NATIONAL REPORT ON
NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS – THE EUROPEAN LEARNING SPACE

LATVIA

1.General introduction

Multilingual and multicultural communication within the world community is important for economic, political and cultural interactions. In this global environment language learning is becoming increasingly important. At the same time, recent advances in instructional technology promote building intelligent tutoring systems in advanced technology laboratories to teach these language skills a reality.

Because Latvia is a small country with population of 2.4 million, foreign languages are of utmost importance in politics, economics and the sciences. Moreover, since achieving independence in 1991, Latvia has rapidly increased international contacts in all spheres of public life, trade and industry. Independence has changed Latvia's attitudes towards learning and teaching of foreign languages. Foreign languages are increasingly perceived useful for a variety of purposes, such as intercultural understanding, academic studies and professional as well as personal travel. This new view is basis of key trends in foreign language education. An early start to foreign language instruction, increased contact hours for language studies, communicatively oriented learning and an intercultural approach are emphasized.

The information technology today in Latvia has become an indispensable part of the life of the society, especially in communication branches and education, e.g. teacher training, in-service training and their everyday performance. The data of the SITES (Second Information Technology in Education Study, organized by IEA- International Association of Educational Achievements) study show that 88 % of Latvia’s students learn at schools where the school principals want the teachers to use the modern information technology in the teaching-learning process. And it is already a reality because the survey of the 5^{th} –12^{th} graders of Latvia carried out in 2001 shows that students have used computers to master different subjects (http://www.liis.lv). The largest number of students - 37.5 % have used information technology to master English, 29.9 % - to master other foreign languages, 26.3 % - in history, 24.8 % - in

geography, 23.7 % - in mathematics, 22.9 % in the Latvian language, etc. (on the whole the students have mentioned 11 subjects).

The state independence introduced the opportunity and the need to redevelop entirely all school curricula and so the leading methodologists in foreign language teaching in Latvia are trying to find the best ways possible to assure high quality of language awareness. One of the optimal ways to intensify and increase the relevance of foreign language learning and teaching is to integrate the use of New Information Technologies and the Internet in the teaching and learning process. It must be stressed that ICT may only be seen as one component of powerful learning environments which has to be integrated into broader contexts of learning (Berghammer S., 2001,14); the latest technical possibilities must be combined with traditional teaching aids, books, maps, dictionaries etc. Language learning has often been described as one of the most impressive mental operations of the human mind in view of the complexity of grammatical structures, the size of mental lexicon, and multiple functionality learners of any language are confronted with (e.g. Schwarz M., 1992). As a result a lot of controversial ideas have arisen on how the language can best be learned.

At present only 44% of the population in the EU member states can speak more than two languages. In Latvia the share of bilingual and multilingual population approaches 80% - at least in this respect we have overtaken Europe. However, in Latvia, as well as in other countries still much has to be done to enhance language acquisition. It is not enough to popularise and implement new, scientifically grounded language teaching methods. What matters most is the ability to convince people that each of us – irrespective of the age, talent, also material possibilities - can learn a language if there is a wish to do so.

Similarly to other countries in higher education two big and important changes have taken place –

- use of new technologies in learning process as well as
- increase of student and staff mobility. Moreover, the main trend has been students' and staff mobility to EU, but in recent years more and more students as well as staff are coming to Latvia.

The aim of the TNP2 project is to examine place of these changes in study process of Latvia higher schools and how it has been altered. At present there are following institutions of higher education in Latvia

	Enrolment	*full-time studies*	*part-time studies*	*studies financed from state budget*	*studies for a fee*
Total higher education institutions	**110500**	**66577**	**43923**	**32988**	**77512**
University of Latvia	30242	17681	12561	6926	23316
Riga Humanities Institute (University of Latvia)	1485	1088	397	-	1485
Riga Technical University	15446	11730	3716	9215	6231
Daugavpils University	4697	2684	2013	1840	2857
Liepāja Pedagogical Higher School	4396	1875	2521	1293	3103
Latvian Academy of Sports Education	1480	1023	457	837	643
Riga Higher School of Pedagogics and School Management	5476	1054	4422	913	4563
Rēzekne Higher School	3661	1799	1862	1173	2488
Latvian Maritime Academy	662	460	202	389	273
The Ventspils College	602	602	-	504	98
Vidzeme College of Higher Education	575	449	126	267	308
Banking College of Higher Education	2129	1426	703	-	2129
Stockholm School of Economics in Riga	344	344	-	344	-
Riga Graduate School of Law	75	75	-	75	-
Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music	429	429	-	415	14
Art Academy of Latvia	592	595	-	442	150
Latvia Academy of Culture	712	712	-	284	428
Latvia University of Agriculture	8920	4134	4786	3222	5698
Medical Academy of Latvia	2715	2715	-	1410	1305
Police Academy of Latvia	3838	1827	2011	2378	1460
National Academy of Defence of Latvia	377	241	136	377	-
Riga Institute of Air Navigation	418	53	365	-	418
Baltic Russian Institute	5755	1869	3886	-	5755
Business Institute RIMPAK Livonia	117	117	-	-	117
International Institute of Applied Psychology	718	458	260	-	718
Institute of Social Technology	1398	561	837	-	1398

