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ABSTRACT

This report details the third year (October 1, 1995-September 30, 1996) of a Trinity College (Ireland) program to offer second language learning modules to students who are not language majors. The modules' objectives are to develop students' communication skills for study, travel, or work abroad during undergraduate years, and to enhance their academic qualifications, vocational prospects, and potential for future mobility. Students can take the language modules for 1 or 2 years; each year of study is complete in itself. Courses in French, German, and Italian are designed for students in specific non- language curriculum areas (the arts, engineering, science, and health sciences). The report outlines the courses offered in 1995-96 and their recruitment, participation, and completion rates, and describes the modules' design and content. It also describes the design and results of testing, and presents brief reports of external evaluations of the French and German modules. A final section describes activities of research and development activities on the project in 1995-96. (MSE)

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University of Dublin ♦ Trinity College

Report on the third year of the ESF-funded project to consolidate and develop foreign language modules for students of other disciplines and the first year of the Language modules Research and Development Project

Centre for Language and Communication Studies

1 October 1995 - 30 September 1996

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Contents

1	Introduction David Little, Director, CLCS	1.1 Objectives, organization and funding	2
		1.2 The language modules in 1995-6	2
		1.3 Research and development in 1995-6	3
		1.4 Language modules and the undergraduate curriculum	3
2	Language modules in 1995-6 Ema Ushioda, Research Fellow	2.1 Modules offered	4
		2.2 Recruitment and rates of participation	4
		2.3 Design of the Modules	6
		2.4 Design of assessment procedures	7
		2.5 Assessment results	7
		2.6 Reports of external examiners	9
3	The Language Modules Research and Development Project in 1995-6 David Little	3.1 Introduction	11
		3.2 Self-access resources	11
		3.3 Interactive multimedia programs for use in self-access language learning	12
		3.4 International E-Mail Tandem Network	12
		3.5 Virtual environments and synchronous communication in self-access	12
		3.6 Publications	13
		3.7 Conference papers and workshops	13
	Appendix	Summary of income and expenditure	15

Handwritten notes:
1. Introduction
2. Language modules
3. The Language Modules Research and Development Project in 1995-6

1 Introduction

David Little

1.1 Objectives, organization and funding

1995–6 was the third year in which the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS) offered language modules to students who were not studying a foreign language as part of their degree course.

The objectives of the modules are: (i) to develop students' communication skills for purposes of study, travel or work experience abroad during their undergraduate years; and (ii) to enhance their academic qualifications, vocational prospects, and potential for future mobility. Students can take language modules for one or two years. Each year of study is complete in itself.

The language modules were introduced in 1993–4 thanks to a special grant of £100,000 from the Higher Education Authority, which wished to give the learning of foreign languages a more central role in the undergraduate curriculum. The HEA again made special grants available to fund the modules in 1994–5 (£58,000), 1995–6 (£52,000), and 1996–7. In all three years, however, the grants were confirmed only after many months of uncertainty.

In 1994–5 CLCS created a partial buffer against this uncertainty by securing funding to support a three-year Language Modules Research and Development Project, launched in Michaelmas term 1995. The biggest single contribution to this project was a private gift of £105,000 (£36,000 in 1995–6). In addition CLCS was able to raise £57,417 in sponsorship and consultancy earnings in 1995–6. (A summary of income and expenditure is given in the appendix on p.15 of this report.)

The launch of the Language Modules Research and Development Project does not, of course, remove the uncertainty that attaches to recurrent funding. But it does mean that in 1996–7 and again in 1997–8 the language

modules will be supported by a research-and-development framework that will keep recurrent funding needs to a minimum.

1.2 The language modules in 1995-6

A full account of the language modules in 1995–6 is provided in section 2 of this report. Here it is enough to summarize rates of participation/completion and draw attention to the generally high level of proficiency achieved by students who completed their module.

At the beginning of Michaelmas term 1995, 280 students enrolled for Year 1 modules, compared with 195 in 1994. This increase was due to the introduction of German beginners' and non-beginners' modules for students of Engineering and an Italian beginners' module for students in Arts and Science. 114 students completed Year 1 modules – a greater number than in 1994–5 (70), though somewhat lower when expressed as a percentage of the final total recruitment (28% compared with 35%).

At the beginning of Michaelmas term 1995, 53 students enrolled for Year 2 modules, compared with 51 in 1994–5. Of these, 29 completed their module, compared with 31 in 1994–5.

Under present arrangements, all students who take a language module do so as an extra commitment, so it is hardly surprising that the number of participants falls steadily through the academic year. In 1994–5, the recurrent cost (teaching, administration and materials) per student completing his or her module was £351. If all students who enrolled for a language module at the beginning of Michaelmas term had completed that module, the cost per student would have been £120. These figures help to highlight the waste involved in offering extra-curricular courses free of charge. However, they conceal the fact

that many students who dropped out of their module before the end-of-year assessment nevertheless managed to learn quite a lot of their chosen language. What is more, the total number of students receiving a certificate of completion (114) is by no means negligible.

