

LINGUA 1
OPENING THE DOOR TO LANGUAGE LEARNING
INTERIM REPORT ON PHASE ONE TESTING - BELGIUM

DR. INGE LANSLOTS, PROJECT COÖRDINATOR
FRANCIS NOTE, PROJECT ASSISTANT

NOTE FOR MR. BICKERTON

We have not included the learner packs in this report, because that would have been far too much pages. Instead, we created an account for you in our Blackboard Learning environment, where you can find all packs, just like the students did. It also gives you an impression of Blackboard.

To log in:

Go to: <http://blackboard.lessius-ho.be:81/>

Push "login" and login with username [david.bickerton](#) and password [dbickerton](#).

Kind regards
Francis Note
Project Assistant Belgium

1. CONTEXT

WHO ARE YOU? (NAME, ROLE, INSTITUTION AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION)

Inge Lanslots, Project Coordinator; assisted by Francis Note, project assistant; Both from Lessius Hogeschool, School for higher education in Antwerp, Belgium.

WHAT DID YOU DO? (I.E. WHAT MODEL DID YOU TEST?)

We tested a distance-learning model, for two languages: Spanish & Italian. In fact, we tried out two different distance-learning models (cf. inf.): In the first one, the students were followed very closely, via e-mail and a digital learning environment. In the second the students had much more freedom, they were offered a range of exercises from which they could choose. They also had to make four written assignments.

WHAT NATIONAL COLLABORATORS DID YOU WORK WITH?

- **LBC - adult education (several establishments)**
- **Telepolis Antwerp (Internet centre)**
- **Community Centre (Local community)**
- **University of Kortrijk, (KU Leuven)**

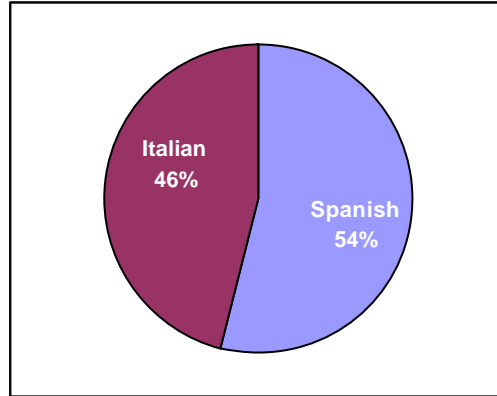
HOW DID YOU ORGANISE AND MANAGE THE ACTIVITY?

Using a learning environment (Blackboard). Each user received a login and a password to work in this learning environment. The "lessons" were posted in the learning environment one by one: once unit 1 was handed in, they received another one, and so on. There were two courses: Spanish (5 learning units) & Italian (10 learning units). Learners received the learning units through the learning environment, and they submitted their assignments through the learning environment. Some assignments were sent to us via e-mail; especially the Spanish students used this medium quite often.

The progress and the activities of the students were followed up by the project assistant, for both languages.

WHAT WAS THE PROFILE OF YOUR LEARNERS? (E.G. NUMBER, AGE, PREVIOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS)

