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Crouching strategy, hidden agenda

Why should we respond to the government's strategy of widening participation? What is behind it? And what can we do about it anyway?

We have become accustomed to the gentle dance of policy makers such as vice-chancellors and government ministers around the role and future of higher education. For the most part, we have taken an interest in the policies which are likely to have the most immediate practical impact on us: how much money will be allocated or whether we shall be subjected to external subject review. But in the last few months it has become clear that there are more fundamental issues in play, concerning the social role of higher education and the particular roles our subjects might be called upon to play.

We shall be required to develop strategies to respond to the issues explicitly raised by government. But we shall also need to address and inflect the deeper policy agendas that lie beneath them. The social role of language and culture is a point of focus in many aspects of the study of languages, linguistics and area studies. We are therefore not wholly disarmed when called upon by government to consider the social role of teaching and learning in our subjects. Our challenge is to apply our conceptual tools to our own practice, and in the process to bring a sharper understanding than is commonly embodied in the broad imperatives of public policy makers.

Expanding higher education

Most colleagues are aware of the high priority attached by government to achieving wider participation. The highly publicised target of attracting 50 per cent of 18-30 year olds into higher education has become the over-riding priority of the funding councils. It has already turned into something of a shibboleth. Phoneticians will know that 42,000 Ephraimites were killed at the passages of Jordan because they pronounced the word incorrectly as 'sibboleth' (Judges, 12: 6). The penalties for heterodoxy in respect of widening participation will be less severe, but still real enough. There could be lost funding, of course. But unless our subjects can play a full role in extending the social 'footprint' of higher education, we are also likely to experience an acceleration of the current decline in applications to our degrees, with consequent erosion of the knowledge base

in our subjects across the UK.

In the first instance, we can expect a continuing series of measures to be announced by the funding councils over the next few months, setting out targets for widening participation, and requiring universities to develop strategies to achieve it. If the principal focus is on numbers, achieving the 50 per cent target, most of our subject areas will be hard pressed to contribute directly, though those areas experiencing some buoyancy in degree applications will certainly be called upon to expand. But even in areas where degree entries are in decline, such as languages and some parts of area studies, there is some scope for action.

In the short term, increased activity in marketing our subjects will be vitally important. The Subject Centre is in the middle of a series of initiatives aimed at helping departments to improve their marketing. These are aimed both at understanding how programmes might be better adapted to the student market, and at providing help in promoting programmes to potential applicants. By the time you are reading this, the *Languages Box* will be providing a rich source of assistance to every department teaching languages. A great deal of relevant material is on the Subject Centre website. And the programme for our Manchester conference (June 24-26) includes numerous formal and informal opportunities to learn more, and exchange ideas in each of our three subject areas.

In the longer term, we need to develop our curriculum offering in ways that respond more effectively to social needs. An obvious approach is to participate in developing interdisciplinary programmes, possibly led by more buoyant subjects, but enriched by a minor strand of language or area study. A less obvious approach is to develop programmes that will also be attractive to non-UK students. Not so helpful with the 50 per cent target, but potentially helpful for departmental survival. These are issues, not only in the UK, but across Europe. For example, the Thematic Network in Languages, funded under the Socrates programme, is beginning to produce important ideas and examples of good practice. The

significance of the European dimension will also increase as the Bologna process gains momentum, moving towards the European Higher Education Area. This is likely to bring both a larger market and greater competition.

Widening participation

Behind the headline 50 per cent target, there is the more crucial issue of extending the social profile of higher education. It is widely believed that the overall recruitment target can be achieved without drawing many more students from less privileged backgrounds. If so, it is likely that our subjects will benefit only marginally. We may therefore need to address two uncomfortable issues about our social profile. The first is that language related subjects are increasingly being marked as belonging to a social elite. Languages are seen as difficult, and are much more studied in the independent school sector than in the state sector. The second issue is that most of our subjects have attracted relatively few students from ethnic minority backgrounds. This is in spite of the great, but largely untapped, linguistic and cultural diversity those students bring with them.

On both of these issues, we need to find ways of achieving greater social inclusion. And we have strong incentives for taking a more active role. The successes of far-right movements in recent weeks across Europe have highlighted the consequences of failing to address issues of inclusion effectively. The xenophobia, racism, and cultural vandalism endemic in these movements present a real threat to the intellectual and ethical foundations of our educational enterprise. Chilling though it is, this is a point at which we can touch the social role of our disciplines, and feel the direct link between our academic work and the great events of the day. Our response to widening participation may be relatively modest, but it is part of a broader process, to which we cannot be indifferent.

There are several examples of individual initiatives, where colleagues have devised ways of addressing the issues of social inclusion. Some of them will be presented at the Manchester conference. But what seems clear is that the consequences of addressing the issues will be significant changes in our own practice. For example, it is clear that we do not have the expertise and networks to carry out changes within a purely HE context. We need to connect with a range of external partners. Schools and colleges are our most obvious and immediate partners, but we can gain a great deal of help and valuable insights from public sector organisations (local councils, regional development bodies etc), voluntary organisations (community groups, NGOs etc) and the private sector (corporate citizenship schemes, sponsorship etc). Underneath the widening participation agenda, there is therefore a more fundamental social agenda, which we are only beginning to discern. Education is regarded at the highest policy-making levels as a key agent of social change, and higher education has a crucial role in shaping that change. Lulled by a decade of concentrating increasingly on research productivity, we have not sufficiently appreciated how fast our wider educational and social importance has grown. The 50 per cent target is a wake-up call, and we need to turn our minds to how we can shape the deeper agenda, and inject into the policy process the knowledge and values of the linguistic and cultural domains, in which we are the experts.

Mike Kelly–Subject Centre Director

A Marketing Strategy for Languages

Liz Ashurst reports on a Subject Centre initiative to help address issues of marketing and recruitment in languages

The Languages Box
At the time of writing, the development and assembling of The Languages Box is almost complete. We have contacted one representative of each HEI with a modern language department to establish the most appropriate recipient of the box. If you want to know who has been contacted in your institution, please email the Subject Centre (llas@soton.ac.uk)

Contents of the box
We hope that the materials we are including in the box will provide a helpful resource to those of you involved in visits to local schools or in giving presentations to potential students of languages. The Subject Centre has developed a CD 'Why Study Languages?' which makes the case for language study using quantative data about employability, quotations from enthusiastic language graduates and an outline of the possible routes to language study and the key skills which will be developed on the way*. As well as the CD, the box will include a resources file with newspaper articles, additional data and tips for making the most of the powerpoint presentation. For those of you who prefer to give presentations using an overhead projector, we have included transparencies of the key slides in the presentation.

THE LANGUAGES BOX

You will also find in the box a copy of the European Languages Portfolio developed by the Languages National Training Organisation (LNTO) and CILT as well as a very helpful explanation of the Bologna process and a copy of the benchmarking statement for Languages and Related Studies.

We are grateful to the French Embassy for the financial support given to the Subject Centre to enable this box to be developed more fully. In addition the following have generously given of their time, expertise and materials: Dutch Embassy, French Embassy, Goethe Institute, Italian Cultural Institute, Portuguese Embassy

and Spanish Embassy.

We are hoping to be able to send out the boxes to institutions in early June.

Languages Marketing and Recruitment Event, 15 March 2002

(Summary of a workshop report written by Paula Davis- a full copy of the report will be available in the Languages box and on the Subject Centre website).

Low recruitment to language degree programmes has led to much discussion of new approaches to marketing. This event provided an opportunity to discuss marketing techniques and to hear a number of case studies. The programme included a number of presentations and case studies on the following themes:

● finding and defining your market

● developing a strategy

● marketing activities

Michael Kelly, Director of the Subject Centre introduced the event by describing the three stages, which are necessary to an understanding of the market. After analysing the existing student body and looking at changes nationally and internationally, it is important to decide how to make courses more attractive to students. This could be done by employing the common marketing strategies of:

● Segmenting – analyse the student profile and identify particular types/sets of students;

● Focusing – make courses more appealing to an identified market segment by linking programmes more explicitly to student profiles. This involves sacrificing market segments you are unlikely to appeal to;

● Differentiating – compare programmes with other institutions and make your programme distinctive.

Anne Slater from the University of Hertfordshire reinforced the need for a marketing strategy which was more than advertising or selling but included an analysis of the 'product', the 'price' (how do language modules compare to other modules from a student's point of view?) and the 'promotion' (what image is projected of an institution/department?).

