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Second medium-term programme of activities 2004-2007

**Project D4 – LCaS**

**Language Case Studies**

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

**Regional workshop report**

(Dublin, Ireland, 11-13 May 2006)

**Project team:**

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The report is accessible in English on the ECML website: **http://www.ecml.at**

The Executive Director of the ECML should be informed about any full or partial translation of the report and a copy of the translation should be sent to the ECML for information.

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# Final report

## 1. Organisational aspects

The 2nd regional event of the LCaS project took place at University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland, from 11 to 13 May 2006. In Dublin the workshop was organised by Mary Ruane, Director of the Applied Language Centre at UCD, who was assisted by Caroline Dunne. The workshop was financed by the ECML in Graz (represented by Adrian Butler, Executive Director of the ECML) and the Department of Education and Science (represented by Paul Caffrey, Modern Languages Inspector and Governing Board Representative of the ECML for Ireland).

The workshop was coordinated by Etain Casey (London, UK) and Johann Fischer (Würzburg, Germany) as trainers, assisted by a third LCaS team member: Marija Lešnik (Maribor, Slovenia), who took part at her own expense.

## 2. Participants

There were a total of 20 participants[1] from seven different countries. The 6 international participants came from Andorra, Austria, the Czech Republic, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and Switzerland. The 14 Irish participants came from all parts of Ireland, representing mainly universities, but working in different fields: some were language teachers at University Language Centres or in Departments of Philology, others were teacher educators or teacher trainers. The majority of the participants were involved with language teaching in secondary education, whereas the participants in the 1st regional event worked on language teaching at university level.

The participants were responsible for the teaching of German, French and Italian, but also of Irish, Spanish and Japanese. As the teaching of English played a minor role, the group was very balanced and had no single dominant language group.

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[1] See full list of participants in Appendix 1.

## 3. Programme

The workshop participants had received pre-workshop reading material providing an introduction to the LCaS project and to the LCaS case studies. They were invited to familiarise themselves with the pre-workshop reading material and to think of possible problems and scenarios for case studies which could be developed during the workshop.
As well as a general introduction to the LCaS project and the case studies, the following aspects were covered during the 2.5-day programme[2]:

- how to design a language case study;
- how to use it in a language class;
- how to teach this approach in teacher education and teacher training.

These aspects were discussed in plenary discussions, smaller working groups and small workshops. The regional event had a theoretical element which was mainly covered in plenary discussions and in practical training in working groups.


## 4. Feedback

18 of the 20 participants completed an evaluation form. This evaluation covered four main aspects:

a) What I have learnt from the workshop
b) Things I will do immediately when I return home
c) Things I will change in the coming two years
d) My main concerns

The results[3] can be summarised as follows:

### a) What I have learnt from this workshop:

−    The participants developed a better understanding of what a case study actually is and what makes the difference between a case study and for example a project, a global simulation or a webquest. Although the participants initially seemed to have understood the general idea of case studies and the differences to similar task-oriented approaches, the lively discussions showed that their understanding was not entirely clear and the topic had to be explained in detail during the workshop. The participants appreciated the fact that they received clarification on the distinction between the various methods of task-oriented and problem-based approaches, and on the purpose and the structure of case studies.

−    The participants also learnt how to design a case study for language teaching purposes and how to integrate case studies into their teaching.

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[2] See timetable in Appendix 2.
[3] See summary of responses in Appendix 3

− Finally, they learnt how to teach the case study approach in teacher training and/or teacher education programmes.

*b) Things I will do immediately when I get home:*

− The participants promised to go through the LCaS material in greater detail, e.g. by checking the LCaS website, and to look for other sources on the case study approach.

− They wanted to continue developing their own language case studies.

− They promised to disseminate the acquired knowledge and to share it with their colleagues.

− Furthermore, they wanted to integrate language case studies and the case study approach into:
  o their language classes;
  o their teacher training / teacher education programmes.

*c) Things I will change in the coming two years:*

The participants' answers focused on two main aspects relating to the integration of the case study approach in their daily work:

− the implementation of case studies in their language classes (6 participants) and

− the integratation of the case study approach in their teacher training / teacher education programmes (13 participants).

