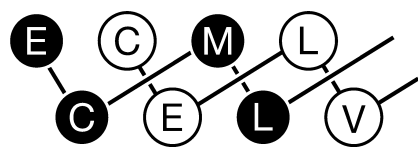# Collection of case studies

on examples of good practice

in Teacher Education

with a focus on organisational aspects

and integrated concepts of language education

Richard Easton

COUNCIL CONSEIL
OF EUROPE DE L'EUROPE

Foreword

The opportunity to be involved with colleagues from a range of states and from a range of sectors has given me a great deal of pleasure, both professional and personal. I therefore wish to express my sincere thanks to colleagues for their hard work and support in producing this collection of case studies.

The primary purpose in producing this collection of case studies in Teacher Education is provide a mechanism for sharing good practice. One hopes that this will afford colleagues an opportunity to reflect on the ideas which lie behind this good practice. In the Information Age it is essential that we have access to current information and practices as they relate to our professional lives. The range of geographical and sector spreads would seem to provide some breadth and depth to our insights into the working practices of colleagues from some of the member states.

At a time when there is considerable change in education and in society in general it is important that we maintain a sense of useful traditions in scholarship and in maintaining the place and importance of the first language. The individual self-construct is indivisible from L1. Similarly, we must also recognise the highly inter-dependent relationship between L1 and L2/L3. To do this effectively we need to have teachers, tutors, lecturers, facilitators, the titles is endless! who have a secure grasp of languages in use and also a secure grasp of the methodologies required to develop confident and autonomous learners.

In the Information Age, if we wish to make useful contributions to society, we all have to be lifelong learners across a range of disciplines. At no point hitherto has there been such a compelling need for citizens to have the ability to communicate in a number of languages. This can only be achieved if there is a very clear view of what language educators have to do and how best they can be prepared to discharge their professional duties. It would be appropriate to point colleagues to the work done by the Think Tank, led by Frank Heyworth, on the roles and functions of teachers in the coming decade.

There is no doubt one of the major developments in language education is the use of ICT. The teacher as facilitator has to draw on all her professional expertise to develop appropriate approaches to teaching and learning. While making use of the new technologies to develop and enhance new approaches to learning she is also helping to build and develop new learning communities which lie beyond the 'walls' of her classroom.

[see also:
workshop report 6/99 "Innovative Approaches to the Organisation and Set-up of Language Education",
project description 2.1.2,
project description 2.1.1
on the ECML website: **http://www.ecml.at, links DocCentre, Workshop reports; Activities**]

The studies in this collection give interesting perspectives on such important themes as lifelong learning, learner autonomy, partnership between professionals and the teacher-client relationship. It is abundantly clear that the message which emerges from this collection is that the individual must be equipped to play a full and useful part in a plurilingual world. It is the job of the teacher educator and teacher to prepare, using the practice, the citizens of tomorrow.

I am sure that colleagues will find these studies stimulating and challenging.

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Context of case studies

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The idea to bring together a number of case studies arose during a workshop in Graz, December 1998, which set itself the task of looking at changes and developments in the provision of pre-service language teacher education. While it is clear that each member state has its own view on what is most appropriate for its learners, there is also the consideration of language as a tool for bringing closer together the peoples of Europe and beyond. The ECML is ideally placed to act as a nodal point for the dissemination of practice collected from the member states via, in this context, its publications programme.

With the development of Council of Europe policies and activities, including the European Common Framework of Reference and the European Language Portfolio, it seems to be important to gather evidence of developments in language teacher education. In addition it also seems important that colleagues will be able to bring to discussions with their individual Ministries information and practice from other states to strengthen arguments and to seek to gain leverage to promote language development and teaching at all levels. A foreign language,

> "frees the mind from the tyranny of words. It is extremely difficult for a monoglot to dissociate thought from words but he who can express his ideas in two languages is emancipated." S.J. Evans. Quoted in R.J. Gardner 1972.

While it is evident that there is great emphasis placed on the interdependence of L1 and L2 / L3 and on the need for all language teachers to work together to develop the learners, one must also be alert to the move in some areas towards a 'generic' approach to teacher education in all subjects. This move to reduce the allocation of time to foreign language can only be seen as counter-productive when one is seeking to develop inter-cultural communicative competence. The 'generic' approach does not and cannot contain the level of detail and subtlety required. Nor can this generic approach to teacher education provide the necessary background for teaching staff who might have a language competence across a range of languages without a high degree of specialism. The methodologies and pedagogy of language teaching are specific and peculiar to the subject domain.

This collection of studies affords the reader an opportunity to gain insights in to some of the developments and practices of colleagues from some of the member states. It would be unusual if the studies did not touch on the topics of learner autonomy, peer support,

lifelong learning and the use of ICT and the articles provide a rich fund of insights and detail on these topics.

I would however propose a brief résumé of the collection by using the following means of analysis:

Looking BACK   to establish clearly whence we come as language people, as learners, clients and teachers.

Looking IN   to establish how we can develop the potential in ourselves, as learners, clients and teachers.

Looking OUT   to establish what lies beyond our own immediate horizons and how we can shift our paradigms to implement change.

Looking FORWARD to anticipate future needs and how best we can prepare to meet these needs of learners, clients and teachers.

It will be evident that the terms learner, client and teacher are not synonymous but they may well be applied to any one person several or more times during the course of her / his lifespan. And so the process may usefully be seen as a helix, with one returning to different 'roles' over time.

I have also taken the liberty of adding some comments based on current practice in pre-service teacher education in Scotland, although there is no separate chapter included. I do hope colleagues will indulge this.

Looking back:

Any reflection on language and its users must include some idea of the core values held in common across societies: one thinks immediately of knowledge about language, perhaps more traditionally known as 'grammar' but going beyond simply knowledge at a declarative level. Also included would be an understanding of the importance of the rich language heritage and diversity which exists within and across frontiers. As noted earlier in this paper, we live in an era where the interdependence of L1 and L2 is clearly recognised and the sense of whence one has come in linguistic terms is a powerful component in enabling one to look without prejudice at others. These 'others' who have chosen to define their worlds in different ways and who have chosen to express their thoughts using different linguistic codes.

We can see this in the pluri lingual approach described by Suliko Liiv but significantly we also learn that there is a National Holiday – Mother Tongue Day. While the main thrust of this paper is a most interesting discussion of learner autonomy, I would argue that one could only be autonomous when one has a highly developed sense of self. This sense of sense depends uniquely on being able to understand the world round about us and being able to relate to it. The way in which we relate to our environment and wider

communities is through the use of language. It is axiomatic that no one has a perfect understanding of language and that perfect communication is something from the realms of science fiction. But we must also recognise that teachers have a responsibility to engage learners with their own L1 so that they, the learners can develop this sense of self, which is located in a community. And, equally importantly, that this community is part of a wider community. We are all acutely aware that accent, dialect and language can be badges which divide with disastrous consequences individuals, communities and states. It would seem imperative then to put in place systems which enables learners to develop in parallel their understanding of L1 and L2 so that the 'badge' does not become excluding but rather something which interest, curiosity and a wish to share, explore and celebrate the differences.

Valerie's chapter, which describes the situation in Malta, demonstrates cogently the need for learners and teachers to have competence in both L1 and L2. She states,

> "... the compulsory core units in both English and Maltese have a practical orientation".

This quote reinforces quite clearly that the languages are equally valued as a medium of communication and instruction. Without rehearsing the detail of the chapter, one may see a very strong link between the development of the learner as a member of a particular linguistic community and the development of the learner who moves via a different language to a different community. Compellingly and cogently, the case is made for teachers to be properly prepared to enable the learners to go down this road. It may be of some interest to know that, currently, in Scotland a great deal of interest is shown in the levels of knowledge about language in pre-service teachers. In England and Wales, the Teacher Training Agency is providing funding to provide supplementary courses to improve levels of knowledge about language for future colleagues.

To look back to an earlier time of Classical Humanism, one can see that the focus has shifted from a small elite which was privileged to have the opportunity to study a foreign language as a mark of its class. We now move towards one which seeks to develop a secure sense of self based on knowing both about languages and knowing how to use languages.

Looking in:

The next stage in this analysis of the chapters will concentrate on he idea of the learner, client and teacher looking in towards herself / himself. This can be seen as the logical extension to the view expressed in the previous section which argued that there is a strong need to have a sense of understanding in one's place in the wider community / linguistic continuum. It is this idea of belonging which enables us all to look, firstly, inwards, to examine our own resources as well as our own needs to develop. Secondly, it is this same sense of a secure base which allows us to look out to wider horizons.

While Liiv and Valerie in their respective chapters have provided important insights into the process whereby learners develop a shared understanding of their backgrounds and develop their own autonomy, Eva and Hartmut provide a different perspective on the different but no less important stage in the 'helix', namely that of the development of the professional whose chosen area of expertise is that of language, and, in particular, that of foreign language.

Both Eva and Hartmut assume as their point of departure a highly developed knowledge and understanding of the language to be taught to the learner / client group and look to ways to build upon and develop the resources which the teacher / tutor brings to the learning situation. Such a social constructivist approach perforce embraces the concept of the development of the learner, client or teacher at whatever point in the continuum, as an autonomous being.

Hartmut stresses in his chapter the importance of the quality of mentoring, i.e. the importance that there is a high-quality dialogue between the professional in post and the professional in training. It is pre-requisite that this dialogue is based on mutual respect: each partner must recognise and respect the particular and different knowledge and skills which each brings to the dialogue. This theme of high-quality dialogue is also an important thread which runs through the chapter provided by Eva.

In this chapter we note that two significant concerns, *inter alia,* are:

- to increase motivation in observing lessons;
- to increase motivation in respectively giving and receiving feedback.

Although there may be disagreement about the definition of terms, it may be useful here to mention that 'feedback', as a term does not necessarily imply any notion of inequality in the relationship. 'Feedback' may be used to mean the sort of exchange which colloquially involves, "This is how it was for me". Constructive criticism may be used to encapsulate a power difference wherein one party may give an opinion and expect that the second party acts upon or reacts to the comments made in a way which moves the professional practice of the second party forward. Significantly in this chapter, both parties, regardless of status, are called upon to examine their practice and to engage in a professional dialogue at a variety of levels.

It would appear self-evident that the development of teachers will involve them in the process as 'teachers as clients' and 'teachers as learners' and that this process will, of necessity, need resources. The two chapters provided by Eva and Hartmut would seem to argue strongly in favour of a developed and highly supportive partnership model. Such a model can only be developed and implemented if and only if there are sufficient resources available to allow all parties to engage actively with the task in hand.

And yet, the information contained in the chapter by Marion would seem both to contradict and to support such a view. There is, quite appropriately, a focus on the provision of ways in which learners, clients and teachers can move forward in their development. What Marion makes very explicit is that a significant tranche of the adult

learning population has its learning needs met while those who meet these needs may well form part of a group which does not attract official support. At a time when certification can be seen as a major industry, (this may only apply to the UK), one might easily identify a 'crack' in the professional wall. The UK has established a body, the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT). Colleagues working in Further and Higher Education are expected to demonstrate their eligibility to become members of this body. There is an assumption that staff teaching in FE and HE will fall neatly into the category of full-time permanent staff. This is contrary to the evidence that many members of staff are part-time and have not had any formal preparation for the role of tutor or lecturer.

Colleagues working in the FE / HE sectors in the UK have to look to their own backgrounds and to within themselves for resources to sustain them in their duties. As this chapter highlights, in the UK, the need for some mechanism which provides official accreditation for staff who seek to move beyond a desire to improve their practice. The important developments outlined in Marion's chapter may be of interest to colleagues working in systems which are in the process of change and development.

When one looks at the processes whereby teachers are part of a continuous development cycle one can look with reasonable certainty to a positive learning and teaching cycle. It is probably easier for the teacher to identify with the learners and clients when they themselves are negotiating their own learning and the processes involved in this. Such a change can properly be described as a paradigm shift, from that of the deficit model, where the subject is paramount, to a developmental model where the actors, processes and product all have significant roles top play. We may usefully remind ourselves at this point of Holec, quoted in Suliko, when autonomy is defined as,

> "the ability to take charge of one's learning".

For our purposes we have to see as implicit in this statement the words 'at whatever point in one's development one may be'.

Looking out:

What can help us all as learners move from the positions inherited from our own past? If language is a badge which has the potential to exclude as well as to include how can we help build communities which have their own sense of identity and the confidence to embrace and celebrate difference? These are two questions to which we must seek answers by sharing goals, aspirations and good practices with colleagues from the member states and beyond. We note the importance of providing opportunities for young learners to have contact with L2 in the primary school (Malta) and also that this contact is equally important for adults (Estonia). At a different point in the helix, colleagues involved in the work carried out in Tübingen declared an interest in staff development taking place in a country where the target language is spoken. Interestingly, one chapter (Scotland) makes specific mention of Cultural Awareness as

part of its certificate programme. We have moved out from knowing about the language to knowing how to use it in contextually appropriate ways.

It would be somewhat odd if we were to argue against the very real benefits of direct contact with speakers of the target language. It follows from this that colleagues involved in language education at all levels have a responsibility to promote the movement of learners and to develop exchanges which will facilitate this movement. Paradoxically, travel is apparently much easier than in the past but time pressure on learners; clients and teachers can make it increasingly difficult for movement and exchanges to take place.

We note that reference is made in a number of chapters to the use of 'new' technologies. The chapter written by Seppo provides us with interesting and challenging insights in to a situation which is 'technology intensive'. Colleagues will note the balance in the perspectives put forward in this chapter: technology, (or should it be technologies?) is not seen as a panacea. It can be used to help build new 'virtual communities'. As Seppo contends,

> "foreign languages can – and should – be used to create, establish and maintain these new environments that are beneficial and conducive to meaningful learning."

The chapter sets out a number of important stages in the development of technology as an educational tool. Perhaps one might see the increasingly significant convergence of foreign language methodology and ICTs as an important to one of the ways in which we can look out to wider horizons. Perhaps reassuringly, we also note that the teacher will continue in the role of 'sage on the stage' as well as that of 'guide on the side'.

It is useful to remind ourselves that 'looking out' can be achieved by working in partnership with learners, clients, mentors, with anyone who wears a different badge as well as by stepping in to the virtual worlds of advanced electronic media.