Annie Bannerman of the University of Aston outlined the findings of a research project, which looked at the attitudes to European Language Learning among young Asian women. The finding that the study of languages was not widely perceived as a route to a successful career has led to the development of a website, currently being trialled in schools with pupils in Years 9 and 10. (www.les.aston.ac.uk/lang.life)

The Marketing Campaign for German, financed by the DAAD was outlined by **Colin Riordan** of the University of Newcastle. The campaign examined the common stereotypes of German and Germany. From these they have developed humorous and informative postcards and posters, which have been sent to all UK schools.

Keith Marshall at the University of Bangor has done much work to develop arguments for, and dispel the myths about, language study. He stressed the necessity of collaboration between the educational sectors. University prospectuses don't generally encourage 14 year olds to continue to study languages while lively videos, posters and websites making the case for languages are more likely to do so. It is important to reinforce messages about the range of jobs available to language graduates and the fact that there are more A and B grades at 'A' and 'AS' level in modern languages than in virtually any other subject.

Elspeth Jones, Director of the Language Centre at Leeds Metropolitan University outlined the schools liaison strategy developed by her institution. A questionnaire to local schools revealed that there was a demand for staff from HEIs to visit schools and give presentations, which would focus on both the professional and cultural benefits of language study. The Languages Roadshow, developed by LMU, has been enormously successful. A video produced by LMU entitled 'English is not enough...' will be available in the Languages Box.

Colleagues from a number of institutions presented case studies describing marketing activities which they had developed in their institutions. These included a powerpoint presentation developed by Robert Gordon University targeted at primary school children and video clips of taster days developed by the University of Portsmouth aimed at enthusing 11-13 year olds which managed to get pupils speaking, listening and singing Spanish in the space of one hour! Several presenters in the course of the event highlighted the need to spread the focus of marketing activity from post 16 language learners to those at primary schools or those in the early years of secondary education.

The event closed with an interesting and thought-provoking debate on the tensions between the desire for inter-institutional collaboration to market languages and the anxiety about sharing 'trade secrets'. There was a general consensus that collectively we can be more successful in promoting languages and can, thereby, increase the pool of potential students of languages which will be of benefit throughout the sector.

*If you would like a copy of the 'Why Study Languages?' CD, please contact the Subject Centre.

Liz Ashurst–Subject Centre Manager
Paula Davis–Subject Centre Research Assistant/ Projects Officer

liaison

Working together for Area Studies

Alison Dickens, Academic Co-ordinator for Area Studies reports on an event run by the Subject Centre to discuss ways of raising the profile of the field

This event was run in order to address a growing concern among colleagues in area studies that students are either not electing to take area studies degrees or are not continuing in the field at postgraduate level. The events of September 11th further focused everyone's minds on the importance at a national and international level of expertise in and knowledge of the regions of the world. There was much talk in the press about the need to foster this expertise and knowledge but the fact remains that in many areas there is a declining number of students from an already small pool. Whatever the reason for this decline it was felt that, particularly in the case of small areas or small departments some collective initiatives needed to be developed in order to prevent the disappearance of much needed expertise in this field.

The Subject Centre, in consultation with its Specialist Group for Area Studies, decided to put on an event to create a space for this dialogue and an invitation was sent out to all relevant Subject Associations (there are some 25 in all), to colleagues in departments and to the Subject Centre's own contacts. Around 30 people attended the seminar representing a wide variety of area studies – Chinese Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Japanese Studies, European Studies, Australian Studies, American Studies, East European Studies, German Studies, Canadian Studies. The day provided plenty of opportunity for discussion stimulated by the two keynote presentations and a demonstration of the Subject Centre's powerpoint presentations aimed at marketing languages and area studies. There was a good deal exchange of views across areas and a general agreement that it was very important to work collaboratively rather than competitively.

In the first keynote **Professor Richard Ellis** (American Studies) outlined some of the major strengths of area studies programmes. He emphasised that the events of 11 September suggest that the world needs area studies and that if the decline of expertise in some areas is not halted there will be serious deficiencies in our future understanding of the world. On a more practical level he cited some of the key benefits of area studies programmes - employability and residence abroad. Quoting from research done by **Jim Coleman** (1999) as part of the FDTL Residence Abroad project Dick highlighted how residence abroad is perceived as having both a short and long term impact on graduate careers. Coleman's research shows that 96.3 per cent of the graduates he interviewed saw their time abroad as a 'good investment' and over 86 per cent felt that it had helped them to gain employment. Also as part of the project, Coleman identified the learning outcomes from Residence Abroad which contribute to personal, academic, cultural, linguistic and key skills. Other important selling features of area studies, Dick argued, were the development of intercultural competence and international citizenship.

The ensuing discussion raised a number of other issues relating to recruitment:
- lack of understanding of the term area studies (or indeed of European Studies, African Studies etc.)
- the need to stress the skills gained through interdisciplinary study (typical of area studies)
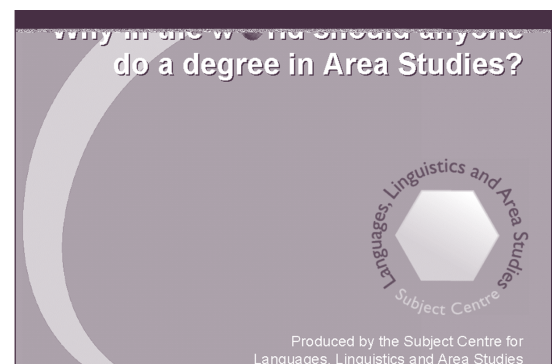- the value of creating alliances with other subjects/departments within an institution (strength in numbers)
- the need to widen participation by offering different study options
- changes in student demand (European Studies appears less appealing than European Politics/Law/Business)

The second keynote from **Professor David Head** (School of International Business, Plymouth) gave several examples of the creative ways in which some of these problems can be addressed. The development of intercultural competence, he argued, was a very useful selling point for language and area studies whereby the skills offered by such programmes can contribute to other courses such as business. These courses attract students from a variety of backgrounds who may already have an interest in cross-cultural competence through their own educational experience or because business courses are now increasingly concerned with these 'softer skills' and issues such as 'responsible management'.
He also suggested offering one-off lectures or 20 credit electives that don't take up much room in the curriculum but which deal with an issue of wide appeal e.g. 'the globalisation debate'. He also stressed the importance of working across the institution to contribute to international strategies and possibly to offer an institution-wide package. Certainly, as one of the participants commented, the threat of redundancy or need for internal redeployment provides a key driver for the development of new initiatives such as these.

To round off the day participants worked as groups to identify other practical steps to help address some of the issues raised in the day. Some suggestions were to do better market research to find out why students find some disciplines, e.g. psychology so appealing; use literary texts or films to raise cultural awareness e.g. teach business ethics using literary texts; exploit moments of media interest; raise awareness among employers of the value of graduates who have followed inter-and multi-disciplinary programmes; run mini-conferences that relate to the 'A' level syllabus. There was a strong sense throughout the day of the need to work together on this issue and that instead of competing for small pool of potential students everyone should work together to increase that pool. It is very much in this spirit that the Subject Centre has developed a short powerpoint presentation (demonstrated on the day) that can be used to raise general awareness of area studies among prospective students. It can be used on websites, in schools/college liaison or with employers. It is being made available via the Subject Centre's website and can be freely used and adapted by colleagues in the HE sector.

Why in the world should anyone
do a degree in Area Studies?

Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Subject Centre

Produced by the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies

Copies can be obtained from:
www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/events/marketingas.html.

Discourse in the Teaching of Linguistics

Keith Brown reports on a seminar organised by the Subject Centre at the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, University of Edinburgh

Discourse is a substantial and fast developing field of linguistic investigation, and this seminar was organised to demonstrate how discourse can be used in teaching many parts of the linguistics curriculum. Seven presentations addressed a variety of different approaches and described courses presented to a range of student audiences, e.g. first and final year linguistics undergraduates and students on EFL courses.

Left to right: Keith Brown, John Joseph, Jim Miller

John Joseph (University of Edinburgh: Discourse Analysis and the Theory and Practice of Translation) focused on the notion of 'voice' ('point of view', 'stance', 'subjectivity'), as manifested in text and the problems it poses for translation. He discussed the Saussurean sign, with its distinction between the 'signifier' and the 'signified' and the issues this raises for translation. Even an apparently simple textbook example like English *sheep* compared to French *mouton* raises problems. These are dwarfed by a consideration of the complex syntactic realisations of 'voice'. He raised the question of whether there can possibly be a single comprehensive theoretical model that might account for the whole gamut of translational practice, or whether the various genres in which translation takes place might not require distinct theoretical models to take account of fundamental differences in normative expectations about the presence or absence of authorial 'voice', and the differences in the configuration of the linguistic sign that these expectations entail.

