

## Language Case Studies (LCaS)

Developing teacher training modules for the use of case studies in language teaching at secondary and university level

*Project description*

*Updated the 17 March 2006*

*Co-ordinator:*       **Johann Fischer**, *Universität Tübingen, Germany*

*Project team:*       **Ana Margarida Abrantes**, *UCP Viseu, Portugal*  
**Etain Casey**, *King's College London, United Kingdom*  
**Elke Gigl**, *Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, Austria*  
**Marija Lešnik**, *University of Maribor, Slovenia*

*Web maintenance:* **René Krätschel**, *Universität Tübingen, Germany*

### 1. CONTEXT

Due to the recent increase in trade, travel and political and social co-operation, language competence has become a key skill in modern Europe. Great efforts have been made to improve language training at all education levels. Whereas in the past language teaching was mainly related to cultural themes with an emphasis on literature, communicative aspects in everyday international contact situations, both for personal and for professional reasons, have become more and more important and language teaching has become interwoven with subject teaching.

Case studies have proven to be an excellent means for the integration of subject-specific aspects into language teaching. The use of case studies in language teaching encourages task-oriented teaching methods and problem-based learning, as the students are confronted with an authentic problem they have to solve by analysing material in the target language. The authenticity of the cases and of the material, as well as the integration of current events have an extremely positive impact on the learners' motivation and stimulate language teaching as a whole.

At present, there is little or no information available for interested language teachers to refer to when planning to use case studies in their own programmes.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### **General aims**

The general aim of the project is to improve language teaching at secondary and university level by introducing a task-oriented approach through the use of case studies in language teaching. This aim will be achieved by the development of teacher training modules including piloted teaching material for the use in class.

The LCaS project aims:

- to increase the motivation of learners to learn languages by providing and stimulating quality training case study material
- to create and disseminate training modules for language teachers which will contribute to the integration of new teaching methods in the language classes and have a multiplier effect in professional development in the university and secondary school sectors.

### **Specific objectives**

Although case studies are used in business studies and law courses, they are still an innovative method in language teaching. The use of case studies in language teaching has a highly positive impact on the development of active and passive language skills, as it follows an integrative concept of language teaching. It also contributes to the development of soft skills such as presentation skills, problem-solving strategies and teamwork.

The specific objectives of the LCaS project are:

- to develop and pilot paper-based and Internet-based case studies for language teaching purposes at secondary and university level,
- to develop criteria to evaluate student performances based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF),
- to develop teacher training modules for the adoption of case studies in language teaching and in this way to achieve a multiplier effect among university and secondary school staff.
- to develop and publish a handbook for teacher trainers,
- to disseminate the training modules and the handbook at international and regional language teaching and learning workshops,
- to raise awareness and disseminate material through the Project Website.

The case studies developed by the LCaS project require co-operation between learners in different countries working on the same Internet-based material. They must co-operate via email or by an Internet-based learning platform. This aspect of the project directly contributes to cross-border co-operation and the formation and understanding of European citizens.

As we will create Internet and distance-learning networks we can contribute to the work of the Information and Communication Technical and Distance Learning area particularly in the practical use of material in class and between learners and teachers in different countries. The project team will use existing networks like the German Association of Language Centres – AKS, the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education – CercleS and the HERMES working group, initially funded within the activities of the EU Thematic Network Project AFANet, for piloting of the case studies and of the teacher training modules.

Our concern is to enhance the status of language teachers in the wider academic community and thus we take the work of the group further in our examination of the interaction between the language teachers and the subject specialists in university and secondary education, as they develop teaching material jointly.

We will provide further quantifiable information on language acquisition and the CEF which will add to the body of knowledge.

### 3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

By the end of the project the partners will have developed the following outcomes:

#### a) **products**

- one paper-based case study in each language (English, French, German, Italian)
- two Internet-based case studies in each language
- training modules for professional development courses which demonstrate the integration of case studies in language teaching
- a published handbook with CD-Rom for teacher trainers providing guidelines and instructions on the use of case studies in language teaching and ideas for professional development courses
- a project website
- three training workshops on international and regional level
- a final report on the results of the project which will include the results of the evaluation process.

#### **handbook:**

The handbook will consist of the following parts:

- a definition of 'case studies' concerning teaching applications, themes and linguistic requirements,
- guidelines for the development of case studies which take into account useful resources, cultural matters and sensitivities, linguistic 'richness' and suitability for language learning tasks, age groups, gender and pre-requisite knowledge,
- guidelines for the development of Internet-based case studies which explain the difference in using paper-based and IT based classroom materials,
- criteria assuring the quality of the cases which set up an evaluation feedback-loop and comparability between the specified languages at similar levels,
- a discussion of the methodological aspects of using case studies in language teaching,
- guidelines for the adoption of case studies at secondary level bearing in mind national and international forms of assessment and study patterns,
- guidelines for the use of case studies in subject-specific language classes,
- models of best practice which demonstrate co-operation between:
  - teachers of the same language working in different countries
  - teachers working in different languages in different countries
  - language teachers and subject-area specialists at university level in the creation of the case study materials and the piloting and evaluation of them,
- guidelines for evaluating the students' performance by applying the level descriptors provided by the *CEF*,
- guidelines for the development of teacher training courses for language teachers.

