secretary stated that the successful completion of this task was dependent on complete information being supplied by Plymouth.

David Bickerton had agreed to supply final figures from the Plymouth account by 31/12/00. These had to be approved by the Treasurer. As UCD had taken over the account mid-way during the financial year, the Secretariat agreed to supply details of the balancing invoices for 2000 and CercleS-related expenditure for the period August to December. The Treasurer would approve the amalgamated Dublin/Plymouth accounts and provide a year-end statement to the Executive meeting in Barcelona.

The General Secretary reported that a current account in the name of CercleS had been opened at Allied Irish Banks (Belfield Campus Branch). Income including membership subscriptions would be lodged to this account. Pay and non-pay expenditure will be processed through a separate College account set up in the name of CercleS and will meet the College accounting and auditing requirements. The expenditure from this account will be funded from the CercleS account in AIB.

The Treasurer was asked to prepare a draft budget (in Euros) for the calendar year 2001 for the Executive Meeting in Barcelona.

Deputy Treasurer: As well as deputising for and assisting the Treasurer, it was agreed that the Deputy Treasurer would advise and act to consolidate CercleS' links with international organisations. It was agreed that the Vice-President, the General Secretary and the Deputy Treasurer should also liaise closely on these matters.

Vice-President: As well as deputising for the President, it was agreed that the Vice-President would contribute to advancing the CercleS strategy of creating new associations in Northern and Eastern Europe. At present CercleS had many associate members in Finland, Sweden and other Nordic countries but, as yet, no national/transnational association had been formed. It was agreed that Finland and the Baltic States should be prioritised in the first instance. In Eastern Europe, existing links with Hungary should also be consolidated with a view to establishing a national association.

It was reported that the Association of University Language Centres from the French-speaking part of Belgium had expressed interest in joining CercleS. Due to amendments to Article 3 of the Constitution, it is not possible for two national associations from the same country to become members of CercleS.

President: The President stated that his first priority was to consolidate links with existing members particularly those with whom contact has been limited in the recent past. In this context, he wished to restore links with APOCLES, the Portuguese association.

4 New initiatives
The Executive discussed how it should progress the management of the three main initiatives agreed at the Co-ordinating Committee and General Meetings – the Accreditation Scheme, the European Language Portfolio (ELP), and the creation and development of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The following was agreed:

Accreditation Scheme: Bernd Voss would convene a working group, which would produce drafts for the Scheme. He agreed to produce drafts for the Scheme. He agreed to report on progress in the next *Bulletin* and to the next Executive meeting in February.

European Language Portfolio: David Little had agreed to oversee the development of the ELP initiative on behalf of CercleS. He would be requested to prepare a discussion paper outlining plans and to supply a report to the Executive for further action.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs): Members who had indicated at the GM that they would act as SIG convenors were Michel Perrin (new technologies), Anne Gallagher (minority languages), Sandra Kremer (commercial issues) and Thomas Vogel (management and structures). Convenors should be asked to provide short reports for the Executive Meeting in Barcelona and the information about the creation of the SIGs should be published in the Bulletin. It was felt that the CercleS Executive should retain an active involvement in all SIGs and, ideally, a member of the Executive should be part of the co-ordinating team of each group.

5. Proceedings

The *Proceedings* of the Antwerp conference would be edited by Mary Ruane (CercleS) and by Guust Meijers (NUT). A letter asking presenters to submit their papers would be drafted by the editors and circulated by Valère Meus (NUT). It had been agreed with NUT that the budgetary surplus from the Antwerp conference would be transferred to the CercleS account and would be used to cover printing and distributing costs of the *Proceedings*. A letter to confirm this arrangement should be sent to Valère Meus. The Secretary volunteered to seek quotes for printing the *Proceedings* in Dublin.

6. Website

As a first priority, the website has to be transferred from Plymouth to Dublin ideally retaining the /www.cercles.org/ address. As agreed at the GM, the website would not henceforth be password protected. As a consequence, restricted access documents (minutes and agendas) should be deleted. Further information on the development of the website would be published in the next Bulletin and posted on the web.