Looking forward:

It can be argued that all of the chapters have put forward interesting and challenging ideas which help to take us forward in our many and varied roles. In the introduction mention was made of potential shift towards a more 'generic' approach to pre-service education and it is useful to remind ourselves that our particular discipline has its own pedagogy. One of the chapters (Finland) brings to our attention one important development: that of the shift from language as medium to language as mediation, viz.,

> "Language becomes an empowering mediator between teacher, the content matter and the culture represented by these two on the one hand and the community of learners and the learner tasks on the other. In this process, the role of information and communication technologies may prove to be very valuable and beneficial".

It has to be said that there is no challenge to the position of subject knowledge which underpins our discipline. What we have to do is to seek ways in which we can develop and work *differently*. There is a strong body of research which supports the use of 'epistemic play' and yet the idea of 'edutainment' or 'infotainment' may sit uneasily with more traditional concepts of the learner / teacher dynamic.

When one looks at the work done by the "Think Tank" led by Frank Heyworth[1], one can see a focus on the need to recognise the need for new approaches and innovative practice. On the one hand, there is a list of 'person-oriented changes' such as integrating reflective practice and accepting learner autonomy. In addition there is also a recognition that teachers will need to acquire and develop a new range of skills, including the mastery, at an appropriate level, of ICT.

At an organisational level, the Think Tank has recommended that there be

- a common framework for curriculum design in teacher education;
- contributions made to the revised version of the European Language Portfolio.

While it would be unwise to suggest that the chapters contained in this collection provide 'answers' to the needs set out by the Think Tank, it is equally important to underline the fact that they, the contributors, make most useful and insightful comments. The major themes of learner autonomy, life-long learning and personal and professional development are all given serious examination.

On a personal note I would very much like to see some work done in the field of special needs and language and I hope that colleagues will be able to contribute to the major tasks which lie ahead during the European Year of Languages and beyond.

I thank all the contributors most sincerely for their hard work in producing such interesting and challenging work.

I commend these chapters to colleagues everywhere and look forward to the debates which will follow.

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[1] ECML Workshop 6/99.

Initial teacher training of MFL students in Germany for grammar schools with special regard to Baden-Württemberg – A case study

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Summary

The following presentation concentrates on the field of pre-service training for future teachers of modern languages at Grammar School level, esp. for English, French and Spanish, at the Teacher Training College of Tübingen in Baden-Wuerttemberg. After describing the framework of teacher training in general and the work of our Institute in that field, attention is given to a specific programme of co-operation between several European teacher training institutions to enhance the quality of mentoring, which is a decisive element in the system of teacher training.

Guidelines and responsibilities

The national guideline for initial teacher training in Germany is based on the national law for civil servants. It demands a two-year period of preparation (*Referendarzeit*) after having accomplished a Master's Degree in at least two subjects.

The responsibility for teacher training lies with the Ministry of Education of each federal state. In Baden-Württemberg the Ministry of Education and Sports is responsible for the curriculum and the examinations.

The Teacher Training College Tübingen

The "Staatliche Seminar für Schulpädagogik (Gymn.)" in Tübingen was founded in 1946. It is a state supported independent post-graduate teacher training institution in the State of Baden-Württemberg in the Southwest of Germany.

Along with nine similar colleges in a federal state of 10.5 million inhabitants this Higher Education Institution (HEI) is responsible for the two-year-preparation course for post-graduates and future Gymnasium- (= grammar school) teachers. It is obligatory for those who want to become fully certified teachers at grammar schools. Courses for newly appointed trainees start every year in September. This year's course has 150 participants (state-wide: 1 400), which, combined with last year's 150, adds up to a total number of 300 trainees in Tübingen.

The staff of our College in Tübingen consists of 58 people including secretarial and clerical staff, 47 of them full-time Higher Education tutors. In addition to their work with trainees a HE tutor must still have a regular assignment of at least 5-6 periods per week at school, so that he or she knows from his or her own experience what could be demanded from a trainee in class. The staff has been recruited from the Gymnasium sector on the basis of their pedagogical and scientific qualifications and publications.

The Teacher Training College in Tübingen covers 18 different subjects areas, among them English, French and Spanish as Modern Languages. In the field of Modern Languages only the college produces more than 60 MFL-teachers per year.

Courses in methodology range from two to four periods per week per subject and amount to 120 periods per subject within two years. In addition, pedagogy and psychology courses of 150 periods have to be taken as well as a course in school-related legal aspects (40 periods).

Trainee teachers and entry requirements

After having taken the Abitur (= A-level exams) every applicant has to study two to three subjects at university level. While an equivalent to a BA is sufficient for future teachers of primary and comprehensive schools, a Master's Degree in at least two subjects (one or two of which may be a foreign language) is necessary to apply for the two-year-preparation course for future grammar school teachers.

The usual entry age of trainee teachers is a deplorable 28 (after an average of 7.4 years of university studies with 0,5 to 1 year usually spent in a foreign country of their target language). The average entry age is not only due to rather long university studies but also due to military or civil service (one year) and sometimes due to an apprenticeship of about three years after leaving school.

At the beginning of the first meeting at the Teacher Training College they have to take an oath to respect the basic law and are appointed civil servants.

They are paid about 630 pounds per month plus allowances.

Our trainees are assigned to 27 different grammar schools in the Tübingen area for teaching practice which is guided by experienced members of staff. Our HE tutors visit their trainees during their lessons for analysis and guidance six to seven times during their teaching practice (the last two being assessed during the exam period).

After their first year of training and teaching under supervision, trainees have to change to another school for their second year where they are assigned a non-supervised teaching load of 9-11 periods (45 minutes each) per week and where they have to prepare for their final examinations taken during the last six months of the two-year course.

The final examinations consist of the presentation of four lessons, two in each subject, a thesis of 30-80 pages, and four oral exams (methodology in two subjects, pedagogy, law).

Organisation of course work at the teacher training college

The course starts once a year in September one day after the start of the school year. It is a full time course both at school and at our Institute and covers two years of post-graduate tuition with about 40 weeks in the first and 16 weeks in the second year (September-December of the following year) before the start of the examination period.

After an initial three-week-compact course the trainee teachers normally attend lessons in school in the mornings and attend seminars at the Teacher Training College on two to four afternoons per week.

Content of courses

- pedagogy and psychology (150 periods of 45 minutes):
    - the importance of school as a learning environment;
    - pluralistic society and education as an orientation on basic humanistic values;
    - different tracks and educational goals;
    - the educational program of the "Gymnasium";
    - teachers as professional educators, their responsibilities and self-concept;
    - how to translate the findings of education and psychology (e.g. memory span, motivation, types of learners, individual learning strategies, transfer learning, discovery learning, etc.) into successful lesson plans and performance skills;
    - how to determine what to teach and to what end;
    - teaching skills (group / pair work, individual / collaborative work – developing skills referred to above);
    - multi-sensory learning, visualisation, use of media, blackboard work;

- formation of concepts, planning (short term, medium term and long term);
- the function of homework;
- addressing learning problems;
- reflection on practice: role of evaluation in the learning process, classroom management – reasons for / managing of pupil behaviour / use of rewards / sanctions etc.;
- monitoring, assessment, recording, reporting and accountability – assessing pupils' work and performance both formally and informally, examinations etc.
- pastoral issues, e.g. role of the form tutor etc.;

- methodology of teaching subject A: 120 periods and methodology of teaching subject B: 120 periods:
  - developing pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills from 11-19; this also includes sessions on using video, creativity, songs, writing poetry, organising drama classes, reading for pleasure, doing research in libraries and on the Internet;
  - subject knowledge:
    – keeping language skills up to date;
    – information on cultural studies;
    – information on State Curriculum;
    – methods of analysing prose, drama and poetry;

- legal aspects of teaching: 40 periods;

- training of voice and speech: 6 periods;

- information and communication technologies – Internet research etc.: 12 periods.

The tasks of HE tutors

- teaching in College: lectures, workshops, seminars, compact courses etc.;
- school visits to observe trainees in the classroom, give feedback;
- assessment of trainees' progress together with mentor;
- mentor training (normally once per year);
- setting examples of good teaching in their own class.

School commitment

After the initial phase of about four weeks of observation, the trainee teachers start teaching small parts of a lesson or one single lesson before taking over a series of lessons (usually 6-14) on a specific topic / unit. The lessons are prepared with the help of a mentor, who also observes the trainees in the classroom and gives detailed feedback afterwards. In the first year, they have to teach at least 120 lessons (45 min. each) under guidance.

After the first year, the trainees go to a new school for their second year to broaden their pedagogic experience.

The mentor's guidance is drastically reduced. Trainees are regarded as "junior teachers" by their colleagues, and they get the usual assistance any new teacher would get. Full responsibility for classes (9-11 periods per week) is transferred to trainees in the second year. Their school mentor, often head of department, normally visits them only two to three times per year for guidance and assessment. In addition to that they have to do one unit of guided teaching (6-12 periods) in each subject.

Assessment

To encourage the trainees, there is no assessment in the first year. At the end of the first year, the school and Teacher Training College have to decide whether the trainee can take over the responsibility of teaching classes completely on his or her own, without a mentor sitting at the back of the classroom. If this is not the case, guided teaching will be prolonged for another half year.

In the second half of the second year the examination period begins. Two lessons per subject are assessed by a representative of the examining board and by the HE tutor. In addition to this, every trainee has to hand in a thesis of 30-60 pages on methodological and / or pedagogical issues, based on the teaching experience in a specific class. The examination period ends with three oral examinations: pedagogy / psychology, methodology of subject A, methodology of subject B. The head teacher of the second-year school assesses the overall performance of the trainee as well.

The context of mentors' work

The mentoring system in Germany addresses two different types of teachers who are responsible for trainees at school. On the one hand there are all the subject teachers of a school, who could be asked by any trainee for assistance, either for observation purposes in the experienced teacher's classroom or by taking over his / her class for a limited period (normally for three weeks) and getting individual feedback after the lessons.

On the other hand there are mentors, who are appointed by the head teacher. Mentors should normally be well-experienced senior teachers, usually in the position of a head of department. They do not get extra pay for being a mentor. It is expected of them, because they have already taken up a superior position in the hierarchy of the school.

Mentors are responsible for the organisation of the training in school. This is more or less administrative work:

- supervision and training of trainee in school;

- observation of lessons and feedback, checking of lesson plans and schemes of work;

- keeping the record of a trainee's lessons;

- organisation of trainee's teaching / observation timetable;

- collecting the assessments of the other teachers who have taken a trainee for supervised teaching;

- preparing the overall assessment of a trainee for the head teacher etc.

As they are experienced teachers themselves, they also take a trainee into their own class for supervised teaching for at least one period of about three weeks. Guidance and assessment is required of them as well as of the other teachers.

Mentor training

There is no organised form of mentor training. The head teachers have to choose experienced teachers, often heads of department, as mentors. Apart from the co-ordinating function of mentors, any teacher can offer his or her class to be taken over by a trainee for a limited period of time. The teacher in charge then has to meet all the requirements listed under the responsibilities of a mentor.

There is usually one "Subject Panel Day" per year for mentors, carried out by HE tutors. The focus is on the updating of methodology and only to a small extent on mentor training.

Quality control

There is no established form of quality control of courses and / or the work of school mentors. Discussions on how to evaluate course work have recently begun.

A well-established procedure is the joint observation (by HE tutor and school mentor) of trainee teaching, feedback and discussion (ensuring the same basis of feedback and at the same time being a kind of permanent mentor training).

Trainee 'drop-out' rates

Generally not more than 1-2 % leave the course during the first year. About the same rate applies to the second year including exam failures. College and school try hard to avoid failure and take remedial action and offer more intensive supervision by the tutor – in close co-operation with the school mentor.

Employment rates of trainees

About 40-50% are successful in getting a job in a state school. This varies largely: the employment rate of applicants with subjects such as maths, arts, music, is up to twice as high as the average, the rate of those with subjects as geography, history, chemistry is close to zero.

Another 15-20% get a job in a private school.

About 7% get a job in industry, especially in the fields of personnel management, marketing, ICT-training.

A New Step: "Apartment" – A partnership for mentors

Since 1998 the Teacher Training College Tübingen has taken part in a joint project together with Teacher Training Colleges in England, France, Spain, Austria and Iceland, funded by Lingua A, to further the skills of mentors in Modern Language Teaching.

It has long been recognised that the practicum is an essential element of professional Higher Education (HE). In teacher education in Europe, practicum elements of curricula vary widely, e.g. German Länder require trainee teachers to be in school for between 18-24 months, while in Spain for the CAP qualification, student teachers are required to be in school for only twenty days. A common feature though is the joint 'supervision' of trainees by tutors from their HEI and mentors from the school. The nature of the relationship between HE tutors and school mentors varies greatly between and within the states. With the development of the 'reflective practitioner model' of teacher education, and, in some cases, legislation for student teachers to spend more time in schools, the need for a strong relationship gains importance.

In Modern Foreign Language Initial Teacher Education (MF ITE), there can be many weaknesses in the HE tutor – school mentor relationship such as:

a) the undervaluing of the academic elements of teacher education programme by mentors;

b) the supervising teacher not receiving sufficient information on the teacher education curriculum;

c) mentors lacking the necessary skills to educate adults (as opposed to children);

d) mentors feeling threatened by the superior L2 skills of their student teachers.

Over a three-year period, the APartMent project will address these weaknesses by developing mentor-training programmes which significantly strengthen partnerships between HE teacher educators and school mentor, and so improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the practicum in MFL ITE.

Work started with a detailed needs analysis in all the countries taking part in this project. The first step was a large number of informal interviews with mentors and teachers who have had experience in the field of teacher training. These teachers were informally interviewed in the catchments area of the Teacher Training College Tübingen. The basis for such interviews was the mutual analysis of the present situation of teacher training, especially by addressing deficits of the organisation and the contents of the teacher training courses. The teachers interviewed were teachers of English, French and Spanish.

The second step was the development of a detailed questionnaire being the basis for the following results in the field of:

- methodology and professional development of mentors;
- guidance and counselling;
- in-service training, especially in countries of the target language.

The last field is of great interest for the participants of the project, because a detailed in-service programme for European teachers of English in England has to be devised for October 2000.

About 60% of the mentors who have returned the questionnaire, have a general interest in in-service programs and declare that they have taken part in such programs quite frequently. A majority (68%) think that the number of programs in this field is too small, especially in counselling.