Using discourse in the teaching of translation theory has a variety of advantages. It can illuminate the traditional view of the 'impossibility; of translation; help clarify our understanding of the notion of the linguistic sign; highlight the importance of 'interpretation' in communication; develop an understanding of the pervasiveness of 'voice' in language and force us to examine the extent to which a monolithic linguistic theory is realistic.

Cathy Sotillo (University of Edinburgh) gave a talk on teaching students to handle data. This course uses data from the 'Map Task', a data elicitation tool originally developed in Edinburgh. This task records interactions between pairs of students, each of whom, has a copy of a map of an island. The maps differ in detail and neither participant knows exactly how they differ. One participant's map also has a path drawn on it, and the task is for this participant to describe the route of the path to the other, who will try and reproduce it. There is a good deal of literature on establishing 'reference' and then on 'reference tracking' in discourse and the Map Task has been used to gather data on the various processes involved. In this course groups of students collaboratively collect data, analyse it and develop their own hypotheses about how reference is achieved and maintained and the linguistic markers of this. The tutors are there to provide help and support! As a learning experience this approach proves very valuable – not least because, in addition to developing linguistic knowledge at first hand, it also develops a variety of the key skills associated with a linguistics training.

Miriam Meyerhoff (University of Edinburgh) *Discourse and grammaticalisation,* works with spoken and written corpora gathered from several SW Pacific Creoles because this data is more revealing about the interpersonal and intergroup dynamics of variation, and thus about language structure and the interaction between the language system and the socio-cultural environment out of which it grows. Miriam showed how such data exemplifies, and thus can be used with students to demonstrate, the grammaticalisation process – the reanalysis of lexical items to (semi) functional items. She demonstrated how discourse patterns are central to such processes of grammaticalisation. She used her data to illustrate that there are subtle syntactic effects between languages in contact which can only be seen in patterns at the level of discourse.

Richard Badger (University of Stirling) talked on *Investigating English: Language, culture and social identity.* He observed that students on language description units sometimes comment that they do not see how they can apply the linguistic skills they learn in everyday life. To address this Richard has developed a unit that presents a range of linguistic frameworks and tools (especially conversation analysis, genre analysis and systemic functional grammar) which are used to investigate the relationship between language, culture and social identity in a variety of written and spoken texts. The unit covers systemic-functional grammar and genre analysis, using media texts as the object of analysis. It also uses conversation to illustrate patterns of spoken interaction and the role of language in constructing gender identity. The patterns of discourse used are those that occur in institutional settings in which participants arguably have unequal access to power, Education, Medicine and Law.

John Corbett (University of Glasgow), *Discourse and intercultural language education*, showed how discourse analysis can be used in intercultural language education, specifically English Language Teaching. He illustrated his talk by comparing examples of dialogues from standard EFL teaching materials and from 'real life' recordings showing how they differ both in their linguistic structure and in what they communicate. He used these examples to explore the influence on ELT of recent developments in genre analysis of text and speech, and how a discourse model of communicative events can shape the teaching of literature, media and culture in an intercultural curriculum.

Caroline Heycock (University of Edinburgh), *Theoretical syntax and textual data,* described a fourth year honours course in syntax. The topic for the course was 'verb movement', focusing in particular on two related phenomena that are relevant to the history of English, as well as to comparisons between relatively

well-studied European languages: (1) whether finite verbs occur to the left or right of sentence adverbs and negatives (cf the development in English from James went not to James did not go) and (2) the 'verb second' phenomenon (lost from declaratives in English, although retained in questions and negative).

In addition to introducing students to relevant readings, all the students were required to go through an (electronic) text of a novel in Danish and its Faroese translation to find data that could be used as the basis for a paper on this topic. Neither of the languages were known to the students and the exact facts concerning verb movement in Faroese have also not been established in the literature. This enabled the students to test the hypotheses in the literature with regard to verb movement in Danish. An added benefit was that the work done in this class could actually be a contribution to work in this area, by establishing the facts about Faroese. Thus students gained experience of doing real linguistic research and the outcomes, Caroline reports, have so far been very encouraging.

Catherine Emmott (University of Glasgow), *Discourse Analysis and the Teaching of Grammar: From Theory to Practice,* looked at the use of discourse analysis in teaching grammatical theory and, conversely, how grammatical knowledge can be put into practice in the discourse classroom. Using corpus data to illustrate, and sometimes question, traditional grammatical description students are shown how to analyse grammatical patterning in extended texts e.g. extracts from novels that show the use of tense forms and the use of pronouns and other forms in 'reference tracking'. She has also used corpus materials with PG students in order to encourage them to identify, test and some times challenge discourse-based theories of reference, in particular 'accessibility theory' and 'centering theory'. Catherine emphasised that there are different notions of 'discourse' amongst discourse analysts and that different approaches have an impact on curriculum design along with the more practical problem of placing this rapidly-developing area of study within the established curriculum.

The Subject Centre would like to thank Jim Miller for organising the event and the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics for hosting it.

Keith Brown–Chair of the Subject Centre Specialist Group for Linguistics

Literature and Culture

Alison Dickens reports on the Subject Centre's activities in this area

With the help of its Special Interest Group for Literature and Culture the Subject Centre has run two events this year with a literature/culture focus. The first of these, a study day on teaching literary theory, was run in collaboration with the English Subject Centre while the second focused on curriculum innovation in the teaching of literature. Below is a summary of these events.

Teaching Literary Theory Study Day
This event built on a previous event held by the English Subject Centre and aimed to take a cross-disciplinary perspective on the purpose, place and role of literary theory in the teaching of literature on English, Modern Language and Area Studies programmes.

The day consisted of a keynote presentation from **Professor Judith Still** (Nottingham) and discussion sessions which dealt with the why and how of teaching theory. They keynote set the tone for the day by outlining some of the arguments (from a languages perspective) in favour of contextualising the teaching of theory rather than teaching it as separate subject. Thus, rather than seeing the teaching of theory as helping students to acquire a theoretical vocabulary in order become 'comfortable' with and apply a particular discourse, theory can be used to discomfort students and encourage them to question accepted 'cultural norms'. In addition, by using theory as text or as a tool to analyse context, students are encouraged to develop analytical skills to identify the ways in which literature relates to the wider world through ideology and society.

However, the purpose and place of teaching theory will differ among disciplines, as the ensuing discussion emphasised. In English there is often more time to develop theoretical discourse and apply those skills, whereas in cultural studies theory will be used in the analysis of a wide variety of 'texts'. Other issues that were raised were that for students on language courses who are already challenged by the need to read texts in the foreign language strategies for incorporating a theoretical element have to be more subtle. A kind of 'back door' approach which uses a theme such as 'The Figure of the Other' or 'Work' to introduce theoretical concepts.

There was much agreement, however, across disciplines, on the value of teaching theory in terms of helping students to explore ideas, develop critical skills, and recognise a 'critical' position within a text. Altogether the day proved to be a very interesting and valuable forum for the exchange of ideas on the place and purpose of teaching literary theory. Nonetheless, for modern languages, at least, it was clear that in the current climate of declining student numbers the teaching of theory needs to be approached creatively. For this reason the Subject Centre ran its second event which focused on the literature curriculum in modern languages.

Curriculum Innovation in the Teaching of Literature on Modern Language Programmes.
This event began with a look at what 'menu' of courses are currently being offered to students. **Mike Kelly** (Subject Centre/ Southampton) reported on a survey of current modules/units offered in 18 institutions, carried out by the Subject Centre. The results suggested that there may be room for repackaging what is being offered to reflect current research, the increasing emphasis on key skills (e.g. problem-solving) and the need to appeal to changing student tastes. His findings showed that most of the more unusual or 'wow' factor courses were being saved until year three and suggested that these could be introduced at an earlier stage. Thus, instead of some of the survey type courses currently offered to introduce periods or authors, courses could offer a wider context/cultural movement or could focus on a place, moment, topic or issue.

This was all wonderfully illustrated by the ensuing case studies which presented a number of innovative and

interesting ways of using research material, popular texts, film and technology to teach literature.