7. Promotion and publicity

Measures to promote and publicise CercleS and its activities were discussed. Some of the measures proposed were:
- Produce a 'publications for sale' list
- Produce a CercleS Information Pack to include flyer(s), posters, brochures, etc.
- Aim to have CercleS representation at key international and national events,

exhibitions, language fairs, etc.
- Develop publication projects (e.g., CercleS Handbook)
- Develop more active links with national associations by attending their conferences, meetings and other events.

8. Next CercleS conference

On foot of agreement at the GM that the next CercleS international conference would be hosted by RANACLES in France, it was agreed that contact should be made with the French association. The most suitable time to raise the matter was after the Nice conference where a new President would be elected. The theme for the conference should be chosen in conjunction with the organisers. Suggestions for themes included developments in the use of technology, role and status of Language Centres in their institution: (who they are/who they serve), teaching/learning in Higher Education (academic and commercial issues), new roles for Language Centres, student trilingualism and the polyglot graduate. It was agreed that the planning of the next conference should commence as quickly as possible and should be considered in detail at the next Executive Meeting.

9. Membership & related financial matters

The present system of invoicing members was considered. It was agreed that the existing invoicing procedure would be retained but amended. The membership would be invoiced first in January with payment expected by 31 March. The balance would be invoiced in September on the basis of updated figures provided by the national associations. It is proposed that in the year 2002, two thirds of the amount due will be invoiced in January, and the balance of one third, would be invoiced in September.

The Secretary General indicated that it would be necessary to upgrade the existing membership database to allow more accurate recording of the information and to generate invoices. She would advise on the format of the changes needed at the next meeting of the Executive.

In addition to the increase in membership fees, which had been agreed by the GM, the

Executive also considered other possible measures, which would improve the financial situation of CercleS. Among those which might develop an income stream were: development of a certification scheme, increasing book sales (*Bulletin* and *Proceedings*), organisation of seminars and training sessions, sponsorship agreements, providing language services, participation in European projects, etc. The possibility of selling the membership list was also raised as an option. This would require further discussion and would require approval at the next GM.

10. Future Executive Meetings

The President stated that, in keeping with practice up to now, the Executive should meet three times a year – in autumn, early spring and early summer. There should be two Executive-only meetings and a third which would be combined with the Co-ordinating Committee meeting. Where possible, CercleS meetings should be an opportunity to support the activities of national associations.

A proposal to reduce the annual number of meetings to two in 2001 with a view to reducing costs was discussed. It was agreed that the first meeting of 2001 would take place in late January in Barcelona to coincide with the launch of the new national association in Spain, ACLES. The Co-ordinating and Executive Committees would meet in Italy during the AICLU conference in early summer (tentatively agreed for 31 May – 2 June). The third meeting should take place in UCD at the end of the 2001 thereby reducing costs.

It was also agreed that there will be five meetings over the next two years: 3 in 2001 as outlined above and two in 2002, one in April, (in France, venue to be confirmed), and one in September 2002 in France during the CercleS conference.

11. AOB

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6.30 p.m. ■

Minutes of CercleS General Meeting
UFSIA, University of Antwerp
16 September 2000

The President opened the meeting at 3.10 p.m. 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 (GM) of 18 September 1998 were approved (as published in *Bulletin* 10, pp. 8-10).

3. Matters Arising or not covered on the Agenda
It was observed that lists of delegates to the Antwerp Conference needed to be circulated, and it was agreed to bring this to the attention of the organisers. The Secretary General asked for views on the present use of password access to the CercleS web site. The general view of the meeting was that this could be dispensed with.

4. President's Report
Professor David Little briefly reviewed the growth of CercleS during the five years of his presidency. In 1995 there had been six full members (in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Dutch-speaking Belgium, Portugal, and the United Kingdom and Ireland), and 138 affiliated language centres in 11 countries. In the intervening years two new full members had been admitted, in Poland and Switzerland, and two new full members were in the making, in Spain and the Czech and Slovak republics. The number of affiliated language centres had risen to more than 250 in 22 countries.

