Challenges and Opportunities in Language Education

The Contributions of the European Centre for Modern Languages 2000 - 2003

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Although the final version of each chapter has been written by one of the seven authors of the book there has been a large degree of consultation among them, so that all the chapters are the result of collaborative effort.

The work would not have been possible without the reference to all the twenty-five projects, and to the teams who co-ordinated them. And, of course, the work has been inspired by the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment of the participants in workshops and follow-up work.

For more detailed information on any of the projects referred to in this publication visit the ECML website: http://www.ecml.at

Foreword

In 1999, the European Centre for Modern Languages' Governing Board decided to change the format of the Centre's programming from an annual to a medium-term basis. This was intended to allow its projects adequate time to develop and lead to more tangible results.

The first medium-term programme ran from 2000 to 2003 and this book is a summary of those four years of intensive work.

The ECML's projects and activities over that period indeed produced substantial results, which are available to teachers, teacher trainers and other interested readers in the field of language teaching and learning in the form of a wide range of reports, books, dedicated websites, CD-ROMs and brochures.

These results were only made possible by the strong commitment shown by the over 100 experts of the project teams and by the several thousands of participants who were involved in the work over the four years.

However, we are aware that few of these results manage to document one of the most essential outcomes of all these workshops, networks and meetings. We refer to the processes that took place at each of the events: the exchange of information and experience between experts and participants from over 30 countries; the daily reality of intercultural communication; the training and awareness-raising; the research and development processes carried out in a spirit of openness, always seeking the common denominator.

The following book presents some of the major current issues in language education that were dealt with in the Centre's first medium-term programme. It focuses on the contribution that each of the projects has made to these issues and concerns, underlining the main conclusions or recommendations that can be drawn from them.

We have decided to publish it in the form of a reader which attempts to present these issues in a digestible and challenging way. We are conscious that it is aimed at different target groups: firstly the language experts, whom we hope will be prompted to consult the more detailed publications of each project if they are interested in learning more; secondly, the language-teaching community in general, whom we hope will be provoked into reflection about their profession and finally, a wider readership beyond of language learners and those interested in exploring other cultures.

If the ECML is to "make a difference", its work must be disseminated as widely as possible through all the channels at its disposal. You, the reader, are one of these channels: if you have found this book useful, please recommend it to someone else you think may benefit from it.

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Introduction

This book is a reflective account of the work of the European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz in its first medium-term programme, which lasted from 2000 to 2003. It has been written by seven of the co-ordinators of the 25 or so projects in the programme and it has tried to give an impression of the contribution made by all the co-ordinators, facilitators and participants in the programme.

It is not, however, a project report. All the projects are the subject of reports and most of them have resulted in some kind of product – a book, a CD-ROM, a website, or a combination of two or more of these. Detailed information about the whole programme can be found on the ECML website.

What the book attempts is a reflection on the major issues faced by language educators in the period concerned and to provide insight into the way in which the programme tried to address these issues and to provide practical, usable approaches to dealing with them. The projects included applied research and development, carried out by international teams of coordinators and participants; they usually had an element of training and awareness raising, together with an aim to disseminate the results and make them widely available.

The first three chapters of the book set the scene: in the first chapter, Frank Heyworth examines the social context, looking at the features of society where a relevant contribution related to language education seemed most feasible. Today's Europe is multilingual and multicultural and the ECML's work has been directed to making sure that this provides opportunities as well as raising problems.

Throughout the book there is a strong belief that learning languages has an important educational contribution to make in the development of social cohesion, and Michel Candelier's second chapter places this in its political context. The Council of Europe's modern languages projects have emphasized the key role of language learning in the promotion of democratic citizenship and underlined the importance of plurilingualism as a vital feature of a Europe which is free, fair and democratic.

David Newby's third chapter examines the relationship of theory and practice in language education, pointing out that coherent practice is impossible without a basis in an adequate theory. The development of learner-centred approaches is described, complementing the "communicative" approach – which, in theory at least, was adhered to by most practitioners – with more cognitive, constructivist approaches. The *Common European Framework of Reference* has had a major influence by establishing the view of language as action rather than as knowledge.

The other four chapters of the book are concerned with the ways in which the concepts have been implemented. In Chapter Five, Antoinette Camilleri Grima and Anthony Fitzpatrick explores the twin and complementary themes of teachers and

learners, showing how methodological and technological development has led to teachers having to adapt to new roles – as mediators and orchestrators, for example - and to acquire new competences, especially in the domain of ICT.

Ruud Halink's contribution deals with issues related to the organisation of language education. Innovatory approaches can extend the scope of language education and make better learning possible for more people. Various projects have worked out realistic and practical approaches to learning the languages of neighbour countries, through exchanges and visits using an appropriate didactic approach. Using the skills acquired in learning a first foreign language can make the learning of second and third languages easier and more effective; various ways of using available time can be tested out to see whether it is more efficient to learn in intensive or spread out periods of time.

Anthony Fitzpatrick examines the role of resources in language education; he underlines the key role of the *Common European Framework* and the *European Language Portfolio* as an additional overarching resource for the profession; the coherent descriptions of learning, teaching and assessment give a theoretical basis and the *Portfolio* is a significant instrument for both motivation and standardized assessment. The chapter explores the great potential of ICT and new technologies for language education, pointing out at the same time that there is still not sufficient depth or breadth of material available, especially for lesser taught languages, and that to a great extent, the teacher and the textbook are still the resources which are most used. The chapter also examines quality criteria for teaching / learning materials.

The last chapter, by Laura Muresan, looks at the vital aspect of quality. All of the initiatives described in the book need to be examined in the light of two key questions – "Are we doing the right things?" and "Are we doing them right?". The procedures needed to do this systematically are described as part of a continuum which goes from individual and institutional self-assessment to the development of procedures for outside inspection and certification of quality as a guarantee for the user.

Finally, in the conclusion, the overall achievement of the programme is reviewed and some directions for future work are suggested.

1. Language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe – the context

Frank Heyworth

The Social Context

What kind of Europe do we live in? The challenge for the work of the European Centre for Modern Languages over the last five years has been to undertake realistic, practical projects in language education which contribute, in however small a way, to help the citizens of a rapidly changing, diverse society to live better individually and to live together more harmoniously.

It is easy to paint a dark picture of the social context in the period from 2000 to 2003 which the first medium-term programme has spanned – a stagnating economy, increasing unemployment, an ageing population; growing numbers of people on or below the poverty line, and a *"fracture sociale"* – the gap between the rich and the disadvantaged – which seems frequently to be widening rather than narrowing. Wars, within Europe and beyond, have increased the number of refugees seeking asylum; the co-habitation of peoples of different cultures and religions has often led to increased intolerance and to a variety of fundamentalisms.

Better communication between people and peoples will not change economic realities and it would be overoptimistic to suppose that better understanding of each other's languages will resolve conflicts; the bitterest flashpoints are often to be found between communities which share languages which are slightly different but inter-comprehensible. This is proof that understanding others goes beyond mere linguistic comprehension. Nevertheless, many social issues can only be addressed if those involved have a voice which can be heard and understood. Understanding requires not just linguistic competence, but awareness of and respect for the customs and values that are being expressed – intercultural competence is necessary.

This is the general societal background to the issues addressed in this book; the relevance of the different projects described is in the way they seek to increase our understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity, to enrich the many facets and levels of communication and to suggest innovatory ways of organising, carrying out, assessing and improving the quality of language education.

Multilingual, multicultural Europe

> Today's Europe is unarguably multicultural and multilingual. The forces of globalisation and migration, expectations of mobility and the availability of cheap travel mean that cultures are mixing at a rate not seen before in history.
>
> Wherever you look in Europe, the figures are startling. Already 12 million French do not have the French language as a mother tongue. Ten per cent of the German population is foreign-born. The Canary Islands are well known for the many businesses run by northern Europeans and Asians who have settled there; it is less evident to outsiders that 29 different African nationalities are also represented amongst the residents. Romania has 19 recognised minorities, Russia 176 culturally and linguistically distinct peoples. Ten per cent of the United Kingdom population has a background from outside the UK, and this is expected to rise to fifteen per cent by 2020. And the process is continuing: 4 million asylum-seekers sought refuge in Western Europe during the 1990s.
>
> In London, where I live and work, and where my children go to school, thirty-two per cent of schoolchildren speak another language in addition to English. Three hundred languages, from Albanian to Zulu, are spoken by London schoolchildren.

This is how Teresa Tinsley (2003) describes the linguistic diversity which is the setting for the future (and the present) challenges faced by language educators. In the vast majority of cases those belonging to linguistic minorities are from the most vulnerable sections of the communities in which they live. Migrants have to cope with finding work, housing and a social identity in an environment which is frequently hostile to them. Their children have to succeed in educational systems in which their first languages have little or no place; where educational success and social and professional improvement require them to assimilate a new language and different cultural values.

It is clear that a delicate balance needs to be struck between the preservation of linguistic and cultural identity and the ability to live and to function successfully in the predominant culture and language of the new country. Frequently, assimilation is the priority for new migrants, even to the point of refusing to let their children study the "home" language at school. One of the most important challenges for language educators is to be able to convince learners that plurilingualism is possible and realistic – learning one language does not mean that you have to reject another. And, of course, for this to be feasible, the organisation of curricula needs to be less restrictive. The present pattern of choice around Europe – typically, English taught as a first foreign language, with one of the other major European languages as a second foreign language – does not appear to be an adequate response to this diversity, nor does it take account of the vast repertoire of language knowledge present in the European population.

Many countries in Europe are meeting the challenge and opportunity of a multicultural society for the first time. Ten years ago, Iceland was almost entirely monolingual and mono-cultural; now here, too, there is a need to provide Icelandic as a second language for some 28 different language communities and to face the organisational task of

offering language learning opportunities in the "heritage" languages spoken by the newly diverse school community.

The diversity is cultural as well as linguistic; in France there is controversy over whether girl pupils should be allowed to wear head coverings in state schools. The wives of migrant workers are often isolated from social and linguistic contact with the community in which they live, and this leads to a fossilisation of their communicative competence at a very elementary level in the language of the host country.

In many countries, education authorities have made considerable effort to provide outreach programmes which provide help in *assimilation* – learning the language of the host country is combined with practical help in dealing with regulations and bureaucracy and in obtaining their social rights. These are complemented by initiatives whose objectives are directed towards the *preservation of cultural identity*; these include, in the Netherlands, for example, the right of children of all migrants to receive some instruction in their first language. In Amsterdam alone, this meant provision for some 275 different languages.

The challenge of intercultural communication is not just a matter of making provision for linguistic minorities or for migrant groups. The linguistic majority in any social context is often confused and baffled by the arrival of new groups in their midst; contact and communication can be helped if there is access to the heritage languages within and outside the school system. The descriptors of communicative competence and of mediation strategies to be found in the *Common European Scale of Reference* provide both useful statements of objectives, and ways to defining what kinds of partial competences might be achieved.

In this context, one of the priorities of the ECML's medium-term programme, directed to looking for innovative approaches to the organisation and set up of language education, is particularly relevant. Various projects have developed new and informal ways of providing language instruction outside traditional classrooms. These are described in more detail in the different chapters of the book.

Technological change and globalisation

The linguistic and cultural diversity we have described in the previous section is, of course, to be seen within a context of globalisation. Technological developments and commercial expansion mean that the same goods are available all around the world, and that those who have not the means to profit from a consumer society are fully aware of what they are deprived of. The demonstrations which take place around every meeting of the G8 group are an indication of the way in which awareness of social injustice is making large sections of the community reject the values and practices on which the world economy is based.

Information Communication Technology and the development of the Internet are making vast quantities of information immediately available and communication around the world cheap and open to many, though not to all. The widespread availability of the Internet offers opportunities for breaking down the barriers of the language classroom, making authentic language and real time information readily available; learners all around the world can communicate with each other. A number of the projects in the medium-term programme have been concerned with exploiting the possibilities opened up in this way. The project *Information and communication technologies and young language learners* – (project 1.3.3, co-ordinated by Valerie Sollars) – connected primary school pupils in a number of countries in collaborative story telling through the Internet.

One of the most significant consequences of the technological development is the way in which individual learning can be undertaken away from the classrooms, in learners' own time, with a flexibility of source and richness of information which could make the conventional classroom dull and limited. The development of forums and chat rooms enable learners, not teachers, to formulate what questions are to be asked, and to create collaborative learning without teacher intervention.

This raises issues related to how far learning can be autonomous and of the teacher's role in the process. What kind of social structures will learning have in the future? There will need to be a rethinking of the nature of learning groups, of the place, time and content of learning activities and of the role of the school.

Language education as a factor in social development

In the Council of Europe's work over more than thirty years, there has been a constant and developing affirmation of the importance of the social role of language education. The *Common European Framework* (2001: p.4) states as one of its objectives:

> To promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgement and action, combined with social skills and responsibility.

In a "Think Tank" held at the ECML in Graz in 2000 to discuss priorities for teacher education in the years to come, and to suggest relevant projects for the medium-term programme, educators observed a low status for language teachers in many countries and considered that better understanding and communication of the role of language learning in individual and social development was a key issue for the work of the centre, and this led to projects concerning the status of language teachers and an exploration of their future role.

The outcome of the project (Heyworth 2003: p.7) made a strong statement of the potential social role of language educators:

What are the over-riding aims of language education? Possible aims could include:

The development of European citizenship, with an educated European understanding several languages, able to study and travel in many countries, knowledgeable about and with respect for many different nationalities and national cultures.

The conviction that knowing different languages is a powerful factor in intellectual development, encouraging open-mindedness and flexibility, contributing to the development of other skills.

The commitment to life-long language learning, accepting that it is unlikely that schools can predict exactly which languages their students are going to need, and that therefore the aim should be to train them to become good language learners, capable of acquiring the particular languages as they meet the need for them.

The idea that language study offers opportunities to acquire independence and autonomy as learners, that it can be learnt in ways which encourage co-operation and other social values.

This pre-supposes that language teaching has a privileged position in schools compared to other subject areas. This is to be found in both the content and in the methodological approach. When they are teaching learners to communicate in the foreign language, teachers can choose the topics to be discussed and can therefore address issues of social relevance; communicative approaches to teaching include co-operation in learning, the development of reflective and autonomous learning habits. Intercultural competence is an essential feature of knowing a language, and learning a language effectively cannot happen without the development of socio-linguistic competences.

There are dangers in this approach; of trying to do amateur social engineering, of supposing language teachers not to be affected by intercultural prejudice, perhaps of assuming that knowing someone else's language automatically promotes understanding and respect. There will need to be much more usable descriptions of cultural differences and intercultural competences, to achieve teachability linked to successful language learning. However, the strong arguments for a crucial place of language education in general education cannot be convincing unless we address seriously the development of adequate instruments.

In several of the projects in the medium-term programme social issues are addressed specifically. Michel Candelier (in project 1.2.1: *The introduction of language awareness into the curriculum*) has developed ways of introducing very young learners to the understanding of linguistic diversity and the acceptance of difference. The project *Literacy as correspondence – an integrated approach to multiliteracy* (project 1.1.5 – coordinator Valerie Sollars) addresses the problem of literacy training for those learning to read and write in a second language. The project dealing with *organising language learning for the vocational / workplace context, on the needs of migrant workers in the workplace* (project 1.2.5 – co-ordinator Matilde Grünhage-Monetti) seeks to combine the learning of the language with training in vocational skills. The project group identified the fact that in any workplace there is a "community of

practice" (Wenger 1998, p.47) – the habits, rules and procedures by which the group functions, and that these need to be identified and integrated into the language training of migrant workers.

Educational tools for social change – the importance of the *Common European Framework* and the *European Language Portfolio*

In the chapter on the political background to the work of the medium-term programme, Michel Candelier stresses the importance of the *Common European Framework* as a tool to help promote democratic, responsible citizenship; David Newby underlines the educational and methodological importance of the Council of Europe's view of language learning as action, rather than knowledge.

The *European Language Portfolios* have been developed as both a tool for recording and certifying language proficiency and as an aid to reflective and participative learning. Its social role is important, too. The *Portfolios* belong to the learner rather than the school or institution; they include language learning outside the school as well as inside the formal educational context; self-assessment is an integral part of the process of using the Portfolios; the languages migrant children speak at home are seen as an educational advantage, not a problem to be solved. All these features are politico-social statements, stressing inclusion rather than exclusion, the learner as subject rather than object, responsibility and autonomy as key elements in language learning.

In the last workshop (in project 1.1.1 on *innovatory approaches to the organisation and set up of language education*) several participants worked on the practical issues implied by the introduction of *Portfolio* approaches to setting aims and to assessing language achievement, with individual autonomy and social integration as the overall goal of their project plans. Project 2.2.1, *Ongoing assessment in the lower secondary classroom*, co-ordinated by Angela Hasselgren has developed *ICT based materials on a "can-do" basis suitable for portfolio presentation*. The agreed descriptor levels in the *Common Framework of Reference* have given a set of criteria and standards enabling a common approach to initiatives across the diversity of languages.

The ECML as example of social integration

Most of the projects of the ECML involve only a relatively limited number of participants, and the impact of the ideas and approaches which are developed depends on how much and how well those who take part disseminate them and put them into practice.

