TALLENT Dissemination Conference

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The TALLENT Project (Teaching And Learning Languages Enhanced by New Technologies) held its final meeting at the University of Limerick on 26 January, 2002. To mark the event a one-day dissemination conference was organised by the University's Centre for Applied Language Studies on Friday 25 January. The conference, which was opened by the President of the University of Limerick, Dr Roger G.H. Downer, brought together approximately 100 participants from Ireland and 10 other European countries. The programme included both information sessions on some of the latest European, national and international projects in the field of ICT and language learning, and papers on current research and practice. The day closed with three parallel round table discussions on the implementation of new applications in ICT in the language learning context.

Two of the projects presented involve the design and delivery of ICT-related training to second and/or foreign language teachers and teacher trainers in all levels of education. The TALLENT project, presented by Ole Lauridsen, Handelshøjskolen i Århus, DK, included partners from 11 European countries and has been funded since 1998 by the European Commission under Lingua Action A. The project involved the development and piloting of an in-service modular course in ICT and language learning in several European countries. Topics covered in the course include the integration of ICT in language learning, reference tools, the Internet, authoring tools, corpora and concordancing, and the self-directed learning environment. Products produced by the project team also include a book on the subject, edited by Angela Chambers, Jean Conacher and Jeannette Littlemore, to be published by University of Birmingham Press in the autumn of 2002.

In the national area, the Linguistics Institute of Ireland, Institiùid Teangeolaiochta Eireann (ITE), with funding from the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), has developed OILTE (Organising In-service Training for Language and Technology in Education). The main objective of this project, presented by Angela Rickard, ITE, is to train teachers to become trainers in the use of ICT in the language classroom and to enable them to deliver similar training courses to language teaching colleagues in their area, thus adding to the cascade effect of the training process.

The two other projects presented focus on LSP and ICT. Françoise Blin, Dublin City University and Roisin Donohue, Institut National des Télécommunications, Paris, presented TECHNE, a bi-national project involving teaching and learning French and English within a virtual bilingual classroom using TopClass, a web-based environment which integrates course delivery, e-mail and videoconferencing and a number of class management tools. Thomas Vogel, Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), reported on tailor-made distance language training for SMEs, a project funded under the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which aims to develop a learning platform for English, German and Italian, catering for the needs of small and medium enterprises in regions with restricted access to institutionalised language provision.

The papers on research and practice in ICT and language learning covered areas such as the pedagogical context, learner autonomy, computer-based learning environments, authoring tools, tandem learning and e-mail exchanges, the development of online courseware, software evaluation criteria, and using the World Wide Web in language learning. The full conference programme and abstracts of the presentations are available at the TALLENT website:
http://www.solki.jyu.fi/tallent/yr3conf.html