Professor Little recalled that CercleS has three principal aims:
* to support Language Centres in European establishments of higher education, for the provision of language training backed up by appropriate technological and pedagogical resources;
* to promote research in foreign language learning at international level;
* to encourage international and interdisciplinary cooperation between Language Centres in order to enable them to co-ordinate the pursuit of their objectives.

During the past five years those aims had been pursued with some success through the twice-yearly *Bulletin*, the biennial international conferences, and the volumes of conference proceedings.

In conclusion, Professor Little suggested that CercleS could look forward with confidence to further growth in the number of full members and affiliated Language Centres, consolidation of its existing services and activities, and the development of a more proactive role in Europe. In particular he argued that CercleS should develop its relationship with the Council of Europe, create a research-and-development network to explore the possibility of launching an international scheme of accreditation/certification, and explore the possibility of producing a CercleS version of the Council of Europe's European Language Portfolio (see also below, item 8).

5. Secretary's Report
Professor David Bickerton described the two years that had elapsed since the Bergamo Conference as having presented numerous challenges, most of which had been met with a measure of success. To the regular output of the Secretariat (in the form of Issues 10, 11 and 12 of the Bulletin, and the editing and publication of the Conference Proceedings in September 1999) had been added the extensive revisions of the CercleS statutes as determined by the previous GM, and support to colleagues in Hungary, Switzerland, the Czech and Slovak republics

and in Spain in the drafting of their own statutes for national or transnational associations. In the case of Switzerland GE-EHLE had achieved full membership and several others were well advanced in their applications. A publication containing the CercleS Statutes in English, French and German, and those of its full members in English or their original language, together with a history of the Confederation's first decade in existence, had been in preparation for some time and was nearing completion.

The Secretariat had administered AULC's first election in the UK and Ireland, appointed a new CercleS Administrator in December 1998, and liaised with numerous Language Centres seeking associate membership and information. The website had been redesigned in its present trilingual format. It had proved difficult, however, for the Secretariat to sustain normal service from January 2000 onwards due to problems of staff absenteeism and misuse of resources. This had, however, led to a reduction in wage costs for CercleS, and it had culminated in the Administrator's resignation in July. This experience highlighted the lack of resilience in the Confederation's organisation, CercleS being unable to afford to employ several people in its Secretariat, and indeed relying upon the self-funding of travel costs by members of the Executive and upon the generosity of host Universities in covering overheads. The experience also suggested that the CercleS Secretariat needed to operate from within a larger departmental structure than Plymouth had been able to provide.

Professor Bickerton concluded by thanking members for their courtesy and support over the years of his work as Secretary. His report was received by the Meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report
A corrected statement of accounts for 1999, together with estimated figures for 2000, were presented by Professor Bernd Voss. It was explained that the correction had been required because of salary overpayment to the Administrator, liability for which had been accepted by the University of Plymouth.

Accounts for 1999, corrected

Income	GB £	Expenditure	GB £
Proceedings	1,338	Post	773
Advertising	645	Telephone	166
Subscriptions	13,027	Stationery	0
Conference Income	3,208	Bulletin printing x 2	2,190
ADAPT Project	1,050	Administrator	12,733
		Overheads on salary	1,061
		Publicity	0
		Travel	1,405
		Proceedings printing x 1	1,823
Totals	**£19,268**		**£20,151**

Accounts for 2000 – Assets and Commitments (estim'd 16/09/00)

Assets	GB £	Commitments	GB £
Closing balance Plymouth account	264	Bulletin printing x 1	1,145
Proceedings	250	Post	500
Advertising	100	Administrator (Dublin)	3,600
Salary overpayment owed by Plymouth Uni	2,000	Proceedings printing x 1	1,823
Unpaid invoices (@16/9/00)	923	Post	700
Outstanding invoices to full members for Jul-Dec	7,319	General Operating Costs	1,000
Travel Sept-Dec 2000	400		
Totals	**£10,857**		**£9,169**

The Treasurer indicated that income to CercleS from a UK Government-funded Project (ADAPT) had accrued through the use of the Secretariat to relay information on language training opportunities to SMEs in the S.W. of England. Conference income had accrued from Bergamo and had exceeded the publication and distribution costs of the Proceedings by some 33%. Subscription income had continued to rise in line with growth in the membership, and advertising income had held steady. Subscriptions continued to be received in arrears, and this caused multiple difficulties for the Secretariat. Professor Voss observed that the Confederation was only breaking even at present because of its reliance upon individuals to fund their own activities on its behalf.