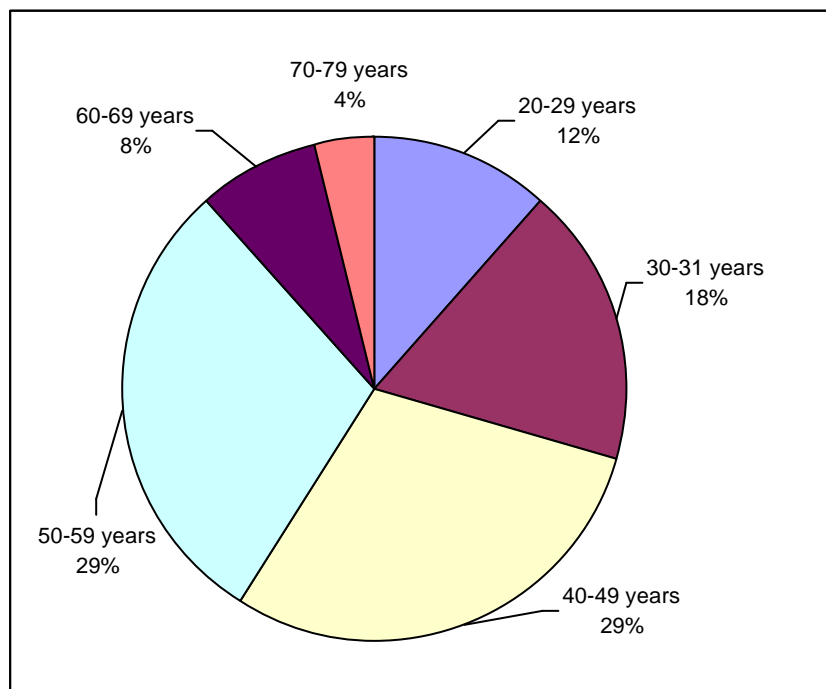
1. NUMBER OF LEARNERS



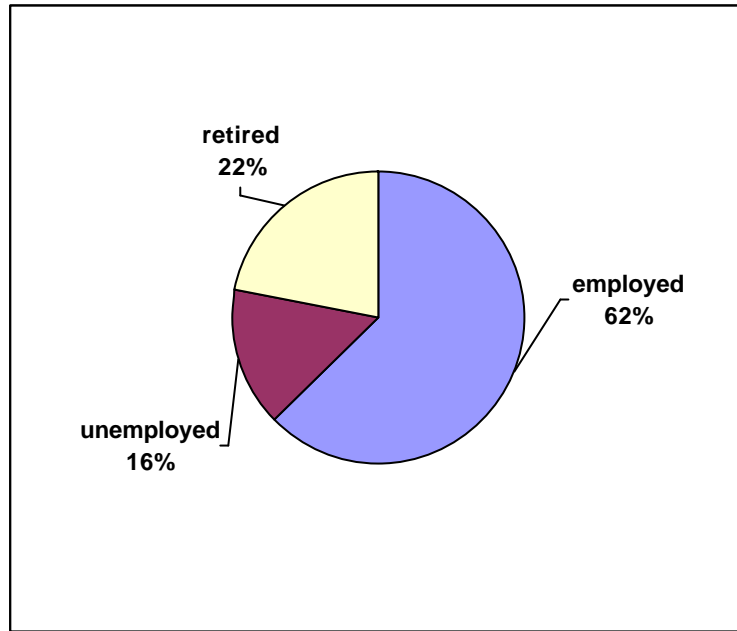
23 people took the Italian course, 27 people took the Spanish course. Six people dropped out of the Spanish course because the starting level was too high for them, or because they didn't have enough time. One person dropped out of the Italian course, leaving us with 43 students.

2. AGE OF THE LEARNERS

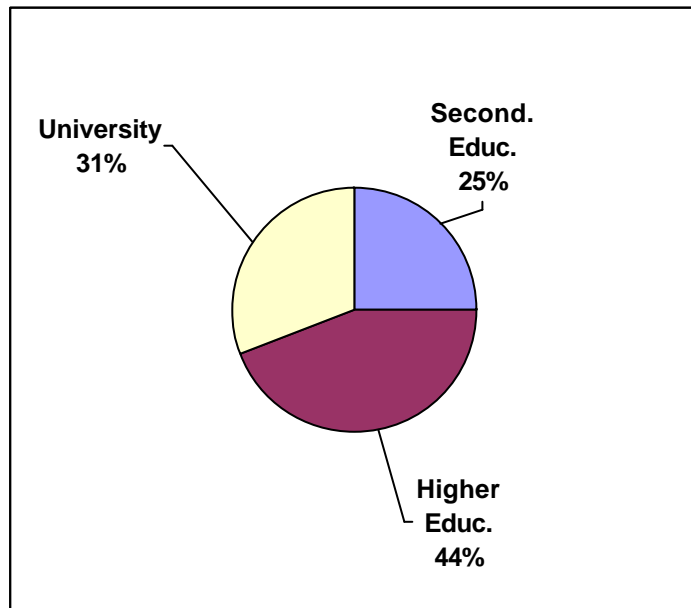
- Average age of the learners: 46,86 years
- Division of ages:



