

Thematic Network Project in the area of Languages

Sub-project 2: Intercultural communication

General recommendations

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General recommendations

Appendix to the Final Report for Year Three

Preamble

The Scientific Committee has elaborated a conception of intercultural communication which corresponds to the needs and aspirations of contemporary Europe in a broad and rapidly changing international context. In the light of this conception, it wishes to propose a number of recommendations for action, which are aimed at strengthening the intercultural awareness and competence of students in higher education in the EU.

The following document sets out its general conception, a set of underlying principles, recommendations for action, and proposals for specific initiatives.

A European conception of intercultural communication

The importance of intercultural communication was signalled in the 1995 Report of the SIGMA project. The European Commission's 1996 White Paper on the Learning Society identified the learning of several community languages as necessary for mobility, mutual understanding between citizens, and personal development. It recognised that purely linguistic skills must be complemented by cultural awareness, so as to achieve adaptation to different working and living environments, mutual tolerance, appreciation of Europe's cultural richness and diversity, and personal intellectual growth. This requirement was confirmed in the 1996 Green Paper on obstacles to transnational mobility. The Council of Europe's Draft Framework for Modern Languages also recognises the importance of intercultural competence in language learning.

Culture is a complex and dynamic process, subject to continuous transformation and reconstruction in the interactions of individuals and collectivities. Historically marked by both conflict and cooperation, the cultures of Europe are closely and variously intertwined, each of them in its way influenced by contributions from many other cultures. We therefore believe that awareness of, and aptitude in, the intercultural contexts of communication are not only integral to language learning but are also indispensable to the future development of Europe.

Intercultural communication is important for the building of mutual respect between cultural groupings within Europe, and also in Europeans' relations with members of other cultures. It has a strategic role in the development of a shared European identity and a common sense of citizenship, whether at the most general European level, at national level, or at the level of particular groups in the community.

All communication is fundamentally intercultural, in the sense that each participant in an act of communication brings to it a specific repertoire of identities, positions and expectations formed through complex relationships with their own and other cultures. Here, culture is understood in the widest sense as an acquired or constructed pattern of values, beliefs, skills and knowledge, which shapes and is shaped by its participants. Effective communication is closely

related to the participants' understanding and management of these different cultural identities and positions. Social progress and the building of relations of peace and equality between people in Europe depend on the development of awareness of such cultural variety and difference.

Intercultural communication is therefore closely connected with values and attitudes. Those who are engaged in raising awareness of the intercultural nature of communication must therefore accept the objectives of combating attitudes which are resistant to diversity and difference; developing a more open and confident relationship to language; fostering a broader and more inclusive notion of personal identity; and encouraging respect for different cultures, especially those of minorities and non-dominant groups.

Many institutions of higher education claim to have adopted a European dimension as part of their strategic direction. There is a need to give a content to this commitment, and to foster the role of universities in the process of European integration both as providers and users of education in intercultural communication.

As a provider, higher education produces and disseminates the knowledge and expertise required. As a user, it requires intercultural education and training to promote effective co-operation between institutions, students and academics of different cultural backgrounds.

Beyond the immediate practical requirements of communication, higher education has a key role in promoting knowledge of and respect for the varieties of culture produced across and beyond Europe, and in combating discrimination based on any forms of prejudice.

Principles

1. Scope

Principle

Intercultural communication should be understood as embracing the full range of communicative interactions engaged in by individuals, including the consumption of discourses and artefacts produced in other cultures.

Reason

The ambition of intercultural communication courses should be to develop capacities and tools for a critical understanding of language and culture, and of one's own situation within a range of interactions.

Intercultural communication is not by any means restricted to conversational interchange or administrative procedures. The conversational exchange, in administrative, commercial and business contexts, is perhaps the most visible context of intercultural communication, but it is perhaps not even statistically the most frequent. It is certainly not the only significant context in which intercultural communication takes place. It should therefore not constitute the

model on the basis of which the intercultural communication component of courses is constructed, except where designed specifically for that purpose. The perception of the other and the development of one's own culture also depend on how intercultural communication occurs through written, audio and visual products.

2. Intercultural awareness

Principle

A dimension of awareness of the intercultural dimension of communication in the contemporary world should be introduced into all humanities disciplines, independent of whether they include a specific foreign language component. The form that dimension should take is a decision to be made by the institution in question.