The Treasurer's Report was approved by the Meeting. A suggestion was made that members may be able to pay their subscriptions two years in advance, and this would improve the Confederation's cash flow. It was agreed that this should be noted, especially as an option for associate members who deal direct with CercleS and do not pay fees through full members.

7. Election of Officers

Professor Little reported that the following had been duly nominated and elected to office by the Co-ordinating Committee for a period of two years:

Office	Candidate	Full member
President	Prof. Maurizio Gotti (Bergamo)	AICLU
Vice-President	Ray Satchell (Bristol)	AULC
Secretary General	Mary Ruane (Dublin)	AULC
Dep Sec Gen	Dr Nicole Chenik (Paris IX)	RANACLES
Treasurer	Prof. Bernd Voss (Dresden)	AKS
Deputy Treasurer	Dr. Charles van Leeuwen (Maastricht)	NUT

The outgoing President invited the Meeting to approve the election of Professor Maurizio Gotti, former President of AICLU and Deputy Secretary General since 1998. This was done with unanimity.

It was reported to the meeting that Dr Chenik had agreed to take over the editorship of the Bulletin.

8. CercleS – Future strategy

The President reviewed the direction and growth of CercleS since he had come to office in 1995 and suggested that the Confederation had developed sufficient size and authority to take on a more proactive role. He added that, ideally, this would also generate an income stream. He reported on discussions at recent meetings of the Executive and the Co-ordinating Committee which had approved a recommendation that CercleS should immediately bring forward an accreditation scheme for Language Centres, establish a validated CercleS version of the European Language Portfolio, and in due course establish a certification scheme.

It had been agreed to seek the approval of the Meeting that Professor Voss should convene a working group charged with producing drafts of an accreditation scheme; this should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate initiatives by institutions and also sufficiently authoritative to command general agreement; the results would be remitted to the Executive for action. It was also proposed that Professor Little should draw up a discussion paper on the issues which would have to be addressed before CercleS could publish its own version of the ELP. This also would be used to guide the Executive.

Both strategies were approved *nem con* by the Meeting.

It was suggested from the floor that CercleS should also develop Special Interest Groups, and proposals were canvassed. Nick Byrne (London School of Economics) of AULC and Dr Thomas Vogel (Frankfurt an der Oder) of AKS undertook to co-ordinate activity in the area of Structures and Organisations, addressing the concerns of Centre managers; Anne Gallagher (Maynooth) of AULC undertook to co-ordinate activity in the field of Minority Languages.

9. Subscriptions for 2001-02

The President reminded the Meeting that the Treasurer's Report in 1998 had anticipated a need to raise subscriptions in 2001 if CercleS was to remain viable. The matter had been fully debated by the Executive and the Co-ordinating Committee and it had been agreed to recommend to the Meeting an increase broadly in line with cost of living rises since 1996:

Category	New sub in Euros	Current	% Rise
Associate members	120	100	20%
Members (via full members)	90	80	12%
Eastern European associates	45	40	12%
Eastern European members	45	40	12%

The increase in subscription rates was agreed *nem con*.

10. Applications for full membership

Professor Bickerton reported on his examination of the draft statutes of CASALC (the Czech And Slovak Association of Language Centres in Higher Education (the Czech and Slovak abbreviation being CASAJC)) and a statement received from the constitutional steering committee for ACLES (the Spanish Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior) comprising Stuart Dyke (Autonomous University of Barcelona), Paul Miller (University of Navarra), Montse Corrius (University of Vic), Gerry Sweeney (ESADE) and Isabel Jaschek (University of Salamanca). He had received a set of statutes for ACLES, in Spanish, shortly before the Antwerp Conference.

