Project Title: TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LANGUAGE LEARNING PEDAGOGY (TELLP)

Project Number: 134244-2007-UK-COMENIUS-CMP

Sub-programme or KA: COMENIUS MULTILATERAL PROJECTS

Technologically Enhanced Language Learning Pedagogy: a project report and handbook for teachers

By Gee Macrory, Lucette Chrétine, José Luis Ortega Martin
Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following people to this handbook:
The staff and head teachers of the six schools:
(list of schools)
Pura Ariza, MMU
Cathy Brady, MMU
Sarah Lister, MMU
Joanne Mimnagh, MMU
Jo Clark, Stretford High School, Trafford
TDA

We are very grateful to the European Commission for the funding that this project has received ..................
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Chapter 1: introduction/rationale

Introduction

We are living in a time of globalisation. Our reference point in education is no longer national but European and international. It is therefore essential for our schools and training systems to provide everyone with the means to open themselves to the world through mastery of foreign languages. Nowadays, the lack of competence in at least one foreign language is an obstacle to professional life. We need to ensure that pupils are able to speak a first, second and even a third language. In Europe, as signatories to the Barcelona agreement, we are committed at least to the idea of bring children up with the aim of speaking their ‘mother tongue plus two’ (2003, see below). Thus, language education policy at a European level is of huge contemporary relevance. However, we also live in a world which has recently undergone unprecedented developments in technology, a world too where autonomy and independent learning have gained appreciably in importance. Alongside the autonomy that technology can support and develop, we increasingly also live and work across and within national boundaries, such that intercultural understanding and tolerance have to be developed in children as well as trainee teachers and citizens in general. New generations will live, study and work in the European and international context. Schools and universities, as well as education systems in general have an important responsibility and a key part to play in the building of a European identity.

Language education policy in Europe: the place of early language learning

It is timely to review some key moments in history in the Council of Europe language education policy. As long ago as 1957, the first intergovernmental conference on European co-operation in language teaching took place, followed by the launch of the first major project on language teaching (1963), Publication of first ‘Threshold Level’ specification followed in 1975, and some twenty years later, new member states begin to join intergovernmental projects (1994), and the European Centre for Modern Languages was established in 2001. Article 2 of the European Cultural Convention (http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=018&CM=2&DF=13/12/2005&CL=ENG) stated that the Council of Europe language education policies aimed to promote:

- Plurilingualism: all are entitled to develop a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages over their lifetime in accordance with their needs
- Linguistic diversity: Europe is multilingual and all its languages are equally valuable modes of communication and expressions of identity; the right to use
and to learn one’s language(s) is protected in Council of Europe Conventions
- Mutual understanding: the opportunity to learn other languages is an essential condition for intercultural communication and acceptance of cultural differences
- Democratic citizenship: participation in democratic and social processes in multilingual societies is facilitated by the plurilingual competence of individuals
- Social cohesion: equality of opportunity for personal development, education, employment, mobility, access to information and cultural enrichment depends on access to language learning throughout life

However, a number of proposals from the European Commission (Action Plan 2004-06 for Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity, 2003; Barcelona: Bologna Declaration, 1999; Lisbon Strategy, 2000, Education and Training 2010) have recently raised the profile of early language learning considerably. In 2002, heads of state and government met in Barcelona, where they called upon all member states to take action to improve language learning, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age (Commission of the EC, 2003). What is particularly important is that they emphasised the fact that English, the first foreign language to be learnt in most contexts, was not enough. More generally, the Education Council of the European Union invited member states to take concrete steps to promote linguistic diversity and language learning and the resultant proposals from the European Commission formed an Action Plan for 2004-06, which notes that ‘it is a priority for Member States to ensure that language learning in kindergarten and primary school is effective, for it is here that key attitudes towards other languages and cultures are formed and the foundations for later language learning are laid’(Commission of the EC, 2003: 7).

