

HUMAN PLUS 2004

First Conference of the Archipelago of Humanistic Thematic Networks "The role of the humanistic arts and sciences in European society, education and research"

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Work group 3: Sharing insights and knowledge with respect to learning/teaching strategies

Thematic Network: TNP3 in the area of languages

The following are some of the main recommendations from the synthesis report of the TNP2 subproject on **New Learning Environments for Language Learning and Teaching in European Higher Education** and thus mainly addresses the education aspect of the conference theme.

Summary of needs and tentative recommendations for measures

In order to improve the quality of language teaching at HE level and to meet the challenge of new developments, NLEs and ILL have to be integrated into the teaching and learning process. First of all, the **infrastructure** has to be put in place to meet these new needs and **policies** established to provide a framework for practice. Then, **teachers** will have to be trained to use it and to develop didactically appropriate materials and methodologically sound approaches to teaching and guiding learning in these new environments and to supporting students in their ILL efforts. Thirdly, **students** need to be trained in using NLEs for language learning purposes and in adopting and developing learning strategies needed in independent and self-directed language learning. Fourthly, **dissemination of information** on successful initiatives is necessary. This would promote both **co-operation** between different institutions with the aim to improve the quality of research, development and practice and to avoid the costly duplication of efforts. Interdisciplinary professional co-operation is also necessary, for instance, between language and content teachers and software and hardware designers in order to arrive at suitable applications and solutions for piloting. Finally, it is essential to **ensure that graduates are properly equipped** for the future. This focuses on the development of language graduates whose ability to communicate, teach, and interact in a foreign language is matched with the ability to do so in a variety of environments and through the intelligent use of a wide range of tools (e.g. authoring tools, computer-aided translation systems, computer and videoconferencing systems, electronic forums, online multilingual management systems, and other communications systems). Other graduates must also be equipped so that they have the necessary communication skills for internationalised workplaces and that they will be able to continue and direct their language studies on a lifelong basis in line with what their professional and social life requires.

Tentative recommendations for measures (E-European level; N-national; I-institutional)

1. Development of national and institutional educational visions, policies, and

strategies to recognise and foster the value of multilingualism and cultural competence, as well as ICT and lifelong learning skills, as integral parts of academic and professional competence. (N/I)

2. Improvement, updating, and tailoring of the necessary infrastructure (technical, strategic, staff) to guarantee baseline conditions and to serve the purposes of using NLEs in a flexible way in teaching and for independent language learning (ILL). (I/N)

3. Tailored and continuous technical support for actors involved and interdisciplinary co-operation. (I/N)

4. Continuous practical and methodological teacher development programmes and pedagogical support tailored particularly for the needs of higher education language teachers. (N/I)

5. Reassessment and updating of pre-service education of all language professionals to ensure their future expertise in the field (N/I).

6. Reassessment of qualifications and job descriptions and establishment of new qualifications programmes (e.g. linguistic engineer). (N/I)

7. Systematic learner training for independent language learning (ILL) and use of NLEs and adequate support systems. (I)

8. Acknowledgement of language studies as an integral part of academic and professional qualifications in all fields, and accreditation and validation of such studies as well as independent language learning achievement. (N/I)

9. Establishment of common standardised platforms and learning spaces to ensure easy access of resources and expertise. (E/N/I)

Joint institutional, national, and European projects and action research projects to evaluate existing, and to develop new programmes, materials and pedagogical approaches which promote multilingualism, use of NLEs and ILL. (I/N/E)

11. Encouragement to use common European standards of reference and assessment to guarantee transparency and reciprocal recognition. (N/I)

12. Creation of a European language teaching and learning network, which brings together all existing activities and organisations of European higher education institutions and serves as a main port of call for coordination and dissemination of information and experience. (E/N/I)

13. Creation of post-graduate and professional programmes whose validation can be recognised by European institutions and be included in universities' career structures. (E/NI)

14. Joint evaluation of effectiveness based on common criteria. (E/N/I)