Riga International College of Economics and Business Administration	2742	2742	-	-	2742
Latvian Christian Academy	539	126	413	10	529
School of Business Administration "Turība"	3170	2934	236	-	3170
Higher School of Social Work and Social Pedagogics "Attīstība"	627	627	-	80	547
Higher Education Institution for Economics and Culture	775	775	-	-	775
Higher School of Information Systems Management	894	894	-	-	894
Higher School of Psychology	264	72	192	-	264
Transport and Telecommunications Institute	1723	1276	447	-	1723
Engineering and information Technology Academy	30	22	8	-	30
Law college	1548	444	1104	-	1548
Albert's College	58	58	-	-	58

Education in Latvia Higher Education in Latvia Academic Information Centre- Latvian ENIC/ NARIC & 2002

HE establishments aim to train specialists taking into consideration needs of State and labour market.

Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (Satversme) states the principles of autonomy, academic freedom and integration of research and higher education "Law of Establishments of Higher Education" enforces the autonomy of institutions of higher education

Understanding the importance of foreign languages in the contemporary world, foreign language courses are inevitably part of the curriculum of Bachelor degree studies. (English, German or French, Russian, Spanish; Nordic languages, Oriental languages are taught to the students of Faculty of Modern Languages, University of Latvia)

Lack of trained specialists in foreign language teaching is an acute problem in Latvia. Lack of teachers trained to use active learning methods is even a more topical issue. Another current problem facing Latvian establishments of HE is change of teaching staff. The young people – university graduates – are not eager to take up teaching as a profession due to the low salaries in state financed HE establishments.

Philological and pedagogical faculties of Universities as well as other programs concerned with studies of modern languages, e.g., Vidzeme University College, Ventspils College, Rēzekne Higher Education Institution, Liepāja Pedagogical Higher School, University of Latvia etc. train specialists in the most widely used foreign languages - English, German, French, Russian, as well as Chinese, Japanese, Finnish.

Step by step ICT has been being introduced in Latvian higher educational institutions since 1987.

2.The role of new learning environments in language teaching and learning

2.1. The integration of New Learning Environments in language teaching and learning

To collect the information from HE establishments in Latvia 34 forms of questionnaire have been sent to all state establishments of higher education as well as the private ones. Interviews with language teachers from different universities and the questionnaires filled out by heads of Language Centers of higher educational establishments have shown that the process of ICT integration in language teaching/learning in Latvia started approximately in 1995. Until 2001 it has mainly been conducted by separate groups of teachers and researchers and it has received financial support of Ministry of Education and Science as well as Latvian Council of Science. Unfortunately, the majority of HE institutions have not stated their policy concerning implementation of ICT in study process.

As the allocated resources to institutions of HE aren't sufficient use of ICT in studies is implementation of rather complicated. All students are provided with introductory course in ICT. Nevertheless, there are quite a few establishments of higher education, e.g., Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Latvia, that offer an introductory course of informatics (64 academic hours) and different professionally oriented courses, e.g., "Modern Information Technologies in the Foreign Language Studies" and "Internet – a Tool of Learning Foreign Languages."(Course content and layout is posted on the www.lu.lv, LUIS).

In the recent years several universities (Ventspils College, Daugavpils Pedagogical University, Vidzeme University College, Stockholm School of Economics) have opened specialised computer laboratories for language teaching/learning. One of the leaders in introducing ICT into language teaching/learning is University of Latvia (Faculty of Education

and Psychology). At Faculty of Education and Psychology students are provided with 240 modern computers and access to the Internet.

Sets of recommendations on using ICT in the process of language acquisition have been worked out. These recommendations include websites that can be used in foreign language (English, French, German, Spanish) learning/teaching as well as bibliography on IT in FL learning and information on the most relevant computer and multi-media programs that can be implemented in upper secondary schools in Latvia and methodological materials on IT in FL classroom These recommendations include websites that can be used in foreign language learning/teaching. (http://www.liis.lv)**).** It must be stressed that these materials for teachers and teachers-to-be have been designed during 3 years in cooperative team - work (students, master students, University teachers took part in this project) at the Faculty of Education and Psychology.