When it comes to in-service programs in the countries of the target languages, the differences between the mentors of English on the one hand and those of French and Spanish on the other, are interesting: More than 80% of the mentors of English are interested in an in-service-programme in an English-speaking country, but only 50% of the mentors of French and Spanish share that opinion. Interviews show that teachers of French visit France more frequently than English teachers visit an English-speaking country. France is a neighbouring country to Baden-Württemberg and rather easy to visit. Mentors for Spanish are still a small group. They are offered quite a lot of well-structured summer courses at Spanish universities for their in-service training.

When asked about the fields of interest which a course in the country of the target language should cover, they are ranked as follows:

- language training;
- cultural studies;
- empowerment of methodological competence;
- courses in literature;
- training in counselling.

As a résumé it could be stated that the majority of experienced teachers and mentors are interested in in-service courses in a country of the target language, provided that the courses address the fields of interest they prefer. Training in methodology and counselling should be a part of it, but not be the most important and should at least not dominate the contents of the course. It would certainly be accepted as one topic among others.

Such courses will be developed and offered at the HEIs of the target language, along with a course book for mentors of MFLs in Europe. Support by Lingua B will enable teachers from the respective countries to take part.

Further development in Baden-Württemberg

Only a month ago new plans were issued by the Ministry of Education with the aim to better connect the two phases of ITE, at the university and at the HEI for postgraduates.

Up to now, the two phases have nothing much in common. To prepare future teachers for their job, universities very rarely offer courses in methodology, which are not obligatory at present. A practicum of only four weeks after the first two years of study was introduced two years ago as a transition period. From the year 2002, ITE-student will have to spend half a year at a school for practice in their third year, before they are allowed to finish their studies. This period of practice will be accompanied by experienced teachers at school and HE tutors. As a consequence of the introduction of this intensive practicum, the post graduate phase of teacher training at the Teacher Training Colleges in the State of Baden-Württemberg will be reduced from two years to a year and a half from the year 2004 onwards.

Much debate is going on at the moment, because experts feel that more school practice is needed during ITE, but on the other hand, the reduction of the post-graduate preparation phase of two years still seems to be a necessary basis for excellence in teaching.

The future will show whether Baden-Württemberg, and Germany as a whole, will be able to meet the needs of qualifying future teachers in a more and more demanding society of a unifying Europe, which is aware of the global challenge. The members of staff of the Teacher Training College Tübingen are prepared to do their best.

Class Room Observation and teacher tandems as teaching development systems

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Context within teacher education

This case study shows how the Goethe-Institute introduced a new system of co-operation among peers as a way of achieving an important didactic objective – the development of classroom observation as a major tool for improved quality of teaching. Previously classroom observation had been top-down and we felt that it did not have enough dynamism to support our ideas of development. Therefore, by seeking to involve teachers in the process in an inter-personal, creative way we hoped to contribute to a culture of mutual feedback.

We shall describe in greater detail two parts of a medium term project, namely the development of classroom observation material and the introduction of teacher tandems.

Over the past fifty years the Goethe-Institutes in Germany[1] have built up a network of 18 schools where adults from the age of 18 can learn German as a foreign language. Most of the students come from Europe, Japan, North- and South America and they attend courses in Germany for a limited period of time. Their interests vary, of course, but they often need to learn or improve the language for professional reasons, or to meet academic requirements. Increasingly, the course participants are asking for their individual needs to be met.

The 18 schools employ a total of about 220 teachers on a permanent basis and an increasing number (currently about 80 teachers) of temporary staff. There has been a halt in recruitment for the last ten years and the average age of our permanent teaching staff is now almost fifty years. The temporary staff are younger and more often at the beginning of their teaching careers. From the beginning, all permanent teachers, all university graduates, appointed by the Goethe Institute, have attended a period of pre-service training for three months up to two years. In the beginning of the nineties, teacher training was dominated by centrally organised workshops, which lasted a week, as well as by local day seminars at the institutes. Both types of workshops were mainly carried out by external experts e.g. from universities. Since the mid-nineties we have shifted the focus in the direction of local activities at the institutes and provided more

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[1] The Goethe-Institute is a world wide non-profit semi-private organisation promoting German as a foreign language and German culture.

resources and support. Seminars are now organised and run locally, regionally or centrally for all institutes in Germany. Teachers have the possibility to get funding for publicly offered seminars and in some *Länder* of Germany staff may apply for an extra week for training in different areas e.g. 'language learning' or 'information technology'.

When we introduced new curricula in 1996 it became obvious that the criteria and procedures concerning Class Room Observation (CRO) no longer reflected the ideas and principles of the new curricula. For example the criteria did not correspond to the concepts of autonomous learning or the use of self-access resources. The procedures did not pay sufficient attention to the formative role of CRO and neglected the chances of peer-observation completely. The underlying philosophy was dominated by questions of assessment; the observer was *per definitionem* the director or the head of academic studies. The result was that classroom observation was limited to the question of whether the teaching practice fulfilled the assessment criteria and observation was only applied on a prescribed minimum basis. It has to be stated that – in addition – there might be some general reservation in Germany towards CRO because of its role in the state's two years pre-service training period.

Our vision

In order to make the curriculum really work, we felt we had to go into the classrooms and make sure the change really happened where it should. We decided to up-date the material for CRO in the order to establish classroom observation as one driving force in the process of quality development in the Goethe-Institutes. The teaching was to be developed to meet the requirements and expectations of learners who were to be looked at as customers, as they had to pay for the courses. We also gave the same importance to the further development of the teaching staff, in order to prevent a sense of routine developing and to assure a better perception of the learning and teaching process. After the introduction of the new curriculum this provided another opportunity to develop and to establish quality standards both in the institutes in Germany and abroad. When we started the project we knew that the initiative for change should not just come from the top but be influenced and guided by the peer observation programme.

The emphasis on class room observation has to be seen in a wider context of an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) carried out in 1995, the implementation of a concept of local teacher education and new developments in the area of out-of-class-activities such as self-access centres, cultural and social programmes and language tandems for learners.

The project

The development of material for Class Room Observation

As a first step we carried out desk-based research on our present procedures and material, which varied considerably in the different institutes. We then defined the desired outcomes of the whole innovatory process which included the production of a book as well as a result such as improved teaching across the institutes. Experts in the field, H.J. Krumm and B. Ziebell[1], agreed to take responsibility for actually developing the material. The sources for the development of the materials on classroom observation (were both internal from the Goethe-Institute and external such as relevant research. In order to achieve the best possible results and to motivate as many of the staff as possible to participate, we sent questionnaires to all teachers and to the academic managers. At four institutes parts of the material, although only in draft form, were evaluated. Later all teachers were asked to comment on a revised draft version of the material.

The objectives

Our objectives for developing the material and establishing a better system of classroom observation were manifold. Specifically, the objectives were

- to provide a variety of material for teacher development, both pre-service and In Service Education for Teachers (INSET);

- to train and motivate both teachers and academic managers in lesson observation;

- to ensure that the criteria reflected the new curricula;

- to create a culture which is open to feedback;

- to decrease anxieties related to CRO;

- to reflect the teaching- learning process.

Communication helps implementation

During the process of development some colleagues and, at some institutes, the greater part of the teaching staff, protested against the idea of enhancing the role of classroom observation. The project was perceived as another form of control of which they disapproved. The arguments against it demonstrated that some colleagues could only see the project in a line with a negative outcome where – again – the teachers would be blamed for mistakes and be held responsible for weaknesses. Their reaction focussed

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[1] Barbara Ziebell und Hans-Jürgen Krumm, Materialien zur Unterrichtsbeobachtung, Ed. Goethe-Institut, München, 1998.

only on the perceived disadvantages and deficits and thus the possibilities for future development offered by the scheme were overlooked.

The reception varied from strong protest to indifference. Some teachers stated that the existing material was sufficient, other doubted whether practice could be changed just by developing new material. All sceptical or critical letters, even protest notes, received a careful and detailed response. During the process the schools were kept informed and interim progress reports were supplied regularly. The reception at the institutes made it clear that the aspect of peer observation must not be neglected. The rather strong reactions at some institutes showed that we underestimated the widespread anxieties. The first communication is crucial and should pay attention to sensitive questions. It is an error to think the subject itself comes first; good communication is the first step for the implementation. After every teacher got his own copy of the "Materialien zur Unterrichtsbeobachtung" the acceptance of the project among the teachers and the academic managers increased noticeably.

Training

Right from the beginning it was clear that the development of the material was only one important element that was needed to achieve the above mentioned objectives. Shortly after the publication of "Materialien zur Unterrichtsbeobachtung" all academic managers were invited to a seminar where the philosophy behind the new concept was presented and discussed. On the part of the academic managers, their reservations about the project resulted from the fear of being asked – again – to work more and to spend more time with CRO. A less outspoken scepticism was due to the anticipation of a situation where managers would be asked to give feedback to teachers. It was important to give room for the expression of these impressions. The first rather obvious objective of this seminar was to ensure a thorough understanding of the comprehensive document "Materialien zur Unterichtsbeobachtung". This consists of an introduction where the context of quality management and teacher education is outlined, and where the distinction between observation and assessment is made. It became clear that the material was very suitable for the development of the skills of CRO. The training focussed on the following questions:

- How do we prepare the observation?
- How should the observer react during the observation?
- Who decides which criteria or focus the observation should have?
- What are possible risks in relation to CRO? Questions like objectivity, validity.
- How can assessment mistakes be avoided?
- How can we give feedback to the observee?
- Can we agree on guidelines for feedback?
- Which settings of post-observation sessions are most suitable?

The main focus of the seminar was to outline classroom observation in the context of quality management and staff development. The guiding question was "How can we further develop our teaching?". The most difficult lesson to learn was to accept that

development is always necessary and feasible although the actual standards are already high and the customers are well satisfied with the teaching and in particular with their teachers. It is a paradigm shift to exchange the deficit approach to the development approach.

The introduction of peer-observation in the form of teacher tandems

A second aim of the seminar was to introduce a model of teacher tandems[1] as a self-directed, collaborative teaching development system. The emphasis in the new concept of CRO lay on the formative role and therefore the peer-observation. The model was first developed by Esther Enns, University of Calgary, and Hans Rudolf Lanker[2], Switzerland, where it has been regularly developed further and is applied successfully in Switzerland. We used this model of teacher tandems as a starting point for our model in the Goethe-Institute.

This means that two teachers build a tandem team, observe each other in the classroom and give each other feedback.

In a preliminary phase teachers receive general information on the project and identify possible tandem partners. In the beginning criteria for the choice should be

- comparable work situation;
- common professional aims;
- partners should get on with each other;
- partners should respect each other's competence and qualifications;
- (and last, but not at least), should treat each other with respect.

Partners should indicate their readiness to begin a tandem to the identified partner. In a second step, partners agree on

- the areas where they wish to get feedback;
- what their aims and expectations are;
- the planned duration of the tandem;
- an overall time scale.

Both partners should be open about their worries and anxieties concerning the tandem experience. It is important to develop a positive and collaborative attitude between the tandem partners. They should try to accept their partner and his or her personality, and should try and develop an honest relationship. As with every kind of tandem learning is flexible in relation to time and room. Learners can arrange to learn as long and as often they like to wish or can organise. This flexibility offers therefore an opportunity as well

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[1] A tandem is a bicycle run by two persons. In the education context, tandems are teams consisting of two persons who exchange competences and learn from each other.
[2] Hans Rudolf Lanker, Director of "Zentralstelle für Lehrerinnen und Lehrerfortbildung" in Lerbermatt, Bern, Switzerland.

as it has a risk in it because the flexibility might lead to vagueness and non-commitment. For these reasons it is wise to set some rules and to follow them.

The "Materialien zur Unterrichtsbeobachtung" provide a rich selection of different papers for various aspects of the project. There are papers to be used prior to the observation, during the observation and material to facilitate the post-observation discussion, both for the observer and the observee. Here some examples:

- Guidance for the preparation of a lesson, lesson plan;
- Criteria for specific areas like 'visualising' or 'teacher attitude';
- Support for self-reflection for the observee;
- Guidelines for feedback;
- Criteria for evaluating group work;
- Criteria for presenting grammatical structures;
- Criteria for evaluating class room management.

After its publication this material was criticised because of its comprehensiveness. This was partly a misunderstanding because the observers and observees have to make their choice of the specific materials they will use for their observation. An evaluation of what parts of the material are used more frequently has yet to be carried out.

Every tandem sequence should be evaluated and we provided some criteria to measure the success of it.

Do both tandem partners feel there has been

- an improvement in their pedagogic skills?
- a grown competence in their field?
- a greater degree of self-reflection, self-knowledge?
- a better-developed ability to reflect on their own practice?
- greater enjoyment when they teach?
- a stronger feeling of self-confidence?

The implementation of the tandem model

The academic managers decided to integrate the implementation of this model of teacher tandems in their objectives for the year 1999 with a high priority. As additional support we arranged telephone and e-mail hotlines for further support by the trainer. To facilitate the introduction of the tandems and the "Materialien zur Unterrichtsbeobachtung" at the institutes, the academic managers were given an additional set of materials which they could present in local seminars.

Evaluating the project

A first evaluation after six months has shown that only a few institutes could finally establish tandems without providing further training by external experts. Some institutes organised local seminars with the external trainer and were effective in doing so. In one institute a teacher attended the seminar and implemented the tandem idea very successfully. The fact that a colleague and not a superior had introduced the system helped a lot; this could be a model for further local seminars in the future. In some institutes the model was not introduced at all because the academic managers has not attended the seminar or they had left the institute for reasons of job rotation. Some academic managers tried to introduce the system but could not persuade their colleagues to join the tandem project. In some institutes the tandems were first presented and well accepted but disappeared, 'somehow' from the schools timetable so the innovatory process was interrupted. At three institutes the staff knew that the institutes would be closed by the end of the year and although the teachers would be going to teach at Goethe-Institutes in other towns they had no commitment to set up the tandem project. Summarising the experience of all institutes, the following obstacles and problems became evident and have to be overcome:

- The time taken from the decision to develop the material early in 1997 and the publication of the material at the end of 1998 was quite long. It would be indeed feasible and useful to carry out projects of this size in a shorter time. On the other hand the production of the material was organised as a process where everybody could contribute. This took more time than we had thought, but we considered this time for the development as a first step of the implementation.

- The academic managers cannot introduce innovation without the support and endorsement of the director. An innovation of this importance must become a part of the institute's objectives and should be evaluated in the annual appraisal interview.

- The implementation at the institutes should not depend only on one person.