3. PROFESSION OF THE LEARNERS: EMPLOYED/UNEMPLOYED/RETIRED

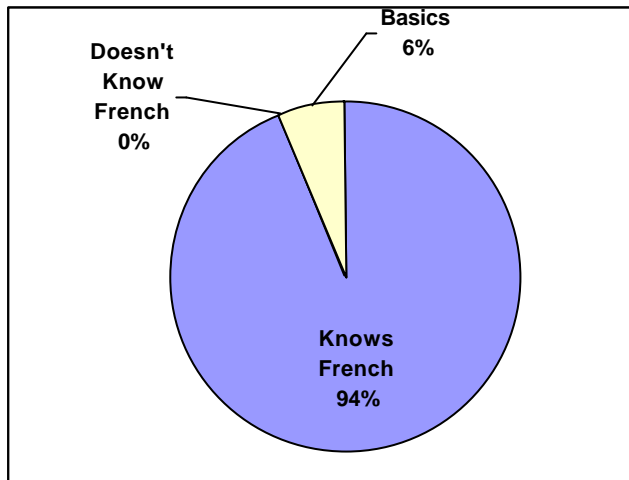


4. STUDIES OF THE LEARNERS: SECONDARY EDUCATION/HIGHER EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY

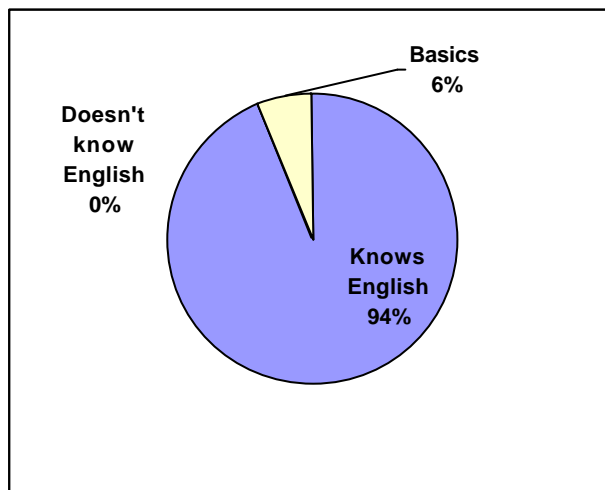


5. LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

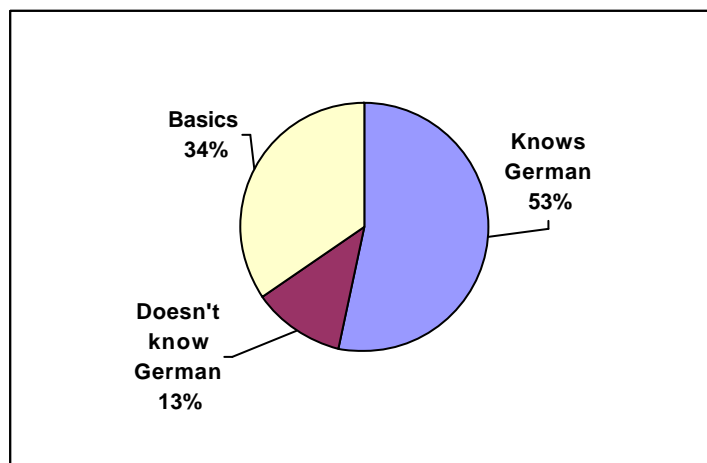
A. KNOWLEDGE OF FRENCH



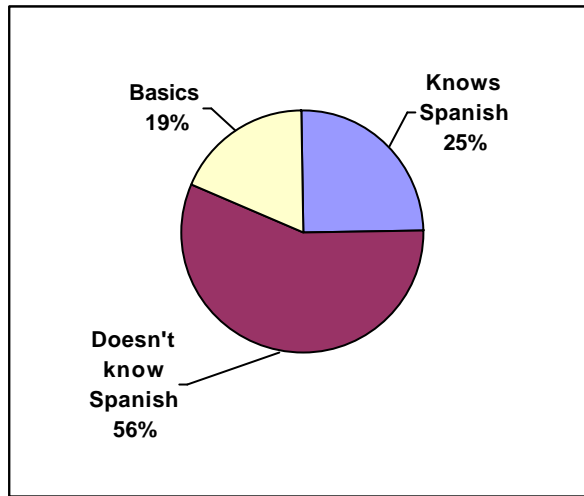
B. KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH



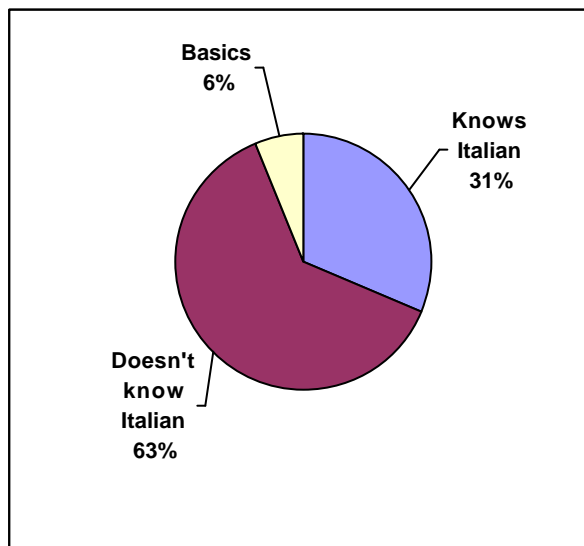
C. KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN



D. KNOWLEDGE OF SPANISH

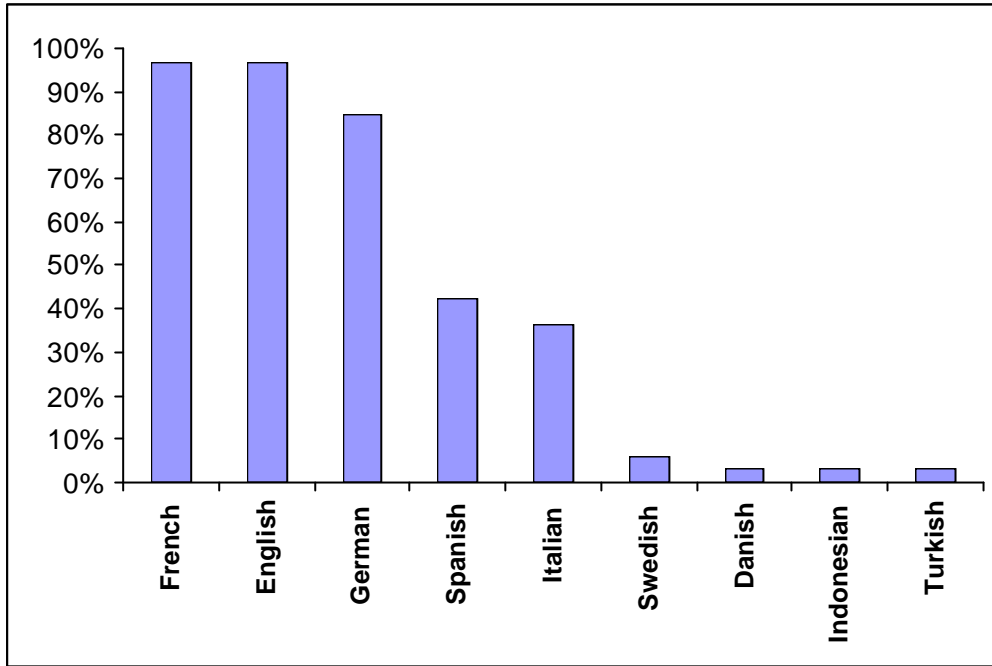


E. KNOWLEDGE OF ITALIAN



Other languages we encountered: Swedish, Danish, Indonesian & Turkish.

The overall picture looks like this:



Of course, everyone speaks Dutch too.

2. **DELIVERY / IMPLEMENTATION**

WHAT METHODOLOGY DID YOU USE?

We used a distance-learning model. Two different approaches: in one system there was a lot of monitoring, students had to send in assignments on a regular basis. There were 10 units, for each unit the students had to make different exercises, and send these to us. These assignments were then corrected and feedback was sent to the students. The exercises dealt with vocabulary, prepositions, verbs and translations.

In the second system, the students were freer, they were given a complete 'collection' of exercises, and they were somewhat free to choose the exercises they wanted to do. For every unit there was a written assignment too: they had to give their opinion on one specific Spanish region, make a vocabulary list, synthesise a text, look up books and/or websites about a region... These assignments were sent to us by e-mail and corrected by an instructor of Spanish.

WHAT WERE YOUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AND HOW DID YOU SET ABOUT ACHIEVING THEM?

It was our aim to offer a "refreshment" course for people who already had some knowledge of the language, and who wanted to exercise this language once again. It was also a course for people studying a language in evening classes: this course serves as an additional course then.

The exercises we offered were clearly meant for people with a 'beginner' level: we started smoothly, and gradually the lessons became increasingly difficult.

HOW DID YOU PUBLICISE YOUR ACTIVITY AND RECRUIT YOUR LEARNERS?

- We recruited students in evening classes.
- We put up posters and flyers in Internet centres and community centres.
- Distributed flyers on conferences and during conferences at Lessius Hogeschool.

WHAT LEARNING AND SUPPORT RESOURCES DID YOU USE? (EQUIPMENT AND HUMAN!)

For Italian, the exercises were made by Paul Sambre, Francesco De Nicolo' and Inge Lanslots. Mr. De Nicolo's exercises were a set of vocabulary exercises (fill in blanks exercises), Mr. Sambre and Miss Lanslots' exercises were a large set of exercises on prepositions, from which Miss Lanslots selected a set of exercises to be used in the project. The translations were set up by Inge Lanslots also.

For Spanish, the exercises we used were designed by the Spanish department at Lessius Hogeschool. The set of exercises has been built up by practically everyone in the department, and the department uses the exercises for their own students. The exercises were selected by Kris Buyse.

For both courses, we used Blackboard, a virtual learning environment. Blackboard was used to offer the units to the students, and the students used Blackboard to send their assignments to us.

In the Italian course, we used Internet links for the grammatical subjects we dealt with in a particular unit. We also used the Internet to offer extra exercises, links to exercises we found on the Internet. We would like to stress

that these exercises were really only additional and we declined all responsibility for them.

In both courses, the students were followed up by the project assistant, Francis Note. He kept track of the students and corrected the exercises for the Italian course, except for the translations, which were corrected by Inge Lanslots. In the Spanish course, the assignments were corrected by Kris Buyse. The exercises in the Spanish course did not have to be corrected, there was instant on-screen feedback. The students did fill out an evaluation form about the set of exercises.

WHERE WAS YOUR ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT?

The students made their exercises at home, in front of their PC. Some students made their exercises in an Internet centre or a library. The feedback was given from Antwerp, Lessius Hogeschool.

WHAT WAS THE TIMETABLE FOR YOUR ACTIVITY?

We started in April and ended in October.

HOW DID YOU SUPPORT YOUR LEARNERS?

- Via e-mail support (also other information was sent by e-mail)
- Manual for Blackboard
- Manual for the accompanying CD-rom
- Telephone support

HOW DID YOU MONITOR YOUR LEARNERS?

In the Blackboard environment, you can monitor the users quite closely. The system keeps track of logins, visited pages etc. We also made an excel spreadsheet with very detailed information about what each student has submitted so far, and what is yet to come.

3. OUTCOMES

WHAT WAS THE ATTENDANCE RATE FOR YOUR ACTIVITY?

23 people took the Italian course, 27 took the Spanish course.

WHAT WAS THE RETENTION RATE, I.E. NUMBER OF LEARNERS AT THE END COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF LEARNERS AT THE START OF THE TEST PHASE?

