

Lingua “Opening the Door to Language Learning” Project

Proforma for partners’ evaluative reports

Please use this proforma to write an evaluative report of your phase 2 activities to be sent to Paula by 10th September 2004. Where you worked with national collaborators, please remember to report on their activities as well as your own. Please attach any materials you have developed for the project (including feedback forms) and any other materials you have used and are prepared to share.

On this form, please fill in your answers in the grey fields.

1. Context

You and your collaborators? Also mention the national collaborators you have worked with.

Name	Role	Institution	Type of Institution
Birgitta Henriksson	Project manager teacher	Alléskolan	Upper secondary and adult education
Märet Wik-Bretz	National Collaborator teacher	Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning	Agency whose main task is to promote the development and utilisation of flexible learning in adult education
Euridys Jonsson	teacher	Alléskolan	
Javier Uzmábal	language assistant	CFL	
Sonia Mora/Maria Sanz	project partners	MT Servicios, Zaragoza	

What did you do? (i.e. what model did you test?) Please indicate in the following table which model you tested. Eight models are described, please indicate with the word “**Main**” which model fits your tested model best. You might have used elements from other models, please indicate this with the word “**Elements**”. Also fill out the Learner Training, Learner support and Learning resources sections for each model.

	<i>Models</i>		<i>Independent Learning</i>		
	Home	Away	Learner training	Learner support	Learning resources
One	a. Open Space: opening up an institutional resource centre to the community, making host staff resources available to the community.	b. Create Space: setting up a resource centre in the community or using an existing community resource centre, e.g. library.			Use of existing resource centres for video conferences; telephone connections for conversation; the school library for showing a film
	Elements				

Two	a. Open Virtual Space: making electronic tools and materials held on an institutional server available to the community.	b. Create Virtual Space: setting up a website for, or delivering electronic materials/learning opportunities to the community.	Use of material from the internet level 2 distance learning course at CFL		
	Elements				
Three	a. Host Study Groups: providing staff and space for the community to meet as a group to learn together.	b. Community Study Groups: facilitating the setting up of study groups in the community.	Study and conversation groups in Spanish via telephone and videoconferencing and virtual chat clubs. The learners were supposed to prepare themselves for the meetings	A native speaker was monitoring the video conversation group from one of the centres Smaller study groups were formed at the other two resource centres A native speaker was monitoring the 3-part-telephone conversations from CFL	A set of themes to be discussed during the video or telephone sessions Resources that students choose for themselves- web pages and other material available at the resource centres for the preparation of the sessions
	Main				
Four	a. Open Days: run language taster sessions, exhibitions, demonstrations etc. in the host institution.	b. Roadshows: language taster sessions, exhibitions, demonstrations etc. in the community.	The test was a possibility to train to speak the language "at distance" by taking part in virtual conversations. One of the goals was to get the learners in contact with people from Spain using video internet or telephone to exchange ideas.	There were tutors at the resource centres to help the learners	
	Elements				

What was the profile of your learners? (e.g. number, age, previous language learning experience, qualifications and identified needs including special needs).

- **Number** of Learners: 14
- **Age group** (please state the number of learners in the age groups):

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
3	3	2	2	3	1

- **Gender** (Please state numbers)

Female	Male
9	5

- **Educational experience** (Please state numbers)

Primary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education / University	Post-HE / Post-University (Further education)	Adult Education	Evening Classes (not only languages)
1	8	5	3	3	

- **Language learning goals** (Please state how many times the reason was mentioned by your learners)

Goal	Number
I just like to study languages	11
I have studied the language and want to refresh my knowledge	3
I am interested in developing a greater degree of independence in my learning	2
I have been advised to improve my language skills by my employer	1
I like the country where this language is spoken	9
In order to meet other people and socialise	9
I have relatives in or from the country where this language is spoken	
I want to be able to use this language when I'm on holiday	10
I want to be able to read books, papers and magazines in this language	12
I want to be able to use this language in letters and/or e-mails	7
I want to be able to watch TV and listen to the radio in this language	9
I want to live/work where the language is spoken	2
I am looking for a good way to use my free time	2
I have a holiday home in the country where the language is spoken	1
For professional purposes	6
Other reasons:	
I want to spend my time in prison learning something useful. I want to "kill" the time with something that I can use after leaving the prison (answer from a prisoner in the telephone conversation group)	1

- **Please write short summaries of the answers on the more open questions.** (Use words rather than sentences.)

