

MMULTICOM – **M**MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION

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Aims

- **Multicom** is an Erasmus curriculum development project whose aim is the implementation of an innovative type of professionally-oriented BA degree programme in the area of languages.
- It will help the partner institutions to develop and implement new practice oriented curricula for 1st cycle language students;

Aims

- It will produce highly-skilled multilingual communicators, mediators and organizers for
 - SME's working in the international markets with multilingual communication needs;
 - Local or regional government administrators wanting to attract international business and to develop international ties;
 - NGO's looking for multilingual operators with good intercultural skills;
 - International organizations (European and international level).

Aims

- To achieve this, it proposes:
 - To define the competences, learning outcomes, and methods necessary for the programme – distinct from already existing BA programmes based on the study of language and literature, language and business, or translation and interpreting –, by emphasizing the importance of professionally-oriented multilingual communication competences and intercultural competence; and

Outcomes

Main outcomes:

- Curriculum framework for the planned BA programme
- Transferable learning/teaching materials in communication and mediation skills in English + the languages of the consortium (Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Romanian) that can be used by the partner institutions in new programmes.

Background: TNP findings

- The Multicom project is a logical follow-up of the work done under TNP3 and TNP3-D, which underlined the need for innovation in Bachelor's Degree level language courses to train high-level multilingual specialists.
- TNP3 (2003-2006) and TNP3-D (2006-2007) identified
- *New trends* in the European and international labour market:
 - Increase in the need for more specific competence in foreign language than general competence;
 - knowledge of more than one foreign language;
 - Increasing diversification of language-related activities and competences;
 - Increasing importance of language-related IT applications.

Background: TNP findings

- *New general needs:*
 - new language combinations (including both the new official languages and rapidly emerging “world” languages);
 - Specialist skills in such areas as website and software localisation, technical writing, business communication, text editing, multimedia development, etc;
 - Flexible and adaptable language professionals.

Background: TNP findings

- *New needs in the area of graduate employment, considering that:*
 - There is a drop in the interest of language graduates in the traditional “language professions” (language teacher, translator, interpreter);
 - Traditional academic programmes do not address the new emerging needs of the language industries and professions;
 - As a result of the introduction of the Bologna system in HE, many graduates postpone taking MA degree programmes or continue such programmes in different institutions or fields which have no direct connection with the specializations studied in the BA cycle.

Background: TNP findings

– *Requirements of three-year BA programmes:*

- To furnish students with solid basic knowledge, skills and competences required to gain access to a wide range of opportunities on the labour market, involving multilingual skills in various fields (business, online journalism, other language professions);
- To enable graduates to access a variety of more specialized MA programmes.

Consortium

Small consortium

Five participating institutions:

- Universities with strengths in particular areas of European higher education
 - Which offer both traditional language degree programmes and/or professionally-oriented language programmes;
 - Which were partners in the three thematic network projects coordinated by FUB (e.g., TNP3) and/or partners in bilateral Erasmus or Tempus projects

Consortium

Coordinator:

- Universite Rennes 2 – UFR langues –
Centre de langues: Daniel Toudic

Partners:

- Freie Universitaet Berlin
- Universidad Autonoma de Madrid
- Universidade de Algarve
- Universitatea Babes-Bolyai, Cluj

Methodology and description

- Duration: three years
- Planned activities:
 - Phase one
 - Identification of new needs in the field of multilingual communication
 - Consultations with stakeholders (in business, local and regional government, Ngo's, etc.)
 - Questionnaires to conduct interviews
 - Interviews with the aim to identify new job/activity profiles
 - Analysis of consultation findings with the aim to define broad professional profiles and competences

Methodology and description

- The results up to now have confirmed the need for new directions in multilingual communication, oriented towards the needs of Europe, businesses and the communication industries in general. Thus
- Five broad professional profiles have been identified:
 - » Sales and marketing management
 - » Public relations and events management
 - » International corporate or organizational communication
 - » Technical writing, authoring and documentation management
 - » Business organization and management

Methodology and description

– Phase two

- Definition of learning outcomes (i.e. things students should be able to do by the end of the course), of the tasks associated with these, and of competences (basic and specific).
- Examples of types of competences for the five professional profiles:
 - Generic academic, professional, interpersonal, and communication skills;
 - A language, B language and C language skills;
 - Generic and specific IT competence.

Methodology and description

- Examples of learning outcomes in the BA degree:
 - language B
 - level B1 language skills by the end of semester 2;
 - level C1 language skills by the end of semester 6;
 - generic communication skills
 - Can communicate effectively by phone, e-mail, can present information orally, with or without media support, can argue effectively, adapting style and register to a target audience, etc.

Methodology and description

- Phase three:
 - The exploration of existing teaching methods and resources in the partner institutions prior to developing a new framework for possible programmes, since they exist in these institutions but are not integrated in a single programme.

Methodology and description

– Phase four

- Development of a curriculum framework on the basis of phase three findings.

– Phase five

- Development of learning / teaching materials (five resource packages in English + the languages of the consortium) transferable to the partner institutions;
- Testing of materials with student groups and external learners over a two month period.

– Phase six

- Implementation of a resource platform available to all partner institutions

Methodology and description

– Phase seven

- Implementation of the new modules or programmes
- dissemination

Conclusion

The academic tradition and the existing structures in the countries of Europe have hindered the promotion of radical reform in the area of language learning. By developing common curriculum frameworks the Multicom project can help broaden the scope of University language programmes and contribute to revitalise the area of specialist language education and enhance employment prospects for language graduates and in a multilingual and multicultural Europe.