Rhian Davies (Sheffield) demonstrated her use of the Galdós project www.shef.ac.uk/hri/galdos.htm - a research project that is collecting and annotating the works of this 19th Century Spanish author. As fewer students study literature at 'A' level the ability or willingness to read in the target language seems to be ever diminishing and at its lowest ebb where pre 20th Century work is concerned. This project, therefore, with its glossary, historical notes and pictures all easily accessible in electronic form provides a source of help and motivation for students. It even includes parallel editions which can be used to explore the process of writing. **Luana Babini** and **Luisa Carrer** demonstrated how this process-oriented approach is also taken by the Italian/Spanish Digital Variants project: www.digitalvariants.org which is collecting extracts from contemporary authors in both their final and draft forms. These are being used by students for both literary study and language learning.

Future uses of technology were demonstrated by **Marie-Christine Press** and **Debra Kelly** (Westminster) whose course is based around teaching literature in the target language. As a result of the particular demands of this approach and the limited time available for teaching, students have to engage in a great deal of independent study based on guided web-based research. An example of this was demonstrated using a Guillaume Apollinaire website (www.wiu.edu/Apollinaire/).

Katherine Fenton (Northumbria) outlined the ways in which the increasingly stable format for webpage encoding (XML) can help to ensure that the time and effort that goes into creating learning materials can be maximised and that materials that have already been designed in outdated formats e.g. MedFrench (1991), but which still have pedagogical value can be given a new lease of life.

Elizabeth Boa (Nottingham) showed how the selection of texts and contexts can have a vital part to play in the successful teaching of literary theory. She showed how she uses Kafka short stories to present and explore narrative theory and reflected on how the popularity of Kafka and the shortness of the texts make the study of theory more accessible for students.

Finally we saw how film can be used to illuminate a novel. **Russell Cousins** (Birmingham) sees that, while adaptations should not replace a reading of the original work, they can at the very least familiarise students with the story. However, using extracts from two cinema adaptations of Zola's Germinal he demonstrated how films can also encourage close readings of the original work through a comparison of the two texts, e.g. through an analysis of what is omitted in the film version, how atmosphere is created and how characterisation is achieved.

Altogether these events have shown that the teaching of literature and culture is still very much alive and kicking, despite the concern over a declining interest in the subject among students. While we can't turn back time and return to the way things were, there are certainly many creative solutions out there and we look forward to exploring them further in the coming year.

Alison Dickens–Academic Co-ordinator with responsibility for Literature and Culture

The Web Guide

David Bickerton reports on the LTSN funded project to create a Web Guide to Good Practice in Teaching and Learning in Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies

Origins
The concept of a guide to the 'state of the art' in teaching and learning was born during a national telephone conference in November 2000 involving the Subject Centre's Languages Specialist Group.

By February 2001 its ideas had been distilled into a report which identified *Web Site Design and Development* as a high priority:

'The group is acutely aware of the important and multiple functions to be served by the Subject Centre web site, and would wish to see it become distinctive, authoritative and inspirational. The site may be expected to act as the first port of call for all staff in UK HE seeking professional information with a distinctive focus on the teaching and learning of language(s). ... It should have the ambition of becoming an international reference site.'

But how? Such aims implied significant expenditure both on quality content and web development. The Group appealed for a budget to allow for the commissioning of specialist contributions to provide authoritative information on innovations in teaching and learning. The task of applying to LTSN for funding fell to Vicky Wright and Alison Dickens; their remit was expanded to cover not only Linguistics and Area Studies but also the creation of a *Materials Bank* (see page 9) in parallel with the *Web Guide.* By October 2001 the projects were launched. Both will report in July and their products will be up and running before the end of the year.

Aims and Ambitions
The UK has a fine record in the provision of public data of quality via the web. One thinks of the pioneering *CALL Software Library* (now *Software* Database and available on the Subject Centre website) and the less well-known *AFLS Guide to Research* (Lodge 1999, now at www.unl.ac.uk/sals/afls/linguistics.htm).
But, as far as we can tell, the *Web Guide* breaks new ground in terms of its objectives, its scale and its free availability to a user community. It is not a collection of links and references; it does not re-order existing publications; it is not a compendium of the views of one individual or organisation; and its aim is neither to teach nor to train. The *Web Guide* consists of selectively commissioned contributions, as in any written encyclopaedia, but with the interlinking and dynamic updating that only the web can provide. Items range in length from 250 to 3000 words and we intend that once the basic structure is in place its contents will be complemented extensively by voluntary contributions from practitioners, moderated editorially to ensure consistency as well as quality. The Guide specifically addresses the issue of good practice for the benefit of

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colleagues such as staff new to an academic field or those seeking to manage a process of change. And the Subject Centre provides a delivery organisation with a capacity to sustain the *Guide* beyond its initial set-up period.

What has been done?
Starting in October 2001, an editorial board was appointed. Meeting monthly this group grappled first with the highly complex task of creating a comprehensive and intellectually coherent typology of all teaching and learning activities in UK HE in the fields of Modern Languages, Theoretical and Applied Linguistics and Area and Cultural Studies. This is a tall order, but its representation on paper has proved a vital heuristic in the process of conceptualising teaching and learning within our disciplines, in commissioning key contributions and, we hope, in avoiding duplication and any lack of proportion. The typology may be viewed at: www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/webguide.html

Valuable critical support has come from the Specialist Groups and from contributors. The typology is currently at version 7 and lists over 350 distinct topics. We have realised we have neither the time nor the budget to commission the totality of what we have identified as appropriate – to do so would require twice as many words as we can afford (160,000). Nevertheless, at the time of writing almost half of our target has been commissioned, and this includes many of the major overviews and survey articles which, by definition, precede our requirement for more specialised elements. A time will soon come, therefore, when we anticipate that voluntary contributions from practitioners can also be slotted into the *Guide*, and a wealth of professional experience thereby recorded and shared.

Users, however, want to be able to find answers to queries quickly and easily, and not navigate through a plethora of detail. A relatively simple and instinctive computer interface to the data, designed by Kate Dickens (the projects' consultant web designer), is now running on a trial basis. Articles are tagged with keywords and users can access them either through a simplified hierarchy of categories and sub-categories, or by keyword search, or alphabetically. Links with the *Materials Bank* will also give users on-line access to related teaching materials, where they exist.

Thus, a search for 'how to design teaching grammars for ab initio Italian courses' could lead to a set of grammar notes donated by their author which can then be

downloaded, amended and used in class.

Challenges
As a general rule we have asked contributors to identify the research underpinnings of what they assert. However, some 'gaps' in the *Guide* have arisen because we have been unable to identify either researchers or documented good practice in the UK. This raises pertinent questions about the focus of educational research, and it means that some topics must have a 'work pending' notice attached to them, or 'expert wanted' – perhaps inspiring a generation of researchers of the future?
A more difficult issue concerns subject ownership. The logic which drives our academic disciplines does not make for neat boundaries at the best of times, a situation rendered more complex through the variations in degrees of learner specialisation. Extreme diversity in learners' interests, abilities and motivations leads, by necessity, to multiple teaching solutions which run counter to any effort to effect economies of scale. Defining good practice in teaching can therefore feel like quantifying the angelic academics able to dance on the head of a pin!

The *Web Guide* distinguishes general or generic topics from those whose content is discipline driven. The latter have proved the more straightforward to commission and the *Guide* is effectively defining the canon for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, as seen by leading UK exponents in 2002. As such it puts curricular flesh on the bones of the Benchmarking statements of the QAA. The resulting snap-shot of a vital part of our academic world will also be of undoubted archival interest in years to come. But generic topics such as good practice in 'teaching on-line' or 'assessing viva examinations' are more reliant on experience and habit, and a consensus on good practice is proving harder to establish.

Outlook
The more ephemeral items within the Guide, such as those describing technological practices or statistical trends in courses, recruitment and employability, will clearly require regular updating. Practices in all areas of teaching and learning also evolve in subtle ways and have ever to be kept under review. We hope that the interest generated by this Project, the contributions from practitioners and researchers, and the opportunistic awareness of the Subject Centre team responsible, will combine to make the *Web Guide* the UK's major information exchange for teaching and learning in our disciplines.

David Bickerton–Co-ordinating Editor of the Web Guide

Web Guide Editorial Board
Prof. David Bickerton (Subject Centre), Co-ordinating Editor and co-editor for Languages,
Vicky Wright (Subject Centre), Project Director and Co-editor for Languages;
Dr Keith Brown (Cambridge), Editor for Linguistics;
Prof. Chris Brumfit (Southampton), Consultant Editor for Linguistics;
Prof. Chris Flood (Surrey), editor for Area and Cultural Studies;
Prof. David Walker (Sheffield), Consultant Editor for Languages and Cultural Studies;
Paula Davis (Subject Centre), Project Officer;
Alison Dickens (Subject Centre), Project Director of
The Materials Bank

The Materials Bank

Alison Dickens and Artie Vossel-Newman report on progress to date.