In the first two years of the language modules, the project as a whole was subject to external evaluation (the external assessors' findings were included in the 1993-4 and 1994-5 reports on the project). In 1995-6 external assessors were replaced by external examiners. Their reports are reproduced in sub-section 2.6. Here it is sufficient to note that, like the external assessors' reports in 1993-4 and 1994-5, they are highly favourable. Interestingly, both externs draw attention to pronunciation as a major problem for some students. We have ourselves been aware of this problem from the beginning, and are addressing it in a variety of ways.

1.3 Research and development in 1995-6

Section 3 gives a full account of research-and-development activity in 1995-6. The principal practical achievements were: significant improvement in the organization of self-access learning facilities, and substantial progress in the development of (i) multimedia learning resources and (ii) virtual environments for use in language learning via the Internet.

The research team (David Little, Ema Ushioda, Barbara Simpson, Breffni O'Rourke, and Klaus Schwienhorst) were responsible for eight project-related publications and 19 conference papers and workshops, many of which will yield publications in due course.

It is important to recognize that the improvements in language learning facilities and resources brought about by the research-

and-development project benefit not only the language modules, but the modern language departments and all members of College who use CLCS's facilities on an individual basis.

1.4 Language modules and the undergraduate curriculum

As noted in 1.1 above, the HEA first provided funding for the language modules because it wished to see foreign language learning assume a more central role in the undergraduate curriculum. Consequently, the question of how exactly the modules should be integrated with the rest of the curriculum has been with us from the beginning.

In Michaelmas term 1995 CLCS prepared a discussion paper on the question of integration for the Deans' Committee and the Faculties. The paper pointed out (i) that as long as the modules remain entirely outside the curriculum they cannot be said to have fulfilled the HEA's aim of restructuring the undergraduate curriculum, and (ii) that lack of integration has significant repercussions for the cost-effectiveness of the modules (cf. 1.2 above). The paper recommended that Year 1 language modules should be taken as an extra commitment, though one for which students would receive credit in their annual examination; and that Year 2 modules should be taken as a fully integrated component of degree programmes, in lieu of some other course option.

The Faculty of Arts (Letters) has accepted the first but not the second part of this recommendation. No response has been received from the other faculties, though the Faculty of Science has always given students credit in their annual examination result if they pass the language modules assessment.

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2 Language modules in 1995-6

Ema Ushioda

2.1 Modules offered

The modules offered in 1995-6 were as follows:

Tuesday evening

- French for non-beginners in Arts, Year 1
- German for non-beginners in Arts, Year 1
- German for non-beginners in Engineering, Year 1
- German for beginners in Arts and Engineering, Year 1

Wednesday evening

- French for non-beginners in Science and Health Sciences, Year 1
- French for non-beginners in Arts, Science and Health Sciences, Year 2
- German for non-beginners in Arts, Science and Engineering, Year 2
- German for beginners in Arts, Science and Engineering, Year 2

Saturday morning

- French for non-beginners in Science and Health Sciences, Year 1
- German for non-beginners in Science, Year 1
- German for beginners in Science, Year 1
- Italian for beginners in Arts and Science, Year 1

Principal developments in the provision of language modules in 1995-6 were: the introduction of a beginners' Italian module on a pilot basis; the expansion of the scheme to include senior freshmen and junior sophisters in Engineering wishing to learn German (this provision replaced the self-instructional programme in German that CLCS had made available to students of Engineering since 1982); the combining of students from different Faculties in the Year 2 modules; the option for students in Science and Health Sciences to take the French module either on Wednesday evening or on Saturday morning.

2.2 Recruitment and rates of participation

With the exception of students in Engineering, students were recruited for the Year 1 modules by including publicity information and an application form in the mailing sent to incoming junior freshmen by the Admissions Office at the end of August. There were separate mailings to students in Engineering and to students who had completed Year 1 modules in 1994-5. In this way, it was possible to process applications in September and begin the modules in the first week of Michaelmas lecture term.

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 summarize the rates of participation during the 22 weeks of the modules (expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled for each module).

As in 1994-5, the rates of participation in 1995-6 showed a steady decline through Michaelmas term, although attendance figures seemed to level off somewhat earlier in Hilary term than in the previous year (see Figure 2.1). Overall rates of completion, however, were lower than in 1994-5: 28% of Year 1 students completed the modules, compared with 35% in 1994-5; 53% of Year 2 students completed the modules, compared with 60%. Whereas in 1994-5 students taking German had demonstrated a higher level of commitment overall than those taking French, in 1995-6 this pattern was reversed, with 45% of students in Arts completing the Year 1 French module, compared with only 17% in 1994-5. In 1994-5 students in Science taking the Saturday morning modules showed a proportionately stronger commitment than students in Arts taking the weekday evening modules; this was not the case in 1995-6.

Module	Initial confirmed enrolment	Number attending first session	Final total recruitment	Number completing module
Year 1 modules				
French non-beginners in Arts (Tuesday)	35 Arts	34 (97%)	38	17 (45%)
French non-beginners in Science & Health Sc. (Wednesday)	21 Science 21 Health Sc.	40 (95%)	43	10 (23%)
French non-beginners in Science & Health Sc. (Saturday)	23 Science 10 Health Sc.	30 (91%)	34	10 (29%)
German non-beginners in Arts (Tuesday)	37 Arts	37 (100%)	40	10 (25%)
German non-beginners in Engineering (Tuesday)	38 Engineer.	32 (84%)	39	9 (23%)
German non-beginners in Science (Saturday)	34 Science	32 (94%)	38	8 (21%)
German beginners in Arts & Engineering (Tuesday)	16 Arts 18 Engineer.	33 (97%)	37	12 (32%)
German beginners in Science (Saturday)	10 Science	10 (100%)	15	5 (33%)
Italian beginners in Arts & Science (Saturday)	12 Arts 5 Science	16 (94%)	22	4 (18%)
Year 1 total	280 students	264 (94%)	306	85 (28%)
Year 2 modules				
French non-beginners in Arts, Science, Health Sc. (Wednesday)	10 Arts 7 Science 10 Health Sc.	23 (85%)	27	16 (59%)
German non-beginners in Arts, Science, Engineer. (Wednesday)	5 Arts 11 Science 4 Engineer.	8 (40%)	20	9 (45%)
German beginners in Arts, Science, Engineer. (Wednesday)	2 Arts 3 Science 1 Engineer.	4 (67%)	8	4 (50%)
Year 2 total	53 students	35 (66%)	55	29 (53%)
Total	33 Students	299 (90%)	361	114 (32%)

Table 2.1
Rates of participation

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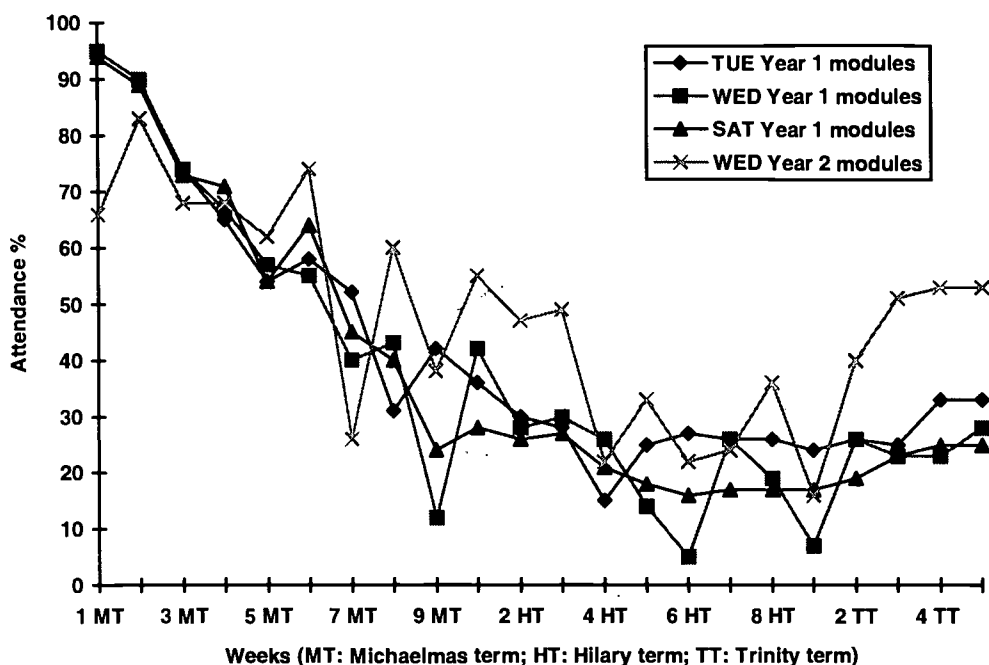


Figure 2.1
Total student participation

Year 1 students in Science and Health Sciences were offered the choice of taking the French module either on Wednesday evening or on Saturday morning. The number of applicants for Wednesday (150) far outweighed the number of applicants for Saturday (33). Although the percentage of students who eventually completed the French module was marginally higher on Saturday than on Wednesday, this large disproportion in initial levels of interest, coupled with the overall drop in rates of attendance across the Saturday modules, signalled a need to consider how viable the running of contact sessions on Saturday morning might be in the future. For 1996–7, CLCS has in fact decided to switch to weekday evening modules only for students in all Faculties.

2.3 Design of the modules

In terms of design and content, the 1995–6 modules followed the principles established in the pilot and second years of the project (for full details, see the reports on these earlier phases). The task-based approach to syllabus design in the German for beginners module

was readily adapted to the new Italian for beginners module launched this year.

As for the non-beginner modules, work done in the first two years of the project to identify student needs and topics of interest meant that the year's programme could be built on a tighter thematic structure. The week-by-week themes and topics ranged from those of general interest (e.g., education, cinema, social issues) to more discipline-specific areas (e.g., technology, scientific research, literature). A bank of theme-related materials in various media was made available for teachers and learners. In addition, students were provided with individual copies of the *Authentik* newspapers in French or German, each issue containing a wealth of authentic material and learning activities.

Contact sessions reverted to the two-hour structure of the pilot year in order to accommodate self-access work using CLCS's technical facilities and resources. The provision of class time for self-access work was especially important during Hilary lecture term, when students engaged in e-mail projects with French- and German-speaking students in Europe (see Section 3.4 below).

2.4 Design of assessment procedures

As in previous years, two types of assessment were administered in the final two weeks of the modules in Trinity lecture term: (i) a pencil-and-paper test comprising a 100-word dictation and a battery of 4 C-tests, designed to measure students' general underlying control of the target language system; and (ii) a communicative test to assess their ability to deploy their language skills, consisting of an interactive group oral presentation for Year 1 students, and a combined group oral and written presentation for Year 2 students. A detailed account of the design and development of these assessment instruments may be found in the reports on the first and second years of the language modules.

In 1995–6 it was decided to develop, pilot and validate new C-test batteries for the non-beginner French and German modules. Early in Michaelmas lecture term, six French and six German C-tests were piloted with native-speaker student volunteers (69 French-speaking and 71 German-speaking students). In each language, the two tests with the lowest native-speaker average scores were discarded, and the remaining C-tests were then piloted on students enrolled in the French and German non-beginner modules in Week 6 of Michaelmas lecture term. Each test was scored with reference to the native-speaker average as the maximum score.

Three of the German C-tests piloted yielded very low student scores. Consequently a battery of six new German C-tests was piloted with 20 native-speaker students in Hilary term. The three new tests yielding the highest native-speaker average scores were used to replace those in the original battery. The modified German battery and the original French battery were then administered as part of the terminal assessment process in Trinity lecture term. The results indicated that the German battery was now pitched at the appropriate level, with an average raw score of 61% (compared with 46% for the original battery). The French C-test battery, administered twice during the year, provided a useful measure of learning progress: among students who took the test twice, a small but appreciable improvement was observable in the rise in

average scores from 68% in Michaelmas lecture term to 72% at the end of Trinity lecture term.

As in the previous year, trial group presentations were held during Hilary lecture term, enabling students to put their communicative skills to the test and build their confidence, and giving newly-recruited assessors experience of the rating-scales. Analysis of inter-rater reliability following the Hilary and Trinity term presentations indicated a high level of agreement between assessors. In the Trinity term presentations, for example, correlations were calculated between the judgements made by assessors working independently in pairs, yielding a range from 0.71 to 0.92, with an average correlation of 0.81. These highly satisfactory results justified continuing confidence in the reliability of the assessment instrument and in the user-friendly design of the rating-scales, particularly as four of the 1995–6 assessors were working with the scales for the first time.

2.5 Assessment Result

114 students completed the assessment process – 85 students in the Year 1 modules, and 29 students in the Year 2 modules. The results are summarized in Table 2.2 below, which indicates the range of student performance classified by module and by Faculty. Figure 2.2 conflates the results for Year 1 and Year 2 modules.

51% of Year 1 students achieved a II.1 grade, while 40% achieved a II.2 grade. 76% of Year 2 students achieved a II.1 grade, while 14% achieved a II.2 grade. Although the highest overall grades were achieved by Year 1 students (see Figure 2.2), the large proportion of II.1 grades achieved by Year 2 students, coupled with the lower rates of attrition in these modules, provide further evidence that the Year 2 modules attract a committed core of relatively successful language learners.

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Module	Student nos.	Average mark	Highest mark	Lowest mark
Year 1 modules				
French for non-beginners in Arts	18	62%	67%	55%
French for non-beginners in Science	14	56%	66%	48%
French for non-beginners in Health Sc.	5	59%	65%	51%
German for non-beginners in Arts	8	63%	70%	60%
German for non-beginners in Science	10	68%	82%	62%
German for non-beginners in Engineering	9	58%	73%	51%
German for beginners in Arts	4	63%	67%	57%
German for beginners in Science	5	62%	67%	58%
German for beginners in Engineering	8	58%	64%	48%
Italian for beginners in Arts*	4	72%	82%	64%
Year 2 modules				
French for non-beginners in Arts	5	64%	69%	61%
French for non-beginners in Science	7	62%	70%	58%
French for non-beginners in Health Sc.	4	64%	68%	58%
German for non-beginners in Arts	3	65%	70%	62%
German for non-beginners in Science	4	60%	66%	53%
German for non-beginners in Engineering	2	–	60%	46%
German for beginners in Arts*	3	64%	65%	63%
German for beginners in Engineering	1	–	56%	–

*No students in Science completed this module

Table 2.2
Assessment results

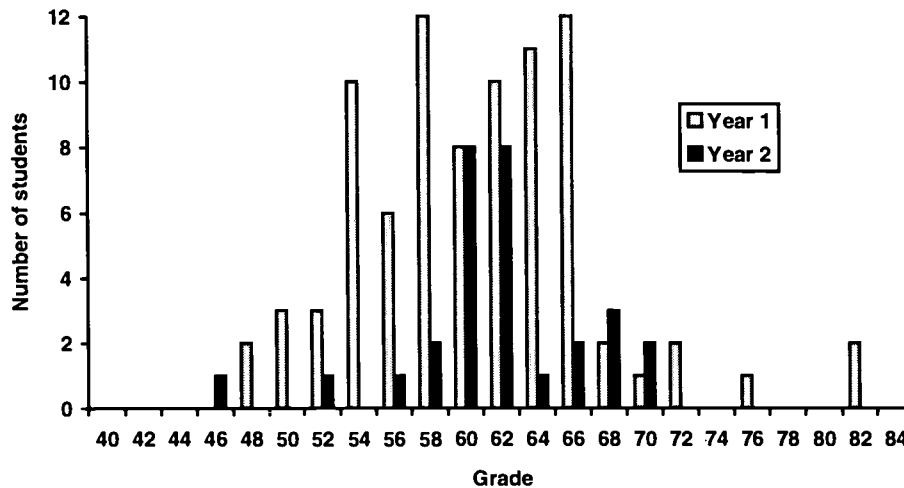


Figure 2.2
Assessment results

2.6 Reports of external examiners

French

(Dr Edith Esch, Language Centre,
University of Cambridge, United Kingdom)

Generally the examination was extremely well organized and conducted with first-rate professionalism. Standards were extremely high overall, with only one domain requiring attention (see below). Analysing the issue concerned was facilitated by the design of the rating sheet, thus validating its use as a diagnostic tool. Trinity College is clearly offering a programme which is well-suited to its growing population of non-specialists. The performance of most students indicates that their level of proficiency is sufficiently high for them to contemplate working or studying through French.

Information received and conduct of the examination – I was very familiar with the assessment procedures and tools because the Cambridge University Language Centre was involved in the evaluation of the language modules in their first two years (see the reports for 1993–4 and 1994–5). Also, the Language Modules Project Co-ordinator made sure that I obtained all the information I needed. A letter was sent to me in good time explaining the role CLCS expected external examiners to play. It was agreed that the thrust of the external's role would reside in the observation of the oral presentations. For other aspects of the examination (C-tests, dictation and written project) it was arranged that any questions would be dealt with in the wider context of the discussion following the presentations.

Oral presentations attended – On 23 April I observed five presentations by Year 1 students from the Arts faculties who were non-beginners in French. Five other groups of non-beginners were observed the following day, three from the Science and Health Sciences faculties.

Assessment – Generally, standards were very high and for most groups the task had been carefully designed to bring to the fore the good points and qualities of individual students. Tasks were imaginative and several centred on topical issues, such as BSE or drug-taking.

Some of the groups had gone out of their way to stage their presentation in an entertaining way. Most managed to maintain momentum throughout the performance.

Overall, individuals' level of grammatical accuracy and of fluency was above average. In Year 2 there was much evidence that students were not only able to select appropriate registers but to maintain and control registers and lexical choice while performing. Pronunciation and the application of phonological rules in connected speech was the only area in which students seemed to have difficulties. French words were pronounced as if they were English words, e.g., *puce* pronounced [pjys] or *alcool* pronounced [alku:l], or even *court* pronounced [ku:t], and too many liaisons were either skipped or erroneous (e.g., *leurs héros* pronounced [loerzero]). Since students cannot have heard such forms from their teachers, their production must be related to the fact that they prepare their presentation in writing, then act it out. This seemed to be a general phenomenon affecting both years and there were no significant differences between students from different disciplines. It is particularly important to put this right because it interferes with intelligibility: a French native speaker who did not know English would not have been able to understand. I am sure it will be possible to deal with this washback effect of the introduction of the written component next year. Perhaps students should not be allowed to write more than a few keywords when preparing their presentations? Apart from this problem, which should be easy to solve, the oral presentations were of excellent quality.

German

(Prof. Dr. L. Legenhausen, University of
Münster, Germany)

Introductory remarks – The oral presentations of the four German language modules (Beginners 1 and 2, Non-Beginners 1 and 2) were performed on Tuesday 30 April and Wednesday 1 May 1996. Since the group presentations were evaluated independently by two CLCS assessors, the external examiner's role was mainly observational. Within the overall assessment scheme the group project presentations are intended to test oral skills, whereas written skills are covered by a combination of dictation and C-test battery. Students taking a second-year module

must also hand in a written project report related to the group presentations. The basis for the following report is the performance in group presentations.

The rating sheet – Guidelines and rating sheets for individual student assessment and group task assessment are well-designed assessment instruments which assessors find easy to handle. They get very clear descriptive glosses of the various attainment levels, and have sufficient time during the performance to tick the corresponding boxes, provided group size does not exceed four participants (which was the case only once).

Scale ranges differ between assessment sheets for individual and group performances. The rating sheet for individual assessments consists of a five-point scale, whereas group evaluations are based on a ten-point scale. The ten-point system includes an extra category, "outstanding", and allows for a more fine-grained deduction of points if certain conditions are not fulfilled. The very fact that for all the presentations observed by the external examiner the application of reduced scales did not seem to be called for might have been a direct consequence of the point reduction system, and evidence of a positive washback effect.

Balance between rehearsed interactions and spontaneous responses – The group presentations, followed by question-and-answer interchanges, provide an ideal blend between rehearsed communicative interactions and spontaneous responses. This combination seems especially fair to beginning students, who can display a wide range of communicative abilities upon which valid assessments can be based. All the groups observed were prepared to engage in high-risk interactions.

Topic choice and degree of commitment to the task – Most presentations dealt with everyday topics. It was quite obvious that most students enjoyed this kind of presentation and were highly committed to the task. However, it

also became evident that some of the most dedicated performances were thematically related to the students' main degree subject. It would be worth considering whether a more systematic integration of students' major field of study/interest into language modules project work might perhaps contribute to reducing attrition rates. This integration would further support the general principle of the language module design: to engage students in purposeful language use during contact sessions.

Proficiency levels – It was noteworthy from an external point of view that the beginners' and non-beginners' presentations were not markedly different, given the fact that non-beginners had mostly had at least four years of German at secondary school. Especially at the phonological level the differences between groups seemed almost non-existent. The following possible explanations spring to mind: (i) the time-gap between German courses at secondary school and undergraduate studies is fairly wide, and non-beginners may fall back into interference-prone habits; (ii) pronunciation is not one of the priorities at secondary school. On the other hand, the fact that students taking beginners' modules quickly manage to establish a good pronunciation standard testifies to the efficiency of the modules. Phonological habits which have already been established are notoriously hard to change.

Final remarks – The good quality of the group project presentations and the great amount of student dedication is convincing evidence of the competent overall design of the German language modules. It is especially the integration of project work into the contact sessions which ensures the purposefulness of the language learning undertaking. If these projects could be co-ordinated with and integrated into the students' main degree studies, then the foreign language modules for students of other disciplines would constitute an ideal implementation of language learning principles.

3 The Language Modules Research and Development Project in 1995-6

David Little

3.1 Introduction

From the beginning, the design and delivery of the language modules have drawn on relevant insights from applied linguistic research; and CLCS has used various empirical research instruments to monitor the running of the modules from year to year. This research-and-development approach has already provided the basis for much fine-tuning of the modules (for an example in 1995-6, see 2.4 above).

In 1995-6 as in previous years, the general research framework was provided by ongoing work in the areas of learner autonomy (David Little) and motivation in language learning (Ema Ushioda). These two focuses were brought together in an exploration of the motivation and attitudes of students who enrolled in the modules in Michaelmas term 1995: part of a long-term research preoccupation with the nature and role of motivational thinking, particularly in relation to autonomous language learning.

The inauguration of the Language Modules Research and Development Project in Michaelmas term 1995 allowed CLCS to extend research initiatives in four areas: the organization and presentation of self-access language learning resources (Barbara Simpson); the development of interactive multimedia resources for self-access use in the French and German modules (Breffni O'Rourke); the use of e-mail for asynchronous tandem language learning (David Little and Klaus Schwienhorst); and the development of virtual environments for synchronous tandem language learning (Klaus Schwienhorst).

Between them these research initiatives yielded 19 conference papers/workshops (see 3.6 below), most of which will be published in refereed proceedings in due course.

In February 1996 the language modules research team hosted a two-day meeting of RIAAL (the Réseau International Apprendre à Apprendre les Langues), which brought together researchers from universities in France, Denmark, Germany and Norway.

3.2 Self-access resources

In 1995-6 the major concern in this area was to find out more about the ways in which students use self-access learning resources. The chief purpose of this research is to identify weaknesses in students' approach to self-access learning and to devise means of overcoming them.

One study focussed on students' use of video and satellite television, which are among the most popular of the resources CLCS offers. It yielded results which suggest that although students believe their language learning is improved by self-access study, in many cases they do not use their time to best effect.

Arising from this study, guidelines for self-access language learning were prepared in two forms: a 16-page booklet and a series of advisory leaflets. The guidelines aim to raise students' awareness of the learning strategies they can apply to resources in different media. In due course on-line advice to students will be integrated into the user interface by which they access all CLCS's computer-based resources, including the interactive database of language learning resources developed in 1994-5.

In 1996-7 the database will be further developed so as to take account of the research findings summarized above. The database was described to members of the RIAAL research network at their meeting in February 1996.

3.3 Interactive multimedia programs for use in self-access language learning

In 1995–6 CLCS's long-established interest in interactive video for language learning moved into a new phase. A fully digital system was established and prototype programs were written using authentic video materials in French and German. This work took as its starting point the interactive algorithm that had been developed for use with the Autotutor, CLCS's interactive videocassette system. It was immediately clear, however, that the integration of text, graphics, sound and video within a single computer program offered kinds and degrees of interactivity that had been beyond the scope of the Autotutor. An empirical exploration of the use of the prototype German program yielded highly encouraging results.

In addition to the units which are already available for use by language modules students in 1996–7, further programs are being produced on an ongoing basis. Each succeeding program provides an opportunity to refine the design of learning tasks and implement new ideas for learner interaction with target-language materials.

It has been important to situate this work in the international research context established by the rapid development of educational multimedia. Attendance at the ED-MEDIA '96 conference, held in Boston, Mass., proved extremely useful in establishing contact with colleagues in this field and giving additional exposure to our own work.

3.4 International E-Mail Tandem Network

In Michaelmas term 1995 CLCS joined an EU-funded project designed to explore the use of e-mail in foreign language learning, the International E-Mail Tandem Network. The project is co-ordinated by the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and involves university learners of Catalan, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English,

French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish at eleven universities in nine EU member states. CLCS's principal contribution to the project in 1995–6 was to help co-ordinate and edit a guide to language learning via the Internet.

In 1996–7 students taking German modules will be twinned with German students following closely similar English modules at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. This scheme will be the focus for an empirical evaluation of tandem language learning by e-mail.

In Hilary term 1996 CLCS also entered into an e-mail partnership with the Universität-Gesamthochschule Wuppertal. Unfortunately the partnership collapsed after a few months for lack of student involvement on both sides.

3.5 Virtual environments and synchronous communication in self-access

In 1995–6 CLCS started to develop virtual environments in the object-oriented multiple user domain (MOO) at Diversity University. MOO technology allows for synchronous text-based communication in a virtual environment that can be created by the participants and accessed from all over the world using telnet and Internet connections. Diversity University is based on the LambdaMOO software which was originally created by Pavel Curtis at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Centre and which has recently been combined with World Wide Web pages and virtual reality created in the Virtual Reality Modelling Language (VRML). The combination of MOO, WWW, and VRML programming offers a whole new range of potential for autonomous language learning.

Initially two virtual rooms were developed at Diversity University: the Tandem Language Centre, the entry point for students, and the Tandem Counselling Office, a room where teachers can meet and learners can be counselled. The Tandem Language Centre has been equipped with a variety of programmed tools that facilitate student interaction and language learning, such as notice boards, virtual recording devices, language games, and

robots. It also has easy-to-use links to lists of language resources (so far in German and French) that provide learners with instant access to a vast collection of authentic materials on the Internet. Access is structured by a task- and activities-based approach and a graphics-based virtual reality interface that provides a common home ground for students and their learning partners from the target language community.

As noted in 3.4 above, three of the German modules are now twinned with similar learner groups in the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. Besides e-mail they will use the MOO virtual reality environment for real-time exchanges with the target language community. This will provide them with authentic language input through discussion with native speakers and the performance of collaborative tasks using WWW resources. It will also yield the necessary data for an evaluation of language learning in this domain.

The MOO system and its developments were presented in hands-on workshops at two conferences: ED-MEDIA 96, Boston, Mass., and Multimedia-Internet-Lernsoftware: Fremdsprachenunterricht vor neuen Herausforderungen, Münster, Germany.

3.6 Publications

- Little, D., 1996a: "Strategic competence considered in relation to strategic control of the language learning process". In H. Holec, D. Little & R. Richterich, *Strategies in language learning and use. Studies towards a Common European Framework of reference for language learning and teaching*, pp.9-37. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. (Published simultaneously in French translation.)
- Little, D., 1996b: "Freedom to learn and compulsion to interact: promoting learner autonomy through the use of information systems and information technologies". In R. Pemberton (ed.), *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning*, pp.193-209. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Little, D., 1996c: "Learning by talking. The use of Autotutor II for group work in self-access: a theoretical and practical exploration". In B. Rüschoff & D. Wolff (eds), *Technology-Enhanced Language*

Learning in Theory and Practice (Proceedings of EUROCALL 94, Pädagogische Hochschule, Karlsruhe, Germany), pp.1-20. Hull: EUROCALL.

- Little, D., 1996d: "Learner autonomy and learner counselling". In Little & Brammerts, pp.23-34.
- Little, D., & H. Brammerts (eds), 1996: "A guide to language learning in tandem via the Internet", CLCS Occasional Paper No.46, 83pp. Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies. (Versions of this report have also been published in German, Dutch and French; translations into other languages are in preparation.)
- Little, D., & E. Ushioda, 1996: "Testing oral skills through collaborative group interaction". In G. Aub-Buscher (ed.), *The Linguistic Challenge of the New Europe*, Papers from the 3rd CERCLES Conference, Hull, 23-25 September 1994, pp.123-38. Plymouth: CERCLES.
- Ushioda, E., 1996a: "Developing a dynamic concept of L2 motivation". In T. Hickey & J. Williams (eds.), *Language, Education and Society in a Changing World*, pp.239-45. Dublin/Clevedon: IRAAL/Multilingual Matters.
- Ushioda, E., 1996b: *Learner Autonomy 5: The Role of Motivation*. Dublin: Authentik.

3.7 Conference papers and workshops

- Little, D., "Designing interactive video programs for group work in a self-access language learning environment". Invited paper presented at 16. Kongress für Fremdsprachendidaktik, Halle (Saale), 4-6 October 1995.
- Little, D., "Learner autonomy: some theoretical perspectives". Invited paper presented at 16. Kongress für Fremdsprachendidaktik, Halle (Saale), 4-6 October 1995.
- Little, D., "Autonomy in second language learning: some theoretical perspectives and their practical implications". Invited paper presented at the seminar *Autonomes Fremdsprachenlernen*, Hessisches Institut für Lehrerfortbildung, Fulda, 27 November-2 December 1995.
- Little, D., "New approaches and attitudes towards learning and assessment". Keynote

- paper presented at the 1995 Colloquy of the European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz, 8–9 December.
- Little, D., "Learner autonomy in theory and practice". Plenary paper presented at the APAC ELT Convention, Barcelona, 29 February–2 March 1996.
- Little, D., "Lernerautonomie im Deutschunterricht". Plenary lecture given at the DeutschlehrerInnentag, Goethe-Institut, Prague, 23 March 1996.
- Little, D., "Understanding learner autonomy in theory and practice". Keynote lecture given at the European Language Festival, Maastricht, 5 June 1996.
- Little, D., "Language awareness and the autonomous language learner". Keynote paper presented at the Third International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness, Dublin, 4–6 July 1996.
- Little, D., "Learner autonomy is more than a Western cultural construct". Paper presented at the 11th World Congress of AILA, Jyväskylä, Finland, 4–9 August 1996.
- O'Rourke, B., "Modes of interactivity: Internet resources for second language acquisition". Workshop given at Multimedia–Internet–Lernsoftware: Fremdsprachenunterricht vor neuen Herausforderungen, Münster, 19–20 September 1996.
- O'Rourke, B., "Interactive video and learner autonomy: the development of a self-access multimedia tool for second language learners". Paper presented at the Fourth CERCLES Conference, Dresden, 26–28 September 1996.
- Schwienhorst, K., "Collaboratory: partnerships for learning". Workshop given at ED-MEDIA 96, Boston, Mass., 18 June 1996.
- Schwienhorst, K., "Modes of interactivity: Internet resources for second language acquisition". Workshop given at Multimedia–Internet–Lernsoftware: Fremdsprachenunterricht vor neuen Herausforderungen, Münster, 19–20 September 1996.
- Schwienhorst, K., "Virtual environments and synchronous communication: collaborative language learning in object-oriented multiple-user domains". Paper presented at the Fourth CERCLES Conference, Dresden, 26–28 September 1996.
- Simpson, B. L., "A study of the pragmatic perception and strategic behaviour of adult second language learners". Paper presented at the Third International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness, Dublin, 4–6 July 1996.
- Simpson, B. L., "An examination of learners' preferences for self-access study and their perceived benefits to language learning". Paper presented at the Fourth CERCLES Conference, Dresden, 26–28 September 1996.
- Ushioda, E., "Managing affective learning experience: exploring the role of motivational thinking". Report on work-in-progress presented at a meeting of RIAAL (Réseau International Apprendre à Apprendre les Langues), Dublin, 9–10 February 1996.
- Ushioda, E., "Effective motivational thinking: a cognitive theoretical approach to the study of language learning motivation". Paper presented at the 11th World Congress of AILA, Jyväskylä, Finland, 4–9 August 1996.
- Ushioda, E., "The role of motivational thinking in autonomous language learning". Paper presented at the Fourth CERCLES Conference, Dresden, 26–28 September 1996.

Appendix: summary of income and expenditure

	LANGUAGE MODULES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT		LANGUAGE MODULES RECURRENT COSTS	
Income	Benefaction	£36,000	Carried forward from 1994-5	£11,197
	Sponsorship and consultancy earnings	£57,417	HEA special allocation	£52,000
	Total	£93,417	Total	£63,197
Expenditure	Salaries and studentships	£38,739	Salaries and hourly teaching	£32,097
	Postgraduate student fees	£6,711	University of Cambridge (external evaluation 1994-5)	£1,861
	Conferences and travel	£13,718	External examiners' fees and expenses	£1,418
	Hosting of RIAAL conference	£2,197	Entertainment (external examiners)	£127
	Fees for data elicitation	£330	Teaching materials	£3,430
	Equipment	£4,464	Stationery	£140
	Stationery	£181	Printing	£961
	Printing	£640		
	Miscellaneous	£47		
	TCD overheads	£3,181		
	Total	£70,208	Total	£40,034
Balance carried forward to 1996-7		£23,209		£23,163



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