- The academic managers are sometimes less successful when training their own staff. Recent research carried out in Switzerland provides a very interesting analysis of factors for effectiveness and sustainability of teacher training and development.[1] One result was that the training provided and run by the school management was considered to be less effective and therefore less successful. My hypothesis is that this result is not due to the school manager's inability to train but because of the tension between their roles of supportive trainer and hierarchic superior.

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[1] Charles Landert, Lehrerweiterbildung in der Schweiz. Ergebnisse der Evaluation von ausgewählten Weiterbildungssystemen und Entwicklungslinien für eine wirksame Personalentwicklung in den Schulen, Chur, Zürich 1999, p. 105.

- Innovation cannot be disseminated only by material, e-mail and phone. The attendance of central seminars must be obligatory; all institutes have to be represented.

- In some institutes teachers refused to join the programme unless they were paid for the time they spent in the tandem project. Teachers and academic managers asked for detailed guidelines concerning the organisation of the tandems. This attitude shows an understanding of staff development that teachers think their development is entirely the management's problem or more general the employer's responsibility.

- Some academic managers still felt inexperienced in giving feedback so that they did not observe lessons often enough for training purposes. There was some feeling that the managers might not be able to cope with difficult situations and discussions provoked by feedback sessions.

- Maybe there exists some reservation towards the self-directed character of tandems. Up to a certain degree managers must be prepared to give up control and should be confident that teachers develop in the 'right direction'. Responsibility is partly misunderstood as having complete control of the learning process.

Interim result and consequences

As a consequence of this evaluation a second seminar for the academic managers was provided in the second half of the year. The emphasis was then laid on the dynamic between a developed feedback culture and the self-perceived need for development. We found out that the organisation's wish for harmony left its mark on our attitude towards feedback and conflicts. The main thing was to get on with each other even at the expense of stagnation in questions of quality. Conflicts were more often seen as a result of personal deficiency, and therefore better hidden or avoided. The seminar suggested a different view, namely to see disturbance and conflicts more as a step in a process. Conflicts are a necessary prerequisite to every change process, there is no learning without conflict. If conflicts are addressed and solutions are found they are fruitful. Hidden conflicts, conflicts which are not handled adequately or a too high degree of conflict can be a serious problem within an organisation. The seminar included training in communication skills with a special focus on difficult situations in communication, giving critical feedback and how to communicate in situations where there is conflict.

Conclusions and plans for future action

Although the project is not yet fully realized we still think it is important to invest in the idea of teacher tandems.

- There should be another series of local seminars where teachers who are successfully involved in tandem work could report on their experience.

- A central seminar should be offered for those teachers who share the experience and wish to develop the tandem idea any further.

- Together with the academic managers we should consider measures to formalise the monitoring and supervision of tandems.

- The Goethe Tandem experience shall be documented and evaluated by teachers who are actually involved in it.

The tandem model provides a system of development which corresponds to existing needs, because the partners define their needs themselves. It is highly flexible and can be applied in most teaching contexts. In this model the responsibility for development is now shared and not only something the employer should provide. From the experience in Canada and Switzerland we can expect tandem learning to be effective and sustainable. It needs investment and careful introduction in the beginning, but is likely to be less expensive than some other forms of training and development. If whole organisations work and learn in tandems the culture of feedback might provide a high innovatory potential. This is only an account of work in progress but there is still some hope that tandems can move very fast.

In addition to this tandem model we should develop more tools and support for self-evaluation and self-analysis for teachers as well, but for the moment this is a vision only.

The situation of language teacher training in Scotland and the UK for Higher Education and Adult Education. Cert TMLA (Certificate in Teaching Modern Languages to Adults) – a case study

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The pre-condition for any successful language programme with satisfied language students is the quality and commitment of the staff delivering the course. There has been recognition in the Higher Education sector through the so-called Teaching Quality Assessment Exercise that teaching is of equal importance as research performance.

However, unlike in the Secondary sector, where a post-graduate course, completion in teaching (the PGCE) specialising in languages is the basis of any offer of employment (and registration with the General Teaching Council), there have not been similar requirements in the Higher and Adult Education fields.

The TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) sector has developed a considerable portfolio of nationally and internationally recognised qualifications because of its importance in the international education market. There are also some generic language teaching courses developed by the RSA (Royal Society of Arts) for example, mainly aimed at the Further Education sector and some part-time and full-time courses have been on offer in England and Wales (e.g. in Leeds and London).

There are, however, certain peculiarities in the employment of language teachers in the Adult and HE sectors which have not been fully addressed by some of these courses.

The majority of foreign language teaching provision in Adult Education and especially in the so-called Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) in Universities who are targeting the non-specialist language learner is being staffed to a large extent by part-time, hourly paid staff.

The reasons for this are not only under-funding of programmes, but also the always difficult situation of anticipating student demand in various languages and stages and at certain times of the year.

The majority of these staff are women, many staff are foreign graduates resident in Britain. Many University departments choose to employ their postgraduate students as

language teaching assistants. Some institutions might give them some general induction and ongoing staff development but the majority will come to the task unprepared.[1]

The difficulties posed by this situation have long been lamented:

- The lack of a nationally recognised teacher qualification for foreign language tutors in the post-compulsory sector continues to undermine the professional status of tutors, though a rising number of in-service or even pre-service training courses are now available.[2]

- There is a considerable gap between ideal practice and the present reality, with substantial anecdotal evidence that university language teachers, very many of whom are untrained, are unaware of research findings and are not implementing best practice in teaching and testing: language learning objectives are often undefined.[3]

- Unfortunately, as student numbers have increased, there has been a tendency to employ (cheap) hourly-paid staff, including post-graduates, who themselves sometimes have precious little training (or, in the case of most postgraduates, experience) and who receive minimal guidance on pedagogical matters.[4]

- Many part-timers with a non-UK educational background will not be very familiar with the British / Scottish education system. Communicative, contextualised teaching with greater emphasis on learner autonomy and the acquisition of transferable skills now play a larger role than before. Language teaching has undergone many changes of which part-time teachers will not necessarily be aware. Factors such as the lack of staff development and, if it is on offer, accessible to them because of timing, relevance and financial restrictions.

Therefore, we are not only dealing with an issue of teaching quality, but also with the issue of equal opportunities for part-time staff and students.

As mentioned before, there are some courses trying to redress the balance: in 1997, an initiative like the DOPLA project[5] began to develop course materials, accessible to Higher Education institutions who wished to offer staff development and support to these groups.

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[1] A survey is currently being undertaken by R. Easton and the author the results of which will be incorporated in a Conference paper to be given at the UCML/CILT Conference in Nottingham in July 2000.

[2] Arthur, Lore (1996), Adults learning languages in: Hawkins, Eric, 30 years of language teaching, CILT (Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research). p. 59.

[3] Coleman, J.A. Studying Languages. A Survey of British and European Students, CILT(1996), p. 14.

[4] John Klapper, 1997: 23, Language Learning at School and in University: the great grammar debate continues (1), In Language Learning Journal, Sepember 1997, no. 1 6, p.22-27).

[5] Training of Postgraduates and Foreign Languages assistants, DOPLA, project based at the University of Birmingham.

These courses provide useful training materials, but are mainly aimed at tutors in need of initial training and staff development. There is, however, also a need for support for tutors / teachers with experience who will not need to start from scratch and who will benefit not only from professional development but also from a qualification which will enhance their employment prospects. As there was no Modern Languages University based teaching qualification for Teachers in Higher and Adult Education on offer in Scotland, the post-graduate qualification of Certificate in TMLA has been introduced by the University of Dundee in 1997.

The Higher Education sector in Britain has recently seen the phasing in of its own professional body of Teachers in Higher Education – the ILT (Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education).[1]

For the first time, University teachers can apply for membership in a professional body comparable in part to the General Teaching Council, demonstrating their commitment and practice to and practice of professional values and core knowledge. This has opened up an opportunity for University based language teachers / lecturers to enhance their professional standing.[2]

Certificate in Teaching Modern Languages to Adults (Cert TMLA)

The University offered a staff development programme to their part-time language teaching staff for many years, provided jointly by the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS) and the then languages section in the Institute for Education and Lifelong Learning (IELL).

Topics for seminars arise mainly out of short-term needs for tutors especially in the evening programme and are necessarily focused on requirements for the individual course / programme.[3]

The introduction of a postgraduate qualification with a structured study programme provides a thorough and organised approach which also allows participants to explore issues other than of immediate relevance for their own specific teaching commitment.

[1] The ILT is based in York . The website address is: *http://www.ilt.ac.uk*
[2] The University is currently undergoing the accreditation process for its staff development courses, amongst them the Cert TMLA, for the ILT.
[3] To name but a few: Oral examination / assessment skills, Use of the Overhead projector, Teaching Grammar, Use of Mobile Language Lab/Video Camera, editing audio tapes for assessment purposes, Vocabulary Learning, Differentiation…

Structure of CERT TMLA

(CERTIFICATE IN TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES TO ADULTS)
(award of 60 SCOTCAT points at Masters Level)[1]
one year part time study

Module 1: Adult Education

Module 2: Language learning and teaching

Module 3: Language teaching: methods and practice

Module 4: Cultural Awareness

Assessment by written assignments, teaching diary, observed teaching practice, oral presentation, final project (depending on the module).

In planning the new course, both part-time tutors and full-time teaching staff had been consulted to develop a balanced programme which could be managed in time and workload, would be seen as relevant and practice oriented but at the same time based on sound theoretical knowledge. In view of the pending introduction of the ILT and the fact that many part-timers worked in different education sectors either at the same time or at different times in their career history (see also table on tutors' profiles) it was seen as essential to include a module on Adult Education (encompassing Higher Education).[2]

The "mainstreaming" of part-time languages provision in Universities and the implications of this development is another interesting issue which cannot be pursued here.

A general underpinning on knowledge about learning theories and the historical development of educational provision for adults amongst other issues was considered to be necessary to allow participants to widen their understanding of education.

Module 2 and 3 allow for the approach to language learning and teaching from both theoretical and practical angles. Emphasis is placed on exploring common "myths and beliefs" in language teaching and from that position to link to theoretical discussions to inform their teaching practice, rather than looking at "How to do it" recipes. More detailed learning outcomes are enclosed in appendices.

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[1] SCOTCAT = Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer scheme.

[2] It might be of interest to readers that many universities in Britain (especially the "traditional" older Universities through their "Extramural" courses, now usually renamed Continuing Education, Lifelong Learning programmes) offer foreign language tuition in evening and daytime classes in designated programmes, newer (post 1992) institutions tend in general to open their non specialist language learner classes to members of the public.

The module of Cultural Awareness is designed to open up discussions about the links between our own position as a cultural being and the restraints this can put on the teacher's and the students' and possibilities for teachers and learners alike. The move from narrow definitions of what the target culture is perceived to be and teaching culture as a one way process between the recipient and the teacher to a broader, more inclusive, inter- and intra-cultural understanding is to be encouraged.[1]

The assessment process is a combination of theoretical and practical assignments which require links to participants' current teaching practice.

Student intake

The target group for the TMLA are part-timers teaching in Adult, Higher, Further and Community education without a Modern languages teaching qualification. Teaching experience and a degree level equivalent qualification is required for admission to the course, as well as good spoken and written English, the language of communication on the course. Students without native or near native command of a foreign language are not admitted.

The following tables illustrate to what extent the target group intake has been met.

Table 1: Profile of tutors studying for Cert. TMLA

	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000

Percentage of total of students enrolled of which:

already working for the University of Dundee [some of these working for other HE / FE institutions at the same time]	45%	33%	50%
working for Further Education institutions only	22.5%	0	0
other Higher Education institution only	12%	23.5%	15%
community education only	0	10%	15%
no current employment	22.5%	33%	15%
in part-time employment	100%	78%	45%
in full-time employment	0	23.5%	30%
native speaker of target language	78%	78%	45%
students with language based first degree	57%	69%	15%
students with degree combined with advanced language study	33%	23.5%	30%
students with degree other than languages	10%	10%	50%
students already with teaching qualification	69%	45%	15%

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[1] For some recent research and practical applications see Byram, M. (1997) Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence and Tomalin / Stempleski (1993), Cultural Awareness.

of which:			
– primary	10%	10%	15%
– secondary	23%	0	0
– EFL	33%	23.5%	0
– mother tongue as foreign language	0	10%	0
– no teaching qualification, but language teaching experience	33%	57%	100%

Table 2: Gender ratio

Gender	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	Total
female	57%	99%	85%	75%
male	43%	1%	15%	25%

Table 3: Origin of participants

	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	Total
UK	45 %	35 %	34%	33 %
Continental Europe	45 %	35%	50%	46%
Africa	10 %	10%	0	8.5%
Asia	0 %	10%	0	4%
Latin America	0 %	10%	16%	8.5%

Table 4: Funding of student fees

	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000
self-funded	45 %	56%	17%
part-funded by home institution	55%	34%	50%
full contribution by home institution	0	10%	33%

As we can see, the main target groups have been met, which is not surprising because of the constitution of the part-time teaching body: there are more women than men on the course, the majority of students have a non UK educational background, e.g. are non-English native speakers, approximately half of the intake already work for the University (and get some of the course fee paid).

There are some shifts, however, in the funding situation: more and more students get their home institution to pay in full or parts of their fees, there is an increase in students from abroad (but resident in the UK), a decrease in students applying with a teaching qualification already but an increase in applicants with in most cases considerable teaching experience in Modern Languages without teaching qualification.

The majority of students had either a full time language based degree or a degree combined with study of their teaching language which is positive.

The course is currently being converted for distance learning in a web-based environment aimed at participants in Britain, medium-term also abroad with addition of EFL based training / qualifications. It is anticipated that this will increase the student numbers significantly as it will be more accessible.[1]

Student feedback

There are various ways of formal feedback through Staff Student Committees and the use of questionnaires after each module and after completion, as well as feedback from recent graduates to trace their career / employment history as well as, of course, informal conversations.

The main concern is, of course, to what extent the course has managed to fulfil the expectations and address the needs of the participants.

The feedback discussed here is based on the first two intakes of the course.

General comments from questionnaires

"... It focused on language teaching, on adult students, and on practice, although gave some theoretical information as well. The teachers encouraged discussion... the assignments (...) were very challenging and gave the feeling that I have really learnt something new. In comparison to the 2 courses that I had done before (....) this was much more relevant and made me feel that I have <u>learnt</u> instead of just studied."