In a typical workshop, 25 to 35 people, each from different countries and backgrounds, where the social and educational problems are very varied meet and work together with

(usually) a very high degree of understanding, respect and co-operation. In the questionnaires given to participants at the end of the workshop, the question "what did you like most about the workshop?" almost invariably emphasises the opportunity to learn about other countries, other people and their concerns and problems. Most projects then involve research and development work done across national, linguistic and cultural boundaries, and it is remarkable how far what participants have in common outweighs what the differences.

The social interaction in ECML workshops is being studied as part of a thesis by Hermine Penz and in an article entitled *Cultural and linguistic mediation at the European Centre for Modern Languages* she describes how meaning is negotiated and mediated – generally in a "mode of co-operative communication" and gives examples where conflicts are resolved through the mediation of the workshop co-ordinator, the staff of the ECML, or by the participants; the key elements seem to be the general acceptance of the Centre as an institution where co-operation is a fundamental value.

Conclusion

In the introduction I recommended modesty in any claims that language education can solve social problems and warned against any idea that language educators could or should try to be social engineers. However, every social situation is a microcosm of the larger world and in the activities of the Centre and in the projects which have been carried out, there has been a concern to develop educational approaches which facilitate the expression of diversity and explore ways in which plurilingualism and pluriculturalism can be experienced and transmitted in a cooperative atmosphere.

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2.   The Political Context: a set of principles and aims

Michel Candelier

A chapter … for the present day

It is very doubtful whether, twenty years ago, a work of this nature would have included a whole chapter devoted to "the political context". While there has always been an objective link between language teaching and the social context in which it takes place, it has never before been viewed as the means of achieving explicitly formulated goals of language policy, nor *a fortiori* – as we do at present – as an instrument by which broader political aims, affecting the overall functioning of a society can be achieved.

This is quite clearly a sign of progress. Associations of language teachers have – among others – made a significant contribution to its achievement. Many of them have, with determination and persistence, brought to public attention the issue of "diversification", that is to say, the place of linguistic diversity in educational systems. Some have even explored the links between language education and equality of opportunity in school systems. And overall, they have helped to raise awareness among language teachers of their role as "political actors": to teach a language strengthens the positioning of that language, and, furthermore, it bestows power – the power granted by the language – to those who are taught it.

At the same time, in the last three decades of the 20th century, language policy became increasingly a recognised domain for academic research, and links were established between those working on language pedagogy and methodology, and those, in most cases, socio-linguisticians for whom issues of language policy were of primary concern.

The vital contribution of the Council of Europe

In the European context, the Council of Europe has become the centre of an enterprise of collaborative reflection which has led to a pluridisciplinary definition of principles and overall aims, as a result of which language education might be able to play a positive and decisive role in the organisation and development of modern European societies.

It is not too much of a simplification to say that during the 1990s, the main focus of the Council of Europe's work on language education shifted from an overwhelming concern principally with didactic questions, with relatively little attention given to issues concerning political aims, to one in which matters of language policy were at the forefront; pedagogic and methodological issues were not neglected, but were examined in the light of specifically defined aims and principles.

These political issues are specifically addressed in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe 2001), in the proceedings of the Innsbruck Conference (Council of Europe 2000) and most recently in the most comprehensive publication in the field of language policy, The *Guide for the Development of Language Policies in Europe* published in a main and an abridged executive version (Council of Europe 2003a and 2003b).[1]

The next few pages will draw extensively on the positions and points of view of the Council of Europe, since, by and large; my own convictions coincide with them. Nevertheless, the view I am presenting stems from strong personal convictions, not from any official dogma, for this could quickly deteriorate into lip service to a sterile *credo*.

Plurilingualism – the right answer to the challenge of diversity

In order to build a genuine European Community, as an integral part of the process of construction, we have to face the challenge of the diversity of languages spoken across the continent. This is, clearly, a handicap (which does not mean that it is a handicap that cannot be overcome). In order to live, work and progress together towards a common future, it is essential to be able to understand our co-citizens and to communicate with them.[2]

In spite of this need, the nations of Europe, and the supranational organisations they belong to, have not taken any steps to impose a single European Language.

This has been the policy of the European Union, as illustrated by the conclusions of the Council of "General Affairs" of June 12 1995:

> The Council underlines the importance of linguistic diversity for the European Union, as an essential feature of a European identity, and of a common cultural heritage. It underlines the importance of the factors at stake – democratic, cultural, social and

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1   We will refer to the *Common European Framework of Reference* as the *"Common Framework"* and the *"The Guide for the Development of Language Policies in Europe"* as *"the Guide"*, specifying the main or executive versions

2   In the myth of the Tower of Babel, the diversity of languages is considered as a major calamity visited upon mankind by God. The link between linguistic diversity and divine punishment (by a god or gods) is recorded in at least 10 of the 60 Babel myths collected by Hartmann across a number of continents (Fred Hartmann, 2002:37)

economic. Linguistic diversity is also a source of employment and activity and an element in European integration.

And the Council of Europe takes, as we know, the same line, proposing in a declaration of the Committee of Ministers on March 17, 1998 to:

Promote widespread plurilingualism by encouraging all Europeans to achieve a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages… by diversifying the languages on offer and setting objectives appropriate to each language.

From certain angles, for example those fostering economic exchanges or personal mobility, the choice these organisations have made are not the obvious or only option. The Guide (in the executive version p. 5) speaks of an *"a continuum of attitudes and approaches" situated between two ends which are "on the one hand policy for the reduction of diversity, and on the other the promotion and maintenance of diversity."* It states that it would be possible that:

Both can be pursued in the name of improved potential for international mobility, of intercomprehension and of economic development.

In order to justify the choice to develop linguistic diversity we must take the argument further. For decades, it has been a commonplace to emphasize the need to preserve the cultural heritage. This argument is not without validity but it does raise a number of issues. Is it not somewhat simplistic to suppose that there is a simple "one-to-one" relationship between language and culture? Do all those who speak the same language have the same culture? Does one lose the whole of one's culture if one no longer speaks the language? Anyway, why should one preserve a culture? What is the meaning of cultural heritage? Do we want to turn the world into a museum? Fortunately the *Guide* does not limit itself to this justification of diversity and stresses the fact that languages have "multiple social functions" which go beyond the simply utilitarian (main version, pp 29 – 30):

They are associated with collective identities (nation, region, community etc.), play a part in the formation of the citizen, are an increasingly indispensable instrument in working life, facilitate the discovery of other cultures or societies, and have an educational role in that intolerance and racism are often expressed in contempt for the Other's language.

In this emphasis on the social functions of language, placing language teaching in a context organised "so that Europeans become plurilingual and intercultural citizens, able to interact with other Europeans in all aspects of their lives." the *Guide* is in agreement with Jean-Marie Klingenberg (2000 p.71) when he says:

A language is for benefit of the citizen, not the citizen for the language

This is significant progress. The "defence" of one language or the other – especially of French, my own language – has often been based on the idea of a supposed "superiority" of the language (its precision, its beauty, its universality…). People were

expected to pay homage to these qualities, respecting them, obeying their rules, however much suffering it cost them! This page of linguistic chauvinism has now been turned; it is no longer a question of defending languages for the sake of the languages themselves, but for what they offer to those who speak them and who recognize a part of their identity in them.

If one keeps in mind these "multiple social functions" of languages it is clear that "the principles of language policy used in the context of nation states are not relevant for Europe" (ibid. p.31)

> Europe is not a political entity of the same kind as a nation-state, to which it would be sufficient to give one (or more) official national language(s)in order to derive a form of unity or identity from it (them). It is a fundamentally novel grouping, a plural space, where numerous linguistic varieties are used – the expression of the cultural diversity of which it consists – which have enriched each other, but whereon linguistic variety has had a dominant position for long. There is probably no single language which Europeans could experience as the language of affiliation to this space.

Education for plurilingualism, education for plurilingual awareness, plurilingual education

The *Guide* (main version p.15) proposes plurilingualism as the guiding principle for the development of language policies by the Council of Europe. It is the "fundamental principle" (p.19) placed at the core of the linguistic ideology which the Council of Europe is committed to.

It is to be understood as both "the intrinsic capacity of all speakers to use and learn, either alone or through teaching, more than one language" and as a linguistic value based on tolerance (main version, page 16):

> Plurilingualism should be understood in this dual sense: it is the basis of a conception of the speaking subject as fundamentally plural and a value in that it is the basis of linguistic tolerance, an essential element of intercultural education and education on otherness.

This implies that language policies for education need to include both (p.16):

> - *education for plurilingualism*, which involves enhancing and developing speakers' individual linguistic repertoires from the earliest schooldays and throughout life. Education for plurilingualism will from now on refer to language education (national, "foreign", regional languages) in which the purpose will be to develop plurilingualism as a competence

> - *education for plurilingual awareness*, which is one of the requirements for the maintenance of linguistic diversity. Education for plurilingual awareness will refer to education, not necessarily limited to language education whose purpose is to educate for linguistic tolerance, raise awareness of linguistic diversity and educate for democratic citizenship.

A third concept, that of *"plurilingual education",* which encompasses the two previous ones is introduced:

> Plurilingual education includes both education for plurilingualism and education for plurilingual awareness, as specified above.

Before we address the issue of what principles of educational policy of this kind can mean for programmes such as those developed at the ECML, it is useful to explore more fully one of the major motivating forces: the link between language teaching and education for democratic citizenship. This will enable us to describe in much more practical terms the relevance of "plurilingual education" as a means of fulfilling the needs implied by the "multiple social functions" of languages.

Language teaching and democratic citizenship

It is by the diversity of the languages to be taught – and therefore by plurilingualism – that the Council of Europe proposes to contribute to the goal of fostering democratic citizenship. This is indicated clearly in the title of a recent conference (*Languages, Diversity, Citizenship: Policies for Plurilingualism in Europe* – cf. Council of Europe 2000a)

Various official declarations by the Council of Europe quoted by Starkey (2002 pp. 8-9) show that the notion of democratic citizenship includes a number of different aspects. It is conceived as a way of putting into place:

> a society that is freer, more tolerant and fairer, based on solidarity, shared values, and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity.[1] It is also intended to provide men and women with the ability to play an active role in public life and to shape, in a responsible way, their personal destiny and that of the society they live in.

One aspect of the link between language teaching and democratic citizenship stems from the fact that:

> By making education for democratic citizenship a priority for the Council of Europe and its member states in 1997, Heads of State and Government set out the central place of languages in the exercise of democratic citizenship in Europe: the need, in a democracy, for citizens to participate actively in political decision-making and the life of society presupposes that this should not be made impossible by lack of appropriate language skills.
>
> (Guide p. 30).

In today's multilingual Europe, the ability to play a role in political and public life requires plurilingual competence, adapted to all the different levels of involvement or

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1   Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, 7 May 1999

of citizenship for which participation is feasible and desirable for any minority community (be they migrants or within a national community) at a European level – within, of course, the essential requirements of citizenship in the country in which they live.

More fundamentally – but still within the domain of democracy – we know that "Language bestows power" and that "one way to exercise this power" for one's personal profit is to use a language "which excludes the other, causes him to be afraid, prevents him from expressing his will or using his critical faculties" (Jean-Marie Klinkenberg, 2001, p.29). Granting the power of language – or of languages – to as many people as possible, is a way of fighting against marginalisation, the gap between rich and poor; this is achieved by giving people a voice, as shown above, but also - and evidently - by giving access to information and culture and – on the economic level – by facilitating access to employment.

François Augidier (1998) has produced an inventory of the skills which education systems should provide as part of training in democratic citizenship, and includes, in addition to "the ability to take part in public debate", "knowledge about the world of today" and "a positive attitude to diversity and to differences". These are goals of language teaching which have been acknowledged traditionally, but which are made much more achievable by the option of pluringualism – that is, plurilingual education (including a number of languages) (Michel Candelier 2000).

If one of the goals of language teaching is "to learn about other countries and other people" it can only do this – even in the case of languages spoken in a lot of countries – for the country or countries whose languages are taught. The more languages one teaches, the greater the knowledge of the world around one.

The same principle can be applied to the openness towards other people and cultures which language teaching is supposed to stimulate. Here, however, limiting language learning to one or two languages, a priori "dominant" ones, produces results which are not just restrictive, but potentially harmful, in that there is a risk of devaluing the languages which are not seen as prestigious enough to be taught. Naturally, there is an inclination to think that if certain languages are absent from the curriculum, it is because they, and the culture they represent, are not worth including. If it is the case that the major language taught has a dominant position worldwide, and is omnipresent in the media, then it is easy to think that the learner will be restricted to a "bi-ethnocentricity" composed of the major international language and the dominant language of the country he lives in (Candelier 2000, p.45). The Guide makes the same observation in different terms, when it remarks that:

> recognition of the diversity of speakers' plurilingual repertoires should lead to linguistic tolerance.

> (main version, p. 35).

The first medium-term programme and plurilingual education – some notable areas of synergy

As we have seen, the choice of plurilingualism as a principle and as a political aim leads us to define two major tasks for educational authorities; education for plurilingualism – that is the development of "plurilingual repertoires"- and "plurilingual education" – the development of values and positive attitudes towards the notion of diversity.

In order to assess the political achievement of the first medium-term programme of the ECML, we must explore how it has met with this dual challenge. We will deal with each aspect separately.

Education for plurilingualism

Assessment of this aspect of the ECML's work requires us to define this complex concept more clearly and fully. The *Guide* provides a way forward when it states (main version p.71):

> Being plurilingual means having a certain degree of competence (oral, written etc.) in several linguistic varieties, with varying functions, the whole being subject to changes over time. It is the potential and / or actual ability to use several languages to differing degrees of proficiency and for different purposes.

It refers to the concept of "plurilingual and pluricultural competence" which is already a feature of the *Common European Framework* (p.168), where it is defined as:

> The ability to use languages for the purpose of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures.

The contribution of the first medium-term programme:

First observation

Basically, one can maintain that any project which contributes to making the teaching / learning of languages more efficiently also contributes to education for plurilingualism since it helps learners gain mastery of the different languages and enriches their experience of the different cultures which make up the plurilingual and pluricultural competence we are seeking to develop.

A description and evaluation of various aspects of the improvements in language education which have been achieved in the medium-term programme in this domain will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters 4 - 7 of the book, which deal with the

organisation of language education, teachers and learners, materials and resources and quality issues.

At this point we will focus on more specific aspects of "plurilingual education", which are described in the *Guide* in the following terms (main version p.69):

> The overall project of plurilingual education is to adapt language education to the needs of European societies […] and to speakers' aspirations by diversifying the languages taught and coordinating the teaching of different languages, which are often regarded as different subjects.

Second observation

It is easy to assess the first medium-term programme of the ECML as regards the first of these specific aspects – the goal of diversifying existing language teaching programmes. The great majority of the projects have been concerned with more than one language, and the conclusions are in all cases transferable to the teaching of other languages. The project dealing with *Neighbouring language teaching in border regions* coordinated by Ruud Halink has had a direct impact on the multiplication of the number of languages taught and to the development of the teaching of lesser-used languages. And no doubt, the expertise which has been gained in approaches profiting from border locations will contribute to the introduction in other countries of new languages, not necessarily those most widely used. One regrets, however, that in almost all the projects the emphasis has been on "foreign" languages rather than on minority regional languages, or the languages of migrants.

The second specific aspect of plurilingual education mentioned in the previous passage quoted from the *Common European Framework* deals with the need to create synergies between the different teaching/learning processes whose goal is to develop individual learners' plurilingual repertoire. It makes economic sense to ensure that in the learning of different languages there is mutual reinforcement, but it is also the expression of a concept which views the competences on which the repertoire is based not as separate skills, unrelated to each other, but as different aspects of a unique global competence. In other words, again from the Guide (p.71):

> Managing the repertoire means that the varieties of which it is composed are not dealt with in isolation; instead, although distinct from each other, they are treated as a single competence available to the social agent concerned.

The *Common European Framework* is more explicit and describes a "plurilingual and pluricultural competence" to be aimed at:

> The concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence tends to consider that a given individual does not have a collection of distinct and separate competences to communicate depending on the languages he / she knows but rather a plurilingual competence encompassing the full range of the languages available to him / her.

In order to help learners to build up this general plurilingual competence and to develop it continuously in a process of lifelong learning, there is a need to foster competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) which I will call "transversal"; this term refers both to "general" competences (concerning linguistic and cultural information in general) and at the same time to approaches which base the acquisition of a new language or culture (or certain aspects of it) on the aptitudes acquired in the previous learning of a particular language or culture (or certain aspects of it).

Such competences can only be developed in the context of "pluralistic approaches" to languages and culture (cf. Candelier 2003, chapter one), with methodological approaches which include activities bringing into play different linguistic and cultural varieties at the same time.

Third observation

Several projects in the first medium-term programme of the ECML fall into this category.

The project called *Introduction to language awareness in the curriculum* and subsequently re-baptised as *Janua Linguarum – the Gateway to Languages* (project 1.2.1, coordinated by Michel Candelier) has as its goal the dissemination of a pluralistic "global" approach (it is also referred to as "an awakening to languages") mostly in primary education, but also from time to time in secondary education. The development of transversal skills is achieved by the use of materials derived from several dozens of languages of widely varying status. The approach is mainly linguistic, but it frequently involves cultural aspects. By allotting a place in classroom teaching to children whose first language is not that of the school, the project also contributes to the need "to give value to the linguistic repertoire of each individual" which the *Guide* seeks to encourage as a tool for plurilingual education.