At University of Latvia, Faculty of Education and Psychology programs used in the process of foreign language learning include – those offered by EWP CALL Library (grammar, functions, Cambridge Proficiency Practice, etc.), The Interactive Picture dictionary: An Interactive multimedia computer program for adult language and literacy, M-Power your Business English: CD – ROM that Maximises your Business English, English for Business: Study Guide.)

In 1991 the Eurofaculty was established at University of Latvia. All the faculty courses are delivered in English, German, French or Russian. Local and visiting professors use new technologies in teaching different subjects.

Riga Technical University (Latvia) meets the challenges offered by the new social, economic and cultural situation trying to adapt innovative and productive educational practices in the development and delivery of courses. This task is closely connected with implementing more flexible education in terms of time and location, types of interactions, forms of communication within the course.

Academics from three University departments proposed the idea for a new course development project - interactive multimedia CD-ROM “Technical Communication”. A team of 72 students together with 2 university lecturers and IT experts tested the idea. The new multimedia CD-ROM had to be completed in 4 months. Authentic tasks to be accomplished and

problems to be solved that had a personal, academic and social relevance replaced direct instruction.

Thus the basic objectives of the project were as follows:

- To create a multimedia CD-ROM which was an educational innovation within the university and a part of the curriculum of the future virtual university of Latvia
- To improve English language proficiency
- To master collaborative and teamwork management via IT networking where both the way of interacting and the end product were equally relevant
- To develop self-directed learning skills.

The course was worked out using a Lotos Notes based virtual platform which has been specially designed at Riga Technical University Distance Education Study Centre to support project management and the course development process. It has proved to be a very flexible and efficient tool in developing different projects in a virtual environment and can ensure a successful collaborative teamwork of geographically dispersed developers (in our case in Latvia and Canada) acting asynchronously by distance in the most convenient way.

The students contributed the content of the course pages in terms of the text in English and Latvian as well as pictures, audio and video in the Internet-based Course Development Forum. Another possibility to interact was a Virtual Asynchronous Discussion Forum that proved to be an effective and indispensable communication tool. The discussion was going on about the best linguistic and semantic expression, translation of specific terms, organizational issues, decision-making, etc.

Another project – an English Language Support Forum for Master degree students – involves a combination of face-to-face and distance delivery. It is also based on Lotos Notes technology and includes such areas as “Getting Started”, “Notice Board”, “Learning Materials, ”FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)”, “Tests”, “Seminar”, “Projects”, “Coffee Room”, etc. Besides comprising learning materials and organizing interaction and collaboration in the virtual environment it serves as an essential tool in testing the communicative skills of students basically in reading comprehension and writing with special emphasis on creative thinking.

The research done at Riga Technical University Distance Education Study Centre has developed suggestions as to the new role of the faculty and students in a long term creative

collaboration in virtual settings, as well as provided the basis for successful development of projects in different languages online.

The Institute of Languages, Riga Technical University has various computer programs such as “Tense Buster”, “Read It. Engineering”, “English for Technical Purposes”, “BBC New English Course”, “Learn to Speak English”, “Business Talk”, “Telephone Talk 1 and 2”, “TOEFL Mastery” etc. These programs help to solve some of the professional tasks of future specialists. Such professional activities in the use of English for Specific Purposes are: reading publications, writing papers, making presentations, writing letters, taking part in meetings and conferences, showing colleagues round a plant/company, socialising, business traveling. The program “Learn to Speak English” includes the simulation of the situations which are very topical for the future specialist and refer also to business traveling – Immigration and Customs, changing money, checking into a hotel, using the telephone, making an appointment, an invitation to dinner, a business lunch etc. Besides, the program helps to some extent solve the cross-cultural issues by introducing movies on “Washington D.C”, “New York”, Chicago”, “San Francisco” etc. Simulation and visualization are important to develop creative thinking. Students master various key words and expressions and do tasks with the text; they are actively involved. Parallel to a computer session, home assignment envisages doing different tasks on compiling dialogs on the above themes, role plays, cross-culturally oriented presentations on various socially and culturally relevant issues.