"I am now much more aware of the communicative approach and of the importance of credible communicative tasks. I am also more knowledgeable of cultural awareness and recent developments in the field of foreign and second language learning and teaching in general..."

"I have redoubled my efforts to find an optimum mix of methodology and technique which recognises the individual's and the group's needs."

"The module, indeed the whole course, generated considerable reflection on my rather entrenched methodology."

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[1] Currently, all participants are based either in the cities and environs of Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow on the main train line (only 1 participant travelled regularly from the North East of England) – the Highlands, Islands and border areas of Scotland are not in commuting distance.

"The final project was a good assignment, although difficult. It forced you to apply theory into practice and was very practical. Something that will really help us with our future teaching."

"I have learnt a lot from not only theory and practice, but from other students and teachers, because we shared different views, opinions, techniques etc."

"I am trying to improve my teaching, using other materials... etc. Also how to help students to develop themselves."

"The teaching practice and the teaching diary assignments were very good from the viewpoint of professional development. It was hard work, but definitely worth it."

These quotations have been chosen to illustrate the main points which students feel they have achieved and which help the course development team to strengthen these areas:

1. the strong link of theory and practice which makes the course more relevant;

2. the encouragement to focus on the student;

3. the support other practitioners / course participants can give;

4. the focus on learning rather than studying (maybe a reference to deep learning rather than surface learning?);

5. the need to focus on the group as well as on the individual learner;

6. the reflection on their own teaching practice.

There is also a shift in attitudes from the beginning of the course, when the focus in modules 1 and 2 is theoretical, which was initially perceived to be lacking in practical relevance, to the overall positive evaluation when the links between theory and practice appeared to be clearer.[1]

It is still early to give a clear indication to what extent the course has improved the participants' employment and career prospects. The majority of them are still in part-time employment or their previous full-time positions. There is anecdotal evidence, however, that they have managed to secure better teaching assignments in institutions and that they are more confident in fulfilling their teaching duties in their work places.

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[1] After the first intake the team tried to address this by giving "independent study sheets" to accompany viewing of language teaching videos and class observations already in the first term to provide also a language teaching focus.

Development plans

The course will be offered also in distance learning mode from January 2000 using a web-based environment for the delivery to widen the student base.[1] After a student and general market survey additional modules will be offered to allow the award of a post-graduate Diploma and, consequently, a Masters programme.

Strong demand is anticipated for research methods, technology based language learning and TEFL training in addition to the Core Certificate. It is also hoped that there will be increased intake into the M Ed and PhD programmes with their stronger theoretical focus.

Conclusion

Staff development has long been a neglected area not only for full-time, but especially for part-time staff in the post-compulsory sector in Modern Languages in Britain. Initiatives of some Universities and professional bodies have begun to have an impact. The professional standing of language teachers in the Higher / Adult Education sector should be improved through access to membership of the ILT. Part-time teaching staff should have access to staff development programmes because of equal opportunities and also for quality assurance reasons to support teaching of a high professional standard.

The Cert TMLA is one option to enhance professional development for language teachers without previous qualifications in this area. The uptake is encouraging and the feedback suggests that an existing need has begun to be addressed. In view of further European co-operation ways should be found to establish a framework for similar qualifications in the European Union.

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[1] For an update of developments please check the webpage of the Centre for Applied Language Studies: http://www.dundee.ac.uk

Appendix 1

Module 1:

Learning outcomes:

On completion of this module members will be able to:

- LO1 demonstrate an awareness of the particular needs of adult learners.

- LO2 reflect upon the implications of these particular needs for the planning and implementation of teaching programmes.

- LO3 reflect upon the implications of LO1 & LO2 for the learning and teaching in continuing education.

- LO4 demonstrate an awareness of the development of Continuing Education in the last two decades and of current policy in the area.

Module 2:

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the module the course members will have acquired detailed knowledge of:

- LO1 the methods by which L1 is acquired.

- LO2 the methods by which L2 is acquired and the influence of language acquisition theory on the learning and teaching of modern languages.

- LO3 the general implications of the above for the learning and teaching of modern languages.

Module 3:

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module course members will be able to:

- LO1 design a teaching programme which takes account of varying learning styles and the different needs of individual learners.

- LO2 produce appropriate resources for use with a multi-level class, including differentiated materials and assessment instruments.

- LO3 demonstrate a sound understanding of the principles of communicative language learning, teaching and assessment.

Module 4:

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module course members will be able to:

- LO1 demonstrate a thorough knowledge of aspects of the life and culture of the country or countries in which the target language is spoken.

- LO2 demonstrate understanding of the relationship between linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

- LO3 incorporate aspects of the above into their teaching programmes in relation to the language or languages that they teach.

Language teacher education and the challenges of information and communication technologies (ICTs): Finnish perspectives

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**"Languages are not just tools. They give every student a better chance
to cope with multicultural communication in today's world."**

Abstract

This article deals with three main topics. It starts with a brief introduction to the Finnish teacher education system. Second, it aims to locate foreign language education within this particular context and to argue in favour of languages as empowering mediators, especially when enhanced with information and communication technologies (ICTs). Third, it will try to throw light on the convergence of ICTs and foreign language methodology. The main emphasis is in a synthesis of learning experiences gained over the past few years in the Finnish context.

Key Words: teacher education; language education; information and communication technologies (ICTs); Finland.

1. Foreign language education challenged by information and communication technologies

When I defended my doctoral thesis in 1991 about the introduction of international communications networks and e-mail into the Finnish senior secondary school education (Tella 1991), it was obvious that a didactic use of technology served little more than a sideline role in most language teachers' and teacher educators' minds, even if, even in Finland, information and communication technologies (ICTs) had been talked about for more than a decade by then. In fact, when the Finnish National Board of Education launched its first ICTs project in 1980, foreign language (FL) teachers were among the most enthusiastic. What then followed is a long path of success and failure, testing and retesting, disappointments but also empowering moments of something new emerging. Now it is easy to see that new media, ICTs, open and distance learning (ODL) and similar trends have started to play a major role in Finnish teacher education and, increasingly so, also in Finnish foreign language teaching.

Many FL teachers still believe they can do without modern technology. To some, ICTs are alien and uninviting. These hesitant attitudes towards combining foreign language education and ICTs are reflected in expressions like "an uneasy alliance" (Tella 1997). This hesitancy is understandable, as it reflects the poor quality of earlier computer-assisted language learning (CALL) software, mostly consisting of drill-and-practice activities, which seldom served language teaching in any way well, and, to an even less extent, as communicative methodology gained ground.

However, a major change took place in the mid-to-late 1980s, when information technology (such as word-processing) and communication technology (e-mail in particular) started to merge. Suddenly, language teachers found new media and applications that were more than simple rudimentary tools in the hands of a knowing teacher and student. The emergence of the Internet with different technological platforms, such as mailing lists, chat, videoconferencing, integrated distributed learning environments (IDLEs; groupware platforms) together with mobile telephony have set a steadily growing number of high-profile FL teachers and teacher educators thinking of the potential of these technological developments. These teachers also understand that ICTs are far from being isolated on the periphery of the curriculum; rather, they help language teachers to get to the point of what counts in language teaching and learning, namely cross-cultural communication. In addition, ICTs are already firmly anchored to the FL curriculum in terms of both content and competencies in many countries.

This article aims to highlight some of the research findings – and some of our own experiences – in order to help language teachers in other countries to reflect on the potential of information and communication technologies in foreign language teaching and teacher education.

2.   Teacher education in the Finnish context

All teacher education has belonged to the universities since 1974, leading to a university degree corresponding to an MA degree. Pre-primary school (or kindergarten) teacher education was incorporated into universities in August 1995. Kindergarten teachers obtain a BA degree, but they can continue their studies in order to upgrade their BAs to MAs. In Finland, it is considered important that all teachers should have an academic degree.

Finnish subject teacher education is based on division of labour between the university subject departments and the specialised Departments of Teacher Education (DTE), belonging to the Faculties of Education. Classroom teacher education is usually organised completely in the Faculties of Education. The Finnish system is close to the German "research model", but includes some elements of the English "personality model" and the French "professional training model".

In education, new kinds of problems – or perhaps just challenges – are coming up. The Finnish educational system has tried to provide everybody with similar and equal starting points. This has been the fundamental principle of the Finnish 9-year-long basic education system since the 1970s. Finland used to have a very centralised national curriculum, but since 1985 there has been a strong tendency of decentralisation and deregulation. A major curricular reform was carried out in 1994. The new framework curriculum gives a general outline and some sublime aims of education, but leaves all teaching objectives, study methods and most content areas to local authorities to decide. With these decentralisation trends and school-based curricula, Finland has gradually been geared towards a more competitive society, in which schools compete against each other. They also look for profiles of their own, whether focusing on sports, arts, ICTs or media.

3.   Foreign language teacher education in Finland

In the Finnish school context, foreign language teaching is taken care of by either dedicated language specialists ("subject teachers") or, in lower grades in particular, by class teachers specialising in teaching a FL.

As Finnish represents a Finno-Ugrian language that is not spoken widely outside Finland, it is only natural that foreign languages play an important role in the Finnish school system. At the moment, it is up to the municipalities to decide at which level pupils start their first foreign language. Very often this happens in grade 3, with children aged about 9. In addition to Swedish, the second national language, all pupils study at least one foreign language (and many study two) in basic education (grades 1-9, pupils aged 7-16). The majority starts with English, followed by Swedish. Small minorities start with Swedish, German or French (and very few with Russian), to be followed by English. In secondary education (grades 1-3, students aged 16-19), most students continue to study three foreign languages and some take a fourth one.

3.1   Foreign languages – More than tools

One of the contemporary myths in language education is a notorious claim that a foreign language is "just a tool". In the light of current foreign language didactics, this claim is clearly misleading and likely to jeopardise the potential embedded in foreign languages. What follows from this myth is that foreign languages are considered less important than the subject content and the classroom context that mediate the teaching / learning process.

We argue that this reductionist belief should be widened considerably (Tella 1999b). If only taken for tools, foreign languages are seen as exclusively technical means to higher-level educational ends, used to reassure novice users. Yet foreign languages can be much more than just tools. In parallel with Jonassen's reasoning (1995), we argue that foreign languages can be used as (i) tools but also as (ii) intellectual partners and as (iii) new educational contexts. Even deeper understanding can be reached, if we link these three interpretations to the cultural artefacts theory by Wartofsky (1979; also Tella & Mononen-Aaltonen 1998).

At the level of primary artefacts, foreign languages can be compared with axes, saws, hammers and other tools humankind has made extensive use of. In foreign language contexts, other kinds of tools should be equalled to language, namely dictionaries, thesauruses, spelling checkers, but also computers and even telecommunications networks. We argue that *this first level is a good starting point but it is certainly not enough.*

The secondary level is concerned *with intellectual partnership that foreign languages can give to the learners.* This level includes various representations both of primary artefacts and of modes of action using primary artefacts but also, more importantly, cultural models (social interaction, discourse, word meaning). At this level, the question is of articulating what learners already know: representing their prior knowledge, reflecting on what they have learned and how they came to know it, supporting the internal negotiation of meaning making; constructing personal representations of meaning, and supporting mindful thinking. In Jonassen's terminology (1995, 62), intellectual partners not only extend but also *amplify* the capabilities of human beings. In teaching a foreign language this level is extremely important, as it forms the gateway to the cognitive levels of the learners.

The third level is concerned with new emerging educational contexts and learning environments. Our main argument is that *foreign languages can – and should – be used to create, establish and maintain these new environments that are beneficial and conducive to meaningful learning.* At this level, meaningful real-world problems, situations and contexts are replicated through foreign language, highlighting and representing the different beliefs, perspectives, opinions, views, arguments, claims and justifications of human beings. At this level, learners should be thought of as members of knowledge-building communities of learners, not "simple" learners or students. In

this sense, foreign languages help constitute relatively autonomous "worlds" of their own, which establish social relations across different cultures.

Cultural aspects are important at all levels, regardless of the age of the students. Language is the fundamental condition of a culture, and culture is an integral part of the interaction between language and thought. Both transmit beliefs, values, perceptions and norms. Language expresses the thinking behind the culture as well as individual worldviews. A simple interpretation of language as a tool does not help in culture-specific situations, which call for a more sensitive analysis of the linguistic and paralinguistic cues embedded in the message.

One way towards *a more modern interpretation of a FL might be found in the ways foreign language methodology has advanced* during the past twenty years. Some of the recent emphases are concerned with the nature of communication itself (authentic, genuine, real-time, dialogic and technology-facilitated), others with the learner's task (autonomy, collaboration, initiative-taking, responsibility-assuming, distributed expertise, shared cognition). There has been a drastic shift from a closed linguistic system towards an open system of knowledge and communication, underlining the importance of pragmatic, communicative and cross-cultural proficiency, intellectual challenges embedded in the use of language, and the trend towards authentic, genuine and immediate / online / real-time communication, enriched with mediated modes of communication.

The latest constructs deal with the paradigm shift in foreign language methodology, viz. *the pedagogical shift from a medium (= a tool) towards mediation* (cf. e.g., Widdowson 1990; Tella 1997, 36-37).

The medium concept implied that the message was conveyed through the language – the meaning of the communication act was linguistically encoded (a traditional structural view). In the mediation concept, the question is not what linguistic expressions communicate, but how people communicate by using linguistic expressions. The question, then, is about the pragmatics of language use, pragmatic features and problem-solving situations, an eclectic but critical methodological approach and in-depth understanding of other people and cultures, in addition to one's own.

One of the basic principles of the mediation concept is that the language is controlled by intake, not by input. This aspect reflects the belief in the learner's capacity to "take in" and to digest language material to a varying extent. In current pedagogical thinking, it is central to allow FL learners and users to control the intake themselves. It should not be regulated by the textbook, the curriculum or, worse still, by the teacher. In this light, and especially if the learner is seen as an autonomous, self-regulating and self-directed learner, the teacher's role becomes more than that of a resource person. Additionally, the role of the language itself becomes more important than just a tool. *Language becomes an empowering mediator* between the teacher, the content matter and the culture represented by these two on the one hand, and the community of learners and the learning tasks on the other. In this process, the role of information and communication technologies may prove very valuable and beneficial.

4.   Information and communication technologies

4.1   Finns' interest in technology

To have a good perspective to Finns' interest in technology, let us cite Señor Ganivet, a Spanish consul in Finland:

- "Finns seem to find it easy to adopt all new practical inventions fast and efficiently."
- "Bikes have become extremely popular."
- "The phone is almost as common as kitchenware."