The project concerning *Literacy as correspondence – an integrated approach to multiliteracy* (project 1.1.5 coordinated by Valerie Sollars) has examined the way in which young learners establish links among the various languages they either have or acquire, in the specific field of learning to read and write. The four case studies refer to a range of different situations: initial literacy acquired in a second language; a second literacy learnt in and through a second language; a second literacy learnt in a foreign language. They demonstrate the complexity of the processes by which learners apply their existing linguistic knowledge to develop the acquisition of new skills and draw methodological conclusions from this.

The project on *Learning more than one language efficiently* (project 1.1.2 coordinated by Gerhard Neuner and Britta Hufeisen) has explored a specific aspect of pluralistic approaches, the development of an "integrated approach" to language teaching. It concerns the use of the first foreign language learning to support the learning of a second one (in this case, building the learning of German on English). The content of the workshops emphasised a psycholinguistic view of the learning process, but at the

same time took account of issues related to educational language policy and the didactic consequences. The main focus has been on the development of linguistic competences, but intercultural aspects are also considered (for example, the similarities and differences between German and English in carrying out certain speech acts).

In general, all genuinely intercultural projects belong to the category of the pluralistic approaches as we have defined it above, in so far as they make explicit links among a number of different cultures.

This is certainly so for the project *Cultural mediation and the teaching and learning of languages* (project 1.2.2, coordinated by Geneviève Zarate). "Cultural mediation" is defined as the way in which relationships with new linguistic and cultural environments are established, either by "initiators" or by the media. The purpose of the project is to describe the role and the place of this kind of intercultural mediation in language teaching / learning. The study produced as a result of the project examines those who are in a position to carry out cultural mediation, and the kind of discourse used in situations where different cultures encounter each other (school and university exchanges, school textbooks, curricula, the media)

The coordinating team of the project *Intercultural communicative competence in teacher education* (project 1.2.3, coordinated by Ildikó Lázár) have succeeded in linking within a single project an analysis of the present state of the field (the situation in different countries and the problems arising from this) with the production of a tool designed to help teachers in the domain of intercultural communication and its application in teaching methodology. The first publication, *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education* describes the different ways in which teachers envisage the role of culture in teaching materials and various ways of assessing intercultural communicative competence. The second publication is a textbook of intercultural communication designed for the use of teachers *Mirrors and windows: an intercultural communication textbook* and clearly emphasises the comparative point of view which characterises pluralistic approaches.

The project entitled *Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning* (project 1.2.6, coordinated by Anne-Brit Fenner) has led to a publication (with the same title as the project) which includes proposals for methodological approaches together with specific learning activities. Their common theme is to illustrate how learners can be stimulated to absorb features of intercultural and "interlanguage" awareness through working with texts, either literary or produced by the learners themselves.

In the project, *The development of an interactive database on intercultural anecdotes* (project 1.2.9) Antoinette Camilleri Grima has produced a booklet with the title *How strange!*, which contains undidacticised authentic materials (intercultural anecdotes narrated by someone directly involved), proposals for their use in language teaching (especially by a story-telling approach, called "storyline"), and more theoretical reflections on the place of intercultural competence in language teaching. Here we see the concept of interculturality in the full sense of the word: the issue is not to "teach" a

target culture, but to encourage the development of "an intercultural competence which will facilitate the acquisition of a second, third culture etc." (Antoinette Camilleri Grima 2003, p.57)

Education for plurilingual awareness

The second dimension of plurilingual education is, as we have seen, closely linked to the development of attitudes. This link with "education for plurilingualism" is mentioned in several parts of the *Guide*. The following passage (main version p.80) illustrates the point very clearly:

> If the plurilingual option in education is to gain acceptance, learners themselves have to be convinced of its validity. Their previous experience or the social representations transmitted to them will not necessarily lead them to recognise the plurilingualism of speakers or the equal value of linguistic varieties. There is therefore a need for education for plurilingualism in schools and universities, particularly for adults and young children.

I have two personal regrets about the way in which education for plurilingualism is presented in the *Guide*.

First of all, the use of the concept of "tolerance" which would be better expressed as "positive acceptance" (this expression is the one used by François Audigier, 1998, p.10). In French *"tolérance"* can denote a kind of passive acceptance tinged with indifference or even scorn.

The second regret concerns the treatment of issues related to attitudes with regard to "education for plurilingualism". The *Guide* (p. 35) proposes that it would be possible to "use this education for plurilingualism as a motivating factor for language learning" but does not include, at least explicitly, one important aspect of motivation: the development of self-confidence in one's ability to achieve one's own continuously growing plurilingual repertoire. This confidence is no doubt to be associated, at least in part, with a growing awareness of the fact that plurilingualism is normal and that it is developed in the natural course of didactic approaches which aim to give value to plurilingual competences.

Fourth observation

The set of projects of the ECML in the medium-term programme which aim to promote the development of intercultural competences – taking great care to avoid the creation of stereotypes – are likely to make an important contribution to the development of positive attitudes to different cultures and those who live them.

Two other projects, whose focus is more "linguistic", should again be mentioned here.

They are first of all *Neighbouring language teaching in border regions* coordinated by Ruud Halink (project 1.1.4). "Learning a neighbouring language and culture implies a

mutual respect and understanding of the 'Other'. This sometimes means leaving behind a troubled history of relations and overcoming prejudices often directed at neighbours and "foreigners" living amongst us" (presentation page of the CD-ROM *Neighbouring Languages in Border Regions*). Since "neighbouring languages" are diverse and often among the less widely used languages, the attitudes this project promotes contribute to giving enhanced value to all forms of linguistic diversity.

In the project *Janua Linguarum – a gateway to languages* (project 1.2.1, coordinated by Michel Candelier), the development of positive attitudes towards diversity (attitudes of interest in diversity and of readiness to accept it) is one of the three basic goals of the didactic activities which have been put into practice and assessed. One of the other aims is the creation of a linguistic culture (in terms of knowledge about other languages) which helps to reinforce these positive attitudes. The third aim is the development of metalinguistic skills, the transversal competences which have been described previously in the context of "education for plurilingualism." The project seeks to promote the broadest possible view of diversity by including at the same time the wide range of languages presented in class, all the languages present in the immediate social context of the school, those of the country where the learner lives, together with a global view of the languages spoken in Europe and in the world.

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3. Theories of language learning and teaching and their influence on classroom practice

David Newby

Who needs theory?

> Theory is when we know everything but nothing works. Practice is when everything works but no one knows why. We have combined theory and practice: nothing works and no one knows why!

> Alan Maley (1991: 23)

This quotation always raises a laugh when it is heard by language teachers – often accompanied by a nod of agreement. Whilst those of us who have worked on projects at the European Centre for Modern Languages might also allow ourselves a wry smile, at the same time this statement causes us a certain amount of embarrassment. After all, the innovative work which forms the core of ECML projects is based on a variety of theoretical insights and it is the overall aim of many projects not only to disseminate good practice but also to explore and make transparent the principles and theories which underlie innovative approaches to language learning and teaching. So are we not getting our message across?

Part of the reason for the anti-theory reaction that is sometimes found among teachers lies in the notion of the word 'theory', which tends to be put on a pedestal and to be seen as the handed-down wisdom of ivory-tower academics. Yet as Henry Widdowson pointed out in his guest lecture at the central workshop of project 1.2.4, theory-making is an area in which teachers themselves are actively engaged. In his article *Expert beyond experience (Widdowson, 2003)* he distinguishes between 'theory' and 'theorizing' and says:

> Theory, we may say, is the abstraction of general ideas from particular experiences. Theorizing is the process of doing this, and a theory is a particular structure of ideas. I would argue that it is the process of theorizing, of engaging in theory in general that is crucial, and that this should lead us to the critical appraisal of particular theories as a way of making ourselves aware of the principles of our practice.

The concept of theorizing, which Widdowson introduces, leads us to see theory rather as a dialogic process, in which teachers critically assess innovative ideas but also reflect on their own beliefs and practices. It is not new theories themselves but the dialogue with these theories which moves us forward and prevents us from being

subject to the dictates of dogma, to the whims of our individual intuitions or the stranglehold of the traditions of the learning and teaching cultures in which we operate.

Where do theories come from?

Theories may derive from a variety of sources. As far as FL teaching is concerned, certain source disciplines have for centuries fed into practice. These are:

a. Theories of language – appropriate descriptions of how language works provided by linguistics

b. Theories of second-language acquisition or learning in general – from both applied linguists and cognitive psychologists

c. Theories of instruction – methodology

These theories might combine to form a coherent approach to language teaching, as was the case with the communicative approach, or they might give rise to sets of principles upon which certain aims or classroom activities are based.

Until relatively recently there has been a tendency for theories to be packaged and handed on to the language teacher as coherent sets of practices or methods. As a result, a certain method would hold sway for a while until it was knocked off its pedestal by a new pedagogical usurper.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a variety of such coups *de force pédagogiques*: in the 1960s, the once much-loved grammar-translation method was dealt a blow by the scientific-sounding claims of audio-lingual methods, which could boast not only the theoretical underpinning of structural theories of language and behaviourist theories of learning but the technical innovations of language laboratories.

For those educational institutions which had invested heavily in this new technology, this proved not to have been money well spent as in the 1970s and 80s the communicative approach provided not only a new view of language but a methodology which revolutionised many foreign language classrooms, including my own.

Then along came Stephen Krashen telling us that actually we were all barking up the wrong tree: second language learning was in fact very similar to first language acquisition and if we would only talk to our learners as parents spoke to their infants, and then natural acquisition processes would do the job without the 'unhelpful' intervention of pedagogy. At the same time, what have been termed 'designer methods' (see Brown 2002) appeared on the horizon – 'suggestopedia, total physical response, the silent way etc. – which had the seductive appeal of offering methods totally different from what we had all experienced in school and which, in some cases, promised learners the success which they had not experienced in formal learning situations. 'Learn a foreign language in 3½ weeks' was an advertising slogan for a

popular 'whole-brain' method, which suggested that someone out there had suddenly discovered the Holy Grail of language learning, which centuries of theory and research had somehow missed.

In the meantime, Krashen's 'back to the womb' view of language acquisition has been largely discredited as many methodologists and applied linguists have begun to accept a general set of theories and principles – loosely united until the label 'cognitive' (for example, Skehan 1998) – which sees learning as a partly conscious process and which sees learners not only as users or acquirers of language but as (school) learners, who take responsibility for their own learning and who play an active role in the overall learning process.[1] This general approach, which draws on insights from cognitive psychology rather than linguistics, focuses on and seeks to optimise cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning such as learning processes, learning styles preferences that individual learners may have and learning strategies that students can pursue.

The beginning of the 21st century could be seen as what Douglas Brown (2002: 5) refers to as the 'post-methods' era, in which 'attention has shifted to teaching and learning processes and the contributions of the individual teacher to language and teaching pedagogy'. The waning of the 'single approach' scenario has been partly brought about by the fact that the parameters in which language learning and teaching is located have both shifted and been extended, which has in turn changed the picture of modern language teaching quite considerably. Some of the factors which have led to these parameter shifts are:

a. a broadening of the overall goals of language learning to include social and cultural goals such as the development of intercultural awareness

b. a general shift of perspective among methodologists and researchers from focusing on teachers and instruction towards learners and learning processes

c. a broadening of theories of language learning to incorporate insights not only from applied linguistics but also from cognitive psychology

d. the internationalisation of teaching methods, aims and assessment, which has been influenced by such factors as the opening up of Europe in the last decade of the 20th century, but also the work of the Council of Europe

e. the increasing opportunities offered by advances in communication technology, which has challenged the centrality of classroom-based teaching

These new or expanded parameters are reflected in several of the chapters which comprise this volume since they have influenced almost all aspects of language learning and teaching: the setting of objectives, the nature of teacher training, the use of resources are some examples.

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1   Gabriela Lojová's article *Johnson's model of foreign language grammar learning applied in Slovak secondary schools* discusses some aspects of a cognitive approach.

The face of modern language teaching

If the single approach scenario is a thing of the past, what theories and approaches tend to influence the classroom of the new millennium? This was one of the questions addressed by the ECML project 1.2.4 *Mediating between theory and practice in the context of different learning cultures and languages*. In the first stage of this workshop, participants administered a questionnaire to teachers and learners in their respective countries, one question of which concerned the approaches and theoretical directions which were most widely applied. From this it emerged that the two labels with which teachers seem to identify most strongly are the *communicative approach* and the concept of *learner-centredness*.

Communicative approach

As the pre-workshop study showed, in virtually all countries the communicative approach is very much alive and kicking. It should be added, however, that some of the exercises and activities frequently used in the classroom – a topic also investigated in the questionnaire – tend to contradict what might be regarded as 'communicative' principles. For example, the practice of asking students to 'read texts aloud in class' remains a much-loved activity throughout much of Europe, despite the fact that it flies in the face of the 'authenticity' principle of communicative methodology. On the other hand, group work and language games, the backbone of the oral basis of communicative teaching, are not as widely used as one might expect.

What we find lurking behind the communicative façade is, therefore, the teachers' own construction of this approach modified by their own 'theorizing' and by the constraints of the respective learning and teaching culture.

What we might also find is a dissatisfaction with the narrow confines of the methodology of the communicative approach with regard to the four skills. For example, by applying the 'authenticity' label to the skill of reading we immediately restrict both the text types we might make available to the learner and the reading activities selected to accompany them. A very different perspective of the reading process – its aims, texts, activities – is provided in the ECML publication accompanying project 1.2.6 *Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning*, which expresses reservations about certain communicative principles and stresses the importance of the use of literary texts in the FL classroom.

In identifying certain shortcomings of the communicative approach it is important, however, not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Despite the shift of parameters in recent years, certain 'communicative' principles remain a bedrock of other theoretical impulses. One of these is the view that language must be seen as a skill-based mode of action, rather than as a stock of knowledge. This is an essential prerequisite for describing language as a set of skills and sub-skills, as competences

which can be analysed and atomised to produce the form of 'descriptors' specified in the *Common European Framework of Reference*. Amongst other things, this mode of description enables us to see language learning as a set of partial competences, on the basis of which the goals of specific groups of learners can be defined. Whereas in the past the often-expressed overall goal of FL learning as 'near-nativeness' immediately doomed virtually all language learning to failure, now it is possible to see the acquisition of partial competences – e.g. reading or writing – not as a sign of failure but as representing realistic aims and expectations of individual learners. The explicit skill-based descriptors of the *Common European Framework*, which are increasingly finding acceptance in many educational institutions, are only possible due to the action-based view of language, which the communicative approach long ago provided.

Learner-centredness

When reading Henry Widdowson's article referred to above, one sentence in particular caught my eye.

> You need to know it [the language you are teaching] not as it is experienced by its users but as it is experienced by its learners. You need to know it as a *foreign* language.

It is interesting to observe one of the leading theoretical crusaders of the communicative approach, which in the 1970s provided a methodology based on activities which sought to simulate and replicate the authentic use of language, now advocating a *learner*-rather than *user*-based view of learning. Indeed, this might be seen as a cameo statement which illustrates how attention has shifted from user to learner.

In recent years, post-communicative discussions of methodology have been dominated by a broadly learner-centred orientation. The theoretical impulses which underlie this orientation are, however, of a very diverse nature. In his book 'Learner-centredness' Tudor defines the term as 'a broadly-based endeavour designed to gear language teaching in terms of both the content and the form of instruction around the characteristics of learners.' (1996: ix). The 'characteristics of learners', however, are seen from several perspectives and can mean many things to many people. Some examples of learner-based categories which have been at the focus of theory development and research in recent years are the following:

Second language learning / acquisition theory

Traditionally, the core of theories which feed into FL teaching provide a basis for methodology, but current learning theories seem either contradictory or poorly developed and lacking in coherence. In particular, those theories based on insights from first-language acquisition and which come from a linguistic direction are at odds with general learning theories deriving from cognitive psychology. Despite spawning a

number of learning applications, such as awareness raising or task-based learning, cognitive theories have not yet delivered the methodological goods that FL teachers need.

Learner commitment. Nowadays, it is usual to see learners not as passive recipients of knowledge, but as active participants in the learning process. This requires, however, greater commitment on their part, and is manifested in processes such as the willingness and opportunity to take greater responsibility for their own learning, to reflect on and optimise learning strategies and to make choices concerning individual learning style preferences. This in turn requires the teacher to focus on aspects such as 'learning to learn', study skills etc. and generally to guide learners towards attaining a greater degree of autonomy.

Learner's functional needs. As stated earlier, aims and objectives have been redefined in an attempt to describe them in terms of skills rather than knowledge. Seeing learning as a set of competences and outcomes has enabled teachers and curriculum and course designers to make aims more explicit – for example, in the descriptors of the *CEF*. This in turn leads to greater transparency for both teacher and learner. This transparency is important for a learner-based view since it makes it possible for learners to set and reflect on their own personal objectives. It also makes resources available such as self-assessment grids or a portfolio form of assessment.