*d) My main concerns:*

− As with the first regional event of the LCaS Project in 2005 in Oulu, Finland, the participants thought that the time aspect is the key problem for integrating case studies in language courses. They suggested that the amount of work could scare teachers off (7 participants) and that the use of the case study approach is a challenge in terms of organisation and planning (7 participants).

− Other obstacles for integrating the case study approach in the classroom perceived by the participants are the learners' low levels of language competence, the difficulty to integrate case studies in certain courses, the lack of support and the teachers' lack of preparation in using this approach. Furthermore, they think that it is difficult to convince exam-driven teachers to use the case study approach.

− Another concern which arose was the problem of finding content which truly interests learners and relates to the "real world".

## 5. Feedback on the LCaS teacher training modules

The focus of this 2<sup>nd</sup> LCaS regional event was on the teacher training modules. The written material developed for this purpose comprised:

−  pre-workshop reading material, providing the necessary theoretical background to the use of case studies in language teaching;

−  a series of narratives on
   o  using language case studies in class
   o  making language case studies
   o  teaching language teachers how to use case studies in class

In both cases the participants agreed that the material provided was very useful, but added that it was slightly negative and required revision and supplementary texts:

−  The participants commented that the pre-reading material was too negative with regard to the communicative approach and this should be revised.

−  The participants did not always agree on the terminology used (e.g.: Is the case study approach a method, a tool or an approach?) and suggested re-examining some terminological issues.

−  The participants thought that the narratives on the various aspects of dealing with case studies (use in class, development of case studies, teaching to use case studies) were very helpful, but that they concentrated on negative aspects in order to familiarise teachers and teacher trainers with possible problems and solutions ("what went wrong and why?"). They suggested that the LCaS group should also develop a series of case studies based upon best-practice scenarios, i.e. provide examples of successful situations in using and developing case studies and in teaching language teachers to use the case study approach in their own teaching.

As far as other teacher training material was concerned (e.g. PowerPoint presentations, classroom recordings), the participants were very positive and considered it very useful for teacher training purposes.

## 6. Salient aspects of the workshop and the evaluation

− Although the pre-workshop reading material provided detailed information on the differences between case studies and other task- and problem-based approaches, this distinction still seemed fairly vague to certain workshop participants – a similar result to the 1st regional event in Oulu, where the team did not use pre-reading material.

− In general the participants were very positive about the case study approach for language teaching purposes, which confirmed the results of the 1st LCaS regional event.

− As at the 1st regional event, the participants saw problems concerning the required time input for using case studies in language teaching and for developing case studies.

− Again, the participants were very interested in creating their own case study, although they seemed less keen on creating web-based material (compared to Finland), as their "end-users" were mainly secondary school teachers.

− The teacher training material was considered to be very useful, but sometimes too negative; it was therefore suggested to revise the pre-workshop reading material and to add more positive narratives to the existing ones, i.e. provide models of best practice.


## 7. Workshop results

The workshop participants received a clear picture on what a case study is, in which respects it is different to project work, global simulations and webquests, and how to use case studies in a language class – which will help them in integrating this approach in their daily work, i.e. in their language teaching and/or their teacher training and teacher education programmes.

They also learnt how to make their own case study, giving them the possibility to develop their own teaching material suitable to their own specific teaching needs, and to train language teachers and teacher trainees to create their own case study.

Furthermore, the participants were introduced to the teacher training material and made suggestions for improvements. This material provided the teacher trainers and teacher educators with a useful resource for their professional development activities.

Finally, the strong co-operation particularly between the Irish participants gives hope that a network of teacher trainers/teacher educators and of language teachers has been set up in Ireland, which will continue working on the case study approach and which will disseminate the approach as well as the LCaS Project achievements.

## 8. Where do we go from here?

As well as further revising the existing LCaS case studies and continuing the piloting activities, the team will revise the written documents for the teacher training modules (pre-workshop reading material, narratives) and will produce more narratives on *using* case studies, *making* case studies and *teaching* the use of case studies, with a focus on positive "best practice scenarios".

Furthermore, the team will start the development of the final publication, i.e. a handbook with information on the project and the case study approach, including a CD-Rom containing the teacher training material and the LCaS case studies.

## 9. Summary

After analysing the LCaS case studies and after training workshop participants to use and make case studies during the 1st LCaS regional event in Oulu, Finland, in March 2005, this 2nd regional event concentrated on the teacher training modules. This gave the LCaS team a chance to discuss the pre-workshop reading material, theoretical aspects of the case study approach and the teacher training material developed by the team with the workshop participants.