In the Spanish part, seven people dropped out, because of lack of time, or because they did not have the correct starting level.

In the Italian course, one student dropped out of the course.

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY PRODUCTS/MATERIALS YOU HAVE DEVELOPED FOR THE PROJECT.

These units can also be found on the Blackboard Learning environment. Please also consult Blackboard with the username and password we mentioned at the beginning of the report.

ITALIAN: 10 UNITS, 10 PACKAGES

- Every unit has an introduction

Unit 1:

- Learning tips
- Exercises on
 - Vocabulary (40 sentences)
 - Prepositions (40 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: prepositions, basic verbs, nouns, adjectives, articles. In addition, some other links like a dictionary, and a small quiz.
- Le Regioni I: about Sicilia & Valle d'Aosta. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 2:

- Exercises on
 - Vocabulary (40 sentences)
 - Prepositions (40 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: verbs, numerals, prepositions, and adverbs
- Le Regioni II: about Piemonte & Puglia. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 3:

- Learning tips
- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Translation (10 sentences)
 - Prepositions (60sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: prepositions, irregular verbs, verb tenses, adverbs, adjectives.
- Le Regioni III: about Liguria & Calabria. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 4:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (60sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: adjectives, other verb tenses, prepositions.
- Le Regioni IV: about Toscana & Lombardia. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 5:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (50 sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: other verb tenses, pronouns.
- Le Regioni V: about Sardegna & Marche. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 6:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (50 sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: other verb tenses, pronouns.
- Le Regioni VI: about Basilicata & Molise. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 7:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (50 sentences)
 - Translations (10 sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: conditionals, degrees of comparison, pronouns.
- Le Regioni VII: about Friuli Venezia Giulia & Emilia Romagna. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 8:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (30 sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: verbs & pronouns.
- Le Regioni VIII: about Veneto & Umbria. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 9:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (40 sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: verbs & pronouns.
- Le Regioni IX: about Lazio & Abruzzo. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Unit 10:

- Exercises on:
 - Vocabulary (60 sentences)
 - Prepositions (40 sentences)
 - Verbs (45 sentences)
- Links to supplementary exercises on grammar: verb tenses
- Le Regioni X: about Campania & Trentino Alto Adige. This part contained a text (website on the internet) and several hyperlinks about the regions (recipes, photo's, tourism, important facts, events...)

Feedback: After each unit the students received a feedback sheet with the corrections of the exercises, their corrected translation etc...

SPANISH: 5 UNITS, 5 PACKAGES

- Every student received a CD-rom with the vocabulary application: Electravoc, a beta version developed by the colleagues of Spanish. They saw it as a free evaluation of that application. In the application, the vocabulary is divided into various categories. Each category has a set of 'word families' within that category. In a category, you can study words and make exercises. You get immediate feedback.

- All students also received a grammar book: Spaanse Grammatica/Gramática española, which was partly bought, partly given to us by Wolters Plantyn editors.

Units: every unit had three parts: Geopolitics, grammar, and vocabulary.

Unit 1:

- Geopolitics: texts about "El Norte" (4 texts)
- Assignments: 1/ a schematic synthesis of the texts; 2/ a thematic vocabulary list; 3/ the students were asked to give their opinion about the region in 40 words; 4/ The students were asked to search 3 websites and/or books about the region.

- Grammar: exercises on spelling (5 exercises), accent (2), gender (4), Numerals (+ cardinal numbers + the hour) (8); regular verbs (5).

- Vocabulary: students were asked to study four sub-themes of the Electravoc CD-ROM.

Unit 2:

- Geopolitics: texts about "El Centro" (3 texts)
- Assignments: 1/ a schematic synthesis of the texts; 2/ a thematic vocabulary list; 3/ the students were asked to give their opinion about the region in 40 words; 4/ The students were asked to search 3 websites and/or books about the region.

- Grammar: exercises on pronouns (3 exercises), concordancia (3), adjectives (4), prepositions (4); irregular verbs (7).

- Vocabulary: students were asked to study four sub-themes and one general theme of the Electravoc CD-ROM.

Unit 3:

- Geopolitics: texts about "El Levante" (3 texts)
- Assignments: 1/ a schematic synthesis of the texts; 2/ a thematic vocabulary list; 3/ the students were asked to give their opinion about the region in 40 words; 4/ The students were asked to search 3 websites and/or books about the region.

- Grammar: exercises on pronouns (1 exercise), prepositions (4), 'Bien' & 'Bueno' (1), La Comparacion (3) ; reflexive verbs (3), gerund (1).

- Vocabulary: students were asked to study five sub-themes and one general theme of the Electravoc CD-ROM.

Unit 4:

- Geopolitics: texts about "El Sur" (3 texts)
- Assignments: 1/ a schematic synthesis of the texts; 2/ a thematic vocabulary list; 3/ the students were asked to give their opinion about the

region in 40 words; 4/ The students were asked to search 3 websites and/or books about the region.