The learner's affective needs. In the 1980s considerable attention was devoted to the question of 'affect' – emotional aspects of learning, which influenced learning processes. So-called 'humanistic approaches' stressed language learning as a process of self-fulfilment and this had implications for many aspects of learning: the context and conditions of learning, motivation, the student-teacher relationship, the nature of activities etc.

The learner's educational needs. The communicative approach saw language learning in largely functional terms: the overall aim was the attainment of communicative competence. In post-communicative teaching, the FL classroom is seen as a springboard to meeting a broader set of educational aims. Categories found in the *Common European Framework* such as sociocultural competence, intercultural skills and awareness or even 'existential' competence reflect these broader aims and the move to see language learning in terms of personal and educational development. These educational aims have figured strongly in the activities of the ECML from the outset: the terms 'social cohesion', which is part of title of the 2nd medium-term programme, reflects this ongoing commitment.

If there is one theoretical concept which links all of the rather disparate set of agendas behind the term 'learner-centred', it is that of constructivism, a term which cuts across a variety of theoretical disciplines – psychology, sociology, learning theory, linguistics etc. – and which is rooted in the idea that human beings do not perceive reality as an external object, but that the human mind creates its own personal construct of reality through which experiences and perceptions are filtered and given sense.

As far as FL teaching and learning is concerned, this concept can, and indeed has to be, incorporated into all aspects of learning theory, including areas such as the development of intercultural awareness. The realisation that new knowledge will be processed, and re-defined by the learner's own personal construct system provides a basis for a methodology which encourages learners to reflect on and interpret, rather than merely consume, new knowledge. This in turn requires teaching methods which seek to integrate principles of interaction and communication resulting from the communicative approach with those of reflection, awareness and personalisation, linked to a cognitive-constructivist view of learning.

The role of the ECML

The work of the Council of Europe has for several decades been firmly rooted in theories and practice of language description, language acquisition and language teaching. The *Language Policy Division*, based in Strasbourg, has played an important role in *packaging* theories in forms that can be directly applied in areas such as syllabus and materials design and testing – as witnessed by the strong influence of *The Threshold Level and The Common European Framework* throughout Europe.

The projects and workshops of the ECML in Graz have complemented this developmental work by examining how theories and applications can be *mediated* in the context of teacher training and *implemented* in the form of materials.[1] A few examples of many projects and publications of the first medium-term programme which have taken on the role of theory mediation in areas referred to this chapter are:

- *Mediating between theory and practice* (1.2.4), which considers various aspects of the theory-practice relationship

- *Helping Learners Learn* (2.2.2), which provides materials to support learner strategy training

- *Cultural mediation and the teaching and learning of languages* (1.2.2), *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education* (1.2.3) *Mirrors and Windows: An intercultural communication textbook* (1.2.3B), all of which provide materials for developing intercultural awareness

- *The introduction of language awareness into the curriculum* (1.2.1), which adds a sociocultural and cognitive dimension to language study.

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1 A summary both of the main theoretical concepts and of work carried out in the framework of the ECML can be found in Newby, D. (ed.) (2003) *Thematic Collections*. A downloadable version is also available at: [http://www.ecml.at/doccentre/doccentre.asp?t=thematic]

A very positive aspect of the work of the ECML is that its project coordinators and participants are themselves practitioners; thus, the mediation of theories does not take a top-down, but a *bottom-up* direction.

Challenges and opportunities

In this chapter I have referred to the abandonment of a 'single-approach scenario' and have spoken of a 'post-methods era'; I have discussed Henry Widdowson's concept of teachers as 'theorizers'; I have mentioned the 'bottom-up' way of implementing theories to be found in ECML projects. In this connection, we could also cite the *Common European Framework*, which stresses its 'non-dogmatic' intention in presenting its users with lists of choices rather than seeking to impose certain approaches. All this points to a perfect, democratic world in which teachers are empowered to make important decisions concerning the theory-practice relationship, a world in which top-down theories and theory makers seem to have been confined to the scrap heap of language teaching history.

But let us throw a little spanner in the works of this perfect world. It is my personal impression that there is a growing gap between certain innovative approaches in FL learning and teaching and actual classroom practice; moreover, that teachers feel increasingly alienated by modern developments. One reason is the expansion of parameters referred to earlier in the chapter, which leave teachers feeling rather overwhelmed. A second reason is that teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, often fails to provide the necessary theoretical basis which is essential if teachers are to carry out a critical dialogue with principles underlying innovative approaches and in turn to become 'theorizers'. If this does not take place, then the very dogma which the *Common European Framework* is at such pains to avoid becomes an inevitable consequence of innovation. A third reason seems to lie in the fact that theory makers often develop theories within their own research culture without considering the realties of the FL classroom.

I shall conclude this chapter by listing four areas of the theory-practice interface, in which I see a conflict between current theoretical trends and classroom practice and which therefore represent a particular challenge in coming years.

- Political, social, cultural goal of FL teaching vs. communicative language goals – do teachers understand and accept this broadening of parameters?

- Learner-centredness – this needs to have a stronger and more coherent theoretical basis, particularly regarding learning theories; teachers need a better understanding of the respective roles of teacher and learner.

- Competences – school examinations, teaching materials and methodology need to be adapted in accordance with a skill-based definition of competences, including partial competences.

- Classroom-based and non-classroom-based learning – methodologists need to rethink the strengths and weaknesses of these different learning contexts and to devise a more integrated methodology to incorporate both aspects.

It is clearly apparent in the topics both of the earlier workshops held by the ECML and from projects of the medium-term programme that there is a general consensus concerning certain theories. The communicative / learner-centred orientations referred to in this chapter are widely accepted, as is the broadening of goals to include social and cultural aspects. What seems particularly important at the present time is that those working at the cutting edge of the development, mediation and implementation of theories also give sufficient attention to taking classroom teachers on board and to avoiding the alienation that new theories often leave in their wake – as indicated in the quotation with which I began this chapter. Given its role of providing an ongoing forum for FL experts and decision makers from 33 member states, it would seem that the ECML is in a unique position to approach this task.

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4. Improved quality through organisational innovation

Ruud Halink

Why should we make organisational changes?

Introduction

"You know, for eight years at school they tried to teach me Dutch, but as far as I can see all I did was to wear out the seat of my pants on the school bench". I heard this from a driver who works for the Belgian Automobile Association. He is francophone and works in the Ardennes region where he regularly has to help Dutch tourists whose cars have broken down. "I just can't manage to put two words together, and have to use mime to communicate with clients from the Netherlands. I regret this very much." (Actually the last sentence is not exactly what he said, as the language used was stronger than would be appropriate in a book of this kind).

Next to him was someone from the Netherlands who is interested in language issues and said how surprising it was that certain French-speaking Belgians, who have studied Dutch for years at school, frequently from the age of six, can't manage to hold even the simplest conversation in Dutch. The problem is not one which is unique to Belgium, even though here the attitude of French speakers with regard to Dutch is coloured both by the political, historical context and by a range of "affective" attitudes. The same problem, however, is found in a good number of European countries and raises important issues related to the efficiency of language education.

Could we be more efficient?

When one realises how much time has been spent in language study – in the case of the francophone Belgian pupil, sometimes up to five or six hours a week – it is reasonable to start asking hard questions about the effect of the teaching: why hasn't it been more effective? It can't be a question of the number of hours devoted to language study. Perhaps he would have had more success if, instead of the 840 hours of language teaching he received (8 times 35 school weeks, with three hours a week), he had studied, for example, in four or five very intensive periods (say, 6 periods of two weeks with thirty hours Dutch per week, 360 hours in all)?

This is the kind of issue addressed in studies concerning the organisation and set up of language education. It is one of the areas which has been a priority for the European Centre for Modern Languages, in the medium-term programme from 2000 - 2003, as

part of its mission to explore responses to the profound social, political and techno-logical changes we are experiencing.

The changes have given rise to new needs and demands for a greater knowledge of other languages and other cultures. The call for proposals in 1999, expressed this need in the following way:

> As language education attempts to cope with the diversified and intensified language needs resulting from the challenge of an increasingly multilingual and multicultural context by offering innovative approaches and methodologies (intensive courses, diversified and increased language offer, more language courses within a limited time frame, exchange programmes, the use of information and communication technologies, self-directed/ self access learning, etc), it collides with the existing overall framework, set-up and administrative organisation of education as a whole.

The changes in demand and need for language education are to be found equally in approach and methodology; today's learners require approaches which are more individualised, more efficient and more motivating.

In different projects carried out in the ECML medium-term programme it has been possible to illustrate how organisational changes have had a positive impact on the quality of language teaching. In other projects, new approaches and procedures have been developed, but the results have not yet been evaluated. Most of the projects have been in the field of initial language teaching.

What kind of organisational changes can be made?

A wide range of educational issues are included in the term "organisation and set up of language education". First of all there is a distinction between:

1. Education at a global level, within the remit of national and regional education authorities, and involving issues such as:

    - the choice of which languages to teach

    - the order in which they are offered

    - the age at which learners begin to learn languages

    - the relationship between language learning and the other subjects in the curriculum

2. Organisation of language teaching at a local level, where decisions can be taken by individual schools and by teachers: this includes matters concerning:

    - the organisation of the timetable

    - where learning takes place

- the use of media, teaching materials and other resources
- who the teachers are

In some countries, of course, there are organisational variables which are decided on centrally by national authorities, whereas in other countries individual institutions have a degree of autonomy – for example, in timetabling or in the choice of languages to be offered. Most of the variables mentioned above are interdependent; the decision to offer language learning to very young learners affects the choice of teaching material and of those best fitted to do the teaching.

We propose to address these organisational issues in the light of the twin aspects of quality and efficiency. The question of quality is very closely linked to that of motivation – the stronger the motivation, the better the results. At the same time we will examine them in the light of the fundamental objective of the Council of Europe, the development of a multilingual society.

It is, of course, evident that organisational innovation may be prompted by other considerations, external circumstances, for example. In some of the member countries of the Council of Europe, new forms of organisation are being explored to palliate the growing problem of a lack of teachers.

Organisation at a global level

First of all we will examine the impact of the projects carried out for the ECML on global organisation of language teaching, so will not be able to include other possible initiatives.

The choice of which languages to teach

The promotion of a multilingual Europe is not simply an aim of the Council of Europe, but is a priority, too, of the European Union. Nevertheless, we can observe a continuous increase in the teaching of English, owing to its role as a worldwide lingua franca. Two trends – one political, the other seemingly "natural" – seem to be in conflict. It makes sense in a situation of this kind to seek synergy rather than to consider the two trends as irreconcilable.

What kinds of synergy are possible in language education?

Traditionally, learners learn the different languages taught in schools, including the mother tongue, in isolation from each other. In the project, *Learning more than one language efficiently*, coordinated by Britta Hufeisen and Gerhard Neuner, research has been carried out to identify areas where synergy is possible. The project team has

developed ways of enabling learners of a second foreign language to use the skills they have already acquired in learning their mother tongue or a first foreign language. This includes the development of strategies for understanding texts (for example, by using exercises in which every second line of a text is erased, but where learners realise that they still can understand a good deal of the text). The strategies which are learnt can be applied to learning any language

The strategies developed by individual readers need to be described explicitly. It would be useful to identify each learner's most effective learning method and their preferred learning style in the course of the study of the first foreign language. Do they need to write words down in order to remember them, or have they a better recall without a written support? Awareness of their own most effective approach to language learning will stand learners in good stead for learning other languages, both at school and later on as adults. In this way, the project contributes to the achievement of another Council of Europe goal, the development of lifelong learning.

This kind of synergy is equally effective in the development of intercultural competences. Awareness of differences in customs, conventions, ways of viewing the world, and learning how to cope with such difference, is a skill not limited to a single individual culture.

Somewhat surprisingly, the project's research led to the conclusion that the teaching of French in the German- speaking cantons of Switzerland will probably be helped in the future by the introduction of English into the primary school curriculum. At the moment, young Swiss pupils study French, but the teaching often has to face a quite negative attitude on the part of the learners. It is thought that the teaching of French at secondary level will benefit from a more positive attitude towards language learning if it is preceded by a previous successful experience. It should also benefit from the fact that a third of English vocabulary has its origins in French.

In a project coordinated by Valerie Sollars on the topic of an *integrated approach to multiliteracy* one of the activities has been the development of teaching material from which learners can optimize the contribution of the skills learnt in learning to read and write the mother tongue (in this case, Slovenian) when they start to learn foreign languages (English and Italian) in primary school. The implementation of this innovation was facilitated in the context of a complete reform of primary education in Slovenia. In the project, care has been taken to ensure a more efficient organisation of learning from the very first moment the child becomes aware of different language phenomena and begins to reflect on the nature of language. The concern is truly one directed towards basic education.

In what order should languages be offered?

In the examples mentioned in the previous paragraph, English was considered as, chronologically, the first foreign language.

The team of the project, *Learning more than one language efficiently* emphasises the fact that this choice stems from the fact that this is the practice in many countries, but that there are no educational reasons to learn English first. One of the team members, Hans-Jürgen Krumm, maintains that it would be more profitable to start learning the language of a neighbour country since in primary schools it would facilitate an approach based on a genuine meeting with another language and culture.

The project devoted to *Neighbouring language teaching in border regions*, coordinated by Ruud Halink and Albert Raasch reaches the same conclusion, all the more because, in such regions, a much more pragmatic approach to language learning can be envisaged. During the course of the project it became evident that the teaching of neighbouring languages must nevertheless form part of a broad approach in which English also has its place. In a workshop in the Basque country, this was shown to be applicable even in a region which has a common language, Basque, on both sides of a national frontier.

How many languages does "multilingual" mean?

It is impossible to give an exact number of languages as a criterion for multilingualism. First of all, we will look at how some countries, which are as it were condemned to multilingualism because their national language is not widely used, organise language teaching. The project *the Organisation of language education in small states* was coordinated by Francesca Junyent Montagne. A number of "small states" joined this project in order to assess the way in which they organised language teaching. Andorra provides an interesting example as this tiny country manages to offer three foreign languages – French, Spanish and English – even at primary level. French is offered as a vehicular language. Although the number of learners is small, only 1800, the example illustrates how multilingual learning can be organised at an early age without overloading either learners or teachers.

Iceland dos not offer such a wide range of languages in its school system, but it is in the process of giving learners the opportunity to learn other languages in addition to the compulsory English and Danish. Young learners now have the opportunity to learn the neighbouring languages, Norwegian and Swedish, via the Internet. They are directed to different websites, which propose interactive learning activities as well as more traditional exercises.

Finland, which can be described as a small state too since only 5 million people speak Finnish, has developed a programme for the diversification and the promotion of language teaching. They have achieved a number of objectives for language education by creating networks of learning institutions focusing on specific fields (such as international cooperation, the introduction of less widely used languages or bilingual education). As a result there has been an increase in the study of German and French. Another consequence has been that boys are achieving a higher level of competence in English than girls, while for other languages the opposite is true.

The achievement of multilingualism is also a financial issue. Many countries are ready to finance the learning of two foreign languages in the compulsory school system. If individuals want to learn more languages, they have to find courses proposed in an open commercial market. In this way many adults are building their own multilingualism.

Local organisational issues

In this section we will deal with organisational issues more closely linked to the individual school or classroom.

More about multilingualism

The choice of what language to learn is also made at a regional or even a local level. In a number of countries schools can offer languages to meet the wishes of learners and their parents.

Some border regions have chosen – as the project on teaching neighbouring languages has shown – to give priority to the teaching of the language of a neighbour country; this is the case in the Saarland in Germany, where French has recently been introduced in primary education. In other regions less widely used languages have been introduced, such as Dutch which is taught increasingly in the regions neighbouring the Netherlands or the Dutch-speaking community of Belgium.

Another study in the medium-term programme examined the influence of twinning arrangements between towns. Although the outcome has not been significant at school level, it has had a considerable impact in encouraging local politicians and civil servants to register for language courses. This is true for less widely used languages, too, with Swedish (9%) and Danish (7%) represented almost as much as French (13%). In contacts between twin towns respect is shown for each other's languages, with the local languages being used just as much as English.

The use of available time

In principle, the amount of time devoted to languages is an important factor for the quality and success of teaching them. There are often demands for increases in the number of hours for language learning as a way of increasing its effectiveness, but this is often difficult to achieve, since timetables are overloaded and languages are in competition with other subjects.

Another option is to use the time available in a different way.

Increasing the volume

During the European Year of Languages in 2001, a series of events was organised to encourage young and adult learners to invest more time in language learning. All kinds of games, festivals and projects provided opportunities for languages other than those taught traditionally.

A wide range of different collaborative projects incited learners to use languages other than those learnt as part of the compulsory curriculum. Especially noteworthy were those projects encouraging the personal involvement of learners who are often prepared to devote a lot of time to making or maintaining contacts with correspondents who frequently become friends. A further interesting example of this in the project on teaching languages in border regions will be described below.