After an intensive computer use students on the basis of a limited number of situations consolidate the components of a general communicative situation. It includes social norms, cognitive strategies (direct and selective attention, planning, self-management, problem identification etc.), communication (1) orientation and estimation of the situation; 2) goal setting – realisation of the strategy of communication according to the communicative tasks; 3) predicting – choice of the right communicative strategy depending on the verbal experience, intuition, the skill to understand the partner in a context; 4) selection of appropriate facts, ideas, semantic and linguistic means; 5) combining of facts, ideas; 6) expressing the verbal content; 7) self-regulation regarding the context).

As to “Tense Buster” students adapt the program to their own language learning strategies. It also provides a comprehensive feedback. Of special importance are materialised actions, e.g. “the moving words” (moving the word from one place to another, inserting it in the

sentence). By understanding the necessary rule and performing a materialised action a student is more likely to acquire it with very few mistakes. This stage is necessary if the action cannot be done at once at an internalised speech stage (Table 1). Much depends on the "orienting basis of the action" (the necessary and sufficient preconditions of performing the action) and the degree of its generalisation. Accordingly, one of the possible effective ways of integrating software in the course is to give during the class a "generalised orienting basis of the action" introducing more generalised concepts instead of innumerable separate factual material. E.g., to master functions and meanings of the finite and non-finite forms of the verb it is suggested to start with a general basic concept "time relation to action" and only later –after mastering this underlying concept and the formulas of formation – students pass over to the most characteristic cases in the use of finite forms of the verb working with the program "Tense Buster". They have extensive practice – multiple choice, gap fill, reading text, moving words, etc. The instructor may also use the Authoring Kit to create new exercises with varitype purposes. BBC New English Course is successful with learners of different levels and is also good for practicing language functions (requests, asking and giving information, asking permission etc.) in different situations pertaining to students' future professional life. Students not only listen to the dialogue but also take part in it choosing the character he/she wants to play.

Distance education using information technologies is also well developed at Riga Technical University. Recently a new Distance learning course "Modern English for Baltic Adults" (for 240 hr) has been completed (Lapiņa, 1999). It includes printed materials and audio tapes. The study support is organised in the form of face-to-face sessions as well as by communicating with tutors using E-mail. Some students in the language learning process prefer E-mail tutorials. (Information technology solutions have been used in the course development and delivery.

A new course "Business Planning for Open Markets" has been developed in English and Latvian by an international team including specialists from Riga Technical University in the framework of PHARE Multi-Country Program in Distance Education. The course has been estimated as one of the best within the PHARE Multi-Country Distance Education Program. The chosen delivery methodology uses one or more Lotus Notes Domino servers accessed by the student group through web-browser technology, augmented by CD-ROM learning

materials. The key components in the multimedia CD-ROM content are: text, tables, audio files, video files, pictures, interactive exercises and case studies. The course is organised with 3 face-to-face sessions during 2 months period. The self-study with CD-ROM and/or printed material is supported over the Internet Study Forum (Virtual Classroom) for discussion, information, assignment contribution etc. "The developed Multimedia – Internet CD-ROM based open distance learning course is an exciting learning media which contributes to the development of new learning methods and motivations in the emerging information society". RTU Distance Education study centre has also ISDN-videoconference system. Videoconferences are used for international project meetings as well as for course delivery sessions among universities in the Baltic Sea region.

School of Business Administration "Turība" has a computerised Distance Learning system, also in foreign languages. Highly systematised courses called "Business English", "Business German" and worked out in close co-operation with specialised departments can be additionally used also by full-time students who study foreign languages for 2,5 years having 320 contact hours. There are few tertiary institutions in Latvia, where all the programs in Distance Education are accessible on the Internet.

Innovative technologies at *Ventspils College* are adapted to educating students in professional translation and business administration. There is one computer per three students. Internet is used widely and efficiently. Students and instructors can also use intranet sending messages, reports or other assignments. There is a choice of commercial software such as "Multimedia Business English", "Business English", "French Pronunciation Tutor", "English Advanced" etc. used in class and individually. Students have access to all the programs. One of the innovative technologies with wide opportunities is the media resource centre "Auditek-Prisma". The computer-controlled lab with integrated multimedia allows effective and active interaction between the teacher and students as well as among students themselves. It fosters versatile speaking and listening activities, saves time, permits a check-up whenever convenient – even after the class. The teacher collects the students' answers on tape using the master recorder. Different forms of interaction are possible: individual work with the program, grouping students in different teams, talking to the whole class, monitoring student work, teacher-student discussion, communicative exercises, group conferences, pair discussion, phone conversation. All the commands are given via the computer.