The writer seems quite fascinated by the Finns' enthusiasm about new technology. What is noteworthy is that he wrote these words in the 1890s, more than 100 years ago.

Nothing much seems to have changed since Ganivet's time. Finns are still highly captivated by new technologies and can profit from Finland's sophisticated technological infrastructure, mobile telephony and emerging e-learning facilities. As an example, while only 2.4% of the world's population has ever accessed the Internet, the number of Internet access points in Finland exceeds that of the whole of South America and the Caribbean and is among the highest in the world. Mobile telephony is one of the areas that is opening up to educational solutions as well. Naturally, education should capitalise on this state of affairs.

4.2   Changes in Finnish communication culture

There are a lot of myths concerning Finland and her culture. One of the myths, originally created by the writer Bertolt Brecht, said that Finns are good at keeping quiet in two languages, Finnish and Swedish, both official languages in Finland. This myth has never really held true, and it is utterly out of date today. This myth, however, leads us directly to the present-day state of affairs regarding modern technology and communication.

One key to understanding the Finnish way of communication is to distinguish between high context and low context cultures. Finland belongs to the high context cultures, which traditionally respect silence, tolerate long pauses, follow the rules of sequential speaking and obey attentive listening when somebody else is speaking. Words are important and thus should not to be wasted unnecessarily. These principles have had an enormous impact on ways Finnish people communicate with each other. When this kind of culture comes into contact with low context cultures, in which communication is mostly based on direct communication and on swift exchanges of ideas between people in the communication interaction, cultural misunderstandings and even clashes are likely to occur.

What has this to do with modern technology? A lot in fact, because there is a striking contrast between traditional ways of communicating and present-day fast telematic communication. In Finland, cellular phones are everywhere; there are more cellular phones per capita than any other country. And at present, Finns use these phones in cafés, on buses, trains and trams, when walking in the streets, everywhere. Sociologically, this is a most captivating situation, which has to be taken into account in cross-cultural communication and which could also be utilised in FL teaching and learning. Why have silent Finns suddenly started to talk so vigorously, incessantly and eagerly, even in public? One answer might be embedded in the changes that have taken place in communication technologies.

4.3   Major changes in information and communication technologies

4.3.1 From IT to ICTs

In Finland, as in many other information-rich and knowledge-intensive countries, a shift has taken place in emphasis from information technology (IT) to information and communication technologies (ICTs). This change is clearly reflected in the use of mobile telecommunications, for instance, but it is also noted in the use of terminology in Finnish schools and in universities, as the notion of communication is gaining wider currency.

Smart messaging is a concept that not only makes it possible to send short text messages (no more than 160 characters) in 2-3 seconds to a host of countries in the world, and at prices much lower than any traditional means of communication could afford. It is surprising how much you can express in 160 characters, by the way. The latest versions of smart messaging enable one to exceed that limit and to send electronic postcards and spreadsheets, music tones and logos through SMS (short messages services). At the moment, more and more people read their e-mails on their mobile phones, and certain telecommunications companies are planning new e-learning services on the air.

4.3.2 From DE to ODL and to e-learning

Distance education (DE) is also changing towards open and distance learning (ODL) and e-learning. Instead of simply delivering teaching to remote places through telecommunications, ODL and e-learning emphasize wider access to learning resources. They also underline the importance of the learner's own responsibility for his or her learning process. In teacher education, these developments have not remained without notice and response. One of our solutions is represented by the Media Education Centre[1] of the University of Helsinki Department of Teacher Education, whose major responsibilities lie in the field of research and development in modern media.

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[1] http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/media

4.3.3 From CBE to NBE

Another shift that has taken place recently is the one from CBE (computer-based education) and CALL (computer-assisted language learning) towards NBE (network-based education), in which a lot of new ideas turn up and call for our intense attention. For example, NBE implies the emergence of groupware platforms (such as WebCT), shared expertise, and cultivation of different types of specialties, which may be seen as a characteristic dialogic feature to empower individuals. These technological platforms are ideal to be used in FL education, as they combine discussion fori and the ways of exchanging and publishing shared documents and graphics.

4.4   From diaspora to convergence

One of the most surprising features witnessed over the past 15 years is the fact that FL methodology and ICTs have gradually converged towards each other. In fact, it is only fair to consider some of the latest developments as belonging to both at the same time (cf. Table 1). When becoming cognisant of this convergence, more and more language educators have started thinking of ICTs in a more positive light. Let me point out some of these developments.

Table 1: Some Common Features Between FL Methodology and ICTs
(based on Tella 1999a, 105; slightly updated)

FL Methodology	ICTs
From a closed system of language towards an open system of knowledge	From automatic data-processing (ADP; "machine-driven") towards pedagogical applications ("user-driven")
From structuralism towards functionalism, experientialism and interactionalism	From ADP-based programming to computer-assisted learning (CAL) and to computers as tools (e.g., word-processing, e-mail attachments)
From mistakes and errors (taken for negative things) to thinking positively of errors as adding to one's learning process: teamwork but also self-directed learning	Towards an open, multimedia-based, networked, dialogic, co-operative and communal learning environment, with an emphasis on distributed expertise
To communicative competence	To media literacy
To pragmatic, communicative, cross-cultural proficiency • From form to content • Structures submitted to contexts relevant to communication situations • Meaningful to learners for different communication purposes • Intellectual challenges • Fictional uses of language	From monologic communication to dialogic and telelogic communication by means of computer-mediated communication (CMC) From closed (drill and practice-type) exercises to using real-life communications networks (e.g., the Internet; integrated distributed learning environments (IDLEs))

To authentic, genuine and immediate / on-line / real-time communication, enhanced mediated communication
To autonomous (self-directed) work on the one hand, to collaborative work on the other, initiative-taking, responsibility assuming
Cross-cultural dialogic communication; mediation; educational multimedia

At present, FL methodology and ICTs have a lot to share. Some of these joint features are concerned with the nature of communication (authentic, genuine, real-time), others with the learner's task (autonomy, collaboration, initiative, responsibility). Some other notions have also become important, such as focusing on the communicative character of the teaching-studying-learning paradigm. The last constructs (dialogic communication; mediation; educational multimedia) concern the relationships between the communicators and the impact of mediation on the communication process (Tella 1998).

5.   In conclusion

What have we learnt from prior experience? At least it seems obvious that present distinctions between work, education, and play will dissolve. New terms like 'edutainment' (education + entertainment) and 'infotainment' (information + entertainment) are sure signs of this development. Some of this might already have come true. Educators and software designers are realizing that including immersive ludic (play-like) features is needed to make them more appealing to be used in educational settings.

Not every country should repeat the mistakes others have made earlier. A few examples arising from the Finnish experience may be quoted, albeit they are eclectic instances. Now if ever it should be understood properly that instead of computer rooms we should install new equipment into subject-based classrooms, but also realize that a growing amount of studying takes place outside of school and conventional classrooms. For training purposes, at least two teachers per school should be allowed to attend; otherwise every effort is wasted. Principals should be trained together with their teachers. Full connectivity to the Internet should be guaranteed with a fixed line (ISDN or preferably ADSL) or with cordless connections. All teachers and students should have access to all the services of the Internet at any time. Information technology (IT) is no longer enough and should be changed into ICTs, network-based education (NBE) or e-learning and integrated to the teaching of all school subjects. The principles of educational use of ICT should be incorporated into all teacher education programmes. The educational rationale should precede any consideration of introducing new technology into educational settings. On the whole, a firm and well-justified theoretical basis is needed so that teachers would understand how these new tools and services can be fully utilized in educational contexts.

Admittedly, the teacher will change from a 'sage on the stage' to a 'guide on the side', but this is not enough: the real question is the dual stance (Willis 1995, 14-15; Mononen-Aaltonen & Tella 2000). Then the teacher is still on the centre stage as an actor and as a moderator of all activities, but at the same time (s)he will be on the side, observing and reviewing the teaching-learning process with an attentive eye. The teacher will be at once an actor and a critic. And so are the students: playing their part but also analysing their own studying process at the metacognitive level.

We started with a motto, contending that languages are much more than simple tools. At the same time, our motto implies that it might take time to master all ICTs at our disposal. Then, perhaps, it is wise to sit down and listen to other people's experiences and bear in mind that the context for human development is always a culture, never an isolated technology. If this is done, then we could really believe that integrating foreign language teacher education and the use of ICTs will be beneficial and lead to more "inclusive" language learning by providing all learners with lifelong learning opportunities.

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Language learning and teaching in teacher education in Malta

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The focus of this chapter is the language component in the teacher training programme which is provided to students who follow the B.Ed. (Hons.) degree at University and which prepares them to teach in primary schools. Prior to providing information about the language component in teacher training, an overview of the primary education system in Malta is provided followed by a general framework of the B.Ed. (Hons.) programme offered by the Department of Primary Education within the Faculty of Education.

Language in primary education in the Maltese context

Education in Malta is compulsory from the ages of 5 to 16. Children spend six years at primary school and five years at secondary school. Eight core subjects are included in the primary school curriculum namely Mathematics, Maltese, English, Religion, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education and Expressive Arts. At the end of the primary school, children sit for competitive national exams in five subjects: Mathematics, Maltese, English, Religion and Social Studies.

Table 1: Primary schooling in Malta

Year group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Children's age	5-6 years	6-7 years	7-8 years	8-9 years	9-10 years	10-11 years

Maltese and English are official languages of the island and are compulsory subjects from the first year of formal education when children are aged 5. The new National Curriculum, which will become the official document in schools during the next scholastic year reaffirms the importance of having students from an early age gain competence in both English and Maltese. The new curriculum recommends that schools adopt their own language policy. Although it has been left up to the schools to determine the language to be used in teaching particular subjects, there seems to be a consensus about the importance of exposing children to English in as wide a context as possible. Given that at secondary school and even at university most of the resources and material available are in English, from a young age children need to gain fluency and competence in the language, while strengthening their competence and fluency in Maltese. Currently, Maltese is the medium of instruction in state schools; English is the medium of instruction in independent and church private schools. This implies that in state schools, children are exposed to more Maltese whereas in the private sector, children have greater exposure to English.

There are three different types of schools which children can attend: state, independent private schools or church private schools.

State schools are non-fee-paying schools governed by a central Education Division. Although in recent years they have started to enjoy some degree of autonomy, the Education Division is still responsible for issuing the curriculum and syllabus and deciding on the textbooks which the schools are to use. Textbooks are on loan to the children for the duration of the year. Textbooks for Religion and Maltese are in Maltese. The Mathematics textbook is in English. The compulsory textbook for the teaching of Maltese is a reader which was first published in 1974. Children are introduced to the first book in the series in Year 1. Over the years, several workbooks have been published and teachers tend to use these to support additional resources which they prepare. For English, children are given the Macmillan Ladybird series *Read with me*. They have several books / readers from this same series each year. From Year 3 to Year 6 children also have a text-book (*Pathway*, Collins) which is divided into units. Each unit includes a reading passage followed by short comprehension exercises, new vocabulary and language activities.

Lessons in English and Maltese are done on a daily basis. English is introduced in the second term of Year 1, soon after the Christmas holidays and teachers are taught and encouraged to emphasise oracy rather than literacy during this time.

The overwhelming majority of children attending state schools are Maltese-speaking. For several children and their families, English is more of a foreign rather than a second language. In these cases, such families would have limited exposure to English.

Independent private schools are fee-paying schools governed by their own school governors and / or school board. Although they follow the same curriculum as the one set for state schools, they have more autonomy in deciding their school programme, choosing their own textbooks and taking decisions regarding the overall running of the school. The parents prior to the beginning of the scholastic year buy textbooks. With the

exception of the Maltese reader, all textbooks are in English. As mentioned earlier, English is the language of instruction used in such schools. For some pupils attending these schools, Maltese becomes their second rather than the first language especially if English is also the language used within the family.

Church private schools are run by the various religious orders found on the island. Education in Church schools at all levels is free and subsidised by the State. Owing to the great demand to enrol children in such schools, entry at the lower grade levels is determined by a ballot system. Consequently, teachers are faced with the situation where they have mixed classes in terms of the language with which children are familiar – some children would be coming from Maltese speaking families; others from English speaking families.

In all schools, mixed-ability teaching is encouraged. Students with special needs are also welcomed in mainstream schools and generally have a facilitator assisting them in class. In state schools, children are grouped by ability during the last two years of primary schooling on the basis of national, end-of-year exams. Teachers in state schools are expected to teach all subjects. In independent and church schools, there tend to be teacher specialists for subjects such as physical education, drama, art and music.

It is worth noting that state schools are very well equipped with computers which have been gradually introduced since 1996. Every classroom has three or four computers depending on the number of children in class. Computers were first introduced with the five year olds (Year 1) and in subsequent scholastic years, they were introduced with the six (Year 2), seven (Year 3) and eight year olds (Year 4). During the scholastic year 2000/2001, they will be introduced in Year 5 and finally in Year 6 in 2001/2002. In church and independent schools, computers are found in a lab and children can use them during timetabled slots. The introduction of computers has had obvious implications for the teacher-training programme. It will have to be seen whether and how the introduction of computers will affect children's language competence and skills since the overwhelming amount of software available is in English. Software in Maltese is extremely limited.

The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed. (Hons.)) primary programme

The route to becoming a primary school teacher is by following a four-year B.Ed. (Hons.) degree programme offered on a full-time basis by the Department of Primary Education within the Faculty of Education.

This programme provides students with a professional degree, aimed at giving them a background both in the field of teaching and in developing their academic skills. The programme has:

- compulsory components in the Foundations area (incorporating Educational Psychology, Philosophy of Education and Sociology of Education);

- a teaching practice component in each of the four years of the course;

- a dissertation which allows students to conduct research in an area or topic of their choice.

Originally designed to qualify students to teach in both secondary and primary schools, the course structure has undergone two major changes in recent years. From the academic year 1996/97 onwards, students are to concentrate either on a secondary school subject or focus their studies entirely on primary schooling for the last two years of the course. Students who choose to concentrate on primary studies also follow a small number of study units in infant education (5-7 year olds) or the junior years (8-11 year olds). Subsequently, a new course structure came into place in October 1999 whereby students have to register either for a four year B.Ed. (Hons.) specialising in primary school teaching or a four year B.Ed. (Hons.) specialising in secondary school teaching.