Using time more efficiently

The most obvious example in this category – though it might also be included in the previous section – is that of bilingual education, either where teaching is carried out in another language, or where content teaching is integrated with language instruction, or in immersion programmes. In many cases the actual number of hours is not increased; but hours designated for subject teaching are dispensed in a language other than the main language of instruction in the school. This approach has experienced rapid growth in recent years, in a wide variety of different formats. In some, just two or three subjects are taught in another language, in others – the Wallon region of Belgium, for example – learners begin with a genuine immersion in the other language (75% of the teaching). In Andorra, there is a choice of bilingual education (50% - 50%) at a national level, while Hungary gives authorisation for any language, including minority languages, to be used as the language of instruction. In other countries the range of languages to choose from is more limited, and in some no other languages are allowed. It can be observed that these forms of bilingual education are often introduced without the support of the local or national education authorities. Often it is the parents who take the initiative; the schools which launch the innovative programmes provide mutual support for each other by creating informal networks. One of these in the Netherlands has established quality criteria and standards for bilingual education.

The success of these formats is not simply due to the fact that there is an increase in the amount of time spent in language work. It is also because in this format, the target language is not the aim, but the means. Learners have to use the language to achieve very specific objectives which are of interest to them. "Interest" is used here in a double meaning – not simply that the learners find the teaching of interest, but that it is in their interest to communicate well in the new language because their academic results depend on this.

Another way of using time more efficiently is to concentrate the time available in an intensive period of study. There are a number of examples in the collection of case

studies produced for the ECML by Frank Heyworth (project 1.1.1 – *a Collection of case descriptions of innovatory approaches in the organisation and set-up of language education*). Among them is a description by Barbara Hinger of a research project which indicates that Austrian learners of Spanish achieve better results if the available time is used in short intensive periods, rather than spread out throughout the school year. This is especially true for the development of oral skills and for the motivation of the group of learners concerned. Assessment carried out in Canada –the ECML's work goes beyond Europe's borders – shows positive results for a format where schools offer English each afternoon or a complete afternoon during one school year, as an alternative to 120 minutes a week over a number of years.

Where language learning takes place

It is a legitimate question to ask whether the traditional classroom is the best place for language learning. There are a number of alternatives which are increasingly being adopted.

In countries where the target language is spoken

In such an environment the language learning classroom becomes immediately much more interesting. Even if one does not speak the language of the country, the atmosphere, the objects around one, even the furniture etc. … provide information about the culture of the country. If the learner has good competence in the language spoken, all the subjects become interesting. The project on *neighbouring language teaching* describes cooperation projects between schools on different sides of a national border which have gone so far as to propose a joint curriculum. In other regions (Bavaria and the Czech Republic, for example) individual learners have the opportunity to spend six months in a school on the other side of the border. This is a full immersion programme, as the learners live in a host family.

Other kinds of institution as well as schools can be effective places for learning languages – libraries and documentation centres, youth centres, companies, for example.

Language resource centres

One of the projects in the ECML medium-term programme (project 1.1.7 *Setting up a language resource centre*, coordinated by Catie Condostanos) includes an inventory of centres which provide a range of resources for language learning. The project is supported by the European Commission and of particular interest are those centres offering language learning programmes. In Sofia, for example, the "Happy Puppy" language centres provide opportunities for young learners (from 6 - 12 years old) to learn English through games, self-study activities, courses with tutors and the use of

multimedia resources. In some countries, language centres have been established within school institutions (for instance, vocational education in the Netherlands and university education in Iceland). School learners and university students from different courses and faculties are brought together either for independent learning modules or in language courses.

Learning at home

Even in traditional language learning, study at home is part of the language learning process. New information technology now makes it possible to undertake interactive language learning at home. An interesting example is the description (in Frank Heyworth's collection of case studies) by Anne Stevens of the Open University in England, whose language courses give a primordial role to the learner in the language learning process. The student defines his/her own objectives, the amount of time to be given to study, the part played by the instructor and the type of course (for example, an intensive week or the use of ICT).

Resources

The choice of resources to be used is another factor in the organisation of language education. We are not here concerned with the choice of the right course book, but more with the use of resources other than a textbook or the blackboard. The use of websites, e-mail, message services or television gives much more authenticity to the learning context and can have a positive motivating influence.

This topic is dealt with more comprehensively in chapter five of this book.

The people involved

The language teacher is the most important person involved in the language learning process, apart from the learner, of course. Nevertheless, it is useful to introduce other actors into the process. Native speakers (or experts) can be invited into the class to deal with specific topics, preferably of interest to the learners. In the school environment, especially among parents, other languages are present. Schemes using language assistants have shown that teachers in training can stimulate motivation and introduce topical issues from their own country into the classroom.

A less widely used source of tuition is the member of the class who is a native speaker of the target language. In language teaching in border regions "tandem" projects have been instituted. Two learners are twinned in a tandem and teach each other their language. In border regions, the proximity of the tandem partner allows exchanges beyond pen-pal letters, e-mails or Internet chats. The partners can meet, and this reinforces the motivational effect of the tandem approach. Studies have demonstrated that it is not just a factor of improved motivation, but that language competence

improves. The learners learn more and learn the language of young people and every day life in the country of the target language.

This approach, which depends on a reciprocal learning and teaching activity between the partners, has also been used with success with adults. Civil servants in border areas, for example, have been able to give mutual help to each other in learning not only the official language, but also the administrative culture of the other country. This is a much more dynamic approach than using a bilingual vocabulary list of administrative vocabulary, which is the custom elsewhere.

What are likely developments in the years to come?

We are at the very beginning of innovations in the field of finding synergies between languages and of awareness of the range of possible learning approaches. In this area there has been very little change, and it is a challenge for the future to introduce a fuller awareness of learning strategies into the learning process.

There is perhaps a need to review the status of English, taking account of its role as a lingua franca. This requires a very different approach from that of a language which is being learnt in the context of the culture of a particular country; very frequently English is learnt in order to communicate mainly with people who are not native speakers of the language.

If English is offered as the first foreign language learnt, then it would be useful to include "learning to learn languages" as one of the main aims. The child would then gain awareness of language learning processes and especially of those best suited to his or her own learning style. English could then be used as a vehicle for making contact with young people in other parts of Europe or the world, so that English would help in the discovery of new cultures and other countries.

Of equal interest are initiatives promoting the choice of languages other than English as first foreign language. In a number of the ECML projects, the language of a neighbouring country or region has been chosen, because of the opportunities offered for meeting and exchanges. This contact with a neighbour language combined with the trend of starting language learning earlier and earlier, contributes to making a child's first foreign language learning an authentic, living experience. This approach would permit the learning of English as a lingua franca to be undertaken later in the school curriculum, and to be achieved more quickly as it could be based on the English skills which young people acquire outside the school through contact with English as a world language. Provided, of course, that language learning synergies are effectively exploited.

A further challenge relates to the development of resource centres. These are increasingly based on the use of digital information, and this will, in the years to come, make access to this form of learning available to much larger sections of the

population. One can imagine public libraries which would offer a combination of learning through resource centres and language courses. It would need advertising and promotion to attract the public and to stimulate a desire for language learning. The European Year of Languages has shown how effective this kind of activity can be.

The main problem of change management in any organisation is creating the right motivation. Educational change is just as difficult in the educational domain as in commercial enterprises. In the examples we have described in this chapter, we have observed that the most impressive and relevant results at local level are achieved through the establishment of networks of institutions. In international cooperation bilateral collaboration has proved its effectiveness; for global organisation change we have seen that change which is integrated in major educational reform processes and which are in accordance with "natural" educational development have been most successful.

If we have placed a rather greater focus on tandem programmes in this chapter than on other methodological approaches, it is because they correspond to contemporary trends and the needs of today; learner autonomy, individualised approaches, personal interests, languages for special purposes, the use of modern technology, emphasis on language use. The tandem system also marks a break with the classic approach to language learning with a rigid structure and continuous assessment. In border regions, which to some extent are laboratories where new learning approaches can be tried out, new formats are being developed in which language classes are abandoned and replaced by "learning by doing" through systematic and regular contact with learners from the neighbouring country.

Why shouldn't we develop a radical new vision of schools? Why not try to redefine the whole function of Europe? In the Netherlands there are projects working in this direction: schools which choose "a European learning environment". And a good number of schools are queuing up to take part in an initial pilot project …

5.   Teachers and Learners: new roles and competences

Antoinette Camilleri Grima and Anthony Fitzpatrick

From teacher training to teacher education

Philosophers of education argued for a long time about the etymology of the word 'education', not out of love for linguistics, but because each of the two possible etymologies was aligned to a different understanding of the concept. Formalists supported the theory that 'education' comes from 'educare' which means 'to form or train' as they believed that education was a discipline and that children learn what is good for them, that they should be seen and not heard, and that they are made into specific people by their education. On the other hand, the naturalists who believed that education should 'let the child develop' referred to the definition derived from 'educere' which means 'to lead out or bring out' (see Schofield 1972: 32). In this chapter we hope to leave no doubt in the reader's mind that if 'education' at teacher training level was conducted until not too long ago from a top-down perspective where the 'trainer informed the trainee' about what to do in the classroom, now we perceive this activity more in parallel to the ideology of 'bringing out' the potential within the learner.

There has been a clear and definite shift in the literature from the use of the term 'teacher training' to 'teacher education', thus including both the notion of initial formation and that of continuing development; a change which is not accidental. In the *Thematic Collections* (2003, edited by David Newby), Peter Rádai identifies this evolution and explains how we have moved, or are moving to a scenario where the development of professional beliefs and values are kindled and sustained in an environment of active participation by the student-teachers and teachers themselves.

This is not a simple cosmetic makeover. The emphasis has shifted overall from the perspective of the 'teacher' to that of the 'learner', so that rather than talking about 'teaching' it has become more commonplace to talk about 'learning'. This is not to say, however, that the teacher's own presence or importance has become neglected, or ignored. On the contrary, as the teacher is now being regarded also as a 'learner', one can say that the teacher's role is becoming as central as that of the learner's since most of what is researched and published about learning is applicable to the teacher as well. This is why we have decided to talk about teachers and learners in one and the same chapter.

A number of ECML publications reflecting the work of the first medium-term programme highlight this shift of paradigm. For instance, Anne-Brit Fenner (2001:7) specifically states that

> because the learners provide information previously unknown to the teacher, the teacher also participates in the learning process.

Vee Harris (2001:151) uses the metaphor of "putting teachers in the pupils' shoes" as an ideal context for an experiential approach to learning in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. She further provides some case studies to illustrate the success of this approach.

New Competences

Project 1.3.1 on *Information and communication technologies in vocationally oriented language learning* gives an overview of the new skills expected of teachers in a drastically changing learning environment especially due to the use of new media. Anthony Fitzpatrick (2003), drawing on A. Lund's observations, lists five types of new literacies that teachers need to understand and master alongside learners. They are: scientific, digital, critical, linguistic, and cultural literacy.

Scientific literacy relates to the ability to think scientifically in a world which is increasingly shaped by science and technology. This kind of literacy requires an understanding of scientific concepts as well as an ability to apply a scientific perspective. *Digital literacy* relates to the ability to use ICT adequately and apply them in a principled way to the subject matter at hand. For the language teacher, it refers in particular to Web literacy, i.e. the ability to make use of the World Wide Web for language research; to the use of linguistic tools and standard programmes for exercises and testing. *Critical literacy* implies the ability to evaluate the credibility, usefulness and reliability of any given sources of information. It also encompasses skills in sifting and identifying the relevant and important in the flood of information which threatens to engulf the unprepared. *Linguistic literacy* in this context refers to the ability to recognise different genres as they develop, to track developments in language use and usage and to adapt materials (authentic or not) for teaching. *Cultural literacy* relates to observing and recording changes in the society or societies of the target language together with implications for language teaching. Such changes may be of a general nature leading to convergence between own, native culture and the target culture, or to changes particular to the target culture.

Furthermore, in order to function adequately in the world of the new media, teachers need to acquire and master a whole range of new skills ranging from the technical, to the organisational and the conceptual.

Teachers need to become completely computer-literate and have the confidence to use the available technology adequately. They should be able to cope with the most common problems arising from the use of computers very much in the way that average car drivers can cope with commonly occurring problems with their motor vehicles, i.e. no specialist knowledge of the machine, but knowing what to do when routine breakdowns occur. This task would probably become easier for the teachers of tomorrow who are the learners of today.

Given the momentum gathered in the nature of out-of-school and inside-school innovations, new organisational and pedagogic models are called for, including ICT for teacher education using a learning by doing and reflective approach. The innovative potential of languages going online must be fully grasped, where teachers can build and sustain language communities; dismantle them when they have exhausted their function; and link minds and hearts in order to negotiate everyday concerns or even complex issues. Language is a social activity for which you need real partners for communication and teachers increasingly need to diversify the partners with whom their learners practise the target language.

New conceptual skills are required of teachers when one considers that there is a quantum leap in moving from well-tried controllable media like the textbook with its supplementary materials, to the more open, inquiring approach when exploiting the new media to the full. Teachers must move to a role in which they are designing learning experiences and planning encounters for / with their learners with the target language environment in mind, or rather, at hand.

Intercultural communicative competence is highlighted in at least four recent ECML publications, two of which arose out of project 1.2.3.[1] Teachers, alongside learners, now need to be able to meet the special needs of interaction and co-operation with 'otherness'. Aleksandrowicz-Pedich et al. (2003) analysed a questionnaire that had been distributed in English in ten countries, and in French in seven countries, regarding the views of teachers of English and French on intercultural communicative competence in language teaching. Overall they found some divergent abilities in teachers across the spectrum. It is significant that while teachers are aware of the importance of the issue, they agree that

> the move from ideological acceptance to practical solutions ought to be facilitated by training and availability of proper class materials.

> (Aleksandrowicz-Pedich, p. 14).

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1   Others are project 1.2.9 *The development of an interactive database on intercultural anecdotes* by Antoinette Camilleri Grima, and the publication edited by Anne-Brit Fenner *Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning*.

In fact, the authors conclude that,

> all respondents declare unanimously the need to include in the pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes the theoretical and methodological elements of intercultural studies which would constitute the foundations for systematic education in this field.

(Aleksandrowicz-Pedich, p. 24)

New Roles and Attitudes

Teachers are required to take on new roles and come prepared with the pertinent attitudes to the classroom. As in contexts of autonomous learning (cf. Holec and Huttenen 1997), the teacher is now increasingly having to function as facilitator and guide to the learners. Some other new and important teacher roles are those of mediator, researcher and designer of complex learning scenarios, collaborator and evaluator.

The teacher as facilitator and guide

As facilitators, teachers must in many ways know more than they would as directive givers of information. Facilitators must be aware of a variety of materials available for improving students' language skills. In such a context where bottom-up processes are adopted, this focus on choice and independent use of materials by students under the teacher's guidance has been identified in terms of a pedagogy of resources, in parallel with other pedagogies like the pedagogy of time, the pedagogy of choice and the pedagogy of cooperation, by Rita Balbi (1993).

As facilitators, teachers have to be flexible, responding to the needs that students have, and not dependent on just what has been set up ahead of time by a curriculum developer and their idea of who will be in the classroom. Teacher education is a key element to success in this more flexible language classroom so that teachers will have the ability to use and to recommend multimedia and other resources effectively. In fact, teachers must not only know about and understand the functions of different media available in a media-rich environment, they should also know when best to deploy them.

In the joint construction of projects with their learners (a pedagogy of cooperation among learners, and of teachers with learners), teachers need to guide learners in the use of word-processing, graphics and presentation programmes. The integration of audio-visual elements will bring home to learners the fact that the foreign language environment of the target language is as vibrant and multi-faceted as the society in which they live.

The presentation of material in a creative manner also aids the development of cognitive processes (Camilleri 2000). In order to help learners to enlarge their mental and social abilities, to learn how to learn, teachers themselves are a major asset in guiding learners and at the same time practising alongside them, skills like hypothetical thinking, analysis of point of view, and the application of different symbol systems including the graphical, the musical, and even the mathematical as is now possible through the integration of multi-media environments in the language learning process (cf. Camilleri 1998).

The teacher as mediator

The role of mediator is not new for language teachers as it has always been their task to act as intermediary between two cultures while they introduce learners to new linguistic and cultural concepts. However, the immediacy offered by the new media forefronts this role and gives it a new weight. Within the relatively safe confines of traditional textbooks, teachers could introduce relevant aspects of the target language and culture in small, manageable chunks. Access to the 'real world' of the target culture and, at times, confrontation with it, requires new strategies and approaches that need to be learned and practised.

Indeed, a more realistic departure point is that which takes into account the multilingual environment that learners live in and bring with them into the classroom. Teresa Tinsley (2003: 35) puts it very succinctly:

> What is required, first and foremost, is a move to a multilingual perspective, a pluralist conception of language experience, which takes into account individuals' varying levels of contact with and competence in a range of different languages, and supports the development of their plurilingual competence.

Like Tinsley, others argue very convincingly that the best way forward is to include community and regional minority languages into the picture of language learning. Projects that deal with language awareness,[1] illustrate the possibilities offered through this approach for a widening of perspective of what is meant by foreign language learning. An engagement with language awareness gives greater self-confidence to learners who are already familiar with other languages and cultures not necessarily valued within the traditional school system because they are not taught as subjects. Usually, language awareness work also has the added value of bringing the community and the school closer together. What is relevant at this point is that if this approach to language awareness is extended, it will have significant implications for teacher education programmes.

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1   For example Project 1.2.1 *Introduction of language awareness into the curriculum* co-ordinated by Michel Candelier.

