LanguageQuests (LQuest)

Task-based second language acquisition with the help of Internet resources

Project description	*Updated the 1ˢᵗ June 2006*

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1. CONTEXT

This project is about the development and use of LanguageQuests. The LanguageQuest concept is derived form Bernie Dodge's WebQuest (http://WebQuest.sdsu.edu/materials.htm). According to Dodge, 'A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet…' It is a task-based, integrated approach, drawing heavily on principles of collaborative learning. But performing a WebQuest with the help of Internet resources in a foreign language does not automatically result in second language acquisition (SLA).

The concept '*LanguageQuest'* (Dutch:'TalenQuest', www.talenquest.nl) is an innovative approach, targeted at adapting the WebQuest idea to the specific requirements of instructed SLA instruction, based on theoretical insights from SLA research, resulting in:

▪ improved task design and methodology for realistic, content oriented, functional, task-based foreign language learning;
▪ a set of support instruments:
  - quality criteria based on a SLA Model
  - clarification of task features that trigger useful and effective language learning activities
  - a template, customised for the production of TalenQuests.
  - a rubric for the assessment of the pedagogical qualities of TalenQuests

LanguageQuests are designed to promote an integrated approach to communicative, realistic and functional SLA. The work of this project will focus on the implementation and dissemination of this concept, covering methodology as well as ICT, materials development and course design and aiming especially at the potential and impact of ICT and new forms of collaborative work on language education.

It combines the ECML's orientations towards training of experts in language education and research and development. The results will encourage the implementation and dissemination of innovative approaches to the learning and teaching of languages. The workshop aims at raising competence and skills levels, especially in the field of ICT use in FL-education. The outcomes apply to all levels of education, from primary school to university.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

General aims
- implementation and dissemination of the LanguageQuest concept
- improved professional skills for language educators and material developers
- training of multipliers for the use of LanguageQuest

Specific objectives
After the workshop, participants will be:
- familiar with the LanguageQuest concept and the underlying SLA principles
- able to estimate the effect of a LanguageQuest on SLA
- able to improve existing LanguageQuest in terms of better SLA outcomes
- able to design and construct an effective LanguageQuest and
- prepared to disseminate their acquired insights and competence in their home countries

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- improved professional skills for language educators and material developers in ICT applications (especially internet use) in language education
- revision of existing LanguageQuests
- creation of a number of LanguageQuests
- availability of the workshop materials and a collection of LanguageQuests produced by the participants
- development of an international network supported by the ECML project website
- web-based support for the exchange, mutual assessment and feedback-based improvement of LanguageQuests, constructed in the participating countries
- a Brochure containing the core contents of the workshop and a guide to the LQuest website

ACTION PLAN

2004

January – December
- o *Coordinated local and collaborative activities by team members*
- o *preparations for the recruitment of workshop participants*
- o *teambuilding: familiarisation with team members' work and background*
- o *development of ECML Project Website design*

2005

January - June
Workshop preparations: development of a shared collection of relevant resources

17-18 June
Meeting of the project team to prepare the workshop in detail

June – December
- o *Production and pooling of Workshop Materials;*
- o *Development of Website components and maintenance organisation.*

2006

5-8 April
Outline of the **four days workshop** programme (Graz):

Day 1	Getting to know the LanguageQuest concept and acquiring some elementary input of SLA theory (plenary, group work) by performing Web- and LanguageQuests assessment activities (group work) Identification of problematic issues.
Day 2	Suggestions for additions and/or improvements of the assessment instrument (group work, plenary) Designing and constructing a new LanguageQuest (group work)
Day 3	Presentation and evaluation of the constructed LanguageQuests (group work) Trying out existing LQs, sharing experiences and providing feedback
Day 4	Special Interest Groupwork (Early learners, Scaffolding, Form-awareness & Strategy use, Marking & Evaluation Planning dissemination activities (solo, group work, sharing ideas) Evaluation

Profile of participants:
Material developers, teacher trainers specialized in second language acquisition, teachers and other multipliers who have the material possibility of trying out LanguageQuests or can organise such an activity.
Participants are expected to be informed about the possibilities of ICT-use in education in their countries and to have basic knowledge and skills in the use of computers and the Internet. **They will be asked** to do some preparatory work in the form of reading relevant background literature, familiarise themselves with some existing WebQuests and do some assessment activities.

After the workshop they are expected to participate in and contribute to the international LanguageQuest Network (LangQuestNet) co-ordinated by the project team.

April 2006 – February 2007
- *Establishment and development of network supported by website*
- *Monitoring dissemination activities by participants*
- *Organisation of sharing practical experiences*

2007

23-24 February
Team **meeting** to finalise the manuscripts and edit materials for the production of the project brochure.

4. LANGUAGES

The working languages of the project are English and German. Simultaneous interpretation will only be provided for the central workshop.