Reason

Intercultural communication is not limited to situations actively involving the use of a language which is foreign to at least one of the parties. Rather, it represents a form of socio-cultural relation between citizens, their relation to each other and to the world. These relations are informed by attitudes generated to a large extent within the educational system. Historically, knowledge in the humanities, particularly in the modern university, has been developed within a nationalist paradigm or a Eurocentric 'Humanist' paradigm which privileges determined cultural factors over others. Although the nationalist paradigm is most obviously true of the study of the native culture and its history, other subjects have also suffered historically from the universalising of dominant cultural visions of the other. The successful development of intercultural communication implies not only increased fluency in a variety of languages, but also a new, postmodern, paradigm for thinking culture.

3. Place in education

Principle

Education in intercultural communication is an essential component of all stages of the education of citizens. It is particularly important for those professionally involved with members of other cultures, and it need not be restricted to courses involving the learning of a foreign language. It may be conducted through distinct modules or through the development of attitudes and skills within the relevant disciplines.

Reason

We understand 'intercultural communication' as the fundamental condition of relation of people to each other and to their world, in the contemporary multicultural environment. As education once helped form national consciousnesses, it is now its task to contribute to new modes of cultural relation within and beyond Europe.

Intercultural communication is central to the positive development of relations between citizens in today's world, and not merely a mechanism for ensuring the more efficient operation of a global economy. Intercultural communication occurs in concrete situations, which are fraught with sensitive political and ethical issues. Education for intercultural communication is not the provision of a set of devices for 'getting round problems' (although it may also include the development of appropriate strategies). The aim of education in this context should be to help people become confident, but reflective, citizens in an intercultural environment, aware of the social and historical complexities of the various situations in which members of diverse cultures interact.

4. Targeting

Principle

Courses relating to intercultural communication should always be developed in relation to the particular needs of the specific target audiences.

Reason

All communication is context-specific and, even in personal interactions, the range of situations of intercultural communication differ greatly. For example, those encountered by a person working for a foreign subsidiary of a multinational corporation differ for those undergone by a refugee, a holidaymaker, a student of a foreign culture, a teacher of immigrant children, or a citizen who watches television. 'One-size-fits-all' theories of linguistic or cultural interaction are singularly inappropriate to the realities of intercultural communication in the modern world. Great care should therefore be used in generalising theories of intercultural communication: respect for cultural plurality should be matched by an openness to a plurality of approaches.

5. User focus

Principle

The overall approach to be adopted should start from the language user's viewpoint. The institutional angle, which is important for planning, has to be tuned to the competence and interests of the individual language user.

Reason

If organizational aspects of intercultural competence acquisition carry much weight (e.g. setting up systems of experts in intercultural communication, or specialized training sessions) the intercultural contacts are likely to receive special status. As a consequence participants are very likely to consider themselves as incompetent, which is exactly the opposite of what is desirable, i.e. boosting ordinary language users' competence.

6. Empowerment

Principle

Courses relating to intercultural communication should aim to empower those who suffer from power asymmetries, to promote respect for cultural difference, especially those of minorities and non-dominant groups, and to combat attitudes which are resistant to diversity and difference.

Reason

The encounters which give rise to the problematic of intercultural communication are frequently the consequence (or causes) of historical or contemporary situations of conflict or exploitation. There are significant ethical and political dimensions of education for intercultural communication which imply a positive (i.e. non-neutral) engagement with the surrounding issues.

In specifying the needs of potential audiences, it is particularly important to distinguish between situations of asymmetrical power relations and situations of (broad) equality. In the content of courses dedicated to intercultural communication, particular attention should therefore be paid to the diachronic and synchronic power relations which structure the relevant interactions.

Needs and possibilities are to a large extent determined by the positions and postures held by the agents within the social relations which structure their communication. Awareness of this dimension implies understanding, by all parties to the interaction, both in terms of their contemporary parameters and their historical causes.

7. From near-native competence to mediation

Principle

The traditional ideal of producing native-like competence in the student should be replaced by an ideal of students as cultural and linguistic mediators.

Reason

Native-like competence, and the levels of cultural 'insidership' which may be associated with it, are inappropriate for the realities of post-nationalist, intercultural communication, in which the emphasis should fall on developing a range of skills and knowledge which allow the student to engage critically and creatively with other speakers, native or not, of the given language, in a variety of cultural contexts as well as with a variety of artefacts and discourses produced within another culture. This line of thought may have implications for language-teaching methodologies, particularly with regard, for example, to the use of the student's native language.