In order to qualify for the primary programme, students are expected to have achieved at least a grade 'C' in English and in Maltese at Intermediate level[1]. It is therefore assumed that the students have achieved a certain degree of proficiency in both languages. Furthermore, during their first year of the B.Ed. course, students have to sit for a proficiency test in English which is set by the Institute of Linguistics. Success in this proficiency test is required if students are to continue with the programme.

The degree programme consists of several study units / credits. According to University regulations, students are not allowed to register for more than 30 units per year. Each unit consists of 14 contact hours with the lecturer or tutor. Assessment for each unit could take the form of assignments, tests, practical work, preparation of packs and resources and so on. Students are awarded credits for these study units.

Below is a summary of the curriculum plan offered by the Department of Primary Education for the four-year primary programme followed by a description of the sub-divisions and details about language-related units which are offered in the programme.

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[1] Maltese students follow a two-year post-secondary course prior to entry to University. At the end of these two years they sit for exams prepared by the University of Malta's MATSEC board at Advanced and Intermediate levels. In one sitting, students have to succeed in two Advanced level, three Intermediate level exams and Systems of Knowledge, an inter-disciplinary subject with a cultural bias.

Table 2: The B.Ed. (Hons.) primary programme
(Number of units offered every year in each area)

		Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Total
Primary Studies	Core Content	12	6	8	6	32
	Core Professional	4	4	4	4	16
Primary Subject Specialisation	One of eight subjects	0	2	4	2	8
Primary Cycle	ECE / Junior Years	0	2	2	2	6
Field Placement / Teaching practice		4	4	4	4	16
Dissertation		0	0	0	6	6
Research Methods		0	2	0	0	2
Pedagogy[1]		4	4	0	0	8
Personal Skills[2]		3	3	0	0	6
Foundations		3	3	8	2	16
TOTAL		30	30	30	26	116

Language-related units are included within the:

- *Primary studies* area which is further sub-divided into core content and core professional units;

- *Subject specialisation* where students have eight additional units in one of the eight core subjects taught at primary level (as identified earlier in the paper);

- *Primary cycle* where for six units, students focus their studies either on young learners (5-7 year olds) or the older children in primary (8-11 year olds).

All units within the **Primary Studies** component are compulsory parts of the programme. The section on core content consists of four units in each of the eight subjects taught in the primary school (see above).

The four core content units related to the teaching of English are:

- Teaching English to young learners (2 units);
- Literacy development and clinic in literacy difficulties (2 units).

Emphasis in the first two units is given to basic pedagogical principles which apply to the teaching of languages to young learners. The objectives of the unit are for students to acquire relevant teaching competencies in English language teaching and present students with opportunities to apply this in a classroom situation.

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[1] Pedagogy refers to general units about classroom management, mixed ability teaching, lesson planning, etc.
[2] Personal skills are a set of six units with emphasis on group dynamics and inter-personal skills.

Students are given the opportunity to examine the socio-linguistic situation of the Maltese Islands and its implications for the primary school teacher. This leads to an examination of various teaching methodologies for the teaching of English in Maltese primary schools. The practical aspects of this programme help student teachers to acquire a range of competencies in the teaching of the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing).

With the units on literacy development and related difficulties, the objectives are for student teachers to be in a better position to understand how children learn to read and how to plan necessary intervention programmes in classrooms. The literacy development of young learners is explored through a developmental and process-oriented review of the teaching of reading skills in English as a second / foreign language. Diagnostic tools for the early detection of reading difficulties and possible intervention strategies are explored. A practical component is included in the unit and students are required to take on case studies and apply the knowledge acquired from the theoretical component.

The four core content units related to the teaching of Maltese are:

- Maltese grammar & orthography (2 units);
- Story-telling and narrating / Genres of writing (2 units).

Emphasis in the first two units is given to the analysis of difficulties arising in Maltese orthography as well as to the teaching of skills to enable student teachers to teach Maltese grammar. Student teachers are prepared to teach grammar by assisting their pupils to identify and analyse structures and rules of the language. Given the organisation of these study units, student teachers themselves gain awareness of problems related to orthography, gain familiarity with changes related to orthography as they take place over time and learn pedagogical skills needed for the primary classroom.

The units dealing with story telling and genres of writing emphasise ways in which student-teachers can promote reading in the teaching of Maltese in a creative manner. Rather than treating reading as a solitary activity, narration enables the reading act to become a shared experience between the teacher and the pupils. Considerations are given to choice of reading material, linking the reading material to syllabus constraints and demands as well as to the development of lessons based on story and narration in order to promote language skills. By the end of the units, it is expected that the students are in a position not only to identify and select relevant stories for particular age-groups but also to produce their own material which should be accompanied by a range of resources – pictures, photos, music, worksheets and so on.

As these descriptions suggest, the compulsory core content units in both English and Maltese have a practical orientation. They are meant to provide student teachers with basic skills which they will put into practice as soon as they are responsible for a class, even during their teaching practice.

Within the area of ***Primary Subject Specialisation***, students have the opportunity to specialise in one of the eight core subjects. This decision in favour of the introduction of subject specialisation was taken in view of the eventual setting up of a post for 'subject specialists' in the primary schools. The following units will be offered to students who will opt to specialise in English:

- Topic-based work and the role of fun and games activities in teaching English to young learners (2 units);

- Oral work, listening, reading and writing skills in teaching English to young learners (4 units);

- Using literature to teach language (2 units).

The objectives of topic-based work is to introduce the student teacher to methodologies based on activities and to enable the student teacher to select the right type of activity that will achieve the desired learning outcomes in the particular English language classroom. Activity-based learning can play an important role in the language classroom by providing the learners with possibilities to practise all the language skills during the various stages of the teaching / learning sequence.

Students are introduced to the processes needed to select a topic that is suitable both for the students' level and their interests. The student teachers are involved in brainstorming sessions to produce a number of topic-webs. Subsequently they are guided to identify the relevant language skills emanating from a particular topic and to devise activities to be tried out during workshops.

The role of fun in children's learning is highlighted through the use of enjoyable activities. Some software-based activities are included in these units. The units evaluate which games may be most suitable for particular students and hands-on sessions are conducted on how games can work in class and when games can be used. During these sessions, the student teachers have the opportunity to create or adapt games to be used in the language classroom.

The objective of the four units related to the language skill is to introduce the student teacher to the different theories associated to the teaching of the four language skills. Students gain familiarity with the various methodologies that can be employed in the teaching of such skills as well as a range of resources available. In addition, they are involved in creating resources to be used in class.

In the units on using literature to teach language, students are introduced to different genres of children's literature. They are taught how to adapt and integrate children's literature for the language classroom. In order to enrich and diversify the language-teaching programme, drama, poetry and prose are introduced. Students gain familiarity with ideas and suggestions to incorporate these genres in the Maltese primary classroom, thus encouraging literary appreciation in young learners.

The following eight units are offered to students who opt to specialise in Maltese:

- Introduction to linguistics
- Parts of speech
- Maltese socio-linguistics
- History of Maltese language & literature

- Orthography
- Maltese literature and linguistics
- Multimedia
- Writing

Some of these units are still in the process of being developed and will first be offered during the academic year 2001/2002 or during the following year.

The unit in introductory linguistics serves to introduce students to basic theoretical tools linguists use in their analyses of language. The course content refers to the idea of language as an abstract, complex system of inter-related signs and symbols. The notion of linguistic relativity is discussed in some detail in an attempt at dealing with the relation between language and thought. Human language is compared with other systems of communication, in particular animal communication systems, to show which characteristics make it such a versatile tool for communication. The second part of the course introduces students to the sub-branches of linguistics (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics) from which linguists derive the tools for analysing language in its many forms.

In the unit on parts of speech, students are led to discover how the forms of language are classified under different groupings according to a specific set of criteria. Students are introduced to the philosophical basis for part of speech distinctions and subsequently to the difference between the notional and the formal part of speech theory.

Aspects of Maltese socio-linguistics is an examination of the language as it is used by a very specific society. Consideration is given to relevant factors such as gender, age, geographic origin, social and education level of the users of the language in light of various theories of socio-linguistics.

The unit focusing on the history of Maltese language and literature helps to raise students' awareness about their attitudes towards Maltese. In addition, they will become familiar with the development of the Maltese language from a historical point of view and gain exposure to a variety of Maltese literary texts which can be classified according to accepted genres. The content of the unit provides students with information about the development of the oral and literary components of Maltese. The oral component refers to the Maltese alphabet, different registers and the use of Maltese in recent times. The literary component focuses on eras where poetry, drama and the narrative were the main genres in use.

The unit in orthography builds on previous units in this language area. The content emphasises knowledge and analysis of linguistic criteria which determine orthography; knowledge of orthographic rules; knowledge of the rules which govern orthographic accuracy and awareness of exceptions to rules which create orthographic difficulties.

The unit aims at assisting student teachers to be well-versed in the orthographic rules and their logic, helps them to write Maltese accurately, strengthens their competence as teachers of Maltese and assists them in providing clear and systematic guidelines for their own students to help them write Maltese accurately.

The synopsis of these unit descriptions indicates that within the area of subject specialisation, emphasis is given to language and linguistics where the mother tongue is concerned whereas emphasis to pedagogy is given in the units related to the teaching of English as a second language. The orientation in both areas reflects the strengths of the members of staff responsible for the different areas. Faculty staff working with student teachers following the primary course, are predominantly full-time members of the Department of Primary Education. The units prepared and delivered by these members have a pedagogical orientation. However, some units are taught by members of other faculties, such as the Faculty of Arts and in such instances, more emphasis is given to content.

Within the **_Primary Cycle_**, students who opt for the Junior Years will have six units on curriculum development in the various primary core subjects.

Curriculum development in English will address three main areas of curriculum planning:

- the context and levels of planning;
- the elements of planning;
- the planning process.

The student teacher is given the opportunity to evaluate both the subject-based and topic based approaches to the primary curriculum to arrive at his / her own conclusions about the most suitable approach for particular environments. Throughout this unit, the local National Curriculum provides a springboard for analytical discussion, with particular reference to the English language component.

Students who prefer to take the Early Childhood Education option follow six units related to the teaching of young learners. One of these units focuses on first language acquisition and literacy development whereas another unit deals with the teaching of Mathematics, English and Maltese with 5-7 year olds.

The former introduces students to language acquisition and the onset of literacy development. The first part of the unit focuses on language acquisition and a brief overview of theories of language learning – the behaviourist view, the nativist view and theories of social learning with reference to work by Vygotsky, Bruner and Cazden. The second part of the unit deals with emergent literacy. Emphasis is given to the beginning of reading and writing, the development of pre-reading and pre-writing skills in informal contexts; the first years of formal exposure to these language skills and the setting up of a rich-in-print environment in the classroom.

The unit which focuses on three of the core subjects in early childhood education, presents students with the very specific situation of working with children at the beginning of their formal education. Thus student teachers are taught about pedagogical practices which enhance young children's learning and development. Apart from dealing with issues related to classroom management and organisation, lesson planning and materials making, emphasis is also given to information technology. Student teachers are expected to be computer literate, be familiar with the software packages designated for use in the primary classroom by the central educational authorities and be able to integrate information and communication technology as a resource and tool in their teaching. Needless to say, the introduction of technology in schools was also a challenge to be taken up by staff at the Faculty. This challenge was more relevant and crucial for members of staff whose units deal with pedagogical issues. From the educational point of view, teachers and student teachers have to ensure that information technology as a resource is used in a meaningful way and this invariably raises language issues. Using technology in the Maltese classrooms implies that children have yet another form of exposure to English.

The B.Ed. (Hons.) Primary programme was planned to assist student teachers in their development towards becoming qualified teachers, equipped with a range of skills which enable them to teach effectively in various contexts within the Maltese primary classrooms. It took the Faculty of Education two years of planning, discussion, conferences and departmental meetings in preparation for this change. To date, a group of second year students and the new intake of first years are the ones experiencing the new programme. Evaluation and comparisons with earlier programmes will be undertaken in future. However, the successful implementation and development of the practice will be determined not just by the quality of the student who is attracted to join the programme but also by the commitment of the staff involved. New initiatives can only be successful if there is a firm conviction for the need to change. The fact that the Faculty staff took time to discuss and review previous programmes was a way of convincing all involved of the need to make changes in teacher training. The success or otherwise of such changes can only be evaluated in depth over time.

Developing learner autonomy in language learning and teacher education

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Introduction

In recent years, the notions of foreign language teaching and learning have been the subject of much discussion. The role of foreign language teacher has changed worldwide. Those people charged with the education of young people are responsible for equipping them to meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities presented by life in the twenty-first century. (Trim 1998: 4)

The need for mobility and access to information taken together with the importance of mutual understanding and tolerance establish effective communication skills across language boundaries as an indispensable part of the equipment of tomorrow's citizens facing the challenges and opportunities of a transformed European society. (Trim 1998:6)

The development of education is a dynamic process. Flexible systems of education and training opportunities should be available, involving both public and private sectors. Education is, in many important ways, the pulse of society. It reflects both today's tensions and tomorrow's aspirations. (Delors 1998:7)

Education must meet some quite specific needs, teaching life skills, preparing individuals for their economic role.

The notion of autonomy of learning

Learner autonomy has proved to be a useful tool for language learning as teachers' role in teaching and learning process has not remained constant. Autonomous learning provides alternatives to the established modes of teaching and learning. Teachers are actively involved in teaching-learning process. They are not only the sources of knowledge any more but as facilitators of learning. Teachers do not only direct learning activities, but also the acquisition of knowledge by students.

Learners are encouraged to study independently. More emphasis is on learners' responsibility for their learning decisions.

According to Henri Holec, autonomy is "the ability to take charge of one's learning", which he defines as (quoted from Fenner 1998:254):

- determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- evaluation what has been acquired.

The notion of autonomy of learning thus calls into question the relations between teacher and learner, which are of different nature to traditional relationships, the power structures being altered through this reshaping of learning. (Trebbi 1998:188)

The foreign language syllabus has to accommodate the diverse needs of learners and learner autonomy together with learning to learn procedures which help to take care of the diversification in the classroom.

"Learning to learn procedures must include activities aimed at raising language awareness and learning awareness, at discovering and practising new learning techniques, information gathering and problem solving activities, etc." (Holec 1993:38)

David Little's (1995:14) definition of autonomy in learning implies that all truly successful learners are autonomous. But this does not mean that learner autonomy will develop spontaneously in a majority of learners: on the contrary, its pursuit as a general educational goal will always depend crucially on the initiatives and skills of the teacher.

