

MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF SUBPROJECT 2 ON NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS Lisbon, November 16, 2002

Members present: Alessandra Corda, Fatima Ferreira, Doris Flischikowski, Ana Gimeno, Ole Helmersen, Ilse Kangro, Boguslaw Marek, Marina Mozzon-Mcpherson, Valere Meus, Anne Rasanen, Bill Richardson, Vania Simeonova, Jurate Zdanyte

Excused: Brigitte Forster Vosicki, Tove Jacobsen, Isabel Landsiedler, Ina Maneva, Panos Panagiotidis, Teodor Petric, Franka Poppi.

Agenda

9.30 Start of meeting & review of new developments in TNP2

1. Round table survey on developments in various countries on the basis of questions sent in advance
2. Discussion on the updating of national reports and synthesis report
3. Discussion on the final report to be produced
4. Preparation for the ELC 2003 conference to be held in Aarhus, Denmark
5. Discussion on possible projects
6. a.o.b.

18.30 Finish

Minutes

1. Valere Meus opened the meeting and welcomed everybody.
2. Valere Meus and Anne Räsänen reported on the issues discussed in the Coordinating Committee meeting held in Berlin on October 25, 2002 regarding the changes in the financial situation of TNP2 and on the work to be done during the third year of Subproject 2 and for the ELC 2003 conference to be held in Aarhus, Denmark.
3. A round table survey on the national developments related to NLEs was done. The questions sent in advance to all Subgroup 2 members for preparation and to be used in the updating of the national reports were as follows:
 - a) Are the concerns expressed in the NLE synthesis report from 2001 still valid?
 - b) Have any new positive/negative developments taken place in your country in any of the areas discussed in the synthesis report)?
 - c) Are you aware of any ongoing research that may contribute to our subproject?
 - d) Do you have examples of integration of ICT and contact learning and are you aware of publications concerning the relationship between the two? In your experience, what cannot be taught via ICT?
 - e) Are there any new staff development and/or learner development approaches at your university/in your country?
 - f) What areas would be important to work upon as more practical and concrete projects? Do you have examples of spin-off projects relating to NLEs?
 - g) Are there any developments in using the second type of NLE more systematically in your country?
 - h) What forms of disseminating information about the project have you used?
4. The most relevant developments in each country were the following:

Bulgaria: Web-based modules in Bulgarian as L2 focusing on the language of tourist industry and aiming at B2 level; some new research into a digital real-time translation programme; project DICTION on simultaneous machine translation from any language to any language; some negative developments regarding technical support and funding.

- Lithuania: Increase of integrating NLEs; active participation in EU projects to develop materials; ILL project working on a manual for adult LL strategies; new exchange programmes; info on ICT use disseminated via mailing lists and other info sharing systems; workshops, seminars, conferences for teachers. Funding a problem.
- Latvia: Strategy to train new future teachers; survey on student use of IT for learning (38% of school children have used it for learning English and they want integration); E-university being planned – first course in research methodology with 250 students; publications on ICT; students writing summary reports on TNP2 national reports to inform others about European developments; many projects on teacher training and e-learning; trying to move into an add-in model; info given on project websites. Funding a problem.
- Britain: Concerns are still the same; lots of training and projects; new research to develop mechanisms for measuring learning outcomes; continuous programmes for teachers; learner training modules; language centres are expanding but philologies shrinking; software packages produced by many universities; ELP being integrated; Ls have not expanded – evidence from learning outcomes missing.
- Holland: Learner autonomy is a totally unknown concept in Dutch HE; teachers need a lot of development; joint discussion forum for teachers involved in ICT; technical development rapid, Blackboard adopted as platform; new projects; level set for language proficiency for the new Bachelor's degree.
- Germany: All concerns still valid; national survey on how ICT is used by students, but not for LL; polytechnics more advanced, have their ICT policies and are developing their infrastructures, much funding for that but not so much for teacher development; frustration among previous enthusiasts; many seminars and workshops, but no development in e.g. research; much student resistance because lack of learner training; teacher's "duty" is not to promote self-directiveness; lack of communication and sharing between institutions; teachers' duties expanded – no time or energy for new developments; more concrete actions needed.
- Poland: Concerns still valid; reduction in language courses for budget reasons; university system more flexible; new journal for language teachers.
- Denmark: Not much happening in the traditional universities, but the Business schools are advancing; digital labs, e-learning fund for teachers, technical help provided individually; conference presentations; worry over the dominance of English – universities drawing policies to avoid anglicisation.
- Ireland: Environment increasingly negative for LL; languages weakening at universities of technology in non-language programmes, but traditional style language programmes are not experiencing this; individuals develop but policies do not; wider packages for e-learning with Ls as part; on-line graduate diploma in translation studies hopefully to be funded; ELP implementation in various ways; unwillingness to share experiences.
- Spain: Open University of Technology – over 100 on-line courses.
- Portugal: Not much shared with neighbours so it is hard to get an overall idea; new project on how to learn languages started in the context of teaching Portuguese as L2; no sharing, more competition; not much going on in staff development.

