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Feeling the Heat

Higher education has never been so high on the political agenda as it is now. At UK level, the debate over tuition fees has made university financing one of the government's crunch issues for the autumn, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. Ministers and funding councils have been pouring out consultations and statements on strategy and policy, which could transform the sector over the next five years. Major restructurings are in prospect. At institutional level, changes are also gathering pace, with significant mergers and restructurings underway, and more promised. Internationally, higher education is coming under global pressures as growing numbers of students opt to study outside their own country. And within Europe, efforts are being stepped up to achieve greater convergence through the Bologna process and the aim of a European higher education area, effectively a single market for HE.

While much of the discussion in UK universities revolves around issues of research, it is the issues of education that command public attention, as well as determining the economic fate of the sector. Recognising this, the government has made some far-reaching decisions to address the country's ability to provide education of the highest quality, and to increase its attractiveness to potential students whether from this country or abroad. As a result, two major initiatives are now gaining momentum: the establishment of a new Higher Education Academy, and the creation of Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Both of these will fundamentally affect learning and teaching in our subject areas.

The new HE Academy will be set up over the next few months and will comprise several existing organisations, including the LTSN. By this time next year, our Subject Centre will be an active part of the Academy, carrying out all of our existing activities, and probably adding some new ones. The Academy is planned as a major institution with a long future, rather than a short-term project, and will expect to give energy and direction to the development of education. It will hold a Register of HE practitioners, replacing ILT membership, to which most teaching and support staff will be

expected to subscribe over time. And most national initiatives aimed at innovation and quality enhancement will be channelled through it.

The Centres for Excellence are still under consultation, but there is no doubting the government's commitment to the concept. They are likely to complement Subject Centres by providing a test bed for new ideas and a showcase for good practices in learning and teaching. Some 70 or so are planned, funded at up to £500,000 a year over five years, and we very much hope that some of these new Centres will be established in our subject areas, or in aspects of education that involve our subject centrally.

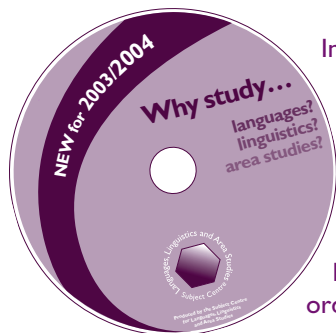
Beyond these two major changes, it is clear that higher education is increasingly seen as the keystone of the whole education system, and that universities and colleges are going to be called upon to play a growing role in partnerships with the 'upstream' sectors, especially secondary schooling, and with the 'downstream' sectors of careers, employment and training. This status brings opportunities and threats. The opportunities are linked to increased resources, broader social support, and a stronger recognition for achievement in education, as distinct from research. The threats are linked to tighter alignment with specific public policies, heavier scrutiny and auditing, and a greater exposure to market forces.

As always, we shall face a delicate balancing act between the constraints of working within a system whose means and ends we can only partially influence, and on the other hand the ability to help our students to transform and empower themselves through learning. With the interested gaze of the broader public turning towards us, that sounds too good a chance to miss. But we should expect that it is we in the academic community, as well as the government, who will feel the heat this autumn.

Michael Kelly, Subject Centre Director

'Why Study.....?'

Marketing Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies



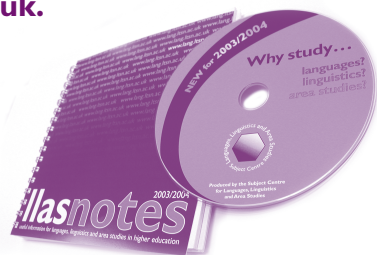
In 2002, the Subject Centre produced the Languages Box, a collection of materials for marketing languages, which could be used by HE staff on schools visits or open days. The box included a CD with PowerPoint Presentation 'Why Study Languages?' which has been used by many colleagues across the UK. We have now updated this CD and included presentations on studying Linguistics and Area Studies. The CD comes as part of LLAS Notes, a notebook with facts and figures about our subject areas (see page 2 of this newsletter).

