

## Distance In-service teacher training course on designing multimedia interactive activities for language learning

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### Pedagogical context

<b>ICT is used</b> in teacher education
The <b>target group</b> was in-service language teachers in the Catalan education system.
The aims of the course were to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Develop teachers' ICT literacy</li><li>○ Offer education opportunities to teachers throughout the whole country</li><li>○ Get teachers' materials together to share</li></ul>
The <b>target languages</b> were: German, English, Italian, French, Catalan
<b>Further remarks</b> The course was publicly announced through the web and teachers of the languages mentioned above enrolled in it. There were 5 groups, each led by a different distance teacher educator.

### Organisational context

<b>Size of target group:</b> 21 - 30		
Apart from the target group - were <b>other people</b> involved? If yes, who?	How many?	To what purpose?
- others (please specify): <b>students</b>		<b>To pilot materials designed in some cases</b>
<b>Teaching period</b> From November 2001 to April 2002		
Was distance learning combined with face-to-face instruction? <b>No</b>		
DL: <b>60</b> hours		

### Motivation for the use of ICT

The 1992 New Education system requirements stated that ICT be integrated in all areas of the curriculum. In 1995, a policy of equipping schools with specific hardware and software to support language teaching and learning led to teacher training action plans that have switched in the last four years from face to face to distance courses.
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In 1990 I started using computers in the language classroom in secondary education, mainly word-processing and editing and have since then been convinced of the potential that ICT has in language learning and for inter- and intra-personal skills development. Learning can be much more autonomous and, in many cases, can become a rich collaborative activity in almost any context.

As for teacher education, distant courses can reach all teachers, regardless time or place.

## **Description of the course**

The **aims** were:

- To give teachers the opportunity to learn with tools that can be integrated in their teaching practice.
- To offer an environment where to share teachers' outcomes.

The **methodology** used:

Teachers worked on their own with on-line materials that could be downloaded. The materials consisted of 7 modules that included a series of guided exercises and an extra one meant to produce a final module outcome. They dedicated 15 days to each module and sent the tutor the final outcome or transferred it to their web space, depending on the module. After module 3, teachers had to devise the outline of a project, a web portal on a specific topic, which was the basis for the course final outcome.

Whenever there was a problem teachers contacted me by e-mail and I tried to answer immediately.

A web page, containing links to the materials designed, was available in my web space so that teachers could browse through other participants' outcomes.

The **teaching materials** used:

Materials specifically designed for the course that included exercises on information handling and the design of interactive materials. The materials were available free on the web.

The **technologies** used:

- Hardware: desktop computers with Internet access
- Software: Word processor, CD ROMs (general and specific reference, language learning), Internet browser, Hot Potatoes, "Güeb" a web page design programme.
- Special workspaces: WebCT for communication between tutors
- e-mail
- internet discussion forums

### ● What was successful

Teachers liked designing interactive materials and web pages and were eager to communicate any success.

They also liked seeing what other teachers had produced and, in some cases, trying the materials out with their students.

● What was less

The web page design programme we used had not gone through enough piloting and had some bugs that hindered teachers' progress at times

● Feedback

They appreciated the fact that questions and comments were answered immediately. The fact that they were not tied to a timetable or to attendance at a specific place gave them the feeling that they could work much more at their own pace.

● What I would change next time

The web page design programme.

I would allow participants access to the collaborative tool WebCT.

● From your experience, what would you recommend to other professionals in the field?

Clear instructions and agreements concerning deadlines

Flexibility

Show as much friendliness and sympathy in electronic communication

### Personal data about the author

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### Professional background

Profession:

Educational adviser, English teacher, teacher educator

*Tier 2 – case study - Distance In-service teacher training course on designing multimedia interactive activities for language learning*

My current occupation is concerned with giving support to in-service foreign language teachers through:

- Face to face and distant teacher training
  - Consultancy
  - Maintenance of the CRLE website
  - Design of ready-made material for the language classroom
  - Design of teacher training material
  - Participation in decision-making concerning equipment and materials sent to schools and teachers' centres.
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