8. Communicative strategies

Principle

Activities in the area of teaching should focus on the promotion of a language user's capacity to construct interaction. More attention should be devoted to the conscious and unconscious, aided and spontaneous use that interlocutors make of such strategies as the use of repairs, and the neutralizing of deviations. Action should be directed to raising awareness for the presence of this ability and to developing the skills by means of exercise work that improves existing competence in a natural way.

Reason

Constructing interaction and establishing cooperation even between interlocutors with widely divergent background, has been identified as one of the most significant characteristics of language users, both intercultural and intracultural. There is sufficient evidence for the position that language users tend to be aware of differences and possible problems and of some ways to overcome them. At the same time indications exist that not all language users have the same degree of natural ability to do so.

9. Mutual learning

Principle

Cultural differences should not be regarded as obstacles to communication, but as opportunities for mutual learning. Activities with language learners need to be centered round the emergence and construction of bridges within the interaction context, rather than on the cross-cultural existence of differences.

Reason

Differences and conflict do exist, but successful interaction between individuals is, by far, the most "natural" and common state-of-affairs. The development of teaching and learning materials should be oriented to raising awareness and to the promotion of skills. Provisions should be made in language curricula to integrate these aspects of communicative competence as normal and essential components of (foreign) language mastery.

Regarding cultural differences as obstacles to be eliminated in order to ensure efficient communication effectively stigmatises such differences and may contribute to the reinforcement of cultural stereotyping and its consequences.

Pre-scientific perception of language and culture tends to distinguish sharply between culture and language. There is, however, overwhelming evidence that so-called cultural conventions are part and parcel of language use. Awareness of variation and of the conventions that may occur in particular circles belong as much to language mastery as the command of a language's morphology or lexis.

Format of recommendations

The recommendations contain four elements, specifying:

Students: one or more groups of students concerned, using the categories given below;

Agents: the group or body which is invited to consider or carry out the recommendation;

Action: the course of action which is recommended.

Reasons: the main considerations which give rise to the recommendation;

Categories of students concerned

1. 'Specialist': 'traditional' undergraduates specialising in modern languages only
2. 'Joint': 'new' undergraduates combining languages with another discipline
3. 'Trainee teachers': students in teacher education, both initial and in-service
4. 'Postgraduates': specialising in modern languages, in instructional courses and research programmes.
5. 'Language professions': trainee translators and interpreters
6. 'Other disciplines': students specialising in another discipline, and studying a language as a minor component, including vocational and professional programmes.

These categories may be further refined, using the following distinctions:

- B2. First degrees, all students
 - B3a. First degrees, specialists in language and culture, native
 - B3b. First degrees, specialists in language and culture, foreign
 - B4. First degrees, other disciplines - humanities
 - B5. First degrees, other disciplines – business, management
 - B6. First degrees, other disciplines - sciences
 - B7. First degrees – SOCRATES exchange students
 - B8a. Teacher training – initial, primary
 - B8b. Teacher training – initial, secondary
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B8c. Teacher training – in-service, primary

B8d. Teacher training – initial, secondary

B9. Training – social professions

B10. Language, culture workers

B11. Postgraduates

Recommendations

1. Second and Third Languages in secondary and higher education.

Students

All students in secondary and higher education.

Agents

Language policy makers at secondary and higher education.

Action 1

Where one second language (in practice usually English) is an obligatory and thoroughly studied subject in secondary education, the next step must be to promote substantial studies for as many individuals as possible (preferably all school-children) in another European or non European language. These second foreign language studies should be followed up in higher education, so as to allow for as many individuals as possible to increase their knowledge and command of the second foreign language they started learning in secondary education, and/or to allow for higher education students to take up another foreign language study. The cultural aspects of second foreign language studies, independently of whether these take place in secondary or higher education, should always be underscored.

Action 2

In English-speaking countries, stronger efforts should be made to promote the study of foreign languages. The EU Commission target of two foreign languages should be adopted in secondary education, and significant competence in at least one foreign language should be made a prerequisite for entry into higher education. Foreign language studies should be followed up in higher education. This should allow as many individuals as possible to increase their knowledge and command of the foreign language they started learning in secondary education, and/or to allow for higher education students to take up another foreign language study.