One of the recommendations put forward by Jean-Claude Beacco and Michael Byram (2003) is the diversification of teacher profiles. They suggest that "there might be teachers trained to teach two or more foreign languages (at different levels)" (p. 88) and mention the need for diversified educational paths at both the organisational and pedagogical levels. This is necessary in order to implement the required innovations if plurilingual competence is taken seriously across the board and in practice would entail, for instance, a revision of teaching formats such as the total teaching time for each linguistic variety and the length and frequency of teaching.

The teacher as researcher

To keep abreast of developments in relevant fields of knowledge and walks of life, particularly in the countries of the target language, teachers need to know how and where they can access information for their own and for their learners' use. Furthermore, reflective practice and action research are becoming part and parcel of the daily lives of teachers. Teachers need to keep up to date with knowledge generated in the field of modern languages and applied linguistics, not only for the sake of their learners, but also for their own professional development that is often taking the shape of 'reflection-on-action'. Action research involves a self-reflective, systematic and critical approach to enquiry by teachers in order to identify areas of difficulty, to embark on a period of study, possibly in collaboration with others, and to bring about informed changes in practice as a result.

Teachers-as-researchers should be able to adjust continually to varying demands made on their professional knowledge. These requirements vary from, for example the level of learner competence they are asked to deal with, to the increasing responsibility placed on them to participate in the administration and evaluation of the educational institution.

The teacher as designer of (complex) learning scenarios

In order to orchestrate successful learning scenarios, teachers need to learn how to put together tasks and materials to guide their learners to successful execution and conclusion of their projects. Unlike work with conventional teaching materials (textbook, workbook, audio and video materials), which have been graded, pre-assembled and collated in a chronological order, the design of learning scenarios nowadays is much more complex, requiring higher order skills involving researching and evaluating source materials, setting overall aims and objectives and breaking down tasks into meaningful and manageable sequences.

The complexity of learning environments also demands that teachers be able to switch between a variety of roles such as encourager to learners in establishing learning objectives; as task-setter in providing learning tasks; as guide throughout the various stages of the learning process; as presenter when providing information and as evaluator

both during and at the end of a task. The flexibility demanded of teachers is related not only to the changing nature of current methodologies, or to the changing type of learners they face from year to year, or from group to group, but also to the range of roles they have to perform within the same course and with the same group of learners.

The teacher as collaborator (with other teachers)

The investment of time and effort required in this new learning environment implies a sharing of responsibilities and tasks among teaching staff. Collaboration with colleagues will lighten the burden and make the efforts more fruitful and rewarding. New management patterns must emerge to ensure fair distribution of workloads, and revised job descriptions will be necessary to share and co-ordinate the tasks in hand.

The current practice of language subjects that compete for time and space on the timetable may need to be altered as already mentioned above. One of the implications of this is surely related to the need for much greater collaboration among language teachers.

The teacher as orchestrator (technology, learners, curriculum)

Teachers will need to develop fairly sophisticated management skills in order to be able to provide a healthy balance between the different elements which make up the new learning environments. Mastery and confidence in the use of technology needs to be applied to the learning inclinations and abilities of individual learners whilst covering the prescribed syllabus or curriculum which is often set by outside authorities for schools.

When the teacher is conversant with the learning styles of the students, and is able to bring the learner style and the learning method and tools into synchronization, then the symphony orchestrated by the teacher as conductor with the learners as performers will surely be more in tune. This is quite a sophisticated task as the teacher needs to be able to identify with precision the learning styles of learners; to choose from and apply with efficacy the relevant learning techniques, tasks and materials; and thus to spark off and successfully sustain the learning process, often within set frameworks which are less than ideal or conducive to collaborative learning.

The teacher as evaluator and self-evaluator

The first evaluation task for a teacher is probably that of selecting materials, methods, and other means for the learners to work with. Furthermore, evaluation of both the learning process and the product, e.g. student level of competence acquired, call for a radical revision of current models of evaluation like examinations.

When Frank Heyworth (2003) talks about the new tools for language learning such as the *Common European Framework*, the *European Language Portfolio* and the

European Language Passport, he forefronts the relevance of 'process' in learning. In this way a humanistic approach to learning and to evaluation can be sustained.

There is no doubt that new teacher education practices will also reflect this trend of empowerment through introspection and self-evaluation and assessment. Teacher self-evaluation also includes self-assessment of the teacher training and development programmes, self-reflection on the impact of personal professional growth on the learners' progress, as well as on the teaching team's development.[1] In this way there is a greater chance for teachers to succeed in their role of raising the learners' awareness of learning, and empowering them to carry out self-assessment.

Education and Professionalisation

Another cornerstone of teacher formation is that of practice-oriented training. For instance, Margit Szesztay (2003) makes a case for the importance of helping student-teachers to be prepared for the realities of the classroom. In the arguments outlined above, in fact, we have identified various practical skills needed which lead us to the conclusion that a theoretical knowledge base becomes inadequate unless it is accompanied by the various strands of practical methodology. Furthermore, what we are arguing for here is the need for the student-teacher to experience learning (and teaching) in the classroom and not only or mostly in the university lecture hall. It is imperative for teachers to acquire first-hand experience of the methods used in classrooms.

In relation to this is the principle of reflective practice. The reflective model of teacher preparation has gained prominence in recent years. It goes very well alongside the principles of learner autonomy, social and personal development and intercultural competence, which have now become accepted as key areas of language learning. Given the revised dimension of teacher as learner, the teacher's role includes an on-going process of reflection in order to evaluate what happened in the classroom and why, and as a result to have the confidence to experiment and try out new ideas alongside the learners themselves.

Some key aspects of teacher professionalism performed as a result also include: reflective partnerships between teachers, peer-mentoring and school-based enquiry. These practices necessitate teamwork and collegiality and help break down teacher isolation and stagnation.[2]

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1   This is explained, discussed and illustrated by Mary Rose on 'The Reflective Practitioner' amongst others, in the CD-ROM *Quality Management in Language Education* based on Project 2.7.1 *Quality assurance and self-assessment for schools and teachers*.

2   For more details on the theory and practice related to this see the CD-ROM on *Quality Management in Language Education*, particularly the contributions by Mary Rose on 'Internal Quality Assurance' and 'The Reflective Practitioner' and by Laura Muresan 'From Individual Self-evaluation to Institutional Quality Assurance'.

Institutionalisation

In the area of quality assurance several countries are moving away from systems of external inspection, e.g. by also eliminating or reviewing the role of the inspector, and are providing teachers with training for self-assessment and enabling institutions to experience internal self-evaluation and self-assessment. This is achieved, amongst others, by moving from a hierarchical role of the traditional education authority to a greater level of autonomy for schools where projects such as School Development Plans outline school improvement programmes on the basis of their particular contexts, needs and priorities. For instance, the quality criteria and priorities for action are discussed with the local education authorities with whom the schools will work in partnership both at the stage of planning and later on at the stage of evaluation. Such processes give vigour to collaborative and co-operative work within schools not only among teachers but also among all those involved - teachers, administrators, learners and parents. Additionally they set into motion new links between education authorities and schools, and also between schools.

There is no doubt that new teacher education practices also reflect a trend of empowering all the social partners in any educational enterprise to shoulder responsibility not only for establishing objectives and selecting methods, but also for evaluating processes. The publication on *Quality Management in Language Education* (2003) by Muresan, Heyworth, Matheidesz and Rose, offers ample evidence and examples of questionnaires and various other instruments for self-evaluation by teachers. Furthermore, this same publication includes, for instance, self-evaluation tools that have been piloted in various countries and by different institutions, for children, teenagers, adults and administrators. Such instruments could be adapted and adopted within any educational establishment for evaluating processes and products thus ensuring a cycle of reform.

One of the more outstanding features in the life of language learners and teachers is greater international contact, both virtual and physical. Language work is often accompanied by travel to target language contexts, for holiday or for work. Exchange programmes for both learners and teachers are commonplace, and institutions are coming to work together at an international level at a fast rate. Once again we need to underline the impact of this on teacher professionalisation.

Conclusion

In his book *Facing the Future: Language Educators across Europe* Frank Heyworth (2003: 4) asks a question about whether we are experiencing a period of 'normal' scientific progress or a period of 'crisis'. In this chapter we hope to have provided plenty of food for thought. We leave it up to the readers to come to their own conclusions as to whether language education (teaching by teachers and learners, and

learning by learners and teachers) will look so different in twenty, thirty years time that ours will be defined as a time of revolution rather than simply one of evolution.

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6.   Resources, tools, aids and other devices

Anthony Fitzpatrick

Resources: a global view

Whereas earlier workshops of the ECML addressed the question of the textbook and other materials used in the language classroom directly (cf. Newby and Fenner, 2000; Afanasyeva, Fenner, Komarova, Kuznetsova, Newby, and Popovici, 1997; and Newby (ed.) "Thematic collections" (2003)), few of the events organised within the context of the first medium-term programme (MTP) were concerned specifically with the development of materials in the classical sense. Many of the topics dealt with in early workshops in relation to teaching materials – learner autonomy, authenticity of materials, cultural awareness, tailor-made materials – seemed to lend themselves more readily to exploitation through the new media. And, as we will see later in this chapter, information and communication technologies and their use in language learning provided a main focus for many of the activities spawned by the series of workshops of the first MTP.

One development, however, overshadowed and informed the work of almost all workshops in the series: the publication of the *Common European Framework* and the launching of the *European Language Portfolio*.

The *Common European Framework* (CEF) has, for the first time, provided a common basis for foreign language learning and teaching in Europe which is recognised by the vast majority of those concerned with language education and training in Europe today. It is a practical tool for teachers, curriculum, test and materials developers ('practitioners'), and offers general guidance in didactic matters / methodology for policy and decision makers. It lists categories for describing objectives for language skills and may be used as a point of reference for the production of teaching materials and evaluation instruments. The six calibrated levels of language proficiency described in the framework furnish a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications. ECML workshop animators and participants now had at their disposal an instrument which supplied them with a common terminology for their discussions on, amongst other topics, the process of language learning and teaching and methodological options and ways of diversifying the curriculum.

The development of the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) has also contributed to a positive standardisation of descriptions of language competence in Europe. A portfolio typically contains the language biography of its owner (including formal qualifications related to the CEF), an account of his/her informal language learning experiences as

well as specimens of the language user's own work. It has a pedagogical function in that it is motivating and promotes reflective learning and autonomy, encouraging lifelong learning, as it grows with the learner's growth in skills and knowledge. Its reporting function offers an interface between different stages in the educational system and bridges the transition between school and the world of work. Thanks to the CEF, the portfolio is able to use common descriptors which are readily recognised by language professionals throughout Europe. Nor is the use of a portfolio limited to the description of an individual's language competence. The ECML workshops related to teacher training have used the portfolio approach to systematise the documentation of skills and knowledge acquisition of the language teacher.

The teacher

Traditionally, the teacher and the textbook have represented the "twin pillars" supporting the foreign language classroom. We have looked at the changing roles of the teacher in the previous chapter and have emphasised the key role which she [1] plays in most language learning environments. The teacher remains one of the most useful resources available to learners as she is able to respond flexibly to the individual needs of learners, offering personal guidance and the wealth of experience she has gathered during her own study of the language. In Chapter 5 we highlighted the need for a shift in paradigm regarding the new skills required of teachers. Despite our plea for the teacher to take more of a "back seat" in language learning activities, we still firmly believe that she plays an essential role as the point of reference in the learning process, bringing a sense of direction and coherence to increasingly fragmented learning experiences in an equally fragmented world.

The textbook

Few would argue with the assertion that the textbook (including supplementary, commonly used media – e.g. audio recordings, visuals) still remains the mainstay of language teaching in Europe today. However, its supremacy is being challenged on a number of fronts by the advent of and the ubiquity of the new media. It is, then, not surprising that there was a shift of emphasis in the activities of the ECML during the first medium-term programme away from improving the textbook and its constituent parts to harnessing ICT to the service of language learning. It is not that the textbook was ignored. Workshop participants continued to work upon improvements called for in previous workshops (inclusion of intercultural elements, language awareness activities, "learning to learn" focus, etc), and the awareness that had been raised with regard to deficits in teaching materials was addressed in a number of workshops.

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1   "she" pays homage to the fact that the majority of language teachers are female, but does not exclude the male.

Reference has already been made to these points in the contributions by David Newby and Ruud Halink in this volume.

In the past decade, increasing, and sometimes impossible, demands have been made upon the textbook as the sole vehicle for language learning and teaching. For example, communicative language teaching stresses the need for authentic, contemporary materials and activities – a challenge which the textbook can hardly fulfil satisfactorily in the fast-moving world in which we live. Also, an emphasis on skills development highlights the need for supplementary materials focusing on specific skills. The chief challenges for the textbook identified by ECML animators include: growing acceptance of learner autonomy, an increasing focus on learning to learn, on strategy training and on taking into account different learning styles. In addition, they recognise an expansion of the aims of learning / teaching to encompass, for example, intercultural awareness and the "language awareness" movement (cf. the contribution of Michel Candelier in this volume).

Faced with these challenges, textbook authors are reconsidering the role of the textbook, placing it within a wider context of materials available and looking for solutions which redefine the textbook as the "springboard" or scoresheet for more complex and differentiated activities.

Against this background, many are tempted to believe that the textbook has now been superseded by the development of communications technologies, a belief we will examine in detail below.

Despite the vast resources potentially available for language learning and teaching, it is sobering to see what is actually on offer in Europe in terms of published materials.

The range of published materials

In 1999/2000, the ECML, the International Certificate Conference and the Centre for Information on Language Teaching co-operated to produce a survey for the European Commission of language learning materials available for the official languages of the European Union in Europe (Fitzpatrick, 2001). The aim of the study was to provide the European Commission with facts and figures on requirements in the field of the development of materials for language teaching and learning. It highlighted the areas where Community action could be effective in contributing to meet the needs identified in the countries of the European Union. The study also included information on teaching materials for Polish as an example of a language of a pre-accession country, but did not survey the language learning needs of the Polish population. The results of the research can be seen at: http://www.icc-europe/Publications/Consolidated_ Report_ELLMS2.rtf, where a database can be consulted by those who wish to research, say, the general availability of materials for the teaching of Italian, or, as a more specific example, the provision of language teaching materials for Finnish for French speakers.

The study serves to highlight and confirm many of the assumed deficits in this area.

The overall findings regarding provision of materials for the more widely taught and used languages in Europe (French, German and Spanish) revealed the following patterns. There was a general shortage of materials for languages for specific purposes and a very severe shortage of materials for language for mobility. The report also showed that most materials available are for beginners with little on offer at levels B1 – B2 (CEF) and even less for levels C1 – C 2. Very few materials were identified for language learning with the following emphases:

- Project-based learning

- Open & Distance Learning

- Web-based

- One to One

- Intensive, accelerated

- Exchange, educational visit, tandem

- Needs analysis & assessment

- Exam / accreditation-focused (though not for German intermediate)

- Creativity enhancement

- Language games (particularly for intermediate & advanced level)

- Mediation

Skills development was generally well provided for, but there were few materials available for the development of writing skills and even fewer for integrated skills and publications devoted to "learning to learn" strategies. Published materials were broadly limited to printed matter with some audio support, whilst there were severe shortages of:

- TV, radio, satellite and digital TV

- Visuals, flashcards and maps

- CALL authoring tools, on-line resources

- Student support reference resources

- and a general shortage of video material.

As can be expected, the situation for the less widely used and taught languages is even worse. Provision is even more severely limited in all the above areas, with very few materials on offer above levels A1 – A2.

As a result, any hopes of encouraging linguistic diversity against this backdrop seem doomed to failure from the outset.

It is not surprising, then, that teachers and educators have been searching for solutions which will compensate for this dearth of materials, particularly for the less widely taught languages and for languages for specific purposes. One solution seems to be to tap into the rich resources of the worldwide web (WWW), using all the tools that Information and Communications Technology put at our disposal.

The "new" media: Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

What are the new media?

In ECML projects, we have come to use the term Information and Communications Technologies to include all technologies in which the computer plays a central role, i.e. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), the Internet, and a variety of generic computer applications. Broadcasting (including digital radio and television and satellite television) is subsumed under the heading multimedia.

A useful table giving a general overview of the affordances and limitations of various technological resources widely in use today in education can be found in a recent UNESCO publication (Haddad & Draxler, 2002).

What can ICT do for language teaching?

Information and Communications Technologies are to be found in virtually every aspect of contemporary society, influencing almost all forms of human interaction. They have changed radically the way in which we interact and communicate with one another, bringing about what has been referred to as a change of paradigm in communicative behaviour.

There is an increasing awareness amongst educationalists, researchers and administrators that the introduction of the new media into educational institutions calls for a change in learning and teaching patterns. For example, 73% of the experts polled for the *Delphi Study* (Vollstädt, 2002) conducted for the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research over a period of two years and culminating in a symposium in February 2002, believe that the new media will lead to a major change in the culture of learning. The reasons given for this supposition are the learning effects and learning possibilities linked to the new media. They believe that the new media:

▪ call for and facilitate more independence on the part of the learner, more self-directed activities and the organisation of learning processes;

- encourage interactive work;

- facilitate direct feedback;

- call for a change in the role distribution of teacher / learner, where learners take on teaching functions;

- enable contents to be continually updated with minimum efforts;

- provide faster access to teaching materials;

- provide greater opportunities for individual forms of learning;

- but also demand more social learning in group and teamwork.