September 2002 sees the official launch of the Subject Centre's new Web Resources Area. This is the fruit of two projects funded by the LTSN - the Web Guide to Good Practice in Learning and Teaching and the Materials Bank - and will provide access to all the Subject Centre's resources through one easy to search interface.

The aims of The Materials Bank Project are to explore the process and practice of creating greater collaboration between colleagues through the sharing of teaching resources. Much time, effort and creativity go into the development of such resources and the Subject Centre felt that by disseminating these home grown materials some of the effort for others could be minimised, while at the same time providing maximum exposure to new or different ideas.

In a survey conducted by the project colleagues reported that they were developing their own materials for a number of reasons, as the chart below illustrates:
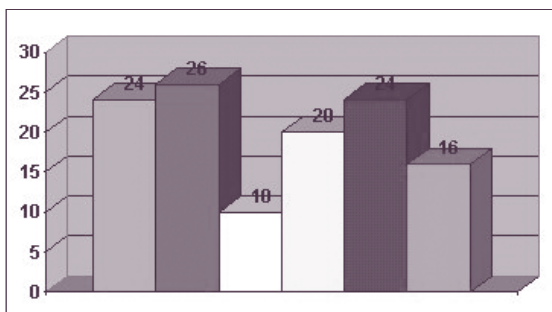
- ☐ to provide up-to-date/current materials
- ☐ there are no published materials in some areas
- ■ to supplement published materials
- ■ to integrate new technologies, e.g. the WWW
- ☐ because I prefer in-house materials
- ■ Other - see below for details

Many identified particular areas where they were experiencing gaps in provision. These were quite varied and related to lack of materials for particular languages (e.g. Portuguese, Japanese, Dutch), for non-specialist learners, for language for specific purposes and for skills development (listening and reading). Other areas of need related to language specific materials for teaching linguistics, methodological guides to help with the design and evaluation of online teaching, online grammar exercises and independent learning materials. Respondents were invited to give details of materials they would be willing to share and to propose small-scale projects that would receive funding from the Project.
Here are some examples of the materials collected so far:

Coursebooks
- *Phonetics For Students Of Modern Languages,* (French, German, Spanish), Dr Rodney Ball, University of Southampton

- *Difficultés de la Langue Française,* Jean-Bernard Adrey, University of Portsmouth

Question banks
- Question banks and tests for French/German/Spanish 1st year UG students,

Valerie Boyle, Loughborough University

- Introduction to Linguistics computerised test, Szilvia Papp, University of Portsmouth

Websites
- Contemporary Spanish Language and Culture website, www.essex.ac.uk/lang/span/Contemp/entrada.htm, Gladis García-Soza, University of Essex

- Beginners German website, www.welcome.to/Angelika'sWebPages, Angelika Flynn, University of Teesside

- English for Academic Purposes Online Resource, www.eapor.net/, Karl Bernhardt, University of Buckingham

Commissioned projects
- Linguistics Question Bank, www.swan.ac.uk/cals/calsres/mcq/mcq.htm, Paul Meara, University of Wales, Swansea

- Website with materials on French political and social history from 1789 to the present, Dave Berry, Loughborough University

- Portuguese speaking and writing exercises, Heloisa Whyatt, University of Southampton

We have been very encouraged by the willingness to collaborate, the quality of materials donated and the ideas suggested for projects.

The process of setting up and populating the Materials Bank has also taught us many valuable lessons along the way, highlighting areas in which sharing in this way can be both beneficial and problematic. First the beneficial. Experience has shown that participants in Subject Centre events which showcase colleagues' teaching materials and practice are very appreciative of the opportunity to meet each other and to exchange ideas.

The Materials Bank, therefore, will serve, at the very least, as another way in which this process of sharing ideas can take place. Thus by looking at each others' materials colleagues can compare 'ways of doing things' which can then be applied to their own language or area of specialism, even if they find they can't use the material's actual content. For example a data-driven language exercise using a corpus (of published or home grown materials) can be adapted to a variety of contexts such as a different language or an area of linguistics. Many of the materials offered will, of course, be usable in their original form, for example self-study sheets, grammar exercises and skills development material. We will endeavour to track use of materials as the Bank grows in order to identify the ways in which the materials offered are exploited.

There are, naturally, areas were problems have surfaced, in particular the area of copyright. This demonstrates that while the mind may be willing to share the strong arm of the law (of copyright) often gets in the way. Despite all the agreements made between our institutions and broadcasters, publishers etc. the issues of disseminating materials that incorporate third party materials is still a complicated one and there remains a certain lack of clarity as to what is and is not permissable. Building on the work done by the FDTL CIEL project (ciel.lang.soton.ac.uk)

we are trying to include as much information as possible on these copyright issues in the Resources Area.

Another issue that has arisen is that, while many colleagues are producing excellent content, they are often hesitant about sharing their material because they lack confidence in its appearance. In a design-oriented world this hesitancy is understandable. Thus, another activity of the project has been to help colleagues to polish their materials to give them a more professional look (the Phonetics Book is one such example). Indeed, this issue of the lack of skills in C&IT is one that will be familiar to many colleagues. In order to try to encourage those who may be interested but hesitant in using technology to develop materials the project has organised a workshop on the use of a simple authoring tool (Hot Potatoes) to develop materials. The workshop (which ran on 7th June) was led by Philip Handley (University of Brighton) and based around his own experience as a novice user. It provided examples of the types of materials that can be produced as well as giving hands-on practice.

On the subject of technology we are also learning many lessons about how to structure and deliver these materials, along with all the other resources housed on our website. Working closely with a web developer and with The Web Guide Project (see p. 7) this new look is beginning to take shape. Here is a sneak preview of the prototype.

There is now only a short way to go before this project ends in October. However, with your continued help and support the Materials Bank (along with the Web Guide) will keep on growing, helping us to build a very important profile of the theory and practice of teaching within our subject communities. If you would like to find out more or donate your materials please contact Artie Vossel-Newman avn@soton.ac.uk
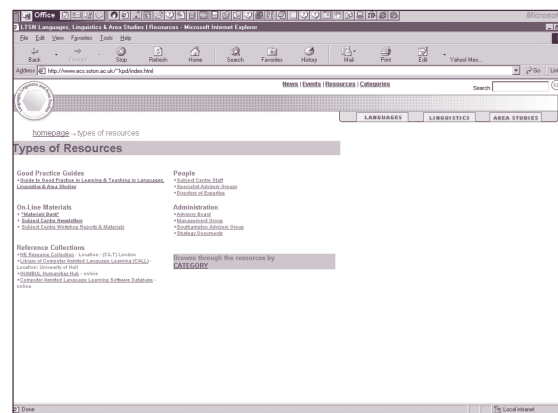
Alison Dickens–Subject Centre Academic Co-ordinator/ Materials Bank Project Manager
Artie Vossel-Newman–Materials Bank Research Assistant/Project Officer

Collaboration Programme in Modern Languages in Higher Education

In the last issue of Liaison, we reported that the Subject Centre was managing a substantial programme financed by HEFCE's Restructuring and Collaboration Fund (R&CF). The Collaboration Programme is the most extensive collaboration supported by this fund: ten mini projects are working to deliver different outcomes, each project illustrating a different model of collaboration. Some thirty institutions are involved.

The programme has been underway now for just over six months and many of the projects have started to deliver some of their outputs and outcomes. We hope to draw some useful lessons on the benefits and potential difficulties of working across institutions to deliver teaching programmes, resources or training. However we are sure that the deliverables of the projects themselves will contribute to the provision of modern languages both within the institutions most closely involved and across the sector as a whole. This in turn should enhance the culture of working in partnership with colleagues across institutions, which was developed so effectively by the FDTL projects. More detail about the projects is given below.

Teaching Collaboration in a Virtual Department of Dutch
Led by University College London, this three year project is working to provide an IT supported framework for inter-institutional collaboration in Dutch. It will develop shared web-based teaching and learning resources and create multimedia self-study packs in literature, linguistics, history and culture.

Gruppo 62 undergraduate collaboration in Italian studies
(www.hull.ac.uk/italian/g62index.htm). This project pools the expertise of staff teaching Italian at the universities of Hull and Leeds. The project is designing topic based modules on Renaissance and Medieval Italy which will be delivered by a combination of self-access web based materials and traditional face to face teaching.