The participants were actively involved in the workshop and took part in many vivid and animated discussions. The feedback received on the teacher training material will help us to revise and improve the documentation and to add useful, but still missing material to the existing documents.

Again the reactions to the LCaS Project were very positive and stimulating as far as the case study approach is concerned. Most participants showed interest in introducing language case studies into their language teaching or their teacher training and teacher education activities and they gave positive feedback on a highly successful workshop.

The participants and the trainers enjoyed the perfect organisation of the team at UCD, the stimulating working atmosphere in the Daedalus Building, the hospitality of our Irish hosts and the wonderful dinner arrangements in the centre of Dublin. This was only possible due to the support – both logistic and financial – provided by the ECML and the Irish Department of Education and Science, to whom the trainers and the participants are very grateful.

This regional event helped us to identify the next steps to take within the activities of the LCaS project. It helped us to revise the LCaS teacher training modules, to prepare the central event of the LCaS project which will take place in Graz in 2007 and to prepare the final project publication.

4 July 2006

Johann Fischer                Etain Casey                Mary Ruane
(Würzburg)                    (London)                   (Dublin)

## Appendix 1: Participants in the LCaS workshop (Dublin, 11-13 May 2006): UCD Applied Language Centre/ECML Participants

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## Appendix 2: Timetable of the 2nd regional event LCaS project (Dublin, May 2006)

**2nd regional event: Dublin, 11 – 13 May 2006**

### TIMETABLE

### Day one: Thursday 11 May 2006, afternoon

| Time | What? | How? |
|---|---|---|
| | Focus:  introduction to LCaS project and workshop | |
| 14.00 – 14.30 | **Opening:** <br> – Prof Mary Daly (Principal of College of Arts and Celtic Studies, UCD) <br> – Mr Paul Caffrey (Modern Languages Inspector and Governing Board member of the ECML for Ireland) <br> – Mr Adrian Butler (Executive Director ECML Graz) <br> – Dr Johann Fischer (LCaS Co-ordinator) <br> – Ms Mary Ruane (Director of Applied Language Centre, UCD) | Plenary |
| 14.30 – 15.30 | Introduction of participants <br> (name, country, institution, why you are here/ expectations…) + badges <br><br> Presenting the programme of the conference and timetable | Group work (one team member + 5 participants) <br><br> Plenary |
| 15.30 – 16.00 | *Coffee break (Daedalus Building)* | |
| 16.00 – 17.00 | Discussing pre-reading materials <br> Task: <br> *In teams discuss your reactions to the pre-reading texts under these headings:* <br> *methodology* <br> *case studies* <br> *ideas (topics, subjects) for case studies* <br><br> *Establish a group leader who will summarise your views on the flipchart. This can be done in a different language. The summary should be done in English.* | Group work + flipcharts |
| 17.00 – 17.30 | Poster session + plenary discussion of results | |
| 18.45 | *Departure Montrose Hotel at 6.45 to take 10 or 46A bus* | |
| 19.15 | ***Dinner in ELY WINEBAR, 22 Ely Place, Dublin 2*** | |

# TIMETABLE

## Day two: Friday 12 May 2006

| Time | What? | How? |
|---|---|---|
| | Focus:  using case studies in class<br>making case studies | |
| 9.30 – 10.00 | Presentation (recap):<br>What are case studies?<br>Types of case studies<br>Questions | Plenary |
| | Case studies framework | |
| 10.00 – 10.45 | Looking at case studies<br>Video | Group work |
| 10.45 – 11.15 | *Coffee break (Main Restaurant UCD – use voucher!)* | |
| 11.15 – 12.45 | Teaching case studies<br>Participants read three narratives (teaching scenarios) and work them out in a case study approach | Group Work |
| 12.45 – 14.15 | *Lunch break (Main Restaurant UCD – use voucher!)* | |
| 14.15 – 14.45 | Discussion, reflection<br>Presenting conclusions from the group work; focusing on several scenarios (team prepares questions) | Group Work<br><br>Plenary |
| 14.45 – 15.15 | Presentation: How to make a case study? | Plenary |
| 15.15 – 18.00 (coffee break incl.) | Task<br>Participants develop their own case study:<br>agree on topic<br>identify aims and targeted skills<br>write the tasks<br><br>*Materials provided*: framework for case studies + checklist to compare results of group work | Group work |
| 19.45 | *Departure from hotel (to go to dinner)* | |
| 20.30 | ***Dinner in FIRE Restaurant, beside Mansion House, Dawson Street, Dublin 2*** | |