Reasons

The importance of English in all kinds of international settings is undeniable. However, there is a risk of impoverishment involved in allowing English to

become the overwhelmingly dominant communicative tool for all sorts of intercultural communication. If, say, a German and a Portuguese only manage to communicate in a third language, which is English, the access that each party will have to the other's cultural sphere will be considerably reduced. An analogous undesirable effect occurs whenever a native or non-native speaker of English wishes to have access to information about other non English-speaking countries e.g. through reading magazines or seeing television, and the only language accessible for her/him is English. Learning other foreign language is thus a means of preserving cultural diversity (a concern that may be thought of in terms similar to the global concern for preserving genetic diversity). Moreover, increasing European citizens' competence in other European languages is a more effective means of tying Europe together than the mere promotion of English as a lingua franca.

Furthermore, experience from studies on bi- and multilinguals tells us that bi-/multilingualism that implies a strict labour division (each language being reserved for specific practices and domains, with little overlap) adds little to an individual's cultural competence. Instead, being able to express similar content belonging to identical or near-identical discourse genres in two different languages does have a positive impact on cultural competence. Therefore, it is important that the competence acquired in the foreign (second foreign) language should neither be too shallow nor too restricted.

2. Reflective study of cultures

Students

HE undergraduate students of foreign modern languages, including those specialising in foreign languages and those combining languages, even as a minor component in their studies, with another discipline.
Language students in secondary education and adult education.

Agents

Teachers and curriculum planners at languages departments, secondary education institutions and in associations/academies/organizations that provide language training.

Action

In all curricula which aim at a broad competence in a foreign language, there should be a component (separate module or more integrated) of contrastive culture studies involving analytical reflection both on the student's home culture and the target culture associated with the language studied.

Reasons

The purpose of the cultural component is to increase each student's awareness of her/his home culture, which is understood to be tied to her/his mother tongue (not always identical to the nation's official language), and that of the target culture. Students which have gone through this kind of reflection are likely, not

only to be more motivated in their language studies, but also to become 'better' - in the sense of more tolerant and more open-minded citizens.

In addition to training in 'intercultural communication skills', instruction in the foreign language needs to include sufficient study of the cultural realities of societies which use that language to enable the student to function in a reflexive and critical manner.

Intercultural communication is not merely a transactional skill between equals, measured by criteria of efficiency, but is also a complex ethical and cultural relationship. A critical understanding of the cultural reality of the other and the otherness of cultural realities is essential to a just communication in educational terms.

3. Contrastive aspects of written discourse and written genres in foreign languages curricula.

Students

Undergraduate students of foreign modern languages, including those specialising in foreign languages and those combining languages to a not insignificant extent with another discipline. Students in teacher education. Postgraduate students specialising in modern languages.

Agents

Teachers and curriculum planners at languages departments.

Action

At advanced levels of language curricula in HE, there should always be a component (separate module or more integrated) addressing contrastive issues of written discourse. Such a component should be based on the reading and analysis of similar texts produced in the home and in the target language, and special emphasis should be laid on genre conventions in the respective languages/cultures.

Reasons

Firstly, it is desirable to increase the understanding of the various preferences that different cultures have in constructing comparable texts, thereby enhancing the students' cultural awareness. Secondly, it is important to increase the students' ability to express themselves adequately in writing in both languages, which in its turn would have the spin-off effect of improving the students' mediation skills. An awareness of the importance of applying this kind of contrastive perspective is still far from having made its breakthrough all over Europe.

4. Providing language courses for students of other disciplines.

Students

Students in other disciplines than foreign languages or studying languages only as a minor component in their programme.

Agents

Language policy makers, higher administration of HE institutions

Action

Efforts should be made to increase substantially the number of composite programmes in which the study of at least one foreign language occupies a significant part.

Reasons

The enhancement of intercultural awareness which is necessary for the implementation of the European Union's objective of building a more integrated Europe is best promoted, on the level of higher education, by allowing language studies to enter traditional programmes in e.g. law, social sciences, technology, media/communication, medicine or business administration. Another related and more concrete objective that could be attained by these measures is to increase the number of people prepared to live and work in other, especially (though not exclusively) European countries.