Supply Teaching Database in French Studies and Research Training
The 2001 Group, a regional consortium of Universities in South East England is working on two collaborative projects which could provide useful models for activity elsewhere. Led by the University of Reading, the Group is developing a database which will offer details of courses offered by staff and research students for exchange in the participating departments. At the same time, the group is funded to carry out a project designed to create a flexible form of research training for students. A website is being created which will house both the supply teaching database and act as a notice board for the postgraduate students. Study days are also being organised for the postgraduates to enable them to share ideas and concerns with students on similar programmes in other institutions.

Web materials in European Area Studies
The Contemporary France Online project (www.well.ac.uk/cfol/index.asp), financed by FDTL funding developed a bank of web based learning materials including linear lecture notes converted into web pages, audio and video interviews, testing questions and digitised images. With funding from the Collaboration Programme resources will be developed and piloted in a similar way for German and Spanish. This project is led by Liverpool John Moores University.

MA in Italian Studies: Culture and Communication
This is a joint venture between the Universities of

Birmingham and Warwick. The MA programme involves both face-to face and on-line teaching. Students are registered at both universities and have equal access to the facilities of both campuses. Funding from the Collaboration programme will enable the web-based components of the programme to be developed more extensively to encourage interactive feedback, discussion and debate before and after face-to-face classes.

Joint MA in Soviet and Post Soviet Studies
The Universities of Bath and Surrey are also collaborating to devise a jointly taught and administered MA programme. In this case, the project hopes to be able to have the teaching divided equally between the two participating institutions with the summer being spent in St Petersburg. As part of the programme, web based materials will be developed to improve the flexibility of module delivery. Interestingly, the programme has two distinct tracks aimed at two distinct markets: graduates from traditional Russian language/literature backgrounds wishing to study translation at an advanced level and graduates in area studies wishing to expand their knowledge of Russian culture and acquire a working knowledge of Russian.

North West Centre for Research Training in Language and Linguistics
The consortium, led by the University of Salford is providing a suite of research training courses in the interface between modern languages and linguistics. Courses are available to students throughout Britain though students from the participating North West institutions are charged only a nominal fee. As well as the Research training events organised by the Centre, a website has been developed for postgraduate students in languages and linguistics (www.nwcl.salford.ac.uk)

Materials for postgraduate research training in Romance studies
The Institute of Romance Studies at the University of London is leading this project which aims to produce a substantial corpus of online materials which will provide a national resource for postgraduate training in the Romance languages. The materials included will cover academic resources as well as academic, practical and vocational skills.

Database of current research in Modern Languages
This project, led by Oxford Brooks University in Collaboration with CILT and the Institutes of Romance Studies and Germanic Studies, will produce a database which will identify current research projects in modern languages. The aim of the project is to raise awareness of current research, not only for prospective postgraduate students choosing their research topics, but also for policy-makers and language professionals.

After six months, the projects and the programme are gaining valuable insights into the fruits of and barriers to effective collaboration between institutions. These and updates from the projects will appear in future newsletters from the Subject Centre.

Liz Ashurst – Project Manager for the Collaboration Programme

Lingua 1 Project – Join the Club: Community Language Clubs

Partners: Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Dalarna University, Sweden is hosting the project: Loretta Qwarnström (Dalarna), Tina Eggegårdh (Järfälla Kommun, Sweden) and Vicky Wright (Subject Centre) make up the management team, which will plan and oversee project activities.

Over the next three years, a network of community clubs will be set up, the aim being to encourage language learning beyond the traditional classroom. It is hoped that the clubs will appeal to a wide range of people: perhaps those who have been turned off by earlier language learning experiences; people who do not have time to commit to regular classes; people who share common interests; and those who want to turn language learning into a social event. It is not planned that the clubs will run to a set format. Clubs currently envisaged include: a club with an haute cuisine focus run by a chef; a techno-club with a computer focus for young teenagers; a language club for the unemployed; and a literature club based in a bookshop. Each club will be supported by a facilitator and will be provided with support materials and the opportunity to use the European Language Portfolio. Marina Mozzon-McPherson from the Language Institute at the University of Hull is coordinating the face-to-face and online training of the facilitators, and will be helping to develop the support materials. In the first phase of the project, the Subject Centre is supporting three clubs in the Southampton area:

Club de español
In collaboration with the Consejería de Educación en Reino Unido e Irlanda, the Spanish Embassy, we have set up a club de español for local secondary school and sixth-form teachers of Spanish. The club is based on a format developed by the Consejería at CILT. The aims of the club are to enable teachers of Spanish to meet in order to practice/improve their language skills and develop/share materials. They will also have opportunities to find out more about the Spanish-speaking world through presentations and discussions with native Spanish speakers.

The University of Southampton hosted the first club de español meeting on 30th April 2002. It was attended by local teachers of Spanish together with Spanish language tutors from the University of Southampton. Maria Serrano, Language Adviser at the Consejería, chaired the meeting and gave a PowerPoint presentation on *La importancia del español en el mundo: cultura, sociedad, estudios y negocios, Spanish*. The club have agreed to meet regularly after school on the last Tuesday of the month during term time.

Southampton City Council Intermediate Language Club
This club will enable employees from Southampton City Council to meet to practise and improve their language skills. As a precursor to launching this club, we have been visiting French clubs in the local area to

find out how they were set up and how they work. A preliminary meeting with interested council staff was held on 17th May 2002 at Southampton Civic Centre and was attended by nearly 40 people. The purpose of this meeting was to decide upon the focus and language of the club and to arrange meeting times and venues. The club were also offered the opportunity to use the European Language Portfolio. In preparation for the preliminary meeting, a questionnaire was drafted for circulation during the meeting (and after the meeting for those unable to attend). Initial responses to the questionnaire indicate that French is the most popular choice of language for the pilot club.

University of the 3rd Age Club (U3A)

The University of the 3rd Age already has a number of language groups in the UK. Following an initial letter to the Co-ordinator of their Language Network, we were invited to attend a U3A Intermediate French Club meeting in Southampton on 23rd April 2002. We are interested to find out how these groups were set up and how they work. In return, we have offered the Club the opportunity to use the resources and materials in the Centre for Language Study at the University of Southampton, the chance to come and see screenings of French films at the University, and the services of advisers and/or native speakers. At national level, we would like to offer groups the opportunity to register their details with us and help them find international partners. If you are aware of any U3A English clubs operating in France who might be suitable partners for UK French clubs, please email pd2@soton.ac.uk with the details.

Other Project Activities

The Subject Centre hosted the recent visit of the Swedish project partners to exchange ideas while supporting independent language learning. In June, Paula Davis attended a facilitators' training course in Stockholm in preparation for online training to develop language advising skills.

The project website is currently under development and it is intended that it will feature a database of European language clubs, enabling individual clubs to register and find partner clubs in other countries. The web pages will also provide links to existing online language materials. For further information about the project, visit the website at:
www2.du.se/blg/projekt/default.asp?iProjektID=96

Paula Davis - Subject Centre Research Assistant/Projects Officer
Vicky Wright - Subject Centre Academic Co-ordinator for Languages

News from CILT

Dawn Ebbrell reports on CILT HE activities

The Higher Education Resources in the CILT resources library in Covent Garden continues to grow. The CILT library and Higher Education Resources Collection is a reference collection, visitors to the library are welcome during published opening hours, groups can also be accommodated by prior arrangement. Full details can be found on the CILT website at: www.cilt.org.uk

Below are details of some recent acquisitions.

LTSN Assessment Series

The LTSN Assessment series produced by the LTSN generic Centre comprises 12 booklets dealing with different issues.

They include assessment guides for:

● senior managers

● heads of departments

● lecturers

● students

Issues are covered in the context of a particular role, the guide for senior managers for example covers strategic and contemporary issues with implications for leadership such as staff workload, students with disabilities, employability and computer-aided assessment. Cross-reference is also made to key documents such as the QAA Code of Practice. Having explored issues in the context of specific roles, further documents are included in the series which develop a particular area.

Thus, also included are briefings on:

● key skills in higher education;

● assessment of portfolios;

● key concepts: formative and summative, criterion and

● norm-referenced assessment;

● assessing disabled students;

● self, peer and group assessment;

● plagiarism;

● work-based learning;

● assessment of large groups;

All guides are written by expert practitioners and include references and suggestions for further reading.

Copies of the pack have been sent to 3 contacts in all UK HEIs: Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellors (Learning & Teaching) and Heads of Educational Development. Additional hard copies of the series are available at a cost of £75; guides can also be downloaded from the website of the LTSN generic centre at:
www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/projects/assessment/assess_series.asp

Papers from an LTSN conference on assessment can be found on the web at:
www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre/projects/assessment/conference.asp

Resources for language learning

For the undergraduate languages student, Routledge's Interpreting series, available for French, German, Spanish and Italian supports the teaching of liaison interpreting skills as a means of developing advanced language skills. The pack includes a tutor's book, student handouts including structured exercises and six hours worth of dialogues on audio cassette.