Communicating in a foreign language means being able to understand, express oneself and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts, both orally and in writing and in various situations. It also implies knowledge and understanding of the cultures which the language transmits: it makes it possible to go beyond the vision given by stereotypes. The “European Common Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (2001)” designed by the Council of Europe, is the fundamental reference for modern language teaching, learning and assessment of language skills. Mastery of modern languages is achieved by regular practice and memory training. This is made possible by five types of activities: listening, speaking, conversation, written comprehension and writing. However, the notion of intercultural understanding has been given a role of arguably equal importance, emphasising that the learning of a foreign language helps to develop an awareness of cultural differences and diversity and the desire to communicate with foreigners in their language. It contributes to open-mindedness and understanding of different ways of thinking and acting.

In England, drivers of change include the National Languages Strategy (2002), arising out of the Nuffield Report (2000) and the Dearing review (2007). Findings from reports of current provision in primary languages
(Powell, Wray, Rixon, Medwell, Barnes & Hunt, 2000; and Driscoll, Jones & Macrory, 2004) highlight key elements that are important to making an early language learning programme work in practice. These include, unsurprisingly, the issues of sustainability and teacher training (CLIL approach). Research findings suggest a need to provide training that permits engagement with a cross-curricular approach embedded in authenticity (Macrory & Beaumont, 2007) and further, a need to create ways in which to strengthen the involvement of schools in training (Macrory & McLaughlin, 2009).

The place of English as a lingua franca world wide has long been an element in the position/take up of foreign language learning in the UK, with much concern surrounding the decrease in interest particularly at secondary school level. Given that previous attempts to introduce languages earlier in the school system had apparently foundered, notably in the 70s (Burstall et al, 1974), the more recent moves have been greeted with some caution in some quarters, although welcomed overall (Driscoll, Jones and Macrory, 2004). Johnstone (2001) suggested that any re-introduction of primary languages would need a ‘different rationale to underpin it’; since then arguably that different rationale has indeed begun to emerge, with an increasing emphasis on the global dimension, cross-curricular and CLIL approaches to language learning alongside increasing use of technology.

The global dimension in education has more generally prompted schools in the UK to adopt a more outward looking approach to education, encouraging links with numerous countries around the world. More specifically, however, significant for the UK has been the response in teacher training terms to the introduction of primary languages and the TDA (Teacher Development Agency for Schools).

**In France**, after being optional, learning a language in primary school became compulsory in 2002. Every pupil in France learns a language at key-stage 2. Since 2005, the national language policy has become a government priority at primary and secondary and even at higher levels. Research on languages, on introducing different languages (Éveil aux langues, Michel Candelier, 2003a, 2003b, Candelier M., Ioannitou G., Omer D., Vasseur, M.-T. (2008), learning 2 languages in year 6 (classes bi-langues) All initiatives aiming at promoting innovative methodologies such as CLIL (EMILE) pedagogy are largely encouraged. The number of European and International sections has increased in recent years. Language learning now starts from the second year in primary school (CE1). It continues throughout the three years of Key-stage 2. There is a final assessment in CM2 (Year 5) where the target is to reach A1 level in the European assessment standards as described in the ECRF. After a period when languages were introduced at school (often at an early age reception class) until university, the challenge now and in future years in France is teaching languages differently, insisting on motivation and giving meaning to learning a language, focusing on oral production, on using the language and also developing oral communication skills. Official guidelines focus on linking Language learning in terms of actions (“Approche Actionnelle”, “Learning by doing”, task-based learning). All
these ideas are developed in The Language Innovation Plan (June 8th, 2006 and « Le Socle Commun de Connaissances et de Compétences”).

Le pilier 2 : La pratique d’une langue vivante étrangère (pilier 2)
http://eduscol.education.fr/pid23410-cid47413/pilier-2.html

The use of ICT for these aims is widely supported (children need to get an ICT certificate: B2i at the end of key-stage 2) In this respect, the “1000 visioconférences” programme, initiated last year in France is being developed in the country (http://www.educnet.education.fr/primaire/1000-visios/). This is about linking schools with videoconferences. This initiative is about language pedagogy supported by technology in an intercultural context:

In Spain in Andalucía (Spain) (Plan de Fomento del Plurilingüismo: Una política lingüística para la sociedad andaluza, passed by the Andalusian Government March 22nd, 2005), the plan for the Promotion of Plurilingualism is a linguistic policy for the Andalusian society as a response to the necessity of facing the challenge represented by the technological, social and economical changes that have been occurring in the last three decades. Those changes have also produced great expectations about innovation, especially in the educational context. The Spanish Ministry of Education has developed a new global linguistic policy for this Autonomous Region, based on the theoretical principles emerging from the European Union and defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, evaluation. The new bilingual schools promote the teaching and learning of some fields of knowledge using two languages at least: the mother tongue and a second instrumental language. Those languages are used to teach certain curricular areas, using the natural method, based on communication, interaction and the oral practice as the central point. Moreover, the first foreign language will be taught from Infant Education and the first stage of Primary Education. The second foreign language will be introduced in the third stage of Primary Education.

The Plan for the Promotion of Plurilingualism includes the development of a specific training program that will count with the active participation of the Teachers Centres, the Official Schools of Languages and other national and foreign training institutions, as well as the participation of teachers in European programs, the exchanges with foreign teachers and the possibility of carrying out courses and brief stays in a foreign country.

Every program and measure taken by the Plan for the Promotion of Plurilingualism has a common objective: to provide Andalusian students with plurilingual and pluricultural competences.

The interculturality phenomenon makes necessary the construction of an intercultural democratic project with the aim of offering responses to the challenges emerging every day in this new social scene. The mentioned project must have an objective in mind: to reach the balance between diversity and cultural identity so that every member of a society, regardless their origin, race or religion, acknowledges and tolerates the remaining different cultural options.
In order to attain the aim of guiding the foreign language training activities to the Andalusian society as a whole and, particularly, to the students' parents, that Plan considers the idea of offering extracurricular and complementary activities related to the learning and practice of languages; it also intends to create language courses for parents in Bilingual Schools.

In addition, it is expected to evaluate the students by valuing their linguistic competence, taking into account the resources and evaluation methods proposed by the European Framework of Reference; on the other hand, they will try to evaluate the processes and factors contributing to the improvement in the quality of the specific programs considered in the Plan for the Promotion of Plurilingualism.

The linguistic policy that the Andalusian Government has set through the Plan for the Promotion of Plurilingualism is breaking with the traditional division in the learning/teaching of languages. In that sense, it proposes a new curricular model, the integrated curriculum, common to all languages (mother tongue or foreign language) and to all the stages and educational modalities, also including the linguistic contents which must appear in the curricula for languages. (Junta de Andalucía, Plan para la Promoción del Plurilingüismo).

**Technology and language learning**

**Mastery of ICT tools:** Digital culture which is major in economic and social fields involves the safe and critical use of technology by both children and teachers. It is learnt by doing, so children can experiment outside of school. Motivation becomes a key issue then. Using technology in an effective way during school with a learner-centred approach, for authentic communication, in real time helps to provide every child with the necessary skills to use it independently after school in “real life”.

New technologies are increasingly available for use both across the curriculum and in the language classroom. Over recent decades, these have served to promote language learning and teaching at a distance through online programmes, web-based tutorials and so on as well as independent study (for example on computer-based vocabulary and grammar programmes). The field known as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has developed into a more nuanced range of approaches as the range of technologies has grown and diversified. The more recent developments in the areas of webcams, video-conferencing, blogs, wikis, podcasts, mobile phones and digital video and photography have opened up possibilities that were the stuff of science fiction only a generation ago. In classroom practice, at least in the UK, with laptops, interactive whiteboards and data projectors now commonplace, the opportunity to bring the benefit of other new technologies into the classroom is within our grasp. Crucially, however, as O’Hara (2008:31) points out, ‘pedagogy still has to catch up with resourcing in order to get the most out of the technology’. This may be particularly the case with primary languages as a relatively new field. As languages are being introduced at a time when new technologies offer an apparent abundance of possibilities, it is crucial that we know how best to
exploit them as well as incorporating this understanding into teacher education programmes.