The place of mother tongue and foreign languages in the curriculum

The re-independence era has witnessed extensive work in reforming curricula at all levels of the educational system. Curriculum development has been a large undertaking in our society. Foreign languages as an essential element of education have their solid place in the curriculum.

Each school is responsible for developing its programme in compliance with the core education and speciality of its branches. Each school has the right to introduce special subjects. (Kera 1996:37) Greater autonomy has encouraged schools to improve their curricula with new subjects, especially in foreign language teaching.

In 1996 a new curricula were introduced in comprehensive and upper secondary schools. In addition, several methodological handbooks of different subjects have been published. Our curriculum has a section of required subjects and a range of optional subjects.

In practice all Estonian children start school at the age of 7.

The number of hours devoted to the teaching of the mother tongue are:

- Forms 1-3 : 18-22 hours;
- Forms 4-6 : 14-16 hours;
- Forms 7-9 : 11-12 hours.

In Forms 10-12 there should be 12 obligatory courses, each course consisting of 35 hours, the school can decide the order of the courses. The course in Forms 10-12 are the following: text analysis (1-2 courses), speech course (1-2 courses), the structure of the mother tongue (2 courses), literature (6 courses), orthography (1-2 courses). The school has the right to compile its own schedule for the lessons.

In 1999 at the end of Form 9 all the students wrote an essay in their mother tongue. In the year 2000 the school has to decide whether the students have to write an essay or a final test. In 2001 all the graduates of the comprehensive school have to write a final test in mother tongue. One of the problems for the teachers of L1 is the fact that English has strongly influenced the use of student's mother tongue due to media and computers. Starting from 14 March 1999 Estonia celebrates a new national holiday – Mother Tongue Day.

Now a few facts concerning mother tongue teachers in Estonia.

Mother tongue teachers according to their age
(statistical data from the Ministry of Education of Estonia):

Tongue	Total	Under 30	30-50	Over 50	Under 30	30-50	Over 50
Estonian	1 842	162	954	726	9%	52%	39%
Russian	538	42	283	213	8%	53%	40%

Mother tongue teachers according to their education:

Tongue	Total	Higher	Sec. special	Second.	Higher	Sec. special	Second.
Estonian	1842	1554	185	103	84%	10%	6%
Russian	538	509	29	0	95%	5%	0%

In the column about higher education it is possible to go further and see whether higher education also involves pedagogical training or not. Out of 1 554 Estonian mother tongue teachers who have graduated from the university 1 218 have a pedagogical speciality of Estonian as a mother tongue and 116 not. 183 teachers of Estonian as a mother tongue have got higher education in a pedagogical speciality, which is not Estonian language and 37 have no pedagogical qualification.

Out of the teachers of Russian as a mother tongue 393 have a pedagogical higher education, 39 have not. The number of teachers who have the university degree not in the speciality they teach is 69.

During the last few years very much has been done to teach the Estonian language to the people of other nationalities living in Estonia, at the same time stressing the importance of their mother tongues to maintain their links with their culture of origin. According to the curriculum teaching Estonian at Russian medium schools begins in the second term of Form 2 and is compulsory. The number of lessons per week varies from 3 to 5.

Besides compulsory learning of Estonian at schools great efforts have been made by educational and governmental institutions to teach Estonian to the adult population. The results here depend entirely on every single person – on his / her motivation, needs, understanding, attitudes, on the environment the person has come from or is living in.

According to the latest population census in 1989 more than a hundred different languages were spoken in Estonia.

Education and training in modern languages goes hand in hand with the principles of the Council of Europe recommendations.

The following foreign languages are taught at present: English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Finnish, Swedish, Latvian, Polish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Lithuanian, Hungarian. They meet the needs that arise due to our geographical position, demographic situation and the European dimension.

Our educational authorities stress the importance of diversified language learning in order to promote pluri-lingualism in a pan-European context by encouraging the students to achieve a degree of communicative ability in at least two foreign languages.

In Estonian schools the students start learning foreign languages at the age of 9 in Form 3 with four 45-minute lessons per week. The class can be divided into two groups for foreign language lessons if there are more than 25 students in the classroom.

The students usually start with English, German, French or Russian according to their own preference, but instruction is dependent upon the availability of teachers at the school.

With the help of the Nordic countries a project on the vocational education foreign language curriculum and materials development for English and German has started. (Mere 1997:39)

Foreign language teachers according to their education:

Modern language	Total	Higher	Sec. special	Second.	Higher	Sec. special	Second.
English	1 851	1 599	101	151	86%	5%	8%
German	725	650	46	29	90%	6%	4%
French	54	51	0	3	94%	0%	6%
Russian	899	773	82	44	86%	9%	5%

Foreign language teachers according to their age:

Language	Total	Under 30	30-50	Over 50	Under 30	30-50	Over 50
English	1 851	308	980	563	17%	53%	30%
German	725	72	379	274	10%	52%	38%
French	54	8	32	14	15%	59%	26%
Russian	899	24	512	363	3%	57%	40%

The A-language choice made in the autumn 1996 in Estonian medium schools (Ministry of Education Fact Sheet, p. 10):

Language	%
English	76.4
German	19
Russian	3.5
French	1.1

In Russian medium schools the first foreign language is Estonian as the state language.

In 1998/1999 school year English was taught as the first foreign language for 100 200 students, as the B-language (second foreign language) for 42 096 students and as a C-language (third foreign language) for 3 859 students. German was taught as A-language for 20 896 students, as B-language for 17 822 and C-language for 9 547 students. French as A-language was taught for 1 677 students, as B-language for 700 and C-language for 960 students. Russian as A-language for 18 833, as B-language for 43 248 and as C-language for 876 students. Finnish as A-language for 323 students, as B-language for 92 students and as C-language for 1 065 students.

The following table illustrate the study of foreign languages as part of the curriculum at the beginning of academic year 1998/1999 (Education 1997/98. Statistical Office of Estonia, p.76):

Language	No.of schools	Lg. share (total)	Tuition in Estonian	Tuition in Russian
Russian	452	23.9	29.4	-
English	664	55.4	50.3	77.4
German	394	18.3	17.8	20.1
French	29	1.2	1.2	1.5
Finnish	33	0.6	0.6	0.2
Swedish	13	0.1	0.2	-
Latin	5	0.0	0.0	-
Esperanto	1	0.0	0.0	-
Spanish	2	0.0	0.0	-
Danish	1	0.0	0.0	-
Japanese	1	0.0	0.0	-
Hebrew	1	0.1	-	0.5

The teaching material is still a problem at the lower secondary level in the A-language teaching. Ad teachers find the new curriculum too open, some are unable to make the correct choices between different teaching materials available. For the B-language textbooks we have our own textbook writers. At the upper secondary level mainly British up-to-date textbooks are used. (Mere 1997:38-39)

On 27 October 1999 the Pan Baltic project on using the Internet for teaching English in schools started.

Foreign language is compulsory in vocational schools as well.

The British Council is currently running an ESP Teacher Trainer Course for teachers in vocational schools and colleges.

Foreign language teaching and learning continues at a tertiary level at universities. Depending on the specific academic institution and faculty students the students have to learn at least one foreign language as a general subject during their first year (sometimes during one semester). In most universities ESP is taught. Universities have introduced special computer programmes in order to facilitate language learning.

Unlike teachers in schools, university teachers are given little or next to no in-service training. With the support of the British Council the Institute of Humanities, the Pedagogical University (Tallinn University of Educational Science), Tartu University and Tallinn Technical University will run a Lecture Improvement Programme to help to bridge this gap. The programme supported by the Ministry of Education is aimed at new university lecturers and university lecturers who wish to improve their lecturing skills. (Beattie 1999:6)

The preparation of foreign language teachers is carried out in two universities and their colleges: University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Educational Science (Tallinn Pedagogical University). After a four-year course the students get a BA degree and can teach foreign languages in primary and secondary schools. During their studies the students are provided with the knowledge of linguistics, psychology, sociology, philosophy, pedagogy, methodology, etc., the students go on pre-service training to schools twice. The students have a tutor from the school and the methodologists from the universities and colleges also go to observe and assess their lessons. Teaching practice occupies an important place in the system of professional preparation of future foreign language teachers.

The "Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching" is reflected in the curriculum of the English language students at Tallinn University of Educational Science.

Learner competencies, both general and communicative competencies, are developed through practical language courses, such as practical grammar, phonetics, listening comprehension, integrative skill development, critical reading and extensive reading. Communicative themes and notions, as presented by "The Framework Proposal" are covered by integrative skill courses.

The foreign language teaching methodology course aims at making students aware of the differences between productive and receptive language skills and receptive language skills and respective language activities as well as interactive and mediating language skills and tasks. The students also acquire the skill of using corresponding activities, i.e. that of mediation and interaction, in the special course of translation theory and practice. As far as different aspects of the learner's general competences are concerned, the socio-cultural knowledge is elaborated in the course of area studies and British and American literature courses. As D. Coste (1993:42) has stressed:" any communicative perspective, any inventory of functions and notions, any selection of vocabulary, any grammatical system even, is in dissociable from the cultural loads which is a constituent part of each and every language system and each and every communicative event."

The learner's mental context i.e. his perceptual apparatus, attention mechanism and memory work are in focus in a special course of psycholinguistic theories of foreign language learning. The course aims at giving an overview of foreign language learning and teaching process as well as practical skills of dealing with learners' cognitive, affective and personality factors in students' teaching practice.

The professional development of teachers is another burning issue. During five years the professional training of English and German teachers has been systematic thanks to the help from the British Council, USIS, Goethe Institute. The in-service training of teachers of French is carried out by the French Cultural Institute together with the French Embassy.

Ongoing in-service programmes are essential to provide the space needed for teachers to understand their classroom better.

In 1994 a requalification project of teachers started for those teachers who had a university pedagogical degree but not in English and who could teach English at the lower secondary level after a two-year requalification course. These courses still work at Tartu University and Tallinn Pedagogical University. The aims of the programme are:

- to provide an opportunity of obtaining a second speciality (that of a teacher of a foreign language) to teachers of other subjects;

- to improve the language level of the requalifying teachers by raising the outcome to that of the Cambridge First Certificate;

- to provide a repertoire of contemporary EFL teaching methods and techniques, enabling the requalifying teachers to teach English in Forms 3-9;

- to provide the requalifying teachers with basic facts about the society and culture of English-speaking countries.

The LIP (Language Improvement Programme) was also started for primary school teachers.

All the methods used in teaching area studies should enable the trainees to compare cross-cultural differences and similarities between the English-speaking countries and Estonia.

Foreign language learning is a lifelong activity and the teachers should introduce the concepts and methods of self-directed learning that the learners might use in their future life. In order to promote lifelong language learning, distance-learning programmes are offered by the Open University departments, private sector and cultural associations.

According to David Little (1995:14-15) the concept of lifelong learning rests on the belief that learners can achieve sufficient autonomy (I) to recognise when they need to embark on a new course of learning and (ii) to decide how that learning will best be managed. At the same time all learning requires the support of an expert. The number of people in any society who can sustain self-instruction over an extended period of time is very small. Thus, if we are serious about promoting lifelong learning, we shall need to give careful thought to the means by which such learning should be supported.

Thanks to the Internet, our students can be involved in distant learning programmes all over the world.

Another important issue and the most time-consuming task for the teachers is how to teach mixed ability classes. The classroom is the whole complex of personal characteristics, the students have different linguistic abilities, language environment and background is different. As groups have become bigger the specific needs of students have grown. The teacher has to prepare more additional worksheets for different needs. There should always be something ready to occupy those students who finish earlier. The teacher has to use different activities and techniques.

The ECML workshop in Cyprus (1999) gave us an opportunity to think about how we apply the key messages towards mixed ability teaching to our various work contexts: to think about how we can make the messages accessible for our colleagues, to think about the practicalities of turning the messages into a lasting reality, which benefits individual learners all over Europe. These five key messages are:

- every class is a mixed ability class;

- individual differences affect learning;

- teachers are responsible for noticing and for catering for individual differences;

- effective teachers of mixed ability classes display a number of characteristics;

- the benefits of teaching in this way outweigh the challenges (this paragraph is a quotation from the handout of the animator Janeen M. Leith).

Our educational system should provide equal opportunities to students with different rates of development.

The introduction of national examinations

Testing is an important part of everyday teaching and learning process. A well constructed test can help the students in at least two ways. As Madsen (1983) states, first of all, such tests can help create positive attitudes towards the class. He explains, "In the interest of motivation and efficient instruction, teachers almost universally aim at providing positive classroom experience for their students" (Madsen 1983:4). Second, tests help students master the language. They confirm what each person has mastered, and they point out those language items needing further attention (ibid.)

Before 1997 there were no unified school-leaving examinations in Estonia. Schools had a great deal of freedom in compiling, administering and marking the tests. The results of the final exams in different schools were not comparable and tended to be subjective.

A questionnaire was prepared to get to know the students' opinion about the English first national examination, which consisted of five papers (listening and reading comprehension papers, language structures, writing and speaking papers). 52% of the students who answered thought that the examination reflects their knowledge of English. The listening part was considered to be most difficult in 69% of the cases, 21% were of the opinion that too much time was given for language structures part, but on the other hand, 46% considered this part to be too difficult (Inglise keel 1997:22). In the second national examination in 1998 the average score out of the maximum 100 was 58.8 points versus 61 points in 1997.

Statistical results according to the data from the State Examination Centre of the 1999 national examinations in mother tongue and foreign languages:

Exam	Number of students	Average result (max. 100)
Mother tongue	14 395	57.47
English	9 258	61.77
French	58	72.72
Estonian as a state language	2 171	64.14
German	1 809	64.52
Russian	408	74.96

Conclusion

The teaching of foreign languages is compulsory in all schools in Estonia. The increase in international links and tourism contribute to public awareness of the need to teach foreign languages not only at all levels of education in schools but also for adults. The acquisition of foreign language skills is encouraged.

The choice of the languages in schools is up to the pupils and English is still the most popular foreign language. As a rule, foreign language teachers have university qualifications. Teacher training in most universities is based on properly balanced relation between theory and practice.

Learner autonomy has proved to be a useful tool for language learning as teachers' role has changed to that of facilitators of learning.

In order to promote lifelong learning, distance-learning programmes are offered by the Open University departments, private sectors and cultural associations.

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