If you have not already received your free copy of LLAS Notes and the 'Why Study..?' CD, you can order one online at: www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/maillinglist/notebookfrm.aspx

Our New Publications

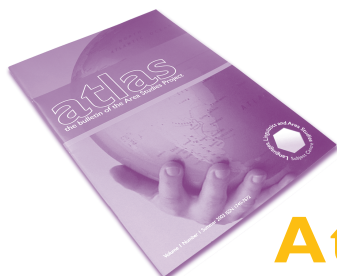
During the summer the Subject Centre produced two new publications. Order online at www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk.

LLAS Notes



LLAS Notes: Useful Information for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies in Higher Education is a new way of disseminating key information to the Subject Centre's community. It is a 96-page spiral bound notebook containing:

- Facts and figures on higher education in our subject areas including statistics on 16-19 exam entries and HE intake as well as courses offered through UCAS and at postgraduate level;
- A comprehensive directory of subject associations and related organisations in our subject areas;
- More information about the Subject Centre and what we do;
- Space for making your own notes.



Atlas

The Subject Centre is also pleased to announce the first edition of *Atlas: the Bulletin of the Area Studies Project*. Edited by John Canning, Academic Coordinator for Area Studies, Atlas contains:

- Editorial: Building an Area Studies Community, John Canning
- The Labours of Area Studies, Alison Dickens
- Area Studies: Key to the Future of Modern Languages, Michael Derham
- Area Studies Project event reports, conference reports, diary of forthcoming events

Contributions for the second issue in November/December 2003 are very welcome. For further details email the editor at J.Canning@soton.ac.uk.

Review of our Events Programme 2002-03

The Subject Centre aims to provide a programme that is of interest and of value to colleagues teaching and supporting learners of languages, linguistics and area studies. The events pages of the website provide more detail about the 2002-03 programme and in many cases an event report. Go to: www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/events/llaseventsarchive.aspx

Last year's programme included

- Curriculum 2000 and the implications for HE
- Computer Assisted Assessment
- Pedagogical Research
- Teaching on less commonly taught Area Studies programmes
- Using Virtual Learning Environments
- Personal Development Planning
- Intercultural learning and the role of visual media
- Interactive Whiteboards for Language Teaching
- Interdisciplinarity and inter-cultural learning
- Implications of the White Paper and the National Languages Strategy
- Key Skills and Assessment in Linguistics
- Set texts? New approaches to the teaching of literature in languages and related studies/area studies

It has been very rewarding to see a growing attendance at our events (some 427 in 2002/3) and feedback has shown that these events can be "highly useful, interesting, inspiring", "well-presented, very informative and stimulating" and even "exciting". One of our primary aims is to provide a forum for colleagues to meet with each other to discuss their teaching and related issues. Comments from many attendees have shown that this aspect of our work is highly valued:

"The Subject Centre does an excellent job to facilitate the exchange of ideas"

"Good to meet colleagues to discuss teaching strategies"

"Wide-ranging, well-organised and useful for networking"

"Keeping in touch with teaching while engaged in research"

As to the forthcoming programme (see page 4), while one attendee was keen to see "more of the same!" we have tried to incorporate suggestions and ideas from colleagues who are part of the Subject Centre Network (those who attend events, use our website, sit on our advisory committees, receive our bulletins, receive funding for projects etc.). So if you have attended an event in the past that you have enjoyed or would like to suggest topics for future events please let us know.

Subject Centre/CILT Conference: Navigating the new landscape for languages

Call for papers - deadline Friday 24 October 2003

'Navigating the new landscape for languages' will take place at the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London on 30 June and 1 July 2004. This two-day conference is jointly organised by the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies and CILT - The National Centre for Languages, in partnership with key subject associations in languages and related studies in higher education: UCML, SCHML, AULC and ALL.

The conference aims to bring together all those concerned with the development of policy, strategy and the curriculum in languages and related studies (including linguistics) in higher education, both in the UK and internationally.

These are challenging times for languages and related studies. The recent report 'A new landscape for languages', funded by the Nuffield Foundation, mapped current trends and demonstrated that they are not confined to the UK. Among the key needs it identified were: the effective management of more differentiated provision; increased collaboration between education sectors and institutions; and clearer rationales for the study of languages. These needs are set in the context of the contracting range of universities offering languages, the increasing range of languages available and the shrinking numbers of students studying specialist language degrees.