- Grammar: exercises on imperative (2 exercises), pronouns (1), ser, estar & hay (8), Gustar (1); Preterito compuesto (4).

Unit 5:

- Geopolitics: Revision lesson, with two tests on the texts about the regions.

- No assignments

- Grammar: exercises on El pretérito indefinido (7 exercises), el pretérito imperfecto (2), los pretéritos imperfecto e indefinido (5), El futuro imperfecto (4) ; El condicional (2).

- Vocabulary: students were asked to revise and study all chosen themes.

- In every unit, students were asked to fill out an evaluation form about the exercises and the vocabulary.

- The grammar exercises were provided with references to the grammar book, so the students could look up the theory immediately.

HOW DID YOU / WILL YOU DISSEMINATE YOUR RESULTS?

- Via the project handbook
- Internal newsletter at school
- Project website
- Maybe school website (later on)

4. EVALUATION

WHAT FEEDBACK DID YOU OBTAIN FROM LEARNERS, TUTORS, ETC?

Generally, the students are happy with the course. They see it as a good addition to another course. Some of them want to know the language better because they love the country so much, or because they have relatives in that country.

Some people see the course as a good way to improve their knowledge of a language they once knew well, but haven't used for a long time.

Other students like the course because they like to study languages, or because they like the concept of distance learning.

One student likes the course because it's free...

A much heard complaint is that that course does not have a "speaking" or "listening" aspect.

We sent all students an evaluation form. About half of the students sent this form back. These are the results:

General remarks (participants Spanish + Italian):

- 92 % of the students evaluated the composition of the course as being 'very good' or 'good'. 8 % evaluated it as being moderate.
- All students commented that the layout of the course was 'good' or 'very good'.
- The repetitive aspect of the course was evaluated as 'good' or 'very good'.

- The participants evaluated the rhythm of the lessons, which they could actually choose for themselves, as 'good' or 'very good'.
- Generally spoken, most students (over 70 %) were satisfied with the course. 30 % thought that it could be better. 85 % said that the course came up to their expectations.
- 85 % of the students have the impression that they have improved their knowledge of the language during the course.
- 92 % of the students did not have problems with the Blackboard learning environment. All students thought that Blackboard was a good system for this type of distance learning

Remarks for the Italian course

- We offered the students LEARNING TIPS in some units. Our learners evaluated them as 'not so useful'. 25 % found them useful. Consequently, only 25 percent of the students used the tips when studying a unit. Again, 25 percent has the intention to use the tips when further studying the language.
We also included some hyperlinks in the tips, and they more popular: 50 % says to have used these.
- As for the VOCABULARY EXERCISES: the quality was evaluated by most students as 'good' or 'very good'. The difficulty of the exercises was evaluated as being 'average' by most students, meaning that that were not too difficult or too easy...
- The students also indicated that they had to look up many words. (Maybe this indicates that the exercises were not THAT easy after all...)
- The feedback they received when their corrected exercise was sent back, was evaluated as very 'good' or 'good' or 'average' by 87% of the students. 13 % said that this was weak.
- The PREPOSITION EXERCISES: the quality was evaluated by most students as 'good' or 'very good'. The difficulty of the exercises was evaluated as being 'difficult' or 'very difficult' by most students, meaning that this set of exercises was perhaps somewhat too difficult.
- The students also indicated that they had to look up many things in a grammar book.
- There was no feedback at all for these exercises. (Except for the corrections). All students indicated that they would have appreciated feedback for these exercises.
- The EXERCISES ON VERBS: the quality was evaluated by most students as 'good' or 'very good'. The difficulty of the exercises was evaluated as being "average" or "easy" by most students, meaning that this set of exercises was good and on level.
- The students also indicated that they had to look up some things in a grammar book.
- There was no feedback at all for these exercises. (Except for the corrections). Some students indicated that they would have appreciated feedback for these exercises, but a larger group did not need this: after all, for verbs you can find most rules in a grammar book.
- The TRANSLATIONS were evaluated as being of good quality and the difficulty was all right: they were either 'average' or 'difficult'. The (personal) feedback was evaluated as good.

- The LINKS TO SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES were evaluated by most students as 'good'. The students did also feel that these links followed the track of the course quite closely. The quality of these links and of the grammar was seen as 'good' by most students.
- The LINKS ABOUT GEOPOLITICS AND ITALIAN 'ICONS' seem to have been a bit redundant. Most students did not use them actively: they looked, but did nothing with it (links included recipes, tourism, news & facts...). Probably most students know how to find what they want on the Internet.

Remarks for the Spanish course

- The texts about GEOPOLITICS were evaluated as 'good' to 'very good' by most students. None of the students said that the texts were (too) difficult. The written exercises they had to make about the texts were not too difficult.
- The EXERCISES ON GRAMMAR: scores were quite good: only 8% of the students scored less than 50 %. The quality of the exercises was seen as very good, and the difficulty was OK: not too easy, not too difficult.
- The ELECTRAVOC CD-ROM (vocabulary application) was a good idea. Students liked the application: they used it and indicated that they are going to use it again. They made the exercises in the application, liked the feedback and got good scores for the exercises.
- The FREE HANDBOOK each student received appeared to be a very useful tool. The student used it; the references they found were good (for every set of exercises there was a reference to the grammar book). Most people also said that the explanations were OK, and they are going to use it in further studies.