Aspect	Summary
Occupation	Teachers (3) ,students (3), project leader (1), secretary (1), waitress (1)
Previous occupation if not currently working	Retired teacher(1)
Why choose this way of learning?	I want to study independent of time, place and other students
Language learning experiences and qualifications	-
Native/first language	French (1), Portuguese (1)
Target language	Spanish

What other languages known and levels?	Most learners are good at English. Some of them know other languages
Why do you want to take part?	(We didn't include this questions but it was obvious that people wanted to take part because they wanted to practise the language)
Computing skills/experience	We didn't ask people to specify their computer skills as they didn't need to be very experienced to be able to participate in the test. Most people studying at this level of distance learning have sufficient skills to manage the kind of tasks we asked for, e-mail, internet etc
Where did you hear about scheme?	From my former teacher at the adult section From earlier students

2. Delivery / implementation

Please use **short** answers!

- Give a brief description of your activity, i.e. what exactly did you do and where did you do it? (max 100 words)

We offered two different possibilities to participate in virtual conversation in Spanish.

One possibility was to join a group at Alléskolan using video conferences. We offered 5 sessions. The sessions were monitored by a native speaker (and the teacher/project manager) from one centre, Alléskolan, where we also had the face-to-face starting-up and closing sessions. The learners then had the possibility to join a resource centre near to where they lived with a tutor to help them. There were two resource centres involved where the learners went to the centre which sometimes opened just for these special sessions

We also organised a developed form of telephone sessions offered to the students who were taking the internet-based level 2 course of Spanish at CFL where a native speaker participated together with the student and the normal teacher. On some of these occasions the conversation partners were the native speaker and two students. On other occasions (following-up sessions) the native speaker did not take part

- How does your phase 2 model differ from your phase 1 model? If your phase 2 model is a refinement of another partner's phase 1 model, how does it differ from their model?

In test phase 1 we tested a distance learning model using 2 internet-based courses of Spanish (level 1 and 2) at an ordinary school of adult education and at CFL leading to a qualification. In the evaluation we learnt that many non-traditional learners liked the flexibility of the distance learning model but that they missed the communicative part. So we decided to go on working together and try to find ways to deal with conversation "at distance" using video and telephone for virtual conversation.

We also had the idea to get the learners in contact with people in the country using video, chat and mail contacts which unfortunately failed.

- What were your aims and objectives and how did you set about achieving them?

Aims and objectives.

-to develop models for virtual conversation which could be used in distance learning as well as in other kinds of adult education

-to use video and telephone to get the learners practise conversation when face-to-face meetings are impossible or difficult

-to create "real situations" where the learners would be invited to conversation or role plays

-to get the learners in contact with native speakers of the language

-to use our Spanish partner to test a video and chat platform for virtual contact

How we achieved the goals

-We had worked out a set of themes to be used for the video and telephone sessions with subjects which were very informal preparing the learners for contacts with Spanish people.

-The learners and the native speakers seemed to find the topics interesting and they came very well prepared to the meetings

-We had organised "real situations" for example telephone calls as role plays where the students acted with the native speaker which were very successful

-The learners seemed to be curious about "the new techniques" even if it took some time to get used to them and did their best to participate in the conversations

- We contracted native speakers as a facilitators

- How did you publicise your activity and recruit your learners?

We recruited the learners among people who had participated or were participating in courses given by our centres.

- How did you organise and manage the activity, e.g. how many sessions and how often, who lead these sessions, what was the content?

I. The telephone conference model

There were three to four conversation opportunities per student during the spring e.g every two weeks. Sometimes there were two students connected at the same time. The students had got the themes for the conversations in advance but there were often new subjects coming up. At the beginning there was always the native speaker who was the initiator but later it was the student who made the conversation take another turn

The students decided when they wanted to have the different conversation sessions by sending a mail to the teacher. The teacher gave feedback by mail to the students individually.

Themes for the four telephone conferences

Telephone conference 1 (30 minutes)

Introduction and presentation. Who am I? The reasons for studying Spanish, previous knowledge about Spain and Latin America, contacts with the Spanish speaking world. Javier (the tutor/native speaker) presents himself.

Comparisons Sevilla/the north of Sweden (climate, daily-life, habits ...)

Telephone conference 2 (30 minutes)

To give information and advice. The student/learner has invited a /fictitious/ group of Spanish-speaking people (Javier included). He/she has already sent the programme to them and now he/she will present it to Javier. There are a lot of questions to be answered about time of arrival, what to bring with you, how to prepare for the stay ...

Telephone conference 3 (30 minutes)

To ask for information. The student/learner chooses between

-call for information about something he/she wants to buy from a small ad published in a newspaper

or

-call for information about a language-course in Spain or in Latin America.

Telephone conference 4 (30 minutes)

To present a country in Latin America. The student presents a country in Latin America and explains why he/she wants to visit it. Discussion about similarities and differences between people, culture, politics...

II. The video conferencing model

Session 1- March 24- face -to-face- (Euridys-Birgitta).Alléskolan

Introduction

Presentations- previous knowledge about Spain and Latinamerica-contacts with the Spanish speaking world- the native speaker Euridys from Cuba presents herself- "small talks"about weather, the latest news etc

Session 2-April 13-video-(Euridys-Birgitta-tutors) Alléskolan (4) ,resource centres in Kumla (3 learners) and Askersund (2 learners)

Sweden and the Swedes

The learners could choose

- to present Sweden/Stockholm or their home town
- to give some advice to a tourist visiting Sweden
- to present a typical Swedish feast

The native speaker tells about her impressions of Sweden and the Swedes

Discussion about differences and similarities between countries and cultures

Session 3 -May 11-video-(Euridys-Birgitta-tutors)Alléskolan,(3) resource centres in Kumla (3) and Askersund (2)

The Family

The learners could choose

- to tell about their family life children, school, free time, holidays etc
- to write a diary about a week
- to talk about something that is important for them i.e. nature, travels, sport, children

Discussion about equality starting from a newspaper article

Euridys compares life in Cuba and Sweden, what she misses most etc

Session 4-May 25- failed video -(Euridys,Birgitta, Francis, tutors)Alléskolan (8)

**The session was meant to be a virtual trip to Zaragoza but unfortunately It didn't work so we did some summing up and talked about a bit of everything
Introduction to the film**

Session 5-June 3- face-to-face (Euridys,Birgitta) Alléskolan (8)

Film

We saw a film by Pedro Almodóvar: "Hable con ella" in the film room of the school library and had a tacos. There was no structured material to the film apart from an interview with Almodóvar on video but the discussions after the film were interesting.

We talked about starting a film club with Spanish and Latinoamerican films. One problem is that we are not allowed to charge a fee and the economy of the Adult Department is bad. A possible solution would be to turn to a "Studieförbund" (the sort of educational association we talked about in test phase1).Unfortunately we have not yet been able to work out these plans.

- What learning and support resources did you use? (equipment and human!)

I-Telephone, native speaker, teacher

II- Video, film, native speaker, teacher, resource centre tutors/techniciens

- What was the timetable for your activity? (refer to your work plan)

See above timetable

- How did you monitor your learners, i.e. how were you kept informed about their progress?

Between the video sessions there were no formal contacts but the learners could have mail-contacts with the teacher or the native speaker if they needed help to find vocabulary and information for the preparations of the themes for the sessions.

The telephone conference group had mail and individual telephone contacts with the teacher.

3. Outcomes

*Please use **short** answers!*

- What was the attendance rate for your activity? How many people attended all sessions?

**The attendance rate was very good.
8 people in the videoconferencing group came to all sessions
(1 person attended only 3).
5 attended the telephone conferences (all).**

- 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? How many people gave you feedback? What reasons did learners give for dropping out?

No of completions: 14

No of feedback forms: 12

Reasons for drop-outs: We had no drop-outs just 2 feedback forms missing for the moment

- Please give details of any products/materials you have developed for the project and, if possible, attach examples in the original language (i.e. no need for translations).

We worked out a set a themes for the dicussions. They were not totally the same for the video and telephone conversations due to the different media.(included)

- How did you / will you disseminate your results?

We have not yet decided how to disseminate the results but one possibility is to work together with another European project at Alléskolan which plans to go out to the libraries in the region to reach non-traditional learners for all kinds of studies.

4. Evaluation

Please write a 1500 word evaluation of your phase 2 experience. This should include discussion of the following:

- *Learner feedback and what this revealed about the learners and the scheme e.g. language learning gains, response to the scheme, future plans*
- *Tutor/facilitator feedback e.g. What went well, what challenges were encountered/overcome, what was gained in study group sessions?*
- *Evaluation of model e.g. did you meet your aims and targets (refer back to section 2), what worked and why; what didn't work and why not; what changes did you make; what future revisions to the model would you make?*
- *Comparison of your phase 2 model with phase 1 e.g. What did you learn from phase 1 (from your own model and from other partners' models) that helped you in phase 2?*
- *Impact on language learning, i.e. what was the effect of learning in this way? (Base this on comments from learners and your own observations on how this programme contributed to language learning, raising awareness, equal opportunities, widening / increasing participation, etc.)*

- *Results of working with national collaborators , e.g. what have you learnt from this experience about yourself, your own institution, language learning and teaching, working with non-traditional learners, your own country and other countries? What did you/your institution gain from the experience?*
- *Continuity and sustainability: how do you see this model developing? Do you have any ideas for taking it forward?*

Please also include quotes (translated into English) from learners and tutors and other evidence in support of your evaluation.

The evaluations show that the participants are very satisfied with working orally with the language like this. The informal form and the themes that we had drawn up for the meetings were very much appreciated by the participants.

The answers to the questions about what they had won regarding language learning and what they had liked particularly, show that there seems to be a need to continue using the language orally even after completing distance studies and that the form of video conference can be one way. Most people think that the test has given them a possibility to revive or maintain the language by practising to speak about a special subject and by listening to the language. Somebody writes that the very form of the video conference helped him to dare to speak. Most people were open to this new way of meeting. However, at a comparison between the meetings that were realized face-to-face and at a video conference, most people preferred to sit all together in the group. Video meetings could be a possibility if it is impossible in practice to meet in another way for example if the participants are scattered or if it is about contacts with people in Spain or Latin America. Nevertheless it is pointed out that the technique must be better. Concerning what they have won to take part in the meetings, some of them say that they have got a greater ability to dare to talk but that the attempt has been a little too short. Others see the meetings mostly as a nice way of maintaining the language and trying a new medium. In the future they can imagine to go on with a similar activity for instance a film club. The themes of discussion at the telephone conferences, role plays and "real telephone conversations" were also highly appreciated. The students agreed that this kind of oral practice should get more room in distance language courses.

Having access to a native speaker during the meetings was the resource that was appreciated the most by participants in both groups. It gave both authenticity to the attempt, and knowledge about another country. Moreover it made it possible for the teacher to make notes in peace and quiet, and write down the student's weaknesses and shortcomings in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical correctness. The teacher could bring this up with the student later and give advice about how to go on working.

The native teachers who took part as facilitators at the meetings of the video group respectively at the telephone meetings, were both very positive to the planning and took part themselves in a natural way in the themes and role plays that were included. The greatest difficulties in the video group was the technique that has to work to make the meetings good. The tutors/technicians at the centres must be available. The themes chosen for the meetings and the careful planning of their own preparations also facilitated the work for the leaders. There was however a problem that part of the spontaneity disappeared. Some conversations sometimes tended to be "reading" out of the manuscript. The student was tempted to be too bound to what he/she had prepared and written down. This could be avoided by the choice of theme for the video/telephone meeting.

One goal was to develop models for the use of video and telephone as means of communication in conversation in languages where distance and other factors make face-to-face meetings impossible. We chose to work with a planning that emanated from themes that among other things would lead to a preparation for a contact with Spain. Unfortunately that part of the test could not be effected, but we thought anyway that the planning worked with some changes for example a film show.

The technique was another impediment that the video group's model could not be performed in a full scale.

Certain themes were too comprehensive and became more of a presentation than a conversation. We got, however, rather a good idea of how a video conference could be used in distance education. As an answer to the question "What is your opinion about the use of video in conversation as a possibility to develop the oral skill for instance in distance courses?" several participants answer that it would be good as a complement. However, if the flexibility of the distance course is to be maintained, changes must be made in the fixed schedule, that is the meetings must be planned so there are several possibilities for the participants to apply in accordance with the model of a telephone conference where the participants agree individually with the teacher when they want to have the conversations. The telephone group was a little too small in order to draw any decisive conclusions, but it was evident that they all appreciated the flexible system to book their calls. Some of them had tried another system of telephone conference where more people can take part, but that demands that you book a long time in advance, and which in that way was experienced as more complicated.

The evaluations show that the access to a native facilitator together with the regular teacher is of decisive significance in order to create the feeling of authenticity that makes the conversations to be experienced as genuine. Supplying culture in the countries of the target language is important as well. Many in the group of the telephone conference also felt very proud to be able to communicate by telephone, which is maybe the medium that demands the most; no gestures or visual impressions reinforce the communication but it is the word, the intonation and the pause that is the most important.

Our idea for the test of phase2 was to go on developing models for how the oral skill and the communication of the language would be provided for at distance courses. Our experience of working with languages at distance and the evaluations from the internetbased course in Spanish 1 and 2 and in test phase1, shows that the flexibility in the model, among other things, makes it possible to capture many non-traditional learners who from different reasons do not fit into usual classroom teaching, but that the weakness lies in the training of the oral skill. It is true that the web support gives good opportunities to listening, but communication and conversation can not be accounted for "on the net", except in controlled simulation exercises that may be felt as affected and non-realistic.

We think that video- and telephone conferences may be a complement to the ordinary distance education also in languages with the models that we have tested. Where separate unities of adult education do not have resources to offer courses in languages, distance education with several unities connected is a possibility. Then it is a matter also here of greater distances and less possibilities to have close meetings. Maybe a native facilitator can be employed. Among the offers of modern communication media you should not forget the telephone. It is an easily accessible, cheap and flexible tool in the training. Different forms of contacts with people in the target countries ought to be developed as well. There are less expensive ways, except chat, to talk to each other (cheap telephone subscriptions, data programs type Netmeeting etc). At CFL the teaching is carried on at total distance, which means that students neither meet teachers nor other students on the same course in face-to-face meetings. This extreme distance form does not suit everyone and the optimal thing is perhaps to have sandwich training with close meetings and distance studies. For many people however, who want to learn a language, CFL's model is the only one that is practicable.

Working together with CFL has been very rewarding for us as a separate local unity. We have learnt a great deal about distance education in general, and how you work with developing internetbased courses. The two test phases have been rewarding. By the tests and above all by the evaluations that have been made, we have learnt a lot

about how adult non-traditional learners look at language studies and what their needs are. We are better equipped to deal with developing new forms to reach the public (via libraries and learning centres), and with working out new courses maybe not only at distance but also other more informal conversation groups for instance around a film series.

It has been interesting to take part in our partners' tests and the different circumstances that prevail in the countries that are part of the project regarding language teaching and so on. We can also state the fact that we have had a long tradition in Sweden of courses in adult education (educational associations, national unions, folk high-schools etc). This form of studies has been changed according to technical development and been adjusted to new needs. The development goes on and distance studies have come to stay.

Our pedagogic discussions within the project about learning languages and about reaching and capturing non-traditional learners have been very rewarding.