Why use technology with language learners?

The chief reasons for using technology can be summed up as follows.
Technology facilitates:

- exposure to 'authentic' language

- access to wider sources of information and varieties of language

- opportunities to communicate with the outside world

- a learner-centred approach

- development of learner autonomy

How and when the new media should be used requires careful planning and reflection. In the initial stages there is a danger that a fascination with new technology may lead to aberrations in terms of time devoted or assigned to particular tasks which seem more attractive when tackled through the new media. Consideration should be given to the fact that, because the new media can perform certain tasks, those tasks need not and sometimes should not be relegated to machines. There is an inherent danger of wishing to use the new tools for what we are already able to do without them, failing to ask ourselves what the added value of the use of the new media might be. In short, there must be a real reason for using technology in language learning contexts.

The ECML response

Recognising the considerable influence the new media have in exchanges in foreign languages and the fact that there is a general lack of appropriate training of language teachers in meaningful uses of ICT, the ECML accepted three projects in its first medium-term programme which were related directly to the use of ICT in foreign language teaching and learning.

The first, ICT in VOLL IMPACT set out to show how ICT and their multimedia applications can be established as an integral part of modern language curricula in vocationally oriented education and training, and how they can encourage more flexible and accessible educational provision. The outcome is a comprehensive website that serves as a major virtual resource centre for VOLL-related use of ICT and can be accessed at http://www.ecml.at/projects/voll. An overview of the summary publication giving details of the rationale, the theoretical underpinning as well as direct links to materials produced by workshop participants is given in Figure 1 below.
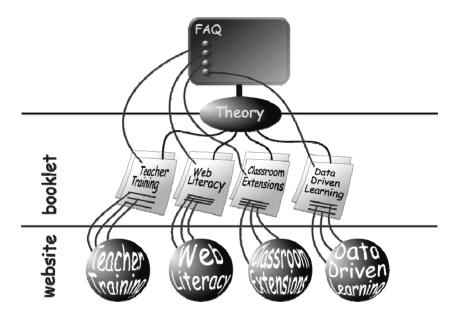

Figure 1: "ICT in VOLL IMPACT" summary publication

The second, *Information and Communication Technologies and distance language learning* (Goodfellow, 2003), was concerned with the educational use of ICT in teacher education and distance language learning. The main objectives of this project, which used an interactive platform for the exchange of ideas and experience, were: the collection of a selected bibliography and webography on ICT in distance language learning, the presentation of case studies on the integration of ICT in distance and other types of language learning and in teacher education, the evaluation of existing tools for ICT in distance language learning.

The third, *Information and Communication Technologies and young language learners* (Camilleri and Sollars, 2003), the "Stars" project, provides an excellent example of European co-operation in the field of early language learning using ICT. Young learners, 7-10 year-olds, are encouraged to communicate with their peers, using an electronic platform designed specifically for exchange. The project demonstrates how

effective and motivating international communication can be at this age, using simple tools and a straightforward platform.

A further small project, *Information and Communication Technologies and the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening)* dealt with the use of Internet-based resources for the promotion of the four skills (the skills of reading and writing had formed the focus of an earlier workshop). A virtual library of relevant Internet-based resources was presented and tested and a fellowship was awarded to extend the scope to the skills of listening and speaking.

In all workshops it was established that the chief problem for language teachers nowadays is not the availability of materials, but how to deploy them efficiently and effectively, taking advantage of new opportunities without neglecting well-tried and reliable sources like the conventional textbook. We have pointed out in the previous chapter that it is necessary to move away from a "top down" approach, which implies a uni-directional transfer of information from the teacher to the learner, to new pedagogical models which prepare them for co-operative, collaborative and life-long learning. For this to become a reality, considerable efforts will be required to familiarise teachers with the new media, ensuring that they acquire competence through confidence so that the technical aspect fades into the background, leaving time and space for the full exploitation of the possibilities of ICT. In short, there should be a shift in emphasis in future training for teachers from *learning to use* to *using to learn*.

Studies have shown that, despite the indisputable potential of new technologies, teachers experience severe problems in exploiting this potential. Often, the reason is to be found in a mismatch between the 'traditional' educational setting with its goals and exam oriented curriculum in the form of a single-subject lesson on the one hand, and the transcending and transforming potential of ICT on the other. Exploiting the full potential of ICT, we need to acknowledge their capacity for compressing space and time and how they are becoming a part of our lifelong learning, whether at school, at work, or at home. These aspects can hardly be expected to materialise within a traditional setting (the 45 minute lesson) which is still often the norm in most educational environments. Alternative organisational forms outlined in the chapter above by Ruud Halink could well lead to viable and more rewarding options.

A note of caution

The new teaching and learning media do not automatically lead to a new "culture of learning" but simply offer the opportunity for change. Teachers' attitudes to the new media and appropriate concepts for their use and for the orchestration of learning will decide whether the desired outcomes can be achieved and whether a major shift in the culture of learning is possible.

Although increasing use is being made of ICT for content research and immediate communication needs in foreign languages, we need to pay greater attention to

questions of how the new media can systematically aid language acquisition and learning.

The future

The spreading and deployment of learning spaces beyond the institutional context (school, university, teaching institution) is changing the character and contents of school-based learning and allows teachers to take into consideration the complexity and individuality of learning.

Experts polled in the "Delphi Study" referred to above and at the 2000 EUROCALL conference in Jyväskylä, Finland, were of the opinion that there will be a considerable growth in the importance of learning processes outside school. Nevertheless, they emphasised that the chief place for learning will remain the school / teaching institution.

ICT will certainly play an increasingly important role as the new media become increasingly integrated into everyday life, affording greater co-operation and collaboration at a European and at a global level. This will be particularly significant for the least widely used and least taught languages (LWULT) and in vocational education. Advances in technology and increased user-friendliness of equipment will break down resistance to ICT use in the classroom and beyond. However, the present fascination with technology is sure to wane, giving way to an emphasis on improved pedagogy which will facilitate "blended learning", i.e. the use and combination of different media and forms of interaction, and this will become increasingly time and place independent. The initial preoccupation with the possibilities offered by individual aspects of ICT will give way to the self-evident inclusion of only those elements which are conducive to richer learning environments in learning and teaching programs and programmes. Finally, there will be a shift from the passive consumption of ready-made programmes which can be observed at present to independent building of content, tailor made for specific groups or individuals.

At an institutional level, three stages related to the introduction of ICT in language teaching and learning can be identified:

1. A general *awareness of the technical possibilities* coupled with the purchase of equipment and ready-made resources.

2. The realisation of the *need for and implementation of support structures*: teacher-training, technical support and senior management commitment to the integration of ICT in (language) training.

3. The establishment of resource centres / persons and networks to adapt offers to needs, leading to a *principled approach to a meaningful integration* of the new media into the teaching / learning process.

At present, it would seem that few authorities and institutions have moved beyond the second stage. Yet, unless stage three is effected, the use of ICT in institutional language teaching contexts may suffer the same ignominious fate as the language laboratory.

Evaluation and Quality Assurance

A major concern in ECML projects has been the question of the evaluation and design of language learning and teaching programmes and materials. Of the approaches to evaluation currently proposed, we have found that the materials developed in the *Quality Guide* (Lasnier, J-C. (ed), 2003) to be comprehensive, user-friendly and instructive.

The guide aims in particular to:

▪ *raise awareness* on the concept of *quality in relation to modern language learning and teaching* and contribute to the debate in the field;

▪ serve as an *"exemplary instrument"*, i.e. a reference or *stimulus for publishing* companies, materials designers, teachers and trainers, course decision-makers etc. when designing programmes, materials and training courses;

▪ provide a *practical* tool for teachers, educationalists and project managers in designing and evaluating programmes and materials and increase motivation in giving a focus to efforts to increase efficiency in the learning/teaching process.

It has been used by a number of projects to plan and to track progress on an ongoing basis in addition to its application as a tool for the evaluation of teaching and learning materials. The *European Language Learning Materials Study* referred to above used it, for example, to evaluate aspects of selected materials chosen to illustrate good practice in the design of teaching materials;

The *Quality Guide* identifies three distinct conscious stages of quality assurance: Before (Design); during (*Implementation*) and afterwards (*Outcomes*), and emphasises how they are interwoven. (See figure 2)
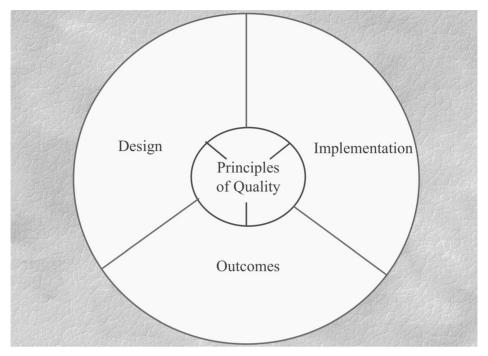
Fig 2: The stages of quality assurance

Nine principles of quality together with related sub-principles are defined in the guide, together with a monitoring process which produces a *Profile of Quality Achievement* which may provide useful suggestions to be fed back into the design stage in order to further improve the quality of language learning opportunities.

Using the CD-ROM of the *Quality Guide* can help teachers, course planners, materials and curriculum designers as well as workshop animators to carefully plan and assess the various stages involved in the processes of their work. It serves as a useful tool for the benchmarking of quality assurance, but still, perhaps, needs to be expanded to go beyond mechanical notions of enhancement, efficacy and technology-driven change to embrace a view which encompasses a human-techno approach to the new media rather than a techno-human view.

Conclusion

We will see an increasing use of the new media in language learning in the next decade, but the use will be most effective when linked to the traditional textbook as the "anchor" or springboard for meaningful activities. Perhaps the chief challenge for us today is to provide learners with approaches which prepare them for the future use of

media, linking the use in institutional contexts to more individual applications which harness the diversity of ICT to authentic, real-world encounters with a target language and culture(s).

We can only concur with Andreas Lund, who maintains (in a forthcoming UNESCO publication, *An analytical study of the use of ICT in language learning*) that, in 21st century pedagogical practice, we need to adopt a perspective which embraces humans, technologies and contexts as an overall, integrated unit.

> We are immigrants to the information age; our students and our children will be the natives.

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7. The Question of Quality: Are we doing the right things? Are we doing things right?

Laura Muresan

In the previous chapters of the book we have been looking mainly at issues related to the content of language education – the social context, the educational principles, the roles of teachers and learners, the organisational and technical challenge. In the background to all of these, however, is the question of quality. The mission of the European Centre for Modern Languages must be to contribute to better language education and the challenge of quality is in the implicit background of all the projects in the medium-term programme. In other words we need a principled way of deciding whether what we have decided to do is relevant, useful, worthwhile – asking ourselves the question "are we doing the right things?" – and at the same time creating instruments and procedures which allow us to assess whether our actions and projects are being carried out efficiently – "are we doing things right?"

What do we mean by quality?

The concept of quality is both *descriptive* and *prescriptive*. It can be both neutral and evaluative – "the quality of life" could mean either "what are the characteristics of life, what is it that makes life, life?" or "what is it that makes life happy, comfortable etc." In fact the second question cannot be answered until the first has been addressed; we cannot recognise good quality in education unless we can describe and define it.

In the field of language education there is a need to have a clear and coherent idea of what are the "right things" that we are doing, and procedures for checking that we are "doing things right". This means that among many issues, the following must be addressed:

- What criteria can be applied to the decision-making process to ensure that curricula take account of relevant factors?

- What are the models against which the quality of teaching / learning activities is to be measured?

- What are the processes by which teaching / learning is planned, organised and delivered?

- How are these models and processes described and communicated in such a way that those involved are aware of them and contribute to their definition and development?

- What are the responsibilities with regard to quality of the different actors – teachers, learners, administrators, parents etc. – participating in the learning activities?

- What are the procedures for observing and getting feedback on the teaching / learning activities?

- What are the procedures for quality control? Who undertakes it? How can the results of the quality control be fed back into the planning and delivery processes?

These are among the issues which have been addressed in a number of the projects of the ECML's medium-term programme. Language learning and teaching are complex matters and cannot be reduced to a single, simplistic model of quality. They are influenced by the personalities of learners and teachers and by the relationships between them. The content is also defined by what is happening in the world around them and the topics they choose to discuss. Nevertheless it is important to aim for high standards and to set criteria by which the quality of teaching/learning operations will be judged.

In the chapter we will describe some exploratory approaches to defining what are the "right things" for language educators to undertake, and how we can establish instruments and procedures for "doing them right".

What are the "right" things?

There is no definitive answer to this question, set in stone, valid at all times and in all contexts. What is "right" in language education largely depends on the changes in demand in the social and educational context. Thus, the entire domain of quality assurance is highly dynamic, reflecting the changes in education paradigms; at the same time, new developments in the understanding of quality trigger changes in educational approaches.

This relationship is implicitly embedded in the trends and concerns in language education in general, e.g.:

- the shift of focus from teaching to learning, concern for ensuring that learning takes place, that learners make progress in improving communication competences (as shown also in the previous chapters of this book);

- the move towards standardisation and coherence of approach in the assessment and self-assessment of communicative language competences (including socio-pragmatic competences, intercultural competences, etc.), across languages,

through the development by the Council of Europe of the *Common European Framework of Reference* and the *European Language Portfolio*

- the shift of focus in teacher education from developing teachers as excellent sources of knowledge to

  - developing in teachers facilitating competences for the development of communication skills in their learners, for empowering learners to seek knowledge and to continue learning also outside the classroom (see also Vee Harris, 2001)

  - encouraging new attitudes, such as the availability to continue their own learning process, as well as to share the responsibility for evaluation with their learners, supporting the latter in the development of self-assessment competences

  - facilitating the development of new literacies - the acquisition of partial competences in adjacent areas, such as new technologies (ICT),

- (as presented in more detail in Chapter 6 above, and among several ECML projects, in project 1.3.1 *Information and Communication Technologies in vocationally oriented language learning* – co-ordinated by Tony Fitzpatrick and project 1.3.2. *Information and communication technologies and distance language learning*, co-ordinated by Daphne Goodfellow);

- the concern for the design of resources that facilitate the effective development of communication competences and study skills

- the growing concern for the development of intercultural competences, for appropriacy of communication according to context (ECML project 1.2.3 on *Intercultural communicative competence in teacher education*, co-ordinated by Ildikó Lázár; see also Camilleri-Grima, 2003; Huber-Kriegler, Lázár and Strange, 2003)

- the favouring of partial competences (preferably in several languages) as opposed to the perfect mastery of one language, alongside the shift of focus from grammatical accuracy to communicative adequacy in a given context and a positive approach to assessment in general (e.g. ECML project 2.2.1 *Can do*, co-ordinated by Angela Hasselgren; ECML project 2.1.4 *Development of a pedagogical kit*, co-ordinated by Gábor Boldizsár)

There is a close link between these changes of educational paradigm and the necessary change of mentality in learners, teachers and teacher educators in relation to what *quality is* in language teaching and learning, in the assessment of language competences, in teacher education.

Once quality standards have been defined internally, i.e. within the institution, among the language professionals involved, it is equally important to communicate them to the

public in a transparent and clear way, so that learners and parents are informed about what they can expect from a course, a study programme, etc.

How do we know we are doing things right?

With a growing concern for quality assurance in a competitive environment, a range of systems have been developed to allow both institutions and individuals to measure the progress they have made, to compare their performance to that of others, and to set themselves targets for continuous improvement. In addition to the well-known "hard" systems of external quality control (e.g. examinations, inspections), there is more and more emphasis placed now on "softer" systems for internal quality assurance, including self-assessment, consultative and collaborative approaches. In what follows, we shall explore how these systems relate to each other, and how individual and institutional endeavours should fit together in a holistic approach to quality management and enhancement.

From individual to institutional self-assessment

As already mentioned above, the development of European Language Portfolios, based on the scale of reference levels introduced by the Council of Europe, provides learners with a powerful instrument for carrying out self-assessment of their communicative competences in different languages as well as of their progress within an institutional framework.

To go beyond the level of the individual learner, we may address a question such as: In what resides the added value of the *Common European Framework of Reference* and the *Portfolio concept*?

They allow learners and schools to achieve consistency of approach in the (self-) assessment of language proficiency and progress made, across languages, even if the learning process of individual students has taken place in a variety of teaching / learning environments.

At the same time, they provide schools and teachers with the framework for setting realistic, measurable objectives that can be fine-tuned through negotiation e.g. between learners and teachers, or between schools as providers of language courses and institutional customers. From a quality management perspective this creates the prerequisites for institutions to develop a coherent and consistent approach to teaching, learning and assessment, on the one hand, and to the evaluation of teaching practice against objectives, on the other.

What is the role of teacher self-evaluation in the quality assurance process? At an individual level, it is often associated with reflective practice and action research, as already mentioned in Chapter 6 above. It may be related to participation in innovatory
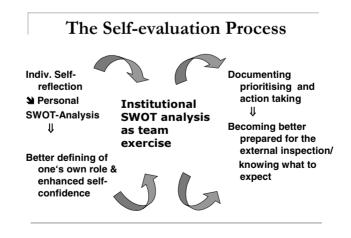
projects, to classroom practice or to any activity engaged in or by the school. In most cases, it is an integral part of team exercises in institutional self-evaluation, and is often complemented by classroom observation and peer review.