Just one more remark: the learning environment offered the possibility of a forum. We have enabled this forum, but we did not actively promote it. Maybe we should have done this, and we could have used it to cope with difficulties and problems regarding the exercises. This way the problems and their solutions would have been possible for everyone.

EVALUATION OF MODEL – PLEASE SAY HOW FAR YOU HAVE COME TOWARDS MEETING YOUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES. I.E. WHAT WORKED; WHAT DIDN'T WORK; WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU MAKE?

A. RECRUITMENT + GENERAL ASPECTS

Positive

- We reached the target group of 40 to 60 year olds. Our 'average' participant had the age of 46 years.
- The use of networks paid off: especially via the adult education network, the reactions were very good
- We also got good response via the internet centres and some of the participants contacted us as a result of the ad we put up there.
- We achieved the quota we imposed on ourselves: 10 participants per course. Moreover, we achieved them quickly.
- From the moment on that the courses are ready, expansion of the number of participants is quite easy, but also more labour-intensive.
- The implementation of the project at school was easy.

Negative

- The real local people were not reached, although we tried to contact them, for example via neighbourhood centres and libraries.
- Maybe we needed some more time to do the recruitment more "thoroughly". For example: the level of the Italian group was maybe a bit too high and the level of the Spanish group was maybe a bit too low. With more time, one would be able to shift people and select the appropriate people.
- It is a pity that the project website was not there yet: the site would have given us the opportunity to refer to it on behalf of the students. That way it would have been possible for them to be acquainted with the other projects in the partner countries.
- Towards the end of the course, the user accounts of the participants were deleted in Blackboard. This was necessary due to an update of Blackboard. Unfortunately, all the documents of the participants disappeared because of this... Fortunately, we were able to correct this.
- It was hardly workable to use Blackboard in all its possibilities, because that would of taken to much time to be acquainted with the system. In an ideal practise, we would use Blackboard in all its possibilities: an own forum, a messenger service, hyperlinks, an agenda/calendar, and an address book...
- For the ideal practise, we would certainly recommend Blackboard, for it has some important advantages compared to a classic e-mail/web site: the sending of megabytes is not limited to one or two, like it is the case in classic web-based services like Lycos or Hotmail. Everyone with an account can have access and the interface is the same for everybody, with makes things a lot easier to explain. Moreover, Blackboard has some important tracking possibilities.

B. LANGUAGE PACK - ITALIAN

Positive

- The reactions we got from the participants were generally spoken very positive
- The lessons were submitted smoothly by the students. The Blackboard learning environment was clearly no problem for this group. As a result, we experienced a smooth co-operation and almost no technical problems.
- The students were very motivated; there was a group who completed the course fast.
- The system whereby the students were followed up very closely was very successful. The students had to send in tasks frequently; this surely gave them the feeling that their work did really matter. As a result, they were motivated to send in a new assignment.
- The course was very approachable and had a progressive structure; the students experienced this as very positive.
- Possible difficulties with the digital learning environment Blackboard were taken care have by a manual and support via e-mail and telephone.
- Most participants experienced the liberty and the flexibility as very positive and they coped with it in a mature way. Most of them showed a lot of self-discipline, enough to conclude the course.

- The feedback we offered was *personalized* exercises (translations), this gave the course a personal touch in an anonymous learning environment.
- The feedback that the students sent to us was very useful. It gave us the opportunity to adjust the course immediately and the feedback was useful in designing the best practise model.
- A reward wasn't necessary, the intrinsic motivation, combined with the correct amount of exercises and the correct learner pack, seemed to be enough.

Negative

- The oral component was lacking. This oral component is of course very dominant in Phase II, and the written component is missing (except for some translation exercises).
- An ideal situation is perhaps a system where an e-course is combined with an e-course and a conversation class. (This was one of the suggestions at the VLOHRA conference Inge Lanslots attended)
- A second lesson: we should try to combine oral exercises with written exercises.
- The correction system (The project assistant corrected the exercises using a matrix) was not watertight: Sometimes more solutions were possible. Not all the possibilities were listed on the matrix. This can be avoided when the correction is done by a teacher of the particular language.
- Sometimes the course was maybe a bit monotonous. Maybe we should have offered more types of exercises.
- Some things were not used by the students: for example: very few students used the hyperlinks about the Italian icons. I have the feeling that they would have read them when the texts were included in the course, for example as word documents.
- The exercises on prepositions were too difficult. Some students also suggested that it would be better to also offer a translation for these exercises.
- An important lesson: the students like sets of exercises they can submit, and they like getting feedback & grades... They are not looking for additional information; they want the 'sec' exercises and links to grammar.