Palgrave Macmillan's Foundations series are specifically designed for non-specialist language learners on institution wide language programs. Beginners courses in French, Italian and Spanish, and an intermediate course for French are available at the time of writing with German 1 due in April 2003.

The books are designed to fit the 20 to 24-week HE teaching year with two or three hours class contact per week. In contrast with many adult education courses, there is less emphasis on topics such as meals out, tourism and shopping. All course books include a self-study section for non-contact hours. For more information visit the Foundations website at: www.palgrave.com/foundations/languages

Library Exhibition
Publishers of teaching resources have been very supportive to CILT over the years, in providing copies of their materials for inclusion in the Library's permanent national reference collection of in-print resources. Since Autumn 2001, a more systematic use of display facilities has been instituted, with a rolling programme of half-yearly thematic exhibitions which will address topical issues, or relate to current developments which are having significant impact on publishing activity. The current display is entitled Resources in languages for adult learners in adult, continuing, further and higher education. Visitors to the library can view this exhibition until the end of this academic year.

Future events
In response to the interest in last autumn's Information Day for Postgraduate Students, a similar event is planned for the next semester for new postgraduate students on MAs and PhD programmes in languages and linguistics. A provisional date of Tues 26 November has been booked for the Information Day to be held at CILT. A series of resource information days on different topics have taken place this year at CILT. A session for linguistics will take place in the autumn term on 4 June 2003. For further details on both events e-mail he-enquiries@cilt.org.uk.

CILT Library Catalogue on the web
The CILT Library catalogue is now on-line and is fully searchable by keywords, author, title and so on. The catalogue is on-line at: www.cilt.org.uk/libcat

Speaking up for languages – report on the European Year of Languages
Speaking up for languages, the report on the success of the European Year of Languages in the UK produced by CILT, was presented at a public event at the Foreign Office on Europe Day, 9 May. Sir Trevor McDonald, backed up by European Ambassadors, made a speech linking competence in foreign languages to the ability to play a full role in Europe - both economically and politically. Europe Minister Peter Hain agreed - he said he was learning German and Jack Straw is learning French.

Speaking up for languages, the report on the success of the EYL2001 in the UK is available from the CILT website in PDF format. The report can be downloaded from: www.cilt.org.uk/eylreport.htm

Dawn Ebbrell–CILT Higher Education Information Officer

Making Sense of 9/11: Teaching American Studies After the Attack on the Twin Towers
Alison Dickens reports on a workshop run by the FDTL AMATAS project

The emotional response to the attack last September on the World Trade Centre has been a very powerful one, intensified no doubt by the fact that it was played out before our eyes on live television.

Just like another momentous event in American history also dramatically captured on film (the assassination of Kennedy), 9/11 has become firmly anchored in our collective memory. We now recount, as we did back in the sixties, where and when we heard of the attack, demonstrating that this was a political action that has had a deep and personal impact. Making sense of such a shocking event, made more shocking because it happened right in our living rooms and offices, has not been an easy task for the ordinary person but neither also for the world's most powerful nation nor for those whose job it is to make sense of such things. The event organised by the FDTL AMATAS project held at King Alfred's College, Winchester, set out to describe this process of making sense of 9/11 and to look at the ways in which both the emotional and intellectual response to it may affect the teaching of American Studies in the UK.

In his talk Victor Siedler (Goldsmith's) outlined the ways in which the complexities of the events of 9/11 were couched in a polarising discourse that played very much to an emotional response of fear, anger and hatred. The civilised world under attack from an uncivilised one, the modern world against the medieval, rationalism against fanaticism. However, as Victor showed, this polarisation both echoed and denied history. Talk of crusades gave the lie to insistences that this was not a war against Islam, while the attack itself - both high-tech and staged for the cameras - was very much the work of a modern rather than medieval 'mind'. This attack was both national (against the most powerful nation in the world), international (the work of a terrorist network rather than one nation state), global (the Twin Towers symbolised both financial and human globalisation) and local (in the use of civilian planes and mostly non-military targets it threatened everyone). So, in order to make sense of these events and the discourse that surrounds them, Victor returned us to ourselves. This last, embodied by the shoe bomber – international terrorist and Islamic fanatic, or South London boy whose father neglected him–demonstrates that things happen for a reason, indeed for many reasons and that in trying to make sense of them we might not get the 'sensible' answer that we are searching for.

The second talk from Andrew Wernick (Trent University, Ontario) looked at the semiotics of a media

event and a media-driven response which put religion at its heart. For the United States (a secular nation that has abolished Christmas from the national calendar as too exclusive, of other religions) this symbolism points to a religion that is not Christianity but a US civic religion in which the President's oath of office makes a bond between God (the state) and the people. Thus it was not the Christian faith that found itself under attack (if one reads this as a war of religions), but the American faith. Indeed, argues Wernick, this was the perfect 'sign crime' in its attack on the Twin Towers so rich in symbolism of masculine, economic and global power. And how does this help us to make sense of things? According to Wernick this 'reading' helps us see how the attack has reinforced rather than diminished US faith in itself, allowing it to reassert its ideological power, its nationhood and its sovereignty over the global community.

In his talk Scott Lucas (Birmingham), considered the ways in which the teaching of 9/11 should interrogate the events from the following standpoints:

- The role of the state – despite globalisation the state does matter whether it be a nation state (e.g. the US) or a statelike economic alliance suchas Al Quaida
- The exercise of power – the playing field is still not level and the US still seeks and maintains a 'preponderance of power'
- Ideology – what is the meaning of freedom and how is this used as a unifying force in a multi-cultural nation?
- The 'mythical nation' – how a culture constructs itself in both cultural and political terms (that are inseparable)

He also gave examples of the ways in which media images can be used with students to illustrate how ideological and political perspectives are constructed and how they may reveal much of what really lies behind them. An example of this is an article from Vanity Fair which portrays the President and Colin Powell in decontextualised close-up and the Vice President (the real seat of power?) in long shot surrounded by the trappings of high command.

In his talk Alasdair Spark (King Alfred's) took up the theme of the influence of affect in students' response to, and reading of, 9/11 and reminded us that a critical view of the US (that of the teacher, perhaps) might not be shared by the student because of the emotive power of the event itself. He then demonstrated the ways in which resources such as TV reports can be used with students to help them with their 'reading' of the event and its aftermath. Using a clip from CNN which

in a rather 'pop' way (the interviewer was from MTV) reported on a growing market in post-Taliban Afghanistan for satellite TV, we explored the ways in which students can be encouraged to 'deconstruct' such images, and perhaps their own, responses to 9/11.

In his final summing up Shamoon Zamir (King's) suggested that it is still very early to judge the long-term impact of 9/11 on the teaching of American Studies. He pointed out that current debates are occuring within established theoretical frameworks and that before any 'new theory' is established it would be risky to try deliver anything too 'new' students. He also commented on the need to be cautious when adding emotion and religion to a rationalist debate, as this may suggest that the Islamic world is defined only by these elements (blind and primitive allegiance to a faith) and ignores the rationalist voices that are being raised within it. He also suggested that while 9/11 was a media moment it is also necessary, in teaching, to explore aspects of international politics that are not media-friendly – the moral and ethical debates about war and killing. He also felt that it is important to be both unafraid to be critical of the Islamic world and to measure anti-americanism with respect for its significant cultural contributions both nationally and internationally.

So did we, after all this, manage to make sense of 9/11 in a way that enables us to teach it to our students? It is hard to tell. The day demonstrated very effectively the need to recognise the impact that a very emotional individual, national and international response has exercised on reasoned debate. It has emphasised how what might be seen as a very polarised response (us good, them bad) belies the underlying paradoxes that throw this easy categorisation into stark relief. Teaching about 9/11 will also reflect these paradoxes making it the easiest topic to teach, in terms of wealth of resources, while at the same time the most difficult, with so many voices to listen to and so many questions still to ask. And to whom will we turn for the answers? Worryingly for American Studies, in the aftermath of the events of 9/11, it seemed that it is to the spokespeople for international politics that the press has turned for answers. So if academics in American Studies do make sense of 9/11 will anyone out there even be listening?

