

ECML Project *TrainEd*

National Training Event in Riga, Latvia

April 15th & 16th, 2005

The first in the series of 6 National Training Events (NTEs) of the *TrainEd* project took place on April 15th and 16th, in Riga, the beautiful capital of Latvia. The aims of this event were: to disseminate the *TrainEd* project to Latvian teachers and teacher educators, to train multipliers, and to pilot the draft guide for trainers, compiled by the project team.

The event was facilitated by Dr. Gabriela Matei, project coordinator, assisted by Marta Zagare of Riga State Gymnasium No 1 (also chair of the Latvian National Mentors' Association), the local organiser.

The event in fact consisted of two workshops with different audiences and venues:

- (a) on April 15th, the venue was the University of Riga, Faculty of Philology; the 24 participants, coming from all over Latvia, were part-time postgraduate students - all teachers of English - attending a professional postgraduate programme (MA). The workshop was also attended by their professors, Dr. Solveiga Ozolina and Dr. Vita Kalnberzina, whom we would like to thank on behalf of the ECML and the project team for so kindly offering us their teaching periods – as well as the venue - for our workshop.
- (b) on April 16th, the venue was Riga State Gymnasium No 1. The 9 participants, coming from Riga and several other Latvian towns, were mentors working with pre-service English teachers.

The contents of the two workshops were established based on:

- the suggestions made by Marta Zagare, who had important knowledge of the needs of the Latvian audience;
- the general aims of *TrainEd* NTEs.

Both workshops contained:

- a presentation of the *TrainEd* project so far;
- a session on *Facilitation skills* particularly useful for teachers and teacher educators, including *Dealing with incidents in groups*.

The second workshop also contained practical sessions on:

- '*Teacher training contexts: from the socio-political to the personal*' – focusing on Latvian issues;
- '*What keeps teachers and trainers going?*' – based on partial results of the *TrainEd* questionnaire.

At the end of both workshops, we collected feedback from the participants which showed that the aims of the event had been achieved and that the training and the materials were rated as very interesting and relevant. Participants also gave us useful suggestions for our project.

To help other NTE facilitators and local organisers, we are attaching in appendix our informal conclusions and thoughts as emerged during our discussion immediately after the end of the workshop.

Gabriela Matei and Marta Zagare

Appendix

Marta and Gabi's post-workshop thoughts

Riga, 16th of April 2005

☺	☹	For the future
<p>-enthusiasm from everyone involved</p> <p>- very good feedback</p> <p>- very good local organization: good rooms, well-functioning equipment, lots of photocopying</p> <p>- good refreshments ☺ (courtesy of the British Council)</p> <p>- participants were very involved and enjoyed trying out things</p> <p>- participants interested in the information about the ECML and TrainEd</p> <p>- we reached 33 participants instead of the expected 20</p> <p>- excellent contingency planning (at the last minute, Marta managed to find an interested – and larger - audience to replace the original one for day 1; the 'original one' could not attend for objective reasons.)</p>	<p>- for the second day, 22 were people invited but only 9 arrived (after all, it was the first nice-weather weekend this year...); all had confirmed, and only 2 excused themselves.</p> <p>So the question arises: how many people do we need to invite to make sure that the expected 20 show up?</p> <p>- an old sin: time too short for everything we would have liked to do...</p> <p>- in the heat of the moment, we forgot to give out the task sheets for the activity we didn't manage to do.</p>	<p>- order lunch on the premises, rather than go out with participants: the service was too slow, though it was very nice to have lunch together in an informal way</p> <p>- give the local organizer at least 2 months in advance to organize things: Marta had very little time to get things ready after the ECML let us know her proposal had been approved – 3 weeks, one of which she was out of the country anyway.</p> <p>- Write a thank-you letter to the host school and university, to the partners (British Council, Mentors' Association) and attach the short report</p> <p>- Send the agenda to the participants in advance</p> <p>- Time permitting, it's important to consult the participants in advance → needs assessment, to match our agenda to their agendas.</p>