Stockholm School of Economics (in Riga) where all the subjects are taught in English has a preparatory semester. It includes the course "Communicating in English" (8 weeks and 4 contact hours a day). There are lectures, seminars, co-operative group work, speaking and writing assignments supplemented by fieldwork and case studies. Integration of English, mathematics, microeconomics etc. takes place. Students improve their overall competence in English, especially writing skills. At the end of the preparatory semester students should be able to give presentations and speak publicly, write papers, speak and write in academic English, work in co-operative groups acting as both a leader and a follower, use the study skills most effective to each individual learner. There are report presentations with opposition both in English and economics. Internet and intranet are used from the very start. The groups and students have their own intranet addresses, as well as there is the Global Address List to all the students' body of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd year. Different messages, reports and comments, various assignments are sent via intranet. It is the best use of communication of this kind at tertiary institutions in Latvia. CD-ROMs are accessible in the library and students use them individually. Internet and intranet are extensively used in the English course "Professional and Academic Content" which lasts for 1 year. English from the very beginning is not so much an aim, but a tool in successful professional studies in which the new technologies are an indispensable part.

We may conclude that teachers will need to develop creative thinking and a flexible approach to explore and make use of these presently available or upcoming new technologies most efficiently.

In Latvian higher schools student and staff mobility programs depend on the established international contacts of the particular university departments. Universities participate in programs like TEMPUS, Socrates Erasmus, Socrates Lingua, etc.

ERASMUS statistics 1999-2003

	1999/2000		2000/2001		2001/2002	2002/2003
	applied	In fact	applied	In fact	applied	In fact
IC no of applications	15	13	16	16	16	19
ERASMUS students from Latvia	339	166 (49%)	525	182 (34,6)	612	674

Foreign ERASMUS students	243	23 (10%)	165	43(26%)	456	454
Erasmus teaching staff	141	44 (31%)	160	41(25,6%)	184	219
HE institutions with ECTS project	11	10	10	10	10	14
HE institutions with student mobility	11	11	16	16	16	19
HE institutions with teaching staff mobility	10	10	12	12	16	17

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2.2. Policies underlying the integration of New Learning Environments

Up to this moment there is no official document issued by the Ministry of Education and Science stating the integration of ICT in the process of teaching/learning foreign languages. Nevertheless, the positive attitude of the Ministry of Education and Science is defined in establishing and financing of Latvian Education Informatization System (LIIS). On June 13, 1997, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia and University of Latvia signed an agreement, "On the Latvian Education Informatization System". The goal of the project is to prepare students of primary, secondary schools and universities to life and work in Information Society. (http://www.liis.lv)

The mission of the LIIS project is to create the conditions for successful continuation of education system informatization. The project covers the whole informatization grid: education content, management, information services, infrastructure and user training at several levels – schools, school boards and Ministry of Education. The project is coordinated by the University of Latvia. Because the project is very labor-intensive, the entire educational society is being involved in its implementation, as is any other person who wants to and can provide assistance in the realization of the project.

Teaching aids in the equivalent of 31 000 printed pages have been developed within LIIS project since its beginning in 1997. Major attention is being devoted to those areas of study, which correspond to the main methods of cognition – rational cognition (mathematics), empirical cognition (the natural sciences, especially physics), cognition by modeling (informatics), and emotional cognition (literature). Using these materials together with original educational software ensures that approx. 20% of the total amount of high school program can

be taught in a computerized way. In some disciplines, e.g., the Latvian language and Mathematics, this percentage reaches 75% of the whole syllabus.

It has been stated that one of the main aims of Latvia is to facilitate cooperation with different international organisations (the European Union, Council of Europe and UNESCO, etc.) and to support integration of Latvian higher education institutions into European and global academic community.

However, there is no clearly defined administrative policy concerning new learning environments in higher education on the national level. There is no centre of coordination either in the Ministry of Education and Science or Centre of Examination and Educational Content.

2.3. New learning strategies: the introduction and promotion of independent learning

In the distance learning courses developed in Riga Technical University different strategies for independent learning are implemented in the course structure and provides the learner with the necessary and various strategies.

Independent learning is also emphasized in the course "ICT and the Internet in FL" delivered at Faculty of education and Psychology, University of Latvia.

2.4. Facilities for independent learning

Centers for independent learning have been established at several higher education establishments, e.g., University of Latvia, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Liepāja Pedagogical Higher School, etc. The newest teaching/ learning materials, modern software (CDs) for learning foreign languages, dictionaries, IT facilities, Internet, copying facilities are available in these centres. Due to scarce resources allocated for these centres their development is rather slow.

2.5. Development of learning materials

The principles of using the programme for developing individual teaching materials, exercises and tests were explained and demonstrated to language teachers from other higher schools in Latvia during 5 seminars in (2001-2002).