In this way, the handbook will provide information on the development of case studies for language teaching purposes and their use in language classes. It will also provide guidelines for teacher trainers to prepare and carry out professional development courses themselves and thus have an important multiplying effect of the project activities.

**b) processes**

The LCaS project will run two regional workshops (one in English, one in French) and one central event in Graz in order to pilot and disseminate the teacher training modules and the case studies.

#### 4. ACTION PLAN

<b>2004</b>
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23-24 April

**1<sup>st</sup> meeting** of project team to plan the development and piloting of the case studies and of the teacher training modules.

January-December

*Throughout 2004 the project team will **develop case studies and pilot them with students in class** (Etain Casey and Marija Lešnik will produce case studies in English, Elke Gigl and Ana Margarida Abrantes in German, Johann Fischer in French and Italian). The team will also work on the **production of the teacher training modules**. René Krätschel will develop the website and produce an Internet version of the case studies.*

1-2 October

**2<sup>nd</sup> meeting** of project team to evaluate the case studies, the piloting of the case studies, the teacher training modules and the website. It will also plan the piloting of the case studies in project year 2 and the first regional event.

<b>2005</b>
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3-5 March

**1<sup>st</sup> regional event in Finland** to present the teacher training modules.

**Participants' profile:**

This workshop addresses language teachers and teacher trainers in secondary schools and university language teaching. The participants should be practicing language teachers and should have been involved in teacher training; they should like to familiarise themselves with task-oriented and problem-based teaching and learning methods. The participants will be invited to pilot both the case studies and the teacher training modules after the workshop and to give feedback to the project team.

Although the teaching material available at the workshop is produced for classes of English, French, German and Italian (main target group), our workshops are open to teachers and teacher trainers of all languages. Participants must, however, be

competent in **English**, which is the working language at this regional event, but it would be advantageous if teachers of Italian, French and German took part.

### 19-20 August

**3<sup>rd</sup> meeting** of project team to evaluate the case studies, the piloting of the case studies, the teacher training modules, the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> regional event, and the website. It will also plan the second regional event and plan the production of the handbook.

### January-December

*Throughout the year 2005 the project team will **pilot and revise the case studies and continue the production of the teacher training modules**. The piloting of the case studies will also be carried out through the joint delivery of a course in a real distance learning situation with students from two partner institutions. Throughout the year the project website will be regularly updated.*

<b>2006</b>
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### 11-13 May

**2<sup>nd</sup> regional event** to present teacher training modules designed for case studies at a workshop carried out in **English**

This workshop addresses language teachers and teacher trainers who work in initial teacher training and/or further development programmes for secondary and university language teachers. The participants should have had experience in teaching languages and may have been involved in teacher training; they should be interested in task-oriented and problem-based teaching and learning methods.

The participants will receive case study examples and readings to examine before the workshop. After the workshop, they will be invited to pilot both the case studies and the teacher training modules or disseminate them as appropriate, and provide feedback to the project team.

The teaching material has been produced for use by English, French, German and Italian language teachers and learners, and teachers teaching these languages are welcome to participate.

### 6-7 October

**4<sup>th</sup> meeting** of project team to evaluate the case studies, the piloting of the case studies, the teacher training modules, the results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> regional event, and the website. It will revise the draft version of the handbook and plan the central event.

### January-December

*Throughout the year 2006 the project team will **continue to pilot the case studies and revise the teacher training modules**. The project team will **prepare a draft version of the handbook**. The project website will be regularly updated.*

**2007**

### February

A 4-day **workshop** will take place in Graz where the team presents the teacher training modules to *teacher trainers*; this workshop will be carried out in **English** and **French** with simultaneous interpretation for the plenary sessions.

This workshop addresses teacher trainers who train teachers in initial teacher training and in further development programmes for secondary and university language teaching. The participants should have experience in teaching languages and should have been involved in teacher training; they should like to familiarise themselves with task-oriented and problem-based teaching and learning methods. The participants will be invited to pilot both the case studies and the teacher training modules after the workshop and to give feedback to the project team.

Although the teaching material available at the workshop is produced for classes of English, French, German and Italian (main target group), our workshops are open to teacher trainers of all languages. Participants must however be competent in English or French.

### April

**5<sup>th</sup> meeting** of project team to evaluate the results of the central event, to revise the teacher training modules, the handbook and the website. The team will also prepare the final report.

### January-December

*Throughout the year 2007 the project team will revise the teacher training modules and the handbook, and update the website. The team will also prepare the final report.*

### August

The **handbook – with CD-Rom** – will be **published**, containing the theoretical background knowledge, the results of the team's studies, the teacher training modules and the case studies.

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**All workshops** will consist of :

- theoretical input sessions. These give background information on the different types of case studies and methodological approaches which have been successful in subject areas. The participants then analyse how case studies may be developed specifically for language learning and how these would affect the planning, syllabus and evaluation of their current language training programmes and what adaptations and innovations would be necessary.
- hands-on sessions in which the participants can use case study material for language teaching and learning. Through discussion they can develop scenarios for their own case studies and learn to collect, evaluate and select appropriate material for the cases and their target group(s) of learners.
- evaluation and feedback sessions.

## **5. LANGUAGES**

The working languages of the project are English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will only be provided for central events (ECML workshops).

Participants are expected to be fluent in one of the working languages and have passive knowledge of the other.