## Day three: Saturday 13 May 2006

| Time | What? | | How? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Focus: teacher training scenarios | | |
| 9.00 – 10.00 | Presentation of case studies developed in the group work | | Plenary |
| 10.00 – 10.30 | Presentation: How to train teachers to use and make case studies? | | Plenary |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | Coffee break | | |
| 11.00 – 12.00 | **Workshop planning** <br> Addressees: teacher trainers <br><br> Tools for teacher trainers for developing courses and workshops for the use of case studies in language teaching | **Lesson planning** <br> Addressees: teachers <br><br> Tools for teachers for using case studies in foreign language classes | Group work |
| 12.00 – 12.30 | Video clip: students' and teachers' reactions to case studies <br> Discussion | | Plenary |
| 12.45 – 14.00 | ***Sandwich lunch in Montrose Hotel*** | | |
| 14.00 – 15.00 | Evaluation of the modules based on reflection sheets <br> Materials provided: evaluation sheet with statements like "What I've learned", "what I will try out"… | | Plenary |
| 15.00 – 15.30 | Evaluation of the regional event | | |

# Appendix 3: Evaluation of the LCaS 2nd regional event (Dublin, May 2006)

(total: 18 forms)

| **Things I have learnt from the workshop** | **Things I will do immediately when I get home** |
|---|---|
| − Info about case studies and how they can be designed; used in class and taught in teacher training (10) <br><br> − The purpose, the structure and examples of case studies → deeper and clearer understanding of case studies (10) <br><br> − Using case studies as a task-based activity (3) <br><br> − Methodology offers endless possibilities of combinations → try new methodologies/approaches (3) <br><br> − The difference between task based learning, projects and case studies (2) <br><br> − Thoughts about using case studies as a learning/teaching approach with student teachers (3) <br><br> − That the topic is rather complex (2) <br><br> − Values of helping learners to: <br>  1. accept responsibility <br>  2. make an argument with evidence <br>  3. work in collaboration <br>  4. report their findings <br><br> − What makes a good case study <br><br> − What other nationalities are doing in their classrooms/their teacher-trainees sessions <br><br> − The challenge for language teachers and language teacher educators to be open <br><br> − Beneficial and enjoyable to work with such a variety of people | − Reread and reflect on the material (11) <br><br> − Think about how to integrate case studies in teaching (with both university students and teacher trainees) (6) <br><br> − Think of language tasks that may be included in case studies <br><br> − Prepare one case study and work on it with my students <br><br> − Share it with my colleagues (6) <br><br> − Send e-mails to colleagues who collaborated in our group in order to continue working on website and case studies (5) <br><br> − Check the website (5) <br><br> − Look up relevant websites and literature (4) <br><br> − File and read the literature on case studies in education and teacher education (2) <br><br> − Read more about use of case studies in teaching at secondary level <br><br> − Start to spread information at both a national and institutional level) |

| Things I will change in the coming two years | My main concerns |
|---|---|
| − Introduce case studies in teacher training courses (9)<br>− Try out case studies in language classrooms → integrate into teaching (6)<br>− Use more authentic materials → more authentic teaching (3)<br>− Offer a workshop on case studies during in-service training (2)<br>− Test case studies with student teachers<br>− Hold a training day for practising teachers<br>− Try to introduce new methods, ways of working related to educational improvement<br>− Be more relaxed in class<br>− Keep on trying to transfer enthusiasm<br>− Keep up to date and more open to this approach | − Amount of work could scare teachers off → time (7)<br>− The challenge in terms of organisation and planning (7)<br>− Resources: finding content that really interests learners and relates to the "real world" (4)<br>− Lack of clarity (3)<br>− Low levels of learners (3)<br>− Difficult to integrate them in some courses (2)<br>− Teachers are not prepared to use this approach (2)<br>− Lack of support (2)<br>− need to be more technologically up-skilled to develop this methodology (2)<br>− Difficult to convince exam-driven teachers<br>− Would learners enjoy and profit from it? |