In order to develop vocabulary, learner's data banks, which provide new dimensions to vocabulary work, have been developed. In the learner's data bank every new word has to be

entered into various fields that include synonyms, antonyms, grammatical information, a register and illustrative examples. A modification of this learner's data bank is also being developed together with future translators to collect terminology for the EC and Latvian legislative system.

Teachers are asked to develop their own programs, thus teachers are better prepared and competent to implement CALL and other multimedia programs in their classrooms.

CD-ROMs have become an integral part of foreign language classes. There is an enumeration and short description of computer programs at the disposal of each foreign language instructor for the use in classes and students who have also individual access to CD-ROM. There are such programs as "Learn to Speak English", "Higgins", "TripplePlay Plus", "English Tutor", "Comprehensive Learning Series", "Your Way", "Business English", "Super Success for the TOEFL Test" etc. During the class students learn how to work with the specific program and then they can proceed with it individually. These are high quality software programs aimed at using various sensory channels thus achieving the best possible psychological effect and corresponding to different learning styles, individual cognitive levels and features.

2.6. Redefining the profile of the teacher

Using IT in language learning is a very challenging task for a language teacher. Thus the role of teacher changes, by no means teachers lose their important role in the process of language acquisition. The role of teacher expands. Firstly, the teacher becomes Planner. She establishes plans of acquisition; she is also Facilitator who ensures that all students have access to resources. It is very often that pupils are better informed about IT, so the teacher also becomes Learner. The teacher is also Manager as well as Co-ordinator, who supervises the allocation of computer time, ensures security of system, and keeps operations within the budget. To achieve better results a teacher should also be aware of the very important role of Participant, who is a member of a group, observer as well as co-operator. In the process of using IT in foreign language acquisition a teacher is also Guide and Helper, whose responsibilities include consulting and motivating. Feedback is a very necessary component of

any process, so to get feedback as well as better evaluate the work done a teacher also should be Evaluator. The evaluation is the most effective if it is done together with participants.
Teacher is the one

- "scouting-researching new areas of knowledge and preparing a trail; moderating-supporting content focused discussions and disputes",
- Sometimes the teacher is "playing "advocatus diaboli": to question too easy solutions, quick answers or beliefs from the students; demanding and supporting from the students better explanation, justification and thought".(Wolf 2001).

The new approach has been discussed in several international conferences as well as workshops. Students as well as teacher trainees, and teachers taking part in in-service training have been introduced to the new role of teacher working with ICT.

Since 1995 till 2001, 350 students (English and German language teachers-to-be) have had courses on using new information technologies and Internet in the foreign language classroom. Approximately 120 English/German language teachers have participated in these courses consisting of discussions of the new role of teacher in the process of foreign language acquisition using ICT.

The issue of the changing role of the teacher has been discussed at different Republican conferences and seminars. Learner-centred approach, which is gaining recognition, requires a change in the role of the teacher and increasing learner autonomy. The teacher's role is changing from that of an instructor to a facilitator or adviser.

2.7. Training programmes and courses for language teachers

Three workshops for foreign language teachers were organized in association with Goethe Institute. Cooperation with Goethe Institute is developed. In October 2001 in co-operation with Goethe Institute Riga 3 follow-up workshops were organised to support the EC funded project "Europe in The Classroom" (Developing Home Page) for 60 participants.

2.8. Measuring proficiency: assessment and self-assessment

In all the developed programs for autonomous learning a module of assessment and self-assessment is implemented (see programs mentioned above) to support self-guided learning process.

3.Promoting multilingualism and cultural diversity

3.1. Promoting the learning of the less widely used and less taught languages

Education establishments in Latvia provide wide scale of less widely used and less taught languages, e.g., Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish as well as Estonian, Lithuanian, Belo Russian, Jewish, Japanese, Ukrainian, Polish and others. However, it must be stressed that language courses are organised either by private language schools or by minority schools, or as language courses at higher education establishments. Ministry of Education and Science has not defined policy concerning the less widely used and spoken languages. It must be pointed out that within the European Year of Languages, special attention is devoted to diversity of languages in Europe. It has been emphasised by the Minister of Education and Science of Latvia Kārlis Greiškalns that "The 21st century treats the variety of languages and cultures, like the diversity in nature, as well as a wealth of mankind. Each language embraces an unparalleled world outlook and reflects national history. Each and every language is a unique value.

3.2. Promoting cultural understanding and intercultural communication

European programs, projects and grants for student and staff mobility promote intercultural communication and tolerance.