Both sets of statutes showed that the groups responsible for them were close to assuming the responsibilities of full membership. CASALC would be meeting in late October to prepare final revisions, and ACLES anticipated completing official procedures in Spain by December and hoped to host a major Conference the following February.

It was proposed that CASALC be admitted as a full member upon President's action, and that ACLES also be admitted, but subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. This was approved *nem con*.

11. Time and place for the next General Meeting

Professor Little reported on discussions at the Co-ordinating Committee which had resulted in the proposal that the next CercleS International Conference be hosted by RANACLES. This was warmly supported by the Meeting. It was suggested that the date of the Conference might conveniently be brought forward to the beginning of September 2002. It was agreed to pursue this suggestion provided dates could be found which did not clash with any other major subject conference.

12. AOB

There was no further business and the President accordingly brought the GM to a close at 4.30 p.m. Professor Maurizio Gotti, the new President, moved a vote of thanks to his predecessor, Professor David Little (Trinity College, Dublin) and the Secretary General, Professor David Bickerton (Plymouth), who had both served two consecutive terms of office. He also thanked the outgoing Vice-President, Professor Michel Perrin (Bordeaux) and Deputy Treasurer, Jolanta Urbanikova (Warsaw), neither of whom had sought re-election. The sentiments he expressed were confirmed by the applause of all present. ∎

INTRODUCING...
THE CERCLES
EXECUTIVE

President

Dr Maurizio Gotti is a full Professor of English Language and Linguistics and Director of the University Language Centre, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Bergamo, Italy. His areas of interest include the features and origins of specialised languages; autonomous language learning and the teaching of specialised languages; English lexicography; and English syntax.

Vice-President

Ray Satchell is the current Chair of AULC. He has been the Director of the University of Bristol Language Centre, UK for the past ten years and has previously lived, worked and studied in Finland, Sweden, Russia, Mozambique and Vietnam. He is the national representative for EFL on the University Council for Modern Languages and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Secretary General

Mary Ruane is a senior lecturer in the Department of Education and Director of the Applied Language Centre at University College Dublin, Ireland. Her chief research interests and publications are in language teacher education, LSP/LAP, and language policy and planning. She is a former executive member of AULC.

Deputy Secretary General

Dr Nicole Chenik is maître de conférences at Université Paris IX-Dauphine, France where she runs the computing faculty's language section and the multimedia Centre de Ressources en Langues. Research interests and publications include CALL, ICT for language learning, and ESP. She is an executive member of EUROCALL and RANACLES and represents CercleS on the WORLDCALL Steering Committee.

Treasurer

Dr Bernd Voss is Professor for the Didactics of English Language and Literature at the Technical University, Dresden, Germany. A CercleS executive member since 1998 and former AKS President, he has spearheaded development of the UNIcert® language training and certification system. He has published widely in many areas including language pedagogy, testing and planning.

Deputy Treasurer

Dr Charles van Leeuwen has been Director of the Universiteit Maastricht's Language Centre since 1999. He is a historian and an expert in Dutch language, literature and culture, and his publications are in this field, as well as translation and language testing. A recent (2001) publication is Hemelse Voorbeelden (*Examples from Heaven*) on Dutch hagiography in the Golden Age. ■

Forthcoming events

22-26 May 2001: IALL '01 Conference, Houston, Texas. Information: Claire Bartlett, Language Resource Centre, Rice University, 113 Rayzor Hall, MS 37, Houston, TX 77005-1892, USA. E-mail: bartlett@rice.edu, Web: http://iall.net/Conf.html

28-30 June 2001: 3rd Conference of the European Language Council, 'Multilingualism and new learning environments', Berlin, Germany. Information: European Language Council, Freie Universität Berlin, ZE Sprachlabor, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, D-14195 Berlin, Germany. E-mail: elc@zedat.fu-berlin.de, Web: http://www.fu-berlin.de/elc/BerlinConf/index.htm