To read the full text of the papers and to find out more about the AMATAS project see: www.amatas.org

Alison Dickens–Subject Centre Academic Co-ordinator for Area Studies
The American Studies and the Teaching of Americanisation Project (AMATAS) is based at the University of Central Lancashire and run in partnership with King Alfred's College, Winchester and the Unversity of Derby.

Book Review

Teaching Languages in Higher Education: Issues in Training and Continuing Professional Development, Ed., John Klapper, CiLT, Centre for Information and Language Teaching and Research, 2001..

This book is an invaluable collection of articles, though perhaps the introduction is too full of acronyms and abbreviations to read through comfortably. However, the aim of clarifying ways towards professional development in modern language teaching is clear, and it is a welcome and timely publication. It is divided into ten chapters which I list below:

In the first chapter, *'Shifting Perspectives on Language Teacher Education,'* John Klapper discusses the problem of becoming 'professional teachers' after gaining one's degree, and presents the pros and cons of behaviourist approaches vs. other more constructivist (where each individual learner constructs his/her world) approaches. This first chapter sets the tone for all the following on reflective practice. Klapper concludes in the words of Richards that teacher development 'is a process of on-going self-discovery and self-renewal, as top down approaches to teaching are replaced by more bottom up approaches that blend the two.'

The second chapter, *'Language Teacher Development from Inside Out,'* by Corony Edwards is a provocative reflection on teachers' beliefs, assumptions and knowledge, and how these all influence professional practice. A value-principle is proposed: that students should learn inductively.

A comparison is made between Western individualist societies and collectivist cultures, because language teaching, by definition, involves cross-cultural issues. A game called 'mazes' (Kennedy, 1999) is proposed to uncover teachers' inherent beliefs. Edwards concludes with the words of Richards, 'Teaching involves both thought and action and the interaction between the two forms the focus of recent approaches to teacher development.'

In the third chapter, *'Training Postgraduate and Foreign Language Assistants: the DOPLA approach,'* Carol Gray expresses the aims of equipping trainee teachers with general teaching and assessment skills relevant to HE, focusing on what's needed, and promoting reflection on practice. The DOPLA (Development of Post Graduate and Language Assistants) course entails the key elements of effective language teaching: building on a well-structured knowledge base, providing a motivational context, ensuring learner activity, and facilitating interaction with others. The DOPLA course, (Parts I and II) was run in Birmingham and has many good ideas for handling feedback, and collective activities during an individual's presentation, etc.

Chapter Four, *'Learning From Experience: Initial Training in Six Universities',* by Helen Adams et al. continues talking of the DOPLA project and examines it from the institutional context and perceived needs of trainees, trainers, and training, asking who should delve into the training. Again, reflective practice is counselled, and feedback is proposed as enhancing the trainer's educational experience. The authors point out that change is crucial. We are all in a culture of change, we must examine the obstacles to training, i.e. communication problems between universities and within the same university. They conclude that the aims of professionalizing teacher training have been successfully met in the DOPLA project.

In Chapter Five, *'Supporting Professional Development in ICT',* William Haworth discusses how truly, 'ICT' could cover a wide area including chalk and felt-tip pens, but is defined more narrowly by 'computers, internet, CD-ROM and other software, television and radio, video, cameras and other equipment.' Still, in discussing the cognitive and constructivist perspective, there is reflection on the comparison of theories such as the 'behaviourist' model (learning through imitation and repetition) and 'transformational grammar' where cognitive language systems are already in place. Thus the actual use of language based around problem-solving was seen as more important than discrete practice of separate aspects of the language, as students are encouraged to generate original utterances. A very clear and useful chart of the aims for training oneself and training others is presented, and the article concludes that the challenges are not technical but human.

Chapter Six, by Elspeth Broady was particularly interesting to me: *'Doing What Doesn't Come Naturally: Designing Activities to Support Listening Comprehension'* Broady begins by making a distinction between 'listening to learn,' and 'learning to listen' and gives sample exercises. She talks about appropriate listening activities for different levels of learners, and discusses the age old dilemma between 'authentic' and 'scripted' materials and examines the principles for designing listening activities: purpose, task, achievability, active engagement. She also discusses video and how to draw attention to meaningful target language forms so that they are likely to be acquired. Video technologies and who has the control are also discussed. She observes that digital technologies can be exploited more flexibly, but that teachers need training in this area.

In Chapter Seven, *'Preparing for Residence Abroad: Staff Development Implications',* James A. Coleman and Linda Parker discuss the problems of residence abroad, and the objectives of such programmes. The authors contrast a distance-learning taught programme with a game showing that 'residence abroad matters,' introducing real life scenarios and a range of costed solutions. They discuss 'good practice' and conclude that residence abroad is a valuable experience, though good practice is not universal as there are quite a few problems integrating the experience into the curriculum.

In Chapter Eight, *'From Learner Training to Learner Development: An Analysis of Changes in the Teacher-Learner Relationship,'* Vicky Davies et al discuss the changes inherent in learner 'autonomy,' and the teacher's role in fostering that 'autonomy' The authors propose several models for the way forward. For one, introducing the notion of 'adviser' rather than "teacher" gives rise to a new way of teaching.

Chapter Nine, *'Tandem Observation: A Strategy for Developing Reflective Teaching,'* by Jane Woodin, et al. discusses peer observation, which though it has become relatively common now, many teachers have still not observed or been observed by a peer. The authors discuss observation which has traditionally been one-way or supervisory in nature, and propose two-way or tandem situations where colleagues observe each other or groups of colleagues exchange observations and discuss outcomes as a group. There are suggestions on how to organize such observations, and the importance of briefing (prior) and de-briefing (post).

Chapter Ten, *'The Teaching Portfolio: Approaches, Values and Professional Development'* by Lore Arthur explains what a portfolio is: a collection of teaching materials assembled to tell the story of an individual teacher in a professional context, and to show competence in teaching and learning. Lore Arthur discusses the portfolio framework, and how to prepare and present a portfolio. How does one show one's competence in a portfolio? Basically, through critical reflection, in writing: a short essay form. It is argued that portfolios are now in the arena where assessment affects policies, budgets, personnel decisions, and institutional goals. What is the best way to prepare and present a portfolio? Basically by assimilating documents with narratives. Arthur gives a list of such beginning with syllabi of course designs–14 general criteria–and considers the benefits of undertaking such a project.

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Subject Centre Calendar 2002/3

July 2002
Thursday 4 July
Workshop: Linguistics and the Web
University of the West of England

September 2002
Monday 16 September
Institutional Visit, Coventry
Thursday 26 September
Symposium: Competing for Space
Can immigrant and indigenous linguistic
minorities coexist, University of Southampton
Friday 27 September
Subject Centre Open Day, University of Southampton

October 2002
Workshop: Curriculum 2000 Part 2, Open University,
London
Workshop: Tools for interactive language teaching

November 2002
Friday 1 November
Seminar: Teaching Celtic Studies, Welsh CILT, Cardiff
Tuesday 26 November
Launch: UCML National Languages Strategy
Tuesday 26 November
Languages & Linguistics Postgraduate
Information Day, CILT

December 2002
Wednesday 4 December
Resources Information Day: Less widely taught
languages, CILT
Friday 6 December
Seminar: Issues in Postgraduate Training for
Linguistics, CILT
Wednesday 11 December
Meeting: Area Studies Network, CILT
Workshop: Personal Development Planning
Workshop: Computer-based Assessment

January 2003
Tuesday 21 January
Meeting: Subject Centre Advisory Board, CILT
Friday 31 January
Seminar: Using Film in the Teaching of Languages and
Area Studies, CILT

February 2003
Seminar: Teaching English Language
Workshop: The Virtual Knowledge Project (Area
Studies)

March 2003
Friday 14 March
Workshop: Area Studies, CILT
Workshop: Marketing & Recruitment
in Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, London
Institutional Visit

April 2003
Workshop: Personal Development Planning
Workshop: Corpora in the Classroom

May 2003
Friday 23 May
Seminar: Key Skills and Assessment in Linguistics,
CILT
Institutional Visit

June 2003
Wednesday 4 June
Resources Information Day: Linguistics, CILT
Friday 6 June
Workshop: Teaching Literary & Cultural Studies, CILT
Friday 20 June
Workshop: Teaching Data Analysis Techniques for
Linguistics, CILT

Meet the Subject Centre Team

Left to right (front): Dawn Ebbrell (HE Information Officer, CILT); Jane Copeland (Subject Centre Secretary, Southampton); Liz Ashurst (Centre Manager, Southampton); Janet Bartle (Academic Co-ordinator for Learning Technologies Hull); Lid King (CILT Director)
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