3.3. Accessing authentic resources and materials

Use of ICT facilitate more successful studies of foreign language Students are really interested in the Internet and possibilities to use it in their study process.

However, not always Internet resources can be used in learning process due to different technical problems: the connection is not always reliable and slow, therefore CD-ROMs are generally preferred. Nevertheless Internet and ICT is used in studies rather widely.

Internet resources are used widely at University of Latvia, Faculty of Education and Psychology. A great advantage of the Web is that students can find something that is appropriate for their interests at their level. In order to make the web search easier, teachers have compiled lists of Internet addresses for different courses: Wirtschafts–Deutsch.

Lists of useful website addresses for teachers of English, German, French have been prepared and regularly updated (http://www.liis.lv).

3.4. Exchange of students and staff

Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Latvia, is participating in exchange programs with: Bristol University, UK, University of Helsinki, Finland, Technical University Dresden and University of Münster (Germany) other organisations and institutions of higher education abroad.

Mobility of students of the University of Latvia

Countries	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
Germany	62	75	106	112	132
UK	6	8	25	23	27
Sweden	47	14	34	26	27
Finland	6	11	27	29	36
Denmark	15	14	23	27	28
Norway	5	12	10	11	12
France	3	6	7	15	16
USA	5	10	21	19	21
Canada	4	1	3	2	2
China	5	4	5	4	6
Benelux	-	-	-	-	5
Others	2	16	5	26	27
Total :	160	171	296	294	339

www.lu.lv

4. The role of NLE in training programs for language and language related professions

4.1. New Learning Environments and the training of language teachers

As already stated, two courses concerned with the use of multi media in the process of foreign language learning are offered at University of Latvia, Faculty of Education and Psychology. “Internet as a tool of Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages” and “Modern Information Technologies in the Foreign Language Studies.” These courses are innovative in Latvia.

Faculty of Education and Psychology at the University of Latvia is trying to develop teacher education programmes that meet the needs of the modern society -encouraging students to take up the responsibility for their own studies, to develop the ability to co-operate, to work in a problem-oriented way and be prepared for continuous changes.

Educational psychology has shown that significant learning takes place only when the learner actively constructs his own learning. Therefore the concept of the course presented is moving from the model of teaching centred on instruction to the one centred on learning, constructing the knowledge, discovering the world and entering intercultural multilingual communication via e-learning. (Work forms: Group work, discussions, presentations, peer teaching, work on projects and e-projects etc.)

The discussed study course is developed on the bases of the theoretical propositions offered by A.Dougall, P.Dunkel, I.Forsyth, P.Gray, W.Maier, B.Rüschoff, D.Squires, M.Schwarz, D.Teeler, D. Wolff, that are creatively interpreted and further developed. Everyday teaching and research work uses the experience and theories that have been acquired while participating in several important projects of the European Centre for Modern Languages and projects financed by the European Commission (ICT in VOLL, ELHE, TNP, @cm etc.) It should be particularly stressed that professional, bachelor and master degree students actively participate in preparing the information necessary for the reports and projects; during the presentations they discuss the unclear questions and check the quality of the obtained data.

The aim of the study course "Internet as a Tool of Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages" is to enable the foreign language teachers – to – be to use Internet resources for developing their own learning and teaching materials to meet the specific goals of the particular students' group and FL teaching aims in this target group. The course provides the students with the necessary information and methodological support, how to use Internet materials in the daily teaching practice. The most important topics of the course are methodological issues for developing Internet – based learning and teaching materials, Search-engines in the Internet (e.g. Yahoo, Alta Vista etc.), data banks, Internet–libraries and Internet-book-shops.

The course "Modern Information Technologies in the Foreign Language Studies" enables the students to integrate the use of the technology into the current trends of foreign language teaching methodology (with the emphasis on "procedural knowledge", and the changed nature of learning). The course encourages students to approach the use of technology critically and focuses less on the mere propagation of information about the software programs available. In addition, the course is designed to explore and assess the ways in which CALL programs and multimedia can change the nature of language learning and generate new types of

teaching practices. Various kinds of interactions are analyzed and different types and levels of interactivity, not excluding that of a teacher, in the multimedia environment are discussed.

The first part of the course is devoted to the theory concerning the development of CALL and multimedia programs, and the second to the implementation and analysis of the programs developed by the leading software firms. Students analyse the software available on the international market and using these programs make outlines for their own lessons. A further step is that the students use authoring tools from Wida Authoring Suite from Teleste Partner Tools to develop their own testing and teaching programs for grammar, vocabulary work, and writing etc. The goal is to enable the teachers to create multimedia teaching and learning materials without any programming knowledge in accordance with needs of individual learner or a group of learners.