5-7 July 2001: ALTE Conference, 'European testing issues in a global context', Barcelona, Spain. Information: ALTE Secretariat, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 1EU, UK. E-mail: hirtzel.m@ucles.org.uk, Web: http://www.cambridge-efl.org/alte

20-24 August 2001: Porta Scientiae: 13th European Conference on Language for Special Purposes, Vaasa, Finland. Information: Department of Scandinavian Languages, University of Vaasa, P.O.B. 700, FIN-65101 Vaasa, Finland. E-mail: lsp2001@uwasa.fi, Web: http://www.uwasa.fi/lsp2001/

30 August-1 September 2001: EUROCALL '01, 'E-Learning', Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Information: EUROCALL, The Language Institute, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK. E-mail: eurocall@hull.ac.uk, Web: http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/eurocall/ecevents.htm

30 August-1 September 2001: 3rd International Congress of EST, 'Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies', Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. Information: Vivi Ronne, EST Congress 2001, Copenhagen Business School, Dalgas, Have 15, DK-2000 Frederiksberg. Tel: +45 3815 3250, Fax: +45 3815 3860, E-mail: vr.tysk@cbs.dk, Web: http://www.cbs.dk/EST/

1-3 September 2001: Exeter CALL '01, 'CALL – The challenge of change', Exeter. Information: Prof. Keith Cameron, School of Modern Languages, Queen's Building, The University, Exeter EX4 4 QH, UK. E-mail: K.C.Cameron@ex.ac.uk

6-8 September 2001: BAAL Annual Meeting, 'Unity and Diversity in Applied Linguistics', Reading, UK. Information: Kristyan Spelman-Miller. E-mail: k.s.miller@reading.ac.uk, Web: http://www.baal.org.uk/baalc.htm

26-29 September 2001: 11th Annual Conference of EUROSLA, Paderborn, Germany. Information: EUROSLA 11, Department of Linguistics and Literature, Fachbereich 3, University of Paderborn, D-33095 Paderborn, Germany. E-mail: eurosla11@hotmail.com, Web: http://eurosla11.cjb.net

4-6 October 2001: 19th Congress of the German Society for Foreign Language Research, 'Fremdsprachenunterricht auf dem Prüfstand – Evaluation', Dresden. Information: Prof. Bernd Voss, Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik, Fakultät Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften, TU Dresden, 01062 Dresden. Tel: 0351-463-3023/2347, Fax: 0351-463-7166/7132, E-mail: b@rcs.urz.tu-dresden.de (Prof. Bernd Voss). Congress E-mail: dgffkongress2001@mailbox.tu-dresden.de, Web: http://rcswww.urz.tu-dresden.de/~kongress

1 & 2 December 2001: 2nd Annual Conference, International Association for Languages and Intercultural Communication: 'Living in translated worlds: Languages and intercultural communication'. Information: Joy Kelly, Languages and intercultural communication'. Information: Joy Kelly, Conference Administrator, Centre for Language Study, Leeds Metropolitan University, Beckett Park Campus, Leeds LS6 3QS, UK. Web: http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/sections/lac/ialic/conference E-mail: j.kelly@lmu.ac.uk, Fax: +44 113 2745966, Tel: +44 113 2837440

9-13 April 2002: TESOL Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah. Information: TESOL, 700 S. Washington St., Ste 200, Alexandria, VA 22314. USA. E-mail: tesol@tesol.edu, Web: http://www.tesol.edu/

16-21 December 2002: AILA '02, 'Applied linguistics in the 21st Century: Opportunities for innovation and creativity'. Theme: 'Globalisation, creativity and the infusion of Information Technology in the 21st Century' Singapore. Information: c/o Conference & Travel Management Associates Pte Ltd, 425A Race Course Road, Singapore 218671. Tel: (65) 299 8992, Fax: (65) 299 8983. E-mail: ctmapl@singnet.com.sg, Web: http://www.aila2002.org/ ■