The conference will address national, international and institutional policy issues as well as innovation, with respect to curriculum design, content and delivery (see list of themes opposite).

Contributions are invited for papers or workshops, addressing the issues outlined below. They may have a theoretical or a practical focus. UK, European and wider international perspectives on any of these issues are welcomed in the context of both undergraduate and postgraduate provision.

To submit a proposal

Proposals should be concisely presented and relate to at least one of the themes opposite. They should be written on the official form and sent to Dawn Ebbrell at CILT, 20 Bedfordbury, London, WC2N 4LB, e-mail dawn.ebbrell@cilt.org.uk by **24 October 2003** at the latest. An electronic version of the form is available from www.cilt.org.uk/he2004 or www.lang.ltn.ac.uk/events/conf2004.aspx. Printed copies can be obtained from Dawn Ebbrell. Submissions exceeding the specified length will not be considered.

The working language of the conference will be English.

Conference Themes

1. Collaboration with other sectors of education/marketing and recruitment

- outreach activities with schools and colleges;
- issues related to school curricula, e.g. English Language A Level and Linguistics programmes, use of ICT in schools;
- strategies for maintaining and strengthening less widely taught languages;
- promotional campaigns and marketing strategies.

2. Income generation

- commercialisation of language services;
- private language service providers: collaboration or competition?
- capitalising on external funding sources.

3. Accreditation and recognition schemes

- alternative qualifications;
- experiences in using portfolios including Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and the European Language Portfolio;
- the Common European Framework of Reference in action;
- employability and recognition of transferable skills.

4. Innovation in curriculum structure and content

- development of new degree programmes; e.g. foundation degrees, modes of integrating language study into other degree programmes, joint degrees in languages and linguistics;
- innovation in the development of Master's programmes;
- pedagogical innovation, including the use of ICT;
- developments related to residence abroad.

Format

- Papers or presentations: 30 minutes plus 10 minutes for discussion.
- Interactive workshops with little or no formal presentation: 45 minutes including time for discussion.

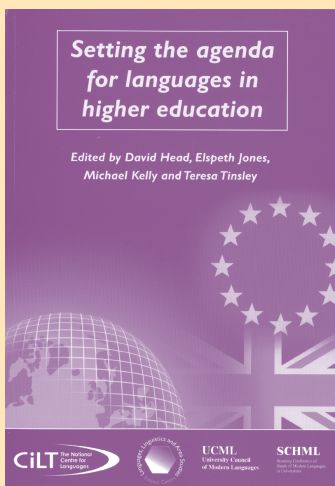
NB: Hands-on ICT workshops will not be available.

Note:

Kelly, M and Jones, D (2003), 'A new landscape for languages', The Nuffield Foundation.

Setting the Agenda for Languages in Higher Education

Now available from CILT publications, 'Setting the Agenda for Languages in Higher Education' is edited by David Head, Elspeth Jones, Michael Kelly and Teresa Tinsley. It has been published in association with the Subject Centre and in collaboration with UCML and SCHML. (CILT, August 2003. 240pp. £15)



This book is designed to support emerging policies towards languages in higher education and to enrich the debate about their place within the curriculum and within society as a whole. It will be of interest to all those concerned with developing provision for languages in HE and it provides an important contribution to the debate on language policies for the 21st century.

For details on how to order see www.cilt.org.uk/publications/howtoorder.htm

News in Brief

The Subject Centre in Wales

The Subject Centre has established a partnership with CILT Cymru to help deliver activities to meet the specific needs of our colleagues in Wales. Keith Marshall, Director of CILT Cymru, would like to establish an Advisory Group to advise on the shape and focus of these activities. If you would like to know more about this partnership, contact Keith Marshall (k.marshall@bangor.ac.uk) or Liz Ashurst at the Subject Centre (E.J.Ashurst@soton.ac.uk). Colleagues in Wales have always attended our workshops elsewhere in the UK and we hope that they will continue to do so.