Finland: Lots of new projects, experimentation and research into adapting materials for platform use; student guidance in network-based instruction very common; staff training within the virtual university of Finland available for all teachers; ELP and framework projects and experiments; project to harmonize assessment in polytechnics; study skills and preparation for mobility quite common practice; pedagogical training for HE language teachers also available; special e-learning courses also for deaf students; research into new strategies for developing multi(media) literacy and establishing on-line communities; special funds within the VU of Finland and from other sources available; open co-operation and collaboration within departments and between institutions; student involvement in design and data providers becoming more common. Lack of time the biggest problem; institutional policies regarding Ls missing, but a lot of work is in progress because of Bologna.

Belgium: Concerns still valid; mixed feelings because of three kinds of actors – philology, language centres, polytechnics; LCs active, but not really leading to joint results; division between learning about the L vs. LL; very little coordination in concepts and in practice; policies missing; e-learning is becoming discipline-independent; not much research, pedagogical development varies; team-based approaches are needed, but universities are not yet ready.

5. It was decided that the national developments would be summarized for the synthesis report to be updated. In addition, a report on the Copenhagen Workshop would also be finalized and sent to Berlin following the table of contents agreed in the Steering Committee meeting in Jyväskylä in August 2002. The SC was informed about the Berlin plan to place the national reports on the TNP website in January and encourage to update all reports by that time.

6. It was agreed that the final synthesis report would also include sections on a) the connections of Subgroup 2 with the other subprojects and with TNP 1; b) what is the role of language in learning content matter (i.e. transferable skills, common core for subject learning, etc.); c) the European HE area; and pathways to learning outcomes with NLE as one possible way ; d) the importance of investment on pedagogical expertise and learner autonomy development, because they are also investments on the quality of learning outcomes and the development of life-long learning and transferable skills. Furthermore, it seems that the reason for LL not ranking very high in the Tuning project survey of employer views has to do with failure to understand that the skills seen as important are in fact dependent on the person's communication skills, in other words, language learning is still seen as a matter of learning about language and not as a tool to be used for workplace communication and networking. These issues should perhaps also be underlined in the synthesis report.

7. Preparations for the Aarhus conference were made and representatives of the subgroup were selected. The following decisions were made:

- a) The overall theme of the NLE workshop is either News on NLEs or What is new about NLEs?
- b) Workshop 1 theme is Novel teaching – novel learning? and it is to be chaired by Bill Richardson. The oral presentation will be given by Marina Mozzon-McPherson on the basis of the written presentation prepared by a task force. As respondents there will be one on-line learner and teacher, possibly from Denmark/Sweden.
- c) Workshop 2 theme is Language learning and technology – is the honeymoon over? It will be chaired by Ana Gimeno and the oral presentation will be given by Valère Meus and Alessandra Corda on the basis of a task force produced written paper. No respondents were specified yet, but some potential ones were mentioned.
- d) The brief commentaries on behalf of the NLE group will be prepared and given by Brigitte Forester-Vosicki (on LLL), Ole Helmersen (on employability) and Anne Räsänen (on Ls and the Bologna process)
- e) If a poster session is available, there will be posters prepared by other members of the SC.
- f) Overall coordination on behalf of the NLE group will be done by Anne Räsänen.

8. Possible projects were discussed and proposed, to be specified in the next meeting of the SC to be held in Aarhus on 26 June, 2003, preceding the ELC conference.

9. Valere Meus concluded the meeting and thanked Fatima Ferreira for all the arrangements and her university for the abundant hospitality during the meeting.

Minutes by Anne Räsänen