C. LANGUAGE PACK - SPANISH

Positive

- The pack was more diverse than the Italian pack. Moreover, the students had the liberty to choose the exercises they wanted to make, they only had to make a defined number of exercises.
- The pack entailed more than the Italian course. Students were offered a grammar book (free); they also got a beta version of the vocabulary program "Electravoc", also for free.
- Every exercise had a reference to a page in the grammar book, where they could find a full explanation of the subject. Therefore, if they experienced problems, they could immediately consult the grammar book.
- The course contained exercises that were all developed by the department of Spanish at Lessius Hogeschool. This had the advantage that the exercises were all tested thoroughly by lots of students... Thus, the quality of the exercises was good.

- The exercises were offered as Hot Potatoes or Perception-exercises. (The exercises in the Italian pack were offered as MS Word files). These exercises are web-based and this allows immediate control and feedback. This is very satisfying, also for the students: they get immediate feedback for the work he or she has done.
- The pack generated fairly positive reactions immediately: the participants saw it as an ideal way to freshen up one's Spanish, and the participants also enjoyed the chapters about geopolitics: in these chapters (short texts about Spanish regions), students got to know a particular region in Spain and its inhabitants.
- Due to the nature of the course, it was possible for the participants to do an exercise several times. This way they could practise more and avoid common mistakes.
- In the Spanish course, the written aspect WAS present: in every unit, participants had to write an assignment about the Spanish regions. The student also had to make vocabulary lists, give his or her impression about a region, look up web sites and/or books, summarize texts.
- All written assignments were corrected and evaluated by a teacher of Spanish, he also added some hints and feedback
- Participants had the opportunity to evaluate each exercise through an evaluation form. This offers the opportunity to adjust exercises immediately and correct texts at once.

Negative

- The aspect liberty and flexibility was conceived a bit too freely by some students. Some of them did not have enough self-discipline. Maybe it had something to do with the large amount of exercises, or the freedom to choose between them...
- The fact that no exercises had to be submitted, resulted in indolence at some times... In the Italian course, the competition spirit was stimulated by the fact that exercises were submitted and a score was kept (and the participants knew each other's scores)... In the Spanish course students had to score themselves and they did not know what score their fellow students got.
- This may have given them the impression that their score did not really matter... For an ideal practise, we prefer a scoring system that is closer to the system used in the Italian course: students will have to send in assignments and exercises and they will get scores.
- The fact that the exercises in the Spanish course were offered via the Internet, also made them more vulnerable: it implies that participants should be willing to spend a lot of time on the Internet. This can be difficult for people with slow Internet connections.
- Of course, you also depend on external servers: when the server on which the exercises are centralized, crashes, all participants have a problem. The Italian course copes with both problems mentioned above: the student downloads the exercise and does the exercise off line.
- In addition, in the Spanish course the oral aspect was lacking.
- The entry level for this course was maybe a bit too high... Moreover the course was not built up progressively but modular.
- We already mentioned the CD-rom that is used for the course. Of course, the students had to install this application on their PC. This generated some problems: the Internet centre Telepolis does not allow installation of 'foreign' applications on their PC's. These people had to look for another solution. In addition, people with the Windows XP experienced problems because the "Windows Installer" was not

suitable for that operating system (This problem had a workaround). Moreover, people with a Macintosh could not install the program at all (no workaround).

- The grammar exercises did not have a (personal) feedback, except for the automatically generated general feedback.

PLEASE COMMENT ON THE IMPACT OF THE ACTIVITY, E.G. COMMENTS FROM LEARNERS ABOUT RISING AWARENESS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, WIDENING / INCREASING PARTICIPATION, ETC.

The participation was free; this was much appreciated by the participants. We also have the impression that we have 'widened' the participation, this is of course difficult to measure, but we have had reactions from people that were very pleased with the opportunity we offered them. In addition, retired people reacted, people who picked up our ad in non-school environments, and this is a signal that the purpose was met.

It was for us also a good sign that quite some enrolments were the result of mouth-to-mouth publicity; this shows that the awareness to study (these) languages is clearly there.

HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS YOUR WORK WITH NATIONAL COLLABORATORS AND WHAT DID YOU GAIN FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

The local network certainly worked best, as the contact persons there were already known by us. This was crucial for the recruitment. We will certainly work together with these partners for Phase II too.

We have built out a national network of collaborators too, but collaboration there will be merely long-term collaboration: we will certainly work together with them for the exchange of study materials, information, experiences...

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED FROM WORKING WITH PARTNERS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES?

The collaboration with the international partners has of course been limited to the project partners so far.

We have the feeling that this (limited) cooperation has been very productive: for Lessius Hogeschool as the second contractor, the cooperation with the project management passed off smoothly, and also the contacts with the other partners has been very pleasant.

The project forum has been a good tool to channel this cooperation, although it could have been used more often... The chat sessions and the telephone conferences were a good alternative for 'real' meetings and it helped to get to know the others, to exchange info and to exchange hints and tips. We are sure that this will persist during Phase II of the project.

In addition, we are sure that the good teamwork will also be fruitful on the long term: exchange of Socrates or Erasmus students, maybe exchange of courses, maybe even another project together?