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"The European Language Portfolio - The Way Ahead"

Bucuresti, 29-30 October 2004

For updated information, visit
www.QUEST.ro

Latest Events

QUEST Romania – Inspector Training

Stage 1: Inspector Training Course

Bucuresti, 2-3 April 2004

At the beginning of April, teachers and directors of modern language centres in our country attended an inspector training course organised by the Romanian Association for Quality Language Services QUEST, held at PROSPER-ASE Language Centre and Goethe-Institut in Bucharest.

The facilitators were experienced QUEST Inspectors: Dr Anca Colibaba, President of QUEST Romania and Director of EuroEd - Iasi, Dr Laura Muresan, Director of PROSPER-ASE Bucuresti and Secretary General of EAQUALS - the European Association for Quality Language Services, and Dr Radadiana Calciu, teacher of English and German at PROSPER-ASE Bucuresti.

The topics covered included:

- an overview of the inspection systems of EAQUALS and QUEST Romania;
- issues related to the inspection process (specificity, steps, requirements);
- the inspector's profile (qualities, abilities, attitudes);
- the role of the inspection team;
- aspects of professional deontology.

The participants were explained how the evaluation of a school is carried out by observing the teaching-learning process as part of a quality inspection, how they can

get an accurate, comprehensive view of systems and procedures in a school, what the sources of evidence are, as well as what mechanisms and instruments can help inspectors find out as much as possible in a short span of time (the inspection lasts for a day and a half - two days).

Through simulations of interviews, the participants played the roles of inspectors and inspected managers, a most useful opportunity for getting a picture of how interviews and discussions progress as part of an inspection process, and also learning from each other about various issues connected with schools, course organisation, and the teaching-learning process in general.

At Goethe Institut, which is situated in an impressive old building in the heart of Bucharest, the trainees had the special pleasure and honour of being welcomed by Ms Heidegert Hoesch, Director of this prestigious institution, who spoke about the perfecting of language teaching and educational standards with a view to the European integration.

Attending this course has been a special experience for all the participants and, at the same time, an opportunity for learning from each other.

Doinita Papatanasiu
Class Language Centre
Constanta

Stage 2: QUEST Inspection Practice

Cluj-Napoca, 13-14 May 2004

The trainers of the QUEST inspector course had the excellent idea of organising a second part of the course as inspection practice. Two language schools in Cluj took their chance and very generously opened their doors – literally, including full access to all their staff, students, and documentation – to the inspectors-in-training, thus providing us with the very valuable and practical experience of a QUEST inspection.

The participants were divided into two groups: half of us ‘inspected’ Access Language Centre, and the other half the German Cultural Centre. We worked in pairs of inspectors, just as in a real inspection. The whole practical module of the QUEST training was very well organised in my opinion: we started as a whole group, divided ourselves into the two groups for the ‘mock’ inspection, and then on the second day came together again as a whole group for feedback and general conclusions.

In our group (ACCESS), the pairs of ‘inspectors’ reviewed the school’s documentation, interviewed the teaching and administrative staff, as well as the school’s management; we also observed many lessons and interviewed students. We then categorised and summarised our feedback for the school management. We not only did a ‘dress rehearsal’ of feedback giving to the director, but also ‘premiered’ feedback giving twice, so to speak: once

at the end of the inspection day, and a summary on the following day, when the two groups came together. Our group’s trainer, Dr. Radadiana Calciu, supervised all the inspection practice that we were involved in and provided us with extremely useful advice on the procedures and philosophy of QUEST inspections; she also helped us with the difficult task of organising all the data we had collected during the inspection into a coherent report that we were able to deliver as oral feedback to the school director. We as inspectors-to-be were also very glad to receive feedback to our own feedback-giving from our trainer. Although the term sometimes used for inspection practice is ‘mock’ inspection – I can honestly say that it was a very serious process, through which we learned immensely. I believe I speak on behalf of all trainee inspectors when I wish to thank both the QUEST trainers – Dr. Laura Muresan and Dr. Radadiana Calciu – and the directors of the two language schools who so generously submitted themselves to the ordeal of an inspection conducted by inexperienced – but very eager to learn – inspectors.

Dr. Gabriela Matei
EduPlus Consulting SRL
Timisoara

Training for New EAQUALS Inspectors

I had the privilege of participating in a one-day training event for new [EAQUALS](#) inspectors, facilitated by Ludka Kotarska, Chair of the EAQUALS Inspections Sub-Committee – Gdansk, Poland, and Maria Matheidesz, Member of the EAQUALS Inspections Sub-Committee – Budapest, Hungary. The training took place in Munich, on April 22, 2004, on the eve of the Annual General Meeting of EAQUALS and of the EAQUALS annual conference.

The “new” inspectors were a group of approximately 40 professionals coming from a large number of European countries, including: Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia & Montenegro, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom. The training consisted of both lectures and interactive activities. The main topics presented and discussed were:

- The new version of the Guide to the EAQUALS Inspection Scheme
- Criteria and standards
- Assessment and report writing
- Good practice for EAQUALS inspectors

I was impressed with the quality of the training conducted by the two trainers: clarity and conciseness seemed to be the main qualities of the materials presented, as well as of the training itself. The participants – the ‘trainees’ – were very interested in the content of the training, as well as very eager to discuss in detail certain issues connected to the inspection scheme, particularly criteria and standards. Time was very limited,

however, and some of the more debatable points remained to be resolved during the more social events of the training and the conference, e.g. during the coffee breaks or at mealtime.

I found particularly useful the discussion or provision – either in plenary mode or in small groups/pairs – of the following issues:

- Differences between *requirements* and *recommendations* as provided by the inspectors in the inspection report;
- Avoiding language that is negative, sententious, vague or general;
- Language that is appropriate for recommendations, e. g., “consider...”, “take measures...”, “explore ways/methods of...”, “include...”, “take a critical look at...”, etc. (especially at the level of the written discourse in the inspectors’ report);
- A list of questions, useful for the focus group discussion with students and teachers;
- The value of the inspection as a consulting experience, not just an evaluative one.

Formulating criteria – this was a point that raised most interest for some participants, who remarked that some criteria/standards needed to be more specific/objective to be operational during an inspection. The facilitators underlined that such criteria are specified in detail in the inspection scheme; it is true, however, that the standards are based, to an extent, on a shared understanding of “good practice” within EAQUALS as an association.

As an inspector-in-training, I particularly appreciated the relevance for future inspection practice of the interactive activities included in the training session. We were involved in task-based learning concerning the following practical aspects of an EAQUALS inspection:

- Documents necessary for establishing the inspection timetable;
- Best use of time during inspection;
- Formulating recommendations on the basis of lesson observation, students’ and teachers’ perspectives;
- Distinctions between requirements and recommendations;
- Analysing and conceptualising data from focus groups and interviews in order to write the inspection report.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the inspectors’ training and the EAQUALS conference – as well as the beautiful city of Munich. I was grateful for the new learning experiences I took part in, as well as for the opportunity of seeing old friends and making new ones. After such highly positive experiences, this new inspector is really looking forward to her first EAQUALS inspection!

Dr. Gabriela Matei
EduPlus Consulting SRL
Timisoara

Projects and Activities Run by QUEST Centres

eLanceNet

As more countries join the European Union, less widely used and taught languages in Europe face the challenge of being swept away by the force of the more predominant languages in Europe.

The possibility of this happening within the next 100 years or so determines us to take the initiative to promote the learning and using of these languages so that they do not fall out of use and eventually become extinct along with the cultures and ways of life associated with them.

eLanceNet - [The European Resource and Language Centre Network](#) - is an EU Socrates Lingua 1 project that has been funded by the European Commission.

The project has developed a web portal where information about foreign language services, courses, resources, funding opportunities and language learning events are made available to language learners, including people with specific needs. The main objective of the portal is the promotion of learning languages in general as well as advocating the learning of less widely used, learned and taught (LWULT) languages, such as Dutch, Greek, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian and Romanian. The information is accessible in the seven European languages listed above and in English as the lingua franca of the portal. Euroed Foundation, the institution which coordinates the project, is based in Iasi, Romania. QUEST Romania is also one of the project partners. The other promoter countries are Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Norway.

eLanceNet addresses two target groups. On the one hand, it addresses language course and resource providers in Europe and on the other, it addresses general users and potential learners.

Language course and resource providers can use the portal to upload information about the different course and/or resources they provide. Even though the portal initially aimed at providing information about courses and resources related to one of the languages of the portal, it has already expanded to include courses and services associated with any of the languages spoken in Europe. The portal also offers course and resource providers information about quality in language education and means of upgrading the services they provide to meet the requirements of quality assurance in language services.

In addition, the portal offers providers information about different trends in language education and learners’ preferences concerning type, duration, time, material and other aspects of language education. Users and learners interested in learning about and registering for any of the courses uploaded on the portal can specify their needs, whether it is a course in a specific language or a textbook they are looking

for. By means of the search facility available on the portal, their requests will be processed and they will receive a result page that will outline the result of their search. Users will then be able to click on any of the choices offered to them to learn more about it. They will also be able to contact the providers they are interested in through the portal and request whatever additional information they may need.

Learners interested in accessing information about language courses or services being funded by different organizations in Europe will also be able to learn of those opportunities using the Funding Opportunities search mechanism available on the portal.

In addition, the portal addresses the needs of learners with specific needs. Language course and resource providers who offer services that target learners with specific needs will be able to post those services on the portal for learners to access information that is relevant to their needs.

Finally, in order to foster the concept of quality in language education, the portal introduces learners to the concept of quality in language education and acquaints them as with the state-of-the-art discussions pertaining to quality assurance in language education. In addition, the portal offers users the opportunity to read about the quality assurance measures that every provider is implementing in their institution.

The portal hosts a forum where different issues pertaining to the learning of languages in general and LWULT in particular are being discussed. Participants in the forum vary from specialized language educators to general learners. The discussions on the forum can be in English or any of the other languages of the forum, thus encouraging participants to practice whatever language they wish to communicate in.

The portal also offers providers and learners information about different events related to the learning of languages not only in Europe but all over the world such as conferences, workshops and seminars related to LWULT or any issue of special interest.

Because we believe that languages are fun, the portal offers users and providers a "taste of" the languages of the portal. Information about the history, culture of the country where a specific language is spoken is available on the portal. If you click on any of the languages in the menu of the "taste of" link of the portal, you will be able to listen to the language and learn something about it. In addition, links uploaded on those pages can offer you a second and hopefully a more fulfilling taste of the language you are interested in.

eLanceNet is now in its final phase. We hope you have the time to check the portal and hopefully benefit for the services it provides whether you are a language service provider or a user.

Waafa Wali

on behalf of EuroEd Foundation

Iasi

FocusEd present at IATEFL 2004

It is not simple to promote ideas, it is easier to go to interested parties with concrete outcomes and products; the palpable reaches more people and practical minds than the intangible ideas which require a lot of imaginative effort. The latter was the challenging task had by the three participants to the IATEFL annual conference located this year in Liverpool, UK; we three, Srdjan Starcevic, Excalibur Language Centre, Novi Sad, Serbia, Ovidiu Ursa, Access Language Centre, Cluj, Romania, and Anca Colibaba, EuroEd Foundation, Romania, assumed the task of promoting **FocusEd**, the international educational association set up by our 10-year old network of Language Centres from post communist countries. But, being all teachers and managers of schools, we were also deeply interested in the events from strictly the professional point of view.

We armed ourselves with an operational strategy: we decided to look for public spaces where information about FocusEd could be displayed; we also analyzed the programme of the event and discussed which of the types of activities could be suitable for our promotional intention. We thought that the adequate and non-obtrusive way to talk about **FocusEd** would be to attend the open forums and introduce the new Association to as many of the participants as possible.

We identified these events and distributed our participation evenly so that we all could get a change to talk about **FocusEd** and balance it with the opportunity to attend the professional presentations running concurrently.

The open forums we took part in were the ones initiated by the Executive Board of IATEFL and the various SIGs..

Besides the presentation of FocusEd in these forums, all the members of the Executive Board and the coordinators of SIGs were contacted on an individual basis and FocusEd goals were presented to them. The new vice-president of IATEFL, Tessa Woodward, the current President, Peter Grundy and the former Vice-President, Susan Barduhn, showed a special interest. George Pickering, the Coordinator of the ELT Management SIG, was also among those with whom we had privileged talks. As all new initiatives, FocusEd has now the challenging task to prove itself and increase public interest for its outcomes.

In parallel with the intense activity of promoting FocusEd, I had a huge interest in the whole professional event which this annual conference of IATEFL creates in the EFL/T world. I looked at it with the eyes of the teacher, of the manager of a language Centre active in the promotion of learning languages. and with those of the President of an International Association which aims at fostering excellence, innovation and diversity in education. I focused my attention on the following global aspects:

- trends in ELT
- trends which could be transferable from ELT to the learning/teaching of other languages

- trends in education
- trends in the management of international Associations
- tips for how to plan, organize and evaluate international events such as this one.

In the first category I would like to mention the obvious interest shown by researchers and practitioners alike in international Englishes, in the current linguistic and sociopolitical developments in English as a world language, the position of English as a *Lingua Franca* and its future. The big debate which covered one of the plenaries and a number of the other important workshops and presentations was centred around the idea about how to harmonize the contradictory position of English. For while its *Lingua Franca* functions are welcomed by non-native and native speakers alike, its *Lingua Franca* forms are regularly relegated to the status of errors. This means that the richness and diversity of lingua francas (or "mixed languages") are denied in the case of English. In the various interventions, among which the most relevant was Jennifer Jenkins (Senior Lecturer of Applied Linguistics at King's College, London) a range of gatekeeping issues were considered. The researcher assessed the extent to which they present obstacles to the future development and acceptance of ELF variants. The topic was developed by other specialists (famous ones, like Henry Widowsen, Robin Walker etc.) who are all engaged in cutting-edge conceptual and empirical research into various aspects of English as a *Lingua Franca* (FLF). For me, the participation to these sessions forged a clear idea that English has ceased to belong to the inhabitants of the British Isles or to the USA citizens. As a living and continuously developing corpus of linguistic data, it is the subject of all the influences and contexts brought into it by those for whom it is a mother tongue, for whom it is an official second language, but also, most extensively, by those for whom it is an additional language acquired for communication with speakers of first languages other than their own. All this impacts in such a varied and diverse way that the consequences are almost unpredictable and the only thing researchers seem to agree upon is the fact that ELF is a reality which has to be accepted and thoroughly studied in a fast pace in order to be able to anticipate the sociopolitical implications of its world wide developments. The main trend in its current evolution is the tendency to economize the effort of the user for communication purposes reflected in the overgeneralization of grammar structures (e.g. loss of s for 3rd person singular) or in the pronunciation strategies adapted to local languages phonetic rules (e.g. loss of sounds and their replacement with local sounds).

The idea was further developed in another plenary, by another famous researcher, Adrian Holliday (Reader in Applied Linguistics, Canterbury Christ Church University College). He looked critically at the native vs non-native speaker distinction as a practical construct. He showed how the ideology of "us-them" has affected the way EFL teachers and students are

perceived. He supported the idea that native speakerism has encouraged the desire to "correct" the "culture" of the "non-native speaker". His conclusion was that the world TESOL should replace the "us-them" divide by an inclusive we which practically means replacing the idea of cultural division and prejudice with cultural continuity.

In the second category, that of trends transferable to the study of foreign languages, in general, I would single out the plenary presented by the renowned researcher and professor Bill VanPatten (Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago). In his presentation he discussed how L1 and L2 acquisition are fundamentally the same in terms of underlying processes and mechanisms, thus rejecting the notion of fundamental differences. His Fundamental Similarity Hypothesis states that (1) all acquisition is input dependent; (2) all grammars are Universal Grammar constrained; and (3) developing grammars are impermeable to outside manipulation.

The main practical implication here lies in the tendency to approach the teaching of foreign languages in a manner close to the natural immersion in the L1. This idea is accompanied by the increasing interest in developing scientifically corpora of linguistic data which need to be transferred to the language learner in a scientific way. English Language Learning materials of this kind have already been developed and advertised at the conference. The famous materials developer Scott Thornbury, among others, presented his grammar book called *Natural Grammar* (OUP) starting with the assumption that learners should learn thoroughly the common words of the language, as they carry the main patterns of the language.

The idea whether languages should be taught based on the corpora of scientific data or on materials based on imagination, creativity and experience was the core of another plenary initiated by the *ELT Journal*. The plenary enjoyed lots of popularity and was held by the equally famous *ELT* professionals Michael Swan and Michael McCarthy. More on this at www.eltj.org. I, personally, find that teachers should avoid being caught in the middle of such a dispute and continue to believe in the teachability of the FL by the teacher and act accordingly, using all the emotional, motivational and cognitive elements that concur in any learning process to speed up the process of FLL.

The third category of "learnings" I have found worth sharing with my colleagues lies in the way in which this conference showed general trends in education. The development and introduction of modern means for learning and teaching has been one of the developments for the past 10-15 years. E-learning platforms, distance education, technologies associated with this approach were presented both at workshops and at the *ELT Resource Exhibition*. Among these I would single out here that the advantages of using ICT devices and products throughout the *ELT* would (language learning and language assessment, pre and in service teacher training) have become a motivator for

institutions all over the world to seek for solutions to improve the exploitation of their teaching networks for the benefit of the students.

Typical online behaviours from a sociological and cognitive perspective were analyzed, informalization, code-switching, issues of correctness were also touched upon.

Another lesson I experienced as a participant at this conference focussed on my observations on how IATEFL as an international organization functions. Much of this information is relevant and transferable to the Focus Ed Association.

Here are some general, useful principles at work:

- the Association looks into the way in which the diversity of professional interests finds adequate ways to develop and share within a common framework; the SIG system continuously develops making way for all new educational trends and manifested needs;
- the world of teaching and resource development is brought together alongside with auxiliary services and developments. Teachers, consultants, researchers, associations, Publishing Houses, educational institutions have all their distinct voices and are separately acknowledged;
- the management system is democratic, transparent, based on volunteering, and is organized on several layers;
- the connection of the Association with the professionals and the community at large is encouraged;
- transcontinental projects are given visibility;
- its system of grants is continuously developing.

Last but not least I could remark here the insight into how the event was organized. Issues such as:

- the preconference sessions
- the conference agenda
- the types of guests and key note speakers
- the types of winners of IATEFL grants
- the social programme
- the location of the conference
- the accompanying materials and the conference folder
- the accompanying ELT exhibition
- volunteer work
- subcontracted services

gave us all food for thought about the huge amount of expertise, contacts, time, effort and money that are necessary to set the standards of quality which FocusEd aspires to acquire in time.

Dr Anca Colibaba
Director, EuroEd
Iasi

AB Campus – e-Learning not only for Highly Educated Adults

In June the Soros Educational Center Foundation hosted an international meeting with the participation of representatives from 7 countries: Spain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Romania.

The meeting was part of a Socrates – Minerva Project whose main objective was adult basic education supported by IT and internet (e-learning).

In most European countries e-learning got to be known and there are similar initiatives in Romania, too, but experience in this field shows that it is mostly the privilege of the highly educated and the activities are run by colleges or universities.

The partners in our project thought that this principle worked against the "democratic" use of the internet, whose content is available free of charge and limitless, and therefore it could be used in adult basic education (reading, writing, foreign languages, IT), too. All these contributed to the idea of creating a virtual campus for people with a lower level of education to help them further their studies.

For the usefulness of the results/product to be guaranteed, the work team has not only employed the services of IT specialists and teachers, but also worked with adults from the larger target group that the project would like to serve. Their needs and expectations are the priority in this project; the coordinators and specialists are just helping them turn their ideas into reality.

In parallel with the campus, a methodological workbook will be put together, which will be a free tool for those adult basic education institutions that consider the optimal use of the internet and the democratic organisation of education important in ensuring equal opportunities.

Csilla LÁZÁR-BOROS
Programme coordinator
Soros Educational Center
Miercurea-Ciuc

News from EuroEd about on-line language learning projects: Eurobusiness Language Skills & Euro-Languages Net

The latest project on our desks is **Eurobusiness Language Skills (ELS)**, which is part of the European Union – Leonardo da Vinci Programme, Pilot Project Area: *Development of Language Skills*, reference no. 1/03/B/F/LA – 154168.

The participating countries are: Italy, as coordinator, and France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Spain, Germany, Greece, and Romania, as partners.

The Romanian participants are: Technology Incubator Centre and APOWer – Bucharest, and EuroEd Foundation – Iasi.

Two organizations share the leadership role in this

project, the **Municipality of Florence**, through one section dealing with employment issues, and **No Limits Education and Training (UK)**. Both possess expertise regarding learning methods and processes likely to increase the value attributed to the main beneficiaries, "women", in the creation of the training course.

The **social and economic context** in which this project is being developed is characterised by the existence of the Single Market and the adoption of the Euro which have created new opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises that carry out a vital role in the European economy, representing ca 70.3% of total business in the EU.

The **target group** that the project addresses consists of manager assistants, secretaries, and office people in general, people who will establish initial contacts with these enterprises. The reasons are many, and they refer to :

- **creating possibilities for re-skilling and flexibility** of the office staff in the "New Economy" in which borders no longer exist and technology allows for the creation of new contacts, collaborations and markets.
- **answering the need to develop language skills** in order to allow a company to establish transnational contacts and therefore fully benefit from the advantages that derive from the introduction of the Single Market in Europe;
- **the necessity to re-think the language training process regarding secretarial personnel in order to respond to the** needs of the group, as perceived by labour market analysts.

The **goals and objectives** of the project derive directly from the needs analysis of the target group:

- **developing the language skills (in English, French, Spanish and Italian) of office workers, seen as key-figures** within companies, providing support and close assistance to the entrepreneurs or managers in order to re-shape their professional profile and help them acquire sufficient linguistic command to enable them to communicate with other countries and to establish contacts and commercial agreements in a complex plurilingual economic context;
- **creating an innovative, topic-based training product that is both intellectually challenging and flexible** in structure.

The expected outcomes of the project are:

- **the creation of an Internet Portal** that contains the training package of three languages aimed at office personnel, consisting of training modules, an on-line dictionary of usual business terms, an on-line tutoring service, and a space on the forum for practicing the language.

- **the creation of an innovative training course for self-learning of languages that would foster the learning of more** than one foreign language with a focus on business language content while also enabling updating and personalising of content;
- **the promotion of equal opportunities in the creation of the training course** that caters for different types of self-learning styles.

The **potential user** will be able to access not only training modules, but also other integral services such as an online dictionary which will be constantly updated in order to collect the words and phrases that are frequently used among office personnel in the four languages. Furthermore, the online tutoring will be accompanied by forums for language practice. In recognition of the expertise that the team of teachers has proved so far, both in terms of materials writing and experience in teaching corporate clients, the **EuroEd Foundation teachers** have been entrusted with the writing of the online English version, topic-based language course and with contributing to the general glossary of business terms and translating them into Romanian.

The EuroEd team has been working on the project for a while and by October the potential users will be able to access the Portal in order to get the training they need in business language in one of the four languages mentioned above. In the process, they can always confer with virtual colleagues from abroad or use the forum just to practice their language.

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Another project we have been working on for a couple of years now is [Euro Languages Net](#).

The participating countries are: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania (the project coordinator), Poland, Portugal, Romania (represented by the EuroEd Foundation in Iasi and the PROSPER-ASE Language Centre in Bucharest) and Slovakia.

The project is designed to create an Internet resource for both learners and teachers of modern less widely used European languages. Because of the global nature of the Internet, users of this network will not be restricted to Europe, the resource will be available to the whole world.

For learners (both potential and existing) the site will provide information about where in continental Europe they can learn less widely used languages. High quality best practices, language learning and teaching resources as well as new language learning possibilities will be provided. **It will also raise awareness to the advantages of learning other languages** in terms of employability, mental stimulation and social interaction.

For teachers, the network has already provided support and a forum for co-operation and sharing of ideas. This aspect has been further extended through conferences and workshops where best practices were

shared. The promotion and dissemination of material across the network have also been discussed.

The main goals of the project:

- to raise awareness of other less frequently used languages and to promote the learning of these languages in order to increase the quality and mobility of the workforce, and to improve intercultural awareness as well as communication between cultures;
- to encourage the general public of all age groups to learn less widely used European languages in order to be effective in a multicultural and multinational Europe;
- to introduce innovative language teaching and learning programmes by promoting modern technologies, to develop language skills through self-access, to give the target group learner autonomy.

What can we really find about the Romanian language on the website ?

- some facts about the language and its origins
- language training providers, at home and abroad
- learning resource centres (libraries and online resources)
- Romanian language survival kit (phrases and short dialogues)
- self-learning tests

to say nothing of many other items that may interest whoever is keen on learning about Romania.

Maria Nicolau
EuroEd Foundation
Iasi, Romania

News from the QUEST Centres

PROSPER-ASE LANGUAGE CENTRE - Between Then and Now

On the 25th of June 2004 the PROSPER-ASE Team celebrated its 10th anniversary*: the founding and junior members were once again brought together by **the PROSPER spirit**, in one extended family, the PROSPER-ASE family.

The ten years passing by have seen the Centre grow and embrace many young teachers, who, by joining the founding members, got 'contaminated' by the PROSPER spirit: a spirit of collaboration and sharing, of desire to stay up-to-date to the developments in the teaching field and get connected to the greater European professional network. The PROSPER-ASE philosophy is centred on providing quality language services and offering its members a sense of identity and belonging to a real professional community. Consequently, its members, teachers and teacher trainers, are actively participating in conferences and seminars, conducting training courses in Romania

and abroad (e.g. in the region, in other countries in Europe, or in places as far away as Almaty, Kazakhstan). As **founder member of QUEST Romania** and through its affiliation to national and international organizations, PROSPER-ASE has ensured for its stakeholders access to the latest developments and contact with professional networks worldwide.

Over the years, the Centre has developed efficient cooperation links with all the QUEST members, with the Academy of Economic Studies and with the European Cultural Institutes in Bucharest, in organizing national and international events. Thus, it is currently collaborating with partner institutions in preparing **the annual QUEST Seminar**, dedicated as always (ever since its first edition in 2001) to the European Day of Languages.

PROSPER-ASE is also involved in various **European projects**, e.g.

- on Quality Management and Training in Language Education, within the framework of the 1st and 2nd Medium-term Programmes of the ECML - the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe;
- promoting life-long learning and less-widely spoken languages, e.g. [EuroLanguagesNet](#), [eEuroInclusion](#);
- on the recognition of non-formal and informal education: the Refine project.

Moreover, one of its most important achievements has been piloting the **European Language Portfolio – the EAQUALS/ALTE version for adults** and supporting the translation and publishing of its Romanian version, **to be officially launched on 29-30 October at the annual QUEST Seminar**.

On the other hand, by its emphasis on quality and its wide educational offer, PROSPER-ASE brought its contribution to raising public awareness as to the need of quality language services and the increasing importance given to communication in foreign languages. That has undoubtedly led to an improvement in the status of the English teacher, and the language teacher, in general, among other professions in Romania.

** In June 1994 PROSPER-ASE LANGUAGE CENTRE opened its doors to welcome its first students. The Centre resulted from the collaboration between the British Council and the teachers with the Academy of Economic Studies. It was set up with a twofold purpose: to promote language learning at European standards and to consolidate the status of the language teaching profession.*

Ana-Maria Nicolae
PROSPER-ASE Language Centre
Bucuresti

Professional Language Centre – New Full Member of QUEST Romania

Professional Language Centre in Targu Mures, an observer member of QUEST, has applied for QUEST inspection in view of its becoming a full member. The inspection has been carried out by two experienced QUEST inspectors.

Following the inspection, Professional LC has received the Inspection Report and has been accredited as full member of QUEST Romania. It is a great achievement and an honour for Professional LC to belong to such a quality network and team.

What does this mean? A set of common standards and characteristics, which refer namely to elements which make up the external image of the school, from advertising materials, certificates, seals, signs etc. In point of content, course-type and course duration, the division of the levels of study, testing and certification, number of students in a group etc.

The experience accumulated during the process of inspection will certainly be as beneficial and useful as the final results themselves.

98% - THE PASS RATE AT CAMBRIDGE EXAMS AMONG PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE STUDENTS

Professional Language Centre has introduced courses specially designed to assist students in tackling the Cambridge Exams, namely FCE, CAE, and CPE. Nobody could have envisaged the subsequent success of these preparation courses in terms of popularity amongst the exam candidates and in terms of pass rates amongst those attending the courses. Consequently Professional LC together with Colegiul National "Al.Papiu Ilarian" has become a closed sub-centre in Targu-Mures.

The most frequently taken exam by our clients and also internationally recognized as a measurement of candidates' level of English is Certificate in Advanced English. The purposes for which students take these exams range from using the certificates in a job or entering a course of study abroad, to receiving clear results demonstrating the achieved level.

Study for Cambridge Exams can really provide motivation and reward in a number of ways: it gives students a definite goal to work for, and also a way of measuring their progress; it makes them improve the parts of their English that are weaker. On the other hand, success in the exam gives them a qualification – a certificate of their English ability – which can help them get into a better university or get a good job.

Ever since the British Council held exams at our schools in June 2000, we have benefited greatly from their advice and support. The pass rate of our candidates was 98% last year, over that announced at the country level, which is an achievement we have to keep up with.

Angela Cotoara
Professional Language Centre
Targu-Mures

International Forum Language Centre, Timisoara

International Forum Language Centre Timisoara is organizing this year for the first time three sessions of Zertifikat Deutsch examinations. (Our school is an Examination Centre authorized by the Goethe Institute Bucharest and has been organizing this exam since 1992). The first two sessions are taking place between June 28th and July 4th with 61 candidates sitting the exam. The third session will be taking place in autumn.

Our Language Centre has always organized preparation courses for the Cambridge examinations with a pass rate of 100% and excellent results in the exams. The school has also a branch in Arad where this year for the first time an CAE preparation course has been organized.

Furthermore, our school proudly continues the two-year tradition of one of its most successful social activities:

Conversation Clubs for the students from both the English and the German Departments. Every Tuesday (for German) and Wednesday (for English) the students get together with their teachers in Club "Escape" and, over a drink, try to bridge the old fashioned gap between students and teachers.

Marius Stoianov
Executive Director
International Forum Language Centre
Timisoara

Teacher Development Seminars at the Goethe-Institut Bukarest

1. Handlungsorientiert unterrichten. Können Sie das?

Seminarleiter: Martin Müller, Freiburg/Schweiz
Deutsches Kulturzentrum Klausenburg,
26.-28.6.2004

Zielgruppe: DaF-Lehrer an Deutschen Kultur-Institutionen

Im Referenzrahmen und in "Profile deutsch" werden sprachliche Kenntnisse der Lernenden als "Handlungen" mit "Kannbeschreibungen" umschrieben. Mit diesem System lassen sich Kenntnisse oder Fortschritte beim Lernen einer fremden Sprache leicht umschreiben und vergleichen.

Das klingt gut in der Theorie, aber wie sieht das konkret im Unterricht aus? Wie kann ich den Unterricht lernziel- und handlungsorientiert gestalten? Welche Themen sollen behandelt werden? Welche Aktivitäten sind wichtig? Wie können die Lernenden durch den Einsatz von Strategien das Sprachenlernen optimieren? Wie können sie ihre Fortschritte überprüfen? Was können wir Lehrer und Lehrerinnen beisteuern, um den Lernprozess transparent zu machen? und und und ...

Die Seminarteilnehmer hatten die Gelegenheit, sowohl die Theorie als auch die Praxis kennenzulernen. In Kleingruppen beschäftigten wir uns mit den Möglichkeiten von "Profile deutsch" und nahmen uns Zeit, die Lehrwerke "Moment mal" und das ganz neue Lehrwerk "OptimalA1" genauer kennen zu lernen und zu überprüfen, wie die Empfehlungen des Referenzrahmens konkret umgesetzt werden. Gibt es in den Lehrwerken

- eine handlungsorientierte Progression mit Kannbeschreibungen?
- spezielles Strategietraining für die verschiedenen Fertigkeiten?
- Erwerb von Wortschatz und Grammatik für das erfolgreiche Verstehen und Kommunizieren?
- regelmäßiges Überprüfen der Lernfortschritte
- Berücksichtigung verschiedener Lern- und Lehrtypen?

Im Seminar hatten die Teilnehmer auch die Gelegenheit, über ihren eigenen Unterricht zu reflektieren und sich für einen attraktiven Sprachunterricht fit zu machen.

Das Seminar wurde freundlicherweise großzügig unterstützt vom Goethe-Institut Bukarest, dem Langenscheidt-Verlag und dem Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen Stuttgart (ifa).

2. Neue Medien im DaF-Unterricht

Referentin: Monica-Maria Aldea
Goethe-Institut / SELS Bukarest, 6. - 11. Juli 2004

Das Seminar richtete sich an DaF-LehrerInnen mit PC-Grundkenntnissen, die interessiert sind, die multimedialen Mittel im Unterricht anzuwenden. Es stellte die Einführung zu diesem immer umfangreicheren Thema dar und bot die Gelegenheit, sowohl die instrumentellen Fertigkeiten zu erweitern als auch den vielseitigen Einsatz im Unterricht zu erproben.

Das neue Medium

Dass das neue Medium nicht länger ignoriert werden kann, stellt heute eine Binsenweisheit dar. Das Seminar wollte durch praktisches Erproben zu einigen Überlegungen führen, und zwar in Betracht auf:

- Anwendbarkeit und Nutzen im eigenen Unterricht
- Zielgruppen
- Fertigkeiten
- Anwendungsfreundlichkeit
- "Mehrwert"
- instrumentelle Fertigkeiten
- Technische Voraussetzungen

Internet

Zugleich wurden im Seminar wichtige online Adressen auf ihre Anwendbarkeit im Unterricht erprobt:

- Portale
- Unterrichtsprogramme
- Zusätzliche Materialien
- Autorenprogramme
- interkulturelle Recherche.

3. Methodik-Didaktik für Lehrkräfte, die Sprachunterricht für Erwachsene erteilen

Referentin: Monica-Maria Aldea
Goethe-Institut Bukarest, 19. - 24. Juli 2004

In diesem Seminar für DeutschlehrerInnen im Erwachsenenbereich wurde einerseits versucht, auf die Fortbildungswünsche der Seminarteilnehmer einzugehen (mögliche Themen: Kursaufbau, Stoffverteilung, Kurspreispolitik, Lehr- und Zusatzmaterialien, neue Lehrmittel, **Europäisches Sprachenportfolio**), andererseits sollte durch die Möglichkeit zur Unterrichtshospitation bzw. zur Unterrichtsplanung des Eigenunterrichts in den laufenden Kursen des Goethe-Instituts Bukarest dem unterrichtspraktischen Teil Rechnung getragen werden.

NEU: In diesem Jahr wurde zum ersten Mal in einer "Moment mal!"-Pilotklasse hospitiert! Kursleiterin in dieser Pilotklasse war Frau Kristine Lazar (Goethe-Institut Bukarest).

Catalin-Tiberiu Nedin
Beauftragter für Sprachkurs- und Prüfungsorganisation sowie Sprachkurs-Kooperation
Goethe-Institut Bukarest

Looking forward to seeing you at
the 4th Annual Seminar of QUEST Romania

"The European Language Portfolio The Way Ahead"

Bucuresti, 29-30 October 2004, to be jointly hosted
by PROSPER-ASE Language Centre and
Goethe-Institut Bukarest.

For further information contact: prosper1@prosper.ro
(subject: QUEST Seminar 2004).

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