Within the broader notion of CALL, there has been increasing interest in Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Lamy and Hampel (2007:7) note that it does in fact dates back at least twenty years and point out how language professionals saw that it ‘could answer two needs at once: it could be the means through which teaching occurred, and it could be an end in itself. Learners could engage with the communicative aspect of their study by exchanging language online rather than in conversation classes’. In order to stress their orientation to language (original emphasis) learning they suggest the acronym CMCL.

The relationship between CMC and the field of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research is clearly pertinent. Blake (2007:77) points out that much of the research into CMC has been carried out from an interactionist perspective that seek to ‘document how synchronous CMC stimulates negotiations of meaning similar to face-to-face exchange’; they are interested in the ways in which such meaningful interactions can provide opportunities for teachers and students to focus on the emerging TL system as well as intercultural reflections. As Blake notes, the intercultural aspect is one favoured by sociocultural researchers who draw upon notions of intercultural competence (eg Byram, 1997), and ICC and CMC together have prompted the notion of telecollaboration (Blake, 2007:78). Chapelle (2007) in discussing CALL/CMC pedagogy, notes the extent to which this was influenced in the 1990s by SLA theory and raises the issue of form and meaning. The latter is of course a tension familiar to all practitioners and researchers in SLA. The possibility that a focus on negotiation of meaning and/or intercultural reflections might result in lost opportunities to focus on form is ever present. Lamy & Hampel (2007:8) suggest that this prompted a return by some researchers such as Belz (2003) to more linguistic than socio-psychological interpretations of online communication. This throws up the complexity of the relationship between research and pedagogy as well as that inherent in new technologies: pedagogic approaches are necessarily informed by previous research but while some argue that pedagogic tasks should meet the criteria derived from SLA research, on the other hand this CMC can itself inform SLA research, through descriptive studies.

Whatever the relationship, however, differential attention has been paid to different technologies available for CMC and for different age groups. Very few studies have been carried out into the use of video-conferencing for language learning (Jaurgi & Bañados, 2008), for example. In terms of age groups, the vast majority of research has been carried out with university level students rather than school-aged pupils.

**Research into video-conferencing for language learning**

Research into the impact of video-conferencing is not of course limited to the relationship of this to language learning; positive benefits are reported for a range of curricular areas (BECTA, 2004; Arnold & Cayley, 2008)). This does
include positive benefits for the use of video-conferencing for language learning. Perhaps unsurprisingly, researchers report that authenticity and the opportunity to interact with a real audience has beneficial effects, and there is positive impact on confidence and motivation (BECTA, 2004). Kinginger (1998) and Yamada (2009) suggest that it improves participation and supports the active production of spoken language. Equally, video-conferencing can serve to support the development of learner autonomy, a point stressed by Steffens (2007), albeit in more general terms. McAndrew et al (1996) note that in fact it can permit a good combination of working alone and working collaboratively. Very specifically related to language learning, it can allow for the use of paralinguistics to aid negotiation of meaning (Wang, 2006; Yamada, 2009). If it is the case, as Blake (2007:78) notes, that ‘one welcome result of the sociocultural paradigm is a heightened emphasis on intercultural pragmatics’, this may prove to be a key issue.

The research literature does throw up a number of unresolved issues, however. Perhaps the most obvious is that of technical problems. The BECTA report (2004) highlights the potential negative impact of these, reporting that (admittedly in only one case) a group of language learners in a secondary school requested an end to such sessions as the lack of synchronicity between lips and voice of the other speakers was too distracting. They also report some individual negative reactions. This raises the issue of group size, as it is still unclear what the differential advantages and disadvantages of whole-class versus small group or individual interaction through the medium of video-conferencing. Related to this is the precise purpose of using this medium rather than any other to enhance language learning. Only by careful integration with other language teaching and learning experiences (or, for that matter, other technologically enhanced learning experiences in other curricular areas) can a judicious balance between focus on form and negotiation of meaning be achieved (see Belz, 2007, Yamada, 2009). Finally, and very importantly, teacher training and expertise is vital for the technology to be exploited appropriately (Blake, 2007).

European Teