

Leonardo: EUROVOLT via VLE (2005-2007)

Project summary:

This project fully supports the e-learning initiative of the European Commission, encouraging language teachers and trainers to make full use of the new media and information and communication technologies (ICT) and the new media for learning scenarios which may be independent of place and time.

There is a general and specific need to familiarize language teachers and trainers with the use of ICT and to show them how to use these to their best advantage in different vocational training situations. Research conducted by the International Certificate Conference (ICC) for the European Commission, the experience of different members of this consortium in related work have shown quite clearly that there is an urgent need to develop the new literacies (scientific, digital, practical, linguistic and cultural) if vocational language teachers and trainers are to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by virtual learning environments. A major shift of paradigm in the cultures of learning is called for in current publications and surveys on this subject, (see "The impact of new information technologies and internet on the teaching of foreign languages and on the role of teachers of a foreign language", a report commissioned by the Directorate General of Education and Culture in 2003).

To increase competence in the new literacies for language teachers and trainers, this project will enable them to use virtual learning environments with ease in a variety of language learning contexts (in DE, EN, PL, SV, NO, BG, OT-Russian planned) and for a wide range of vocational sectors embedded in a variety of cultural backgrounds. It will illustrate clearly how to deploy newly developed e-learning environments, providing activities to practise all four language skills, with special focus on oral communication. A set of teaching/learning scenarios and exemplary materials, models of good practice in modular form, will illustrate a principled approach to the use of the new media and to various methodological approaches (concepts), showing how to apply quality criteria to the planning, implementation and evaluation of learning programs for specific vocational purposes.

In addition, the materials produced and the templates for establishing quality criteria, will contribute to the increasing pool of documentation of good practice throughout the Union, which can be emulated by training and educational establishments throughout Europe. The use of the new media in vocationally oriented language learning (VOLL) can contribute significantly to the efficiency of learning in this area.

Sample language learning modules will be developed in Bulgarian, English, German, Polish, Swedish, Norwegian (and prob. Russian). Manuals in English for wider distribution throughout the Union and in the chosen languages, where necessary. It must be evaluated and established during the piloting phases whether the language teachers/trainers (trainees) need versions in their target languages and will also depend on available funding resources.

Target groups for the model language courses will be:

ECET: Bulgarian as a foreign language for office clerks in the tourism industry (CEF Level A/B)

Verband Wiener Volksbildung: English as a foreign language for Austrian prison officers (Level A 2/B 1/B2)

University of Potsdam: English for students of social sciences (Level B 1/C 2)

Warsaw School: English for Psychology (Level B)

University of Southampton: German as a foreign language: Online portfolio learning for engineers and scientists (Level B)

Warsaw School: Polish as a foreign language for diplomacy and politics (Level B/C)

NTNU/Nordland: Norwegian as a second language in the health and caring sector (Level B)

Folkuniversitetet: Swedish for Medics, Level B (in co-operation with TellRight Project)

(Planned: Nordland: English/Norwegian/Russian for Public Administration, Level B)

The project itself will illustrate how partner institutions can collaborate and network using virtual environments and contribute to a pool of resources which may be called upon by other colleagues working in the specific linguistic/ vocational area in Europe, and it will motivate private enterprises (incl. SMEs) to implement language tuition for their staffs on a regular basis.

The specific aspect of innovation which this project offers is a new Virtual Learning Environment displaying three integrated areas in the field of language education :

1. Teacher training modules: The full integration of ICT and the new media in different vocational language teaching, learning scenarios and cultures (new technical and methodological focus on oral communication skills and access for PC and Apple MacIntosh (!) users).
2. Model language learning modules: Various methodological and didactic innovations for the language teachers and learners (e.g. an electronic vocational language learning portfolio to be integrated into EUROPASS) and
3. a special VLE area with links to other models of good practice displaying vocational language teacher training and vocational language learning by 2007.

Process-oriented and external evaluation of the project will secure all measures of quality issues and the possibility of adapting the project results to other vocational sectors.

The results of the project as well as the different products (VLE content, manual and CD-ROM) will be disseminated throughout Europe.

The project will co-operate and collaborate with other (EU) projects and partner institutions in the field throughout Europe.

11 Project partners from 7 countries:

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