Communications and IT Workshop: Using PowerPoint

The Subject Centre and CILT are proposing to organise a one-day hands-on course focusing on the exploitation of PowerPoint in language teaching in Higher Education. We plan to run the course in May 2004. At this stage we would like to get a feel for the level of interest and demand for such a course and would be grateful if you would complete five short questions using our online form, which can be found at www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/events/powerpointform.aspx

FDTL 5: Celtic Studies

Phase 5 bids are now being invited in the area of Celtic Studies. In order to be eligible to lead a bid, departments must be HEFCE (England) or DEL (Northern Ireland) funded, have undergone QAA subject review under Celtic Studies (2001) and have had their quality approved in the Subject Review.

However please note that other institutions may be involved as partners with the above departments. All departments eligible to lead a bid have made contact with the Subject Centre. If you teach in another department and wish to know more, please email Marie Weaver at the Subject Centre (M.Weaver@soton.ac.uk).

Projects

We are now involved in a broad array of projects. To find out more go to the projects page of our website www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/projects.aspx

Higher Education Academy

The Report of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Committee in January 2003 recommended that a new HE Academy be established. The Academy would bring together the functions of ILTHE, HESDA and LTSN and develop new functions to better support the enhancement needs and interests of higher education communities. Progress towards establishing the Academy is continuing well. The funding bodies and UUK/SCOP have appointed Professor Leslie Wagner as its Interim Chair. The present working timetable is to incorporate the Academy in October 2003 and for it to become fully operational during 2004. For more information, go to the LTSN website: www.ltsn.ac.uk

Foundation Degrees in Languages

The Subject Centre held an open meeting to discuss foundation degrees on 11 July. A report by Tim Connell (City University) on foundation degrees in Languages is on the Subject Centre website at: www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/paper.aspx?resourceid=1631 The Subject Centre is happy to convene another meeting to discuss the implications of foundation degrees for our subject areas. If you would be interested in this, please email the Subject Centre: llas@soton.ac.uk

Languages and Careers

CILT and the Languages National Training Organisation (LNTO) have recently merged to form a single body known as CILT, the National Centre for Languages. Following the recommendations of the National Languages Strategy, this newly merged body submitted a bid to the DfES requesting funding for materials, case studies and information on languages in the workplace. The project is called Languages: Work. For more information and factsheets on languages in the workplace, go to: www.languagesnto.org.uk/careers/factsheets_menu.htm

Rethinking pedagogical models for e-learning

In March we issued a call for bids to manage a project looking at e-learning in Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies. The University of Sheffield was the successful applicant. It is well placed to carry out a project of this kind; the city is developing a Languages strategy through a partnership between the Sheffield Multilingual City Forum, the Association for Language Learning, the Regional Languages Network and local specialist language colleges. In addition to this there are plans to make Sheffield an 'E-Learning City'.

Forthcoming Events

Subject Centre Autumn Programme

For more information on these and other events see forthcoming e-bulletins and our events page on www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/events/llasevents.aspx

Date and Location	Event
5 November 2003 CILT Covent Garden	Opening an umbrella for the Area Studies Community The Subject Centre is brokering this event to set up an Area Studies Association. It will be of most interest to representatives of the Area Studies Associations.
12 November 2003 Women's Library, London Metropolitan University	Selling Languages: Challenges and Solutions This event will examine findings of recent research into attitudes towards language learning at post-16 and post-19 level and will explore curriculum developments being adopted to switch students back onto language learning (e.g. ab initio degree, 3-year degree and foundation degree programmes).
26 November 2003 CILT Covent Garden	Resources and activities for developing intercultural competence This one-day seminar is aimed primarily at tutors in higher education concerned with the development of intercultural competence in students studying on languages or area studies programmes.
16 December 2003 University of Lancaster	Intercultural Learning and Teaching Forum The Subject Centre is hosting a pedagogic forum at the annual conference of IALIC (International Association for Languages and Intercultural Learning). The session will include 3 presentations, a poster exhibition and 3 themed discussion sessions.

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Our monthly e-bulletin alerts to forthcoming events, regular mailings of this publication, a subscription to the Subject Centre Journal, *Liaison*

You can join online at: www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/maillinglist/maillinglistregfrm.aspx