The course on computer-assisted language learning methods into teacher training curriculum has been introduced since 1996.

In practice, there are two main “models” according to which New Learning Environments are implemented in language education:

- “The ADD-ON model, which tends to consider the new environment as additional to the existing structure and practice, i.e., no changes in the existing system are necessary; and
- The ADD-IN model, where NLEs are integrated into the existing system thus causing changes in its structure and content and in professional development. (Meus V., Räsanen A. 2002, 7)

The concept of the discussed study course is based on the “ADD-IN model to support integrative and really creative activities using possibilities provided by e-learning.

Establishing learning projects via e-mail puts students in contact with native speakers or English/German learners around the world and provides an authentic context and motivation for communication. Three learning projects, "Christmas in Germany", “Christmas in Africa” and "Varieties of Modern English Around the World" were successful. Students presentations in the course discussed are posted on the Home Page of the Faculty of Education and Psychology at www.lu.lv.

Many students work out their bachelor’s papers and master papers on IT in a foreign language classroom, e.g., CALL as a Means of Teaching English and Creating an Effective learning Environment; Internet Classroom management in Written Communication, etc.

4.2. New Learning Environments and the training of translators and interpreters

As already mentioned, Internet resources are widely used for training of translators and interpreters at College of Ventspils.

At the University of Latvia, at the Faculty of Modern Languages and at the Faculty of Education and Psychology courses in translating and interpreting are delivered with intensive support of ICT and using Internet resources.

A Case study "Terminology Translation Online" and Template were developed as a part of the ICT in VOLL project documentation (Information and Communication Technology in Vocationally oriented Language Learning"). This case study deals with complicated terminology translation items in politics of environment. Using support of terminology databases of EC Languages (English, German, Finnish and French) translation of the complicated term "EMO" from English in to Latvian was successful. Steps of information search and pedagogical issues as well are discussed**.**

The case study and template are posted on the website of European Centre of Modern languages, Graz (www.ecml.at; project ICT in VOLL, 1.3., Teacher Trainer group)

5. The role of NLE in continuing education programmes or courses

Courses "Modern Information Technologies in FL Classroom" have been provided to master program students at the Faculty of Education and Psychology. Since 1994 more than 300 master students have participated in these courses.

6. Using Information and Communication (ICT) for promoting European cooperation

6.1. Using ICT for cooperation in the development of programs

E-mail is used as a communication tool developing programs. Faculty of Education and Psychology has developed programs in cooperation with University of Bristol (UK), Educational Academy (Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes Oberösterreich) in Linz) (Austria).

6.2. Using ICT for cooperation in the delivery of programmes

No information has been obtained.

7. Needs in the area of New Learning Environments

7.1. Seen in relation to language teaching and learning

Establishment of higher educational should be provided with an infrastructure, including the laboratory for simultaneous interpreting to comply with European standards. As well as software that satisfies the needs of modern language learning/teaching

To provide universities with teachers who are qualified and competent in using ICT in foreign language teaching/learning, teacher training in the area of ICT implementation in language learning/teaching is necessary at all levels of university studies as well as in-service studies. Methodological recommendations should also be worked out. It should also be taken into account that the computer labs should be provided with software encouraging teachers to create their own teaching/learning materials. Development of some kind of coordination centre is necessary to facilitate development of policy of implementation of ICT in language learning/teaching.

Participation in international projects concerned with ICT is of high importance. It is one of our priorities.

7.2. Seen in relation to the promotion of multilingualism and cultural diversity

New Learning Environments promote development of language learning standards, enhance development of learning languages thus leading to a more successful integration of the society. To carry out it more successfully several requirements should be met, one of the most essential being cooperation among establishments of higher education all over the world. Communication with native speakers and exchange programs greatly contributes to the promotion of intercultural understanding and tolerance

7.3. Seen in relation to the promotion of European cooperation

As mentioned above cooperation among international establishments of higher education is very essential to promote cooperation.

8. Measures to be taken to meet the needs identified

8.1. At institutional level

To develop programs and improve language teaching with the help of ICT additional resources should be allocated. Each institution of higher education should work out its policy concerning using ICT. International exchange programs should be encouraged.

More successful implementation of ICT requires close cooperation between technological experts and language specialists.

8.3. At national level

To promote implementation of ICT in higher education additional resources should be allocated.

It is also of prime importance to set up the center concerned with ICT in study process.

8.4. At European level

European institutions of higher education should cooperate and share information as well as promote implementation of ICT in study process.

An easy and quick and as cheap as possible access to Internet should be provided.

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