5. Organizing language/culture courses for immigrants and students from abroad

Students

Those who have come to a foreign country to work for a longer period, or to carry out extensive studies, and who attend courses in the host country's language.

Agents

Language policy makers involved in adult education and higher education in the host country. Administrators involved in guest/immigrant worker issues.

Action

Language training for guest workers, immigrant workers and guest students should be delivered, as much as possible, using the same methodologies as for the host country's own students of foreign languages. In particular, this means that the training should have an orientation from the student's own mother tongue towards the target language (i.e., that of the host country) and that the participation of teaching staff with a competence in the guest/immigrant workers' or students' native language is required.

Reasons

Language provision for guest/immigrant workers as well as for foreign students has largely been carried out by assembling students from all sorts of linguistic/cultural background in the same group. Although there are obvious economic reasons for doing this, and in spite of the fact that there may also be some positive side-effects of organising the language training in such a way, the disadvantages are clear. First, the training will be poorly adapted to the needs of each individual student. Second, the individual student's background will not be taken into account, which is automatically felt as a discriminatory and

diminishing attitude. Third, this is likely to give rise to reactions in protection of the student's identity as a 'foreigner' - an attitude that may seriously impair her/his identification with the host country and long-term acceptance and acquisition of its culture.

6. Institutional preparation

Students

Specialists in modern languages, students combining languages with another discipline.

Agents

Language departments, language associations, university presidents (rectors), ministries of higher education.

Action

All students undertaking periods of residence abroad as an integral part of a university programme of study should receive appropriate preparation for the academic and cultural experience to which they are committed. This preparation should include a component which addresses students' attitudes towards the relationship between their view of self (their personal identities) and their national culture of origin. It should also include specific information on the teaching and learning methods of the host country, the examination system and the expectations of staff. Differences and similarities with the home institution should be pointed out.

Reasons

In order to study in another European country, it is necessary for the student to have enough institutional knowledge about the system to be successful. There are many different cultural approaches to learning. The norms, values and expectations of teachers and learners can vary considerably. How to learn, how to teach, what is considered to be good work and how to participate in learning contexts can diverge. For example, there is more emphasis on independent work and out of class communication between students in some systems whereas in others there is more emphasis on regular class attendance dependence on teachers and on acquisition of facts. There is more emphasis on student choice and autonomy in some countries than in others. Approaches to marking papers, to examination success and failure differ also. Some preparation for this cultural diversity is necessary to help students who are studying in a different country. This should enhance completion rates and make exchanges a more positive experience for most students.

There is also much evidence to suggest that difficulties encountered during periods of residence of abroad are not caused primarily by the lack of essential information so much as by underlying features of personality and outlook. Pedagogies which address this issue should be seen not as alternatives to the provision of key information and situational or conversational strategies but as complementary to them and as part of an integrated programme of study.

7. Cultural study

Students

Specialist students of foreign languages, students combining languages with another discipline, trainee teachers of languages (B3b, B8b)

Agents

University teachers, teacher trainers, language departments, language associations, university presidents, ministries of higher education

Action

A significant part of the curriculum for both first degree students and for teacher trainees should be dedicated to the study of the cultural realities and literatures of places where the language is spoken and to the linguistics of the language in question. Students need to have a thorough knowledge of the institutions of the target country(ies) as well as a vision of the history of the target country(ies) closely related to present concerns. It is also necessary for them to be aware of cultural variety and difference between their home country and the host country as well as cultural variety and difference within each country.

Reason

Whereas, in the past, there has often been an over-emphasis on philological or literary knowledge to the detriment of communicative skills and the understanding of contemporary realities, the contemporary requirement for practical relevance is tending to swing the pendulum the other way.

From our critical perspective on intercultural communication, it is important that a significant part of the curriculum be dedicated to the cultural products of the societies which speak the language in question. Here we refer to cultural studies in the broadest sense as an acquired or constructed pattern of values, beliefs, skills and knowledge. There are many ways to promote and enhance intercultural communication, which itself embraces a wide range of interactions and activities. It is important that courses respond to the ethical dimension of intercultural communication and to the specific situation, real or potential, of the student. It is not necessary that they should conform to a pre-determined model. The building of relations of peace, equality and social progress between people in Europe depends on the development of awareness and acceptance of cultural variety and difference.

In responding to the historical monopolisation of the culture of the language by the main imperial nations, care should be taken not to broaden the range so much as to produce a merely superficial, touristic, contact with post-colonial cultures.

8. Residence abroad

Students

Specialists, B3b

Agents

Language departments, language associations

Action

As an integral part of their degree, all specialist students should be required and enabled to spend a period of at least one semester working or studying in a country where the target language is spoken.

Reasons: It is a legitimate expectation that students specialising in languages should graduate with advanced skills and knowledge relevant to the language, culture and society of the countries where their chosen language is spoken. While it is possible to achieve advanced linguistic skills and knowledge of the culture and society without visiting a country where the language is spoken, both aspects are significantly improved by extended visits. In the case of intercultural skills and knowledge, it is not possible to achieve an advanced level of competence without first-hand experience of interacting with the social and cultural environment.

9. Language diversity awareness

Students

B3a, B3b, (Joint language degrees with other disciplines), B7, B8a, B8b, B8c, B8d; B10

Agents

Language Departments

Action

All 1st year programmes should include an element of education for language awareness, particularly in relation to the diversity of language use in Europe. This should especially address the languages which are less widely taught, should encourage an understanding of the richness of the linguistic heritage, and should be backed up by the provision of facilities to allow for programmes of autonomous learning for the subsequent study of the minority languages of the EU.

Reasons

Recognising the dominance of a small minority of languages (approx. 5) in the curricula of all the countries of the EU, which is likely to persist in view of prevailing social and economic conditions, it is essential in the context of intercultural communication that the EU address the situation of the very substantial proportion of its citizens for whom another (and frequently non-official) language is their mother tongue. There are at least 40 native languages in use in the EU. If parity of esteem is a prerequisite for successful intercultural communication, citizens of the EU, and particularly teachers and those in language-related occupations, should have some knowledge and understanding of the diversity of languages used, and of the challenges it poses for the native speakers of less widely used languages.

10. Access to less widely taught cultures (including non-European languages and cultures)

Students

B3a, B3b, B7, B8a, B8b, B8c, B8d, B10

Agents

Language Departments; Language Development Research Units; Adult and Continuing Education Agencies

Action

In recognizing the cultural capital of linguistic communities in minority positions across Europe, the EU should seek to facilitate access to such cultures through the promotion of autonomous learning, and investment in the development of appropriate new technologies and mobility programmes. Such autonomous learning modules should be offered as elements within 'traditional' (i.e. dominant language-related) European language degree programmes. Appropriate and attractive methods and programmes need to be developed.

Reasons

The teaching of the 'minority' languages of the EU through traditional curricula is extremely limited, and directly reflects their degree of perceived relationship to the dominant languages. It is therefore all the more important to seek other means of retaining access to the rich diversity of minority EU cultures, some of which are threatened with extinction. Attractive autonomous learning programmes can help to provide access to the language, and consequently the culture of minority language groups. Access can also be enhanced by the more extensive use of language advisors. Such access, if it cannot guarantee parity of esteem, can at least help to maintain a minimal degree of balance in the power relationships pertaining in an intercultural context, and validate the cultural heritage of native speakers of minority languages.

11. Research into student attitudes

Subjects

Students undertaking residence abroad

Agents

Researchers and teachers in the field of developing intercultural competence

Action

Further research is required into students' attitudes, outlooks and personalities before undertaking residence abroad, and into changes which take place during and after a period of residence abroad.

Reasons

Not enough is known about home students' attitudes towards themselves and their home cultures, or towards other cultures with which they may interact during periods of residence abroad. Further research is required on which to base the development of new and more effective approaches to residence abroad within the curriculum.

12. Teacher training

Students

Students of foreign languages, trainee language teachers (B3b, MK's 2, B4-7, where appropriate).

Agents

Native-speaking language teachers, language-teacher trainers, authorities responsible for employing/placing language teachers.

Action

The training of language teachers and language assistants should include specific provision for training in intercultural communication, not only in their native language but also in foreign languages. Acquired capacity for intercultural communication in the context of the place in which they are employed should be taken into account in the reemployment or promotion of language teachers.

Reason

Native-speaking language teachers, particularly of English, are employed on the basis of their command of, and didactic skills in, their own language. However, not only their capacity to teach the language to foreigners, but their active participation in the life of the institution and society where they are employed will be significantly enhanced by their understanding of, and skills in, the intercultural environment. Obviously such capacities should not be confused with or reduced to linguistic proficiency.

13. Returning emigrants

Students

Emigrant workers and particularly their offspring, returning to country of origin to complete their education or begin work (B2)

Agents

University authorities and teachers, members of the caring professions

Action

Provision for intercultural communication training should be made for emigrant workers and particularly their offspring returning to their country of origin to complete their education or begin work, including, where necessary, appropriate remedial teaching in the 'native' language.

Reason

Considerable work has been done on the integration of emigrants in their 'new' country, but the more recent phenomenon of return — produced by the development of employment patterns or simple demographics — has received much less attention. However, young people in particular, perhaps born in the country of employment, educated in its school system and often exposed to the 'native' language largely through oral language in the home, may encounter specific problems of cultural and linguistic integration. On returning, they may find themselves in unfamiliar social environments and education systems in their parents' country of origin, where the emigrant worker herself is often the object of complex and not always favourable cultural constructions.

14. Intercultural research

Agents:

European policy makers, national policy makers, fund providing institutions

Action

Future promotion of intercultural research should involve coverage of the conversational, anthropological and sociolinguistic bases of language interaction. Real life interaction should serve as the main basis of observations.

Reason

Reliable naturalistic data of intercultural encounters are still very scarce. As a consequence much existing training is based on impressions and intuitions which do hardly reflect reality. Research which is directed to thorough analysis of the ways interlocutors negotiate meaning, has not been done a sufficiently large scale to provide a reliable basis for further "applied" work. Encouragement needs to be given to the development of textbooks and academic journals in which research issues can be debated and findings can be disseminated.

Proposals for specific initiatives

1. Working group on enhancement of European citizenship

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Granted that education, as it is practised by the university and approved by responsible political leaders also contributes to the entrenchment of those values vital to the *European communal citizenship* of the coming century, which will be based on the development of a communitarian ethics, it nevertheless remains true that it will be up to the students to train themselves to become mediators or cultural intermediary in order to build a *cultural community* rooted in sharing. Indeed, who better than the students represent the desire for a walking European community, that of ERASMUS and SOCRATES, in opposition to an individualistic, divided and sometimes sectarian view of society?

This proposed course of action is by no means out of a concern for metaphysical cum political problems to be looked upon such as "rediscovering the remains of the "ancient Republics" of Greece and Rome or the "emergence of a new concept of communal life" imposed upon us as the result of a single mode of thought but is merely to attempt to bring to public awareness, through an *intercultural approach* focusing on non-European contributions, the existence of links between **culture, language** and **European citizenship**. Following the Confucian precept that teaching one to fish is more profitable than handing out fish, thus students could be provided with the elements necessary to the better construction of the various aspects of the *cultural identity* shared by European citizens according to the official approach forwarded by Brussels of "**unity within diversity**".

PURPOSE

The aim of this project is to provide the European commission with the results of an analysis along with some suggestions on the constitution of the future "*Common European identity*" by centring it on a comparative approach of the influence of foreign cultures, especially in those areas of strong assimilation such as food, arts, literature, spiritual attitudes or spare time activities as well as management, for instance the erstwhile Japanese model of industrial management, not to mention of the ever expanding *Feng shui* fashion. The recommendations will deal with suggestions of comprehensive proposals for the outline and contents of modules which may be included in undergraduate curriculum and these, according to the present state of development, could include:

- An introduction to the typology of the main identity aspects in Europe;
- Developing, through descriptive and diachronic approaches, the awareness of the contribution of non-European values *and* cultures in the building up of the *cultural identity* of the future citizen of the European Union community;
- The presentation of the present-day situations through case-studies;
- The prospect for a "*common cultural identity*" within the forthcoming so-called Knowledge society".

These courses will necessarily be linked to the widening of the territory of the E.U., in connection with the evolution of the concept of the emerging "European citizenship". Thus, students could be offered the possibility of gaining awareness, under the positive aegis of SOCRATES, of the different components of the *multi-faceted European identity* which is expected for the 21st century while, again, striving to "respect and protect the diversity of cultures" (§13, sect° 151/4 of the treaty on the European Union as modified by the Amsterdam treaty) beyond the notion of "**common cultural inheritance**" likely to change in the coming years. This process is in accordance with the avenues of action of the document entitled "Towards a Europe of knowledge" which stresses the importance of developing "social skills...which are conducive to innovation" with a special reference "to a range of transversal competencies, including the understanding of a diversity of cultures, competence in several languages..." (page 3). Therefore, it is proposed that a full course on the notion of sharing *common values* and *cultural diversities* through **intercultural approaches** is to be

integrated in an educational program, firstly at university level since, while Europe is gaining momentum, the perception of "Unity through diversity" is still quite low in young European people today.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Setting up a working group, writing out a detailed project worked out within the framework of an interuniversity cooperation committee* which should be, in due course, submitted to the approval of the European commission and, eventually, carrying out the proposals whilst the necessary implementing tools are prepared. In that respect and as a way to facilitate the necessary dissemination of knowledge and practical skills, new possibilities concerning the use of INTERNET, visio-courses, especially WEB-based tutorials and WEB page, are to be incorporated in the program as part of computer aided teaching.

As a first step, the team should study "the impact of non-European values" starting from "cultural diversities" and provide an overview of currents ideas and thoughts on "the sense of belonging to a common social and cultural area" in order to clear the strong points, define the educational orientation and contents of the program.

The outcome of this first step should stimulate criticism and positive reactions since the project is by no means, meant to be preceptive but, rather, initiate a process of discussion and action to contribute to the building up of the landscape of future university education in the European Union.

2. Développement de *cursus universitaires* sur les langues et cultures des minorités non-européennes présentes sur le territoire de l'Union européenne.

CONTEXTE

La présence et l'importance des minorités non-européennes sur le sol de l'Union européenne est maintenant une dimension marquante de la société européenne et cela contribue à l'enrichissement culturel tel qu'il est encouragé par la devise de la Commission européenne de Bruxelles "Unité dans la diversité" et dans le document "Vers une société du savoir".

Jean Austry affirmait en 1960 que "Les sociétés comme les hommes ne peuvent s'enrichir que par leurs mutuelles différences". Ainsi, par delà la nécessité ou la volonté d'intégration, le respect de des langues et cultures dites "minoritaires", mais aussi l'enrichissement qu'elles peuvent être pour la perception du monde où l'universalisme devrait cohabiter avec les particularismes enrichissants, il est de la responsabilité des universités, en particulier celles qui ont des compétences dans les domaines des langues et des cultures non-européennes, de contribuer à la diffusion, sinon à prévenir la disparition, des langues et des cultures de ces minorités non-européennes afin de faciliter l'apparition d'une communauté culturelle partagée, seul véritable rempart contre les tentations de repli communautaire.

* The core of which is, for the time being, Università degli Studi di Roma III and INALCO

OBJECTIF

Dans le cadre de la politique "d'enseignement tout au long de la vie" prônée par la Commission européenne, l'objectif est de proposer à la *Commission européenne* et à travers elle, aux universités concernées, la mise en place de l'enseignement des *langues des minorités non-européennes* sur la base d'une *didactique interculturelle*.

Ces formations devraient pouvoir être organisées par les SERVICES DE FORMATION CONTINUE et déboucher sur des diplômes propres. Les deux principales catégories de public visé seraient les membres de ses minorités issus de la 2ème génération et les personnes de la "majorité" intéressées, pour des motifs personnels ou des raisons professionnelles, par l'acquisition de connaissances culturelles et un savoir -faire linguistique sur des aires culturelles spécifiques. Cette formation devrait être considérée, dans un souci de partage des savoirs, comme un *service* proposé par les universités au profit des collectivités locales, en particulier l'ouverture de la "formation continue" à un public nouveau et par la mise à disposition d'infrastructures matérielles et pédagogiques. Par ailleurs, les participants pourraient ainsi contribuer à la reconnaissance et à la valorisation de la langue et de la culture qu'ils apprennent.

ACTION

Constituer un groupe de travail interuniversitaire européen pour étudier la faisabilité et les modalités de mise en place, l'approche pédagogique, la dimension interculturelle et les contenus des formations, en prévoyant, dès le départ, un volet EAO (enseignement assisté par ordinateur) incluant des tutorats sous INTERNET.

Préparer une expérimentation sur 3 aires culturelles comme par exemple:

- le Moyen-Orient avec le turc,
- l'Afrique avec le mandingue,
- l'Asie avec le Vietnamien.

Cette phase devrait concerner au moins un établissement de l'enseignement supérieur de chaque pays de l'Union européenne.