Contexts and functions of institutional self-evaluation

The main context in which self-evaluation is resorted to include:

- project or programme analysis – 'measuring' progress and outcomes as compared to the initial objectives and the stages decided on (as shown by Frank Heyworth, 2002, in *"A Guide to Project Management"*);

- preparation for introducing an innovation – diagnosing existing problems and documenting the need for change (Heyworth, 2003a);

- institutional quality management – analysing all the aspects of institutional activity, identifying priority areas in need for improvement and establishing action plans;

- internal quality assurance – as quality control by 'insiders' – for instance, when preparing for an external inspection (quality control by 'outsiders'), e.g. when applying for membership to a national or international quality organisation (Maxwell-Hyslop, 1999).

Whatever the context, key to the effectiveness of individual and team endeavours is the existence of an atmosphere of mutual trust within the institution, as well as everybody's commitment (including the management's) to bring about changes for the better. Developing a self-assessment culture linked to quality assurance in language education is beneficial both at an individual and at an institutional level. The diagram below illustrates the inter-relatedness between the two levels.

The Self-evaluation Process

Indiv. Self-reflection
↘ Personal SWOT-Analysis
⇓

Institutional SWOT analysis as team exercise

Documenting prioritising and action taking
⇓
Becoming better prepared for the external inspection/ knowing what to expect

Better defining of one's own role & enhanced self-confidence

What methods and instruments can we use to find out more about how we are doing?

Depending on the context and the aims of the evaluative venture, one can choose what would be perceived as most appropriate from a whole variety of methods and instruments available.

To give just some examples, there are:

- various portfolios for learners, adapted to age group and national education context (as illustrated through the ECML projects and 2.7.1 *Quality assurance and self-assessment for schools and teachers* – co-ordinator Laura Muresan) ;

- portfolios for teachers, as well as checklists and questionnaires for teacher self-assessment (e.g. in Muresan, Heyworth, Matheidesz, Rose – eds., 2003);

- suggestions for peer review and classroom observation (ibid.);

- checklists for evaluating programmes, such as those developed through the project on *Neighbouring language teaching in border regions* – co-ordinated by Ruud Halink;

- checklists for quality control developed by networks of quality schools, by national or international quality assurance systems.

Other methods and techniques may include:

- carrying out surveys with all staff members or with selected staff members, depending on a given situation, aim, context;

- focus group meetings

- formal or informal interviews

- observation of activities, of processes and persons

- audio or video recording

- evaluation sheets addressed to customers or other stakeholders, etc.

In most cases, there would probably be a mixture of instruments methods and techniques being used, so as to ensure complementarity and objectivity in the gathering of data. The complexity of the instrumentarium would very much depend on the intended timeframe and how exhaustive the evaluation is intended to be.

Whatever the choice of instruments, and however simple or complex as an operation, an important aspect of both self-evaluation exercises and external quality assurance is an ethical approach to confidentiality and the use of data obtained. This involves addressing questions such as: who is going to have access to the information? How is it going to be used? Is this transparent and clear from the very beginning to all those involved in the evaluation?

Certifying quality – assessment from outside

As already mentioned above, one of the functions of self-evaluation is that of getting ready for external quality control, for accreditation and certification purposes.

Why are schools, both public and private, seeking confirmation from outside that they are doing the right things right?

The main reason can be gaining public recognition and market advantage, getting a quality label, or simply getting authorisation to operate (Heyworth, F., 2003c). In addition, the external feedback, usually provided after a full inspection, can contribute to improving standards in the institution. Added value is also gained by becoming part of networks of quality schools, thus enhancing the opportunities of organisational learning, which is becoming more and more an essential element of progress (Pedler et al., 1991)

Who are the external accrediting bodies?

Depending on the institutional status and each local/country context, they can be ministries of education, independent accreditation bodies, national organisations, European or international organisations. English language schools in Britain, for instance, are accredited through the British Council accreditation scheme "English in Britain". In Ireland, there is ACELS, a quality system for both public and private language schools. In a number of other countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe there are national associations of language schools running quality assurance systems.

A very thorough and prestigious pan-European quality assurance system is that of the European Association for Quality Language Services – EAQUALS (many of the national organisations were partners or contributors to the ECML Project 2.7.1. on *Quality assurance and self-assessment for schools and teachers* – co-ordinated by Laura Muresan).

What are the aspects looked for in an external inspection?

An inspection is always a very complex endeavour. Examples of instruments used at European level and in different country contexts both in the public sector and in the private sector are to be found on the CD-ROM *Quality Management in Language Education* (Muresan, Heyworth, Matheidesz, Rose – eds., 2003). Here are just some of the main aspects that an external inspector would want to get information about:

▪ Are there clear quality standards and are they communicated to all interested parties (e.g. to staff and learners)?

▪ Is there consistency between theory and practice, namely between what is considered "high quality standards" in a given context and the teaching/learning

practice in the same context? And how does this compare to the practice and the description of quality standards in other language teaching/learning contexts?

- Is there consistency of approach between aims, processes and assessment?

- Are there measures in place for striking the right balance between *flexibility* (in a learner-centred approach) and *coherence* at institutional level (e.g. in the planning of the teaching/learning process, in the assessment and self-assessment of progress made by learners)? What are these measures in a specific context and how do they work in practice?

- Is there coherence between institutional promises to learners and individual teaching as carried out in the classroom?

- Are the evaluation criteria transparent? Are there evaluation instruments in place to ensure objectivity?

How *hard* is "hard"? – In what direction is external quality control going? In what way is it different from what it used to be?

As already mentioned in Chapter 6 and at the beginning of this chapter, there is growing preoccupation for combining objectivity with a collaborative, consultative approach. To illustrate this, we shall quote an excerpt from the Mission statement of the European Association EAQUALS:

> The EAQUALS inspection scheme is more than just a coherent and effective system for inspecting institutions; it seeks to be a constructive, consultative contribution to the improvement of the institutions to be inspected and to language teaching in general. The scheme is a transparent one – the institutions work with exactly the same documents as the inspectors and the self-assessment guide, the pre-inspection visits and the training seminars are designed to help institutions reach the required standards.
>
> (EAQUALS, 2002: pp 3-4)

Why this growing interest in quality assurance in language education?

The overall aim is that of ensuring that language teaching facilitates learning in a consistent way and that the standards of language learning and teaching processes are continuously improved.

In addition, in a highly competitive environment, with an ever growing range of choices available to the public and the consumers' constant preoccupation for getting "value for money", there is a higher need for accountability in public terms of all the providers of language services.

There are more options in language education than in other areas – the increasing choice of languages automatically triggers the question: which languages? and to what level?

The increasing number of approaches and options available, the greater choice of providers also enhances *l'embarras du choix*.

Hence, an emphasis on quality assurance allows language learners, parents, institutional customers to make proper choices, or at least more documented ones in relation to what they feel is relevant to them.

At the same time, there is growing concern at politico-societal level to provide equal opportunities for the learning of less widely spoken languages, ensuring high standards of teacher education for promoting all languages, including those dominant in smaller countries, as well as ensuring the access to quality language education of less favoured social categories. As we have tried to illustrate in this chapter, the ECML has made a considerable contribution in this sense through several of the projects of the 1st medium-term programme, thus creating the prerequisites to build on in the new medium-term programme – *Languages for Social Cohesion*.

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Conclusion

We hope that this book will have given you a picture of the work of the ECML in its first medium-term programme and stimulated you to think about questions which are important for the present and future of language education.

Almost all the individual projects have led to some kind of publication, whether a book, a CD-ROM or a website. There is a list of the projects in Appendix one, and the publications are available, free, from the ECML in Graz.

For those of us who have been involved in the work, the end of the first programme is time to take stock. In addition to the very impressive array of research and development work, the experience of taking part in international, multicultural co-operation has been enriching and exciting. Groups of experts from the 33 member states which have signed the partial agreement have attended workshops, almost always in harmony, and always with commitment to ensure that the ideas presented are developed and disseminated.

The second medium-term programme begins in 2004, with the title *Languages for social cohesion: Language education in a multilingual and multicultural Europe*; many of the themes described in the book are very much work in progress and will be pursued in the new programme together with other topics, all related to ensuring that the ECML's mission – to contribute to the development and dissemination of good practice in language education – is fulfilled.

Appendix one

Project List – ECML medium-term programme 2000-2003

1.1.1. Collection of case description of innovatory approaches in the organisation and set-up in language education.
Co-ordination: *Frank Heyworth, Switzerland*

1.1.2. Learning more than one language efficiently: Tertiary language teaching and learning in Europe. Example: German as a subsequent foreign language after English
Co-ordination: *Gerhard Neuner, Britta Hufeisen, Germany*

1.1.3. The organisation of language education in small States
Co-ordination: *Francesca Junyent Montagne, Andorra*

1.1.4   Neighbouring language teaching in border regions – how to improve the knowledge of neighbouring languages and cultures in border regions and in particular to achieve this – how to take full advantage of the neighbours proximity?
Co-ordination: *Ruud Halink, Netherlands*

1.1.5. Literacy as correspondence – an integrated approach to multiliteracy
Co-ordination: *Valerie Sollars, Malta*

1.1.6. Foreign language teaching and learning in the context of twin cities
Co-ordination: *Gilbert Dalgalian, France*

1.1.7. Language Resource Centres

1.2.1. The introduction of language awareness into the curriculum
Co-ordination: *Michel Candelier, France*

1.2.2. Cultural mediation and the teaching and learning of languages
Co-ordination: *Geneviève Zarate, France*

1.2.3. Intercultural communicative competence in teacher education
Co-ordination: *Ildikó Lázár, Hungary*

1.2.4. Mediating between theory and practice in the context of different learning cultures and languages
Co-ordination: *David Newby, Austria*

1.2.5. ODYSSEUS – Second Language at the workplace. Language needs of migrant workers: organising language learning for the vocational / workplace context
Co-ordination: *Matilde Grünhage-Monetti, Germany; Elwine Halewijn, Netherlands*

1.2.6. Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning
Co-ordination: *Anne-Brit Fenner, Norway*

1.2.9. The development of an interactive database on intercultural anecdotes
Co-ordination: *Antoinette Camilleri Grima, Malta*

1.3.1. ICT in VOLL IMPACT: Information and communication technologies in vocationally oriented language learning
Co-ordination: *Anthony Fitzpatrick, Germany*

1.3.2. Information and communication technologies and distance language learning
Co-ordination: *Daphne Goodfellow, France*

1.3.3. Information and communication technologies and young language learners
Co-ordination: *Valerie Sollars, Mario Camilleri, Malta*

1.4.1. The management of innovatory projects in language education
Co-ordination: *Frank Heyworth, Switzerland*

2.1.1. The status of language teachers
Co-ordination: *Péter Rádai, Hungary*

2.1.2 Facing the future: Language educators across Europe
Co-ordination: *Frank Heyworth, Switzerland*

2.1.4. Development of a pedagogical kit
Coordinator: *Gábor Boldizsár, Hungary*

2.2.1. Ongoing assessment in the lower secondary classroom – Evolving ICT-based materials on a 'can do' basis suitable for portfolio presentation
Co-ordination: *Angela Hasselgren, Norway*

2.2.2. Helping learners learn: exploring strategy instruction in language classrooms across Europe
Co-ordination: *Veronica Harris, United Kingdom*

1.2.8, 2.3.2 + 2.5.1 Thematic collections on "Intercultural awareness", "Learner Autonomy" and "Early language learning"
Co-ordination: *David Newby, Austria*

2.7.1. Quality assurance and self-assessment for schools and teachers
Co-ordination: *Laura Muresan, Romania*

Appendix two

List of ECML publications / Liste des publications du CELV (First Medium Term Programme)

1. BOLDIZSÁR Gábor, *An introduction to the current European context in language teaching*, ECML Research and Development reports series, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

2. BOLDIZSÁR Gábor, *Introduction au contexte européen actuel de l'enseignement de langues*, Série de rapports Recherche et Développement du CELV, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes, 2003.

3. CAMILLERI Grima Antoinette, *How strange! The use of anecdotes in the development of intercultural competence / Comme c'est bizarre! L'utilisation d'anecdotes dans le développement de la compétence interculturelle*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2002.

4. CAMILLERI Mario, SOLLARS Valerie, *Information and Communication Technologies and young language learners*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [CD-Rom], 2003.

5. CAMILLERI Mario, SOLLARS Valerie, *Les technologies de l'information et de la communication et les jeunes apprenants de langues*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes [CD-Rom] [à paraître en 2004].

6. CANDELIER Michel, *Janua Linguarum – The Gateway to languages – The introduction of language awareness into the curriculum: Awakening to languages*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [forthcoming, 2004].

7. CANDELIER Michel, *Janua Linguarum – La porte des langues – L'introduction de l'éveil aux langues dans le curriculum*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes 2003.

8. COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Languages at the Council of Europe / Les langues vivantes au Conseil de l'Europe*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [CD-Rom], 2003.

9. DALGALIAN Gilbert, *L'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues dans le contexte des villes jumelées*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes, 2003.

10. DALGALIAN Gilbert, *Language learning and teaching in the context of twin cities*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [forthcoming, 2004].

11. DROUGAS Alex, WESTHOFF Gerard, *Content design and methodology of seminars, workshops and congresses*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2002.

12. DROUGAS Alex, WESTHOFF Gerard, *Méthodologie et organisation de séminaires, d'ateliers et de conférences*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes, 2002.

13. FENNER Anne-Brit, *Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2001.

14. FENNER Anne-Brit, *Sensibilisation aux cultures et aux langues dans l'apprentissage des langues vivantes sur la base de l'interaction dialogique avec des textes*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes, 2002.

15. FITZPATRICK Anthony, *Information and Communication Technologies in vocationally oriented language learning*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

16. FITZPATRICK Anthony, *Les technologies de l'information et de la communication dans le cadre de l'apprentissage des langues à orientation professionnelle*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes [à paraître en 2004].

17. GOODFELLOW Daphne, *Information and Communication Technologies and distance language learning / Les technologies de l'information et de la communication et l'apprentissage des langues à distance*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [CD-Rom], 2003.

18. GRÜNHAGE-MONETTI Matilde, HALEWIJN Elwine, HOLLAND Chris, *ODYSSEUS - Second language at the workplace: Language needs of migrant workers: organising language learning for the vocational/workplace context*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [book + CD-Rom], 2003.

19. GRÜNHAGE-MONETTI Matilde, HALEWIJN Elwine, HOLLAND Chris, *ODYSSEUS – la deuxième langue dans le lieu de travail: Les besoins linguistiques pour les travailleurs migrants: l'organisation de l'apprentissage des langues à des fins professionnelles*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes [livre + CD-Rom] [à paraître en 2004].

20. HALINK Ruud, RAASCH Albert, SCHMITZ-SCHWAMBORN Gabriele, SCHWARZ Ulrike, *Neighbouring languages in border regions / La langue du voisin en région frontalière*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, [CD-Rom] 2003.

21. HARRIS Vee, *Helping learners learn: exploring strategy instruction in the language classrooms across Europe*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2001.

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23. HASSELGREEN Angela, *Bergen 'Can Do' project*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [book + CD-Rom] 2003.

24. HEYWORTH Frank, *A guide to project management*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2002 [book + CD-Rom].

25. HEYWORTH Frank, *Guide de gestion de projets*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes, 2002 [livre + CD-Rom].

26. HEYWORTH Frank, *The organisation of innovation in language education. A set of case studies*. Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

27. HEYWORTH Frank, *L'organisation de l'innovation dans l'enseignement des langues: études de cas*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes [à paraître, 2003].

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33. JUNYENT MONTAGNE, Francesca, *The organisation of language education in small states / L'organisation de l'enseignement des langues dans les petits Etats*. Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

34. LÁZÁR Ildikó, *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

35. LÁZÁR Ildikó, *Intégrer la compétence communicative interculturelle dans la formation des enseignants de langues*, Conseil de l'Europe / Centre européen pour les langues vivantes [à paraître, 2004].

36. MORO Bernard, *Web literacy / Alphabétisation à l'outil Internet*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, [CD-Rom], 2003.

37. MURESAN Laura, *Quality management in language education / Assurance de qualité dans l'éducation langagière*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, [CD-Rom], 2003.

38. NEUNER Gerhard, HUFEISEN Britta, *Mehrsprachigkeitskonzept – Tertiärsprachenlernen – Deutsch nach English*, Europarat / Europäisches Fremdsprachenzentrum, 2003.

39. NEUNER Gerhard, HUFEISEN Britta, *The concept of plurilingualism – Learning subsequent languages – German after English*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

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41. NEWBY David, *Mediating between theory and practice in the context of different learning cultures and languages*, European Centre for Modern Languages, Council of Europe, 2003.

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44. NEWBY David, *Thematic collections: Presentation and evaluation of work carried out by the ECML from 1995 to 1999*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

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46. RÁDAI Péter, *The status of language educators*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages, 2003.

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50. ZARATE Geneviève, *Cultural mediation and language learning and teaching*, Council of Europe / European Centre for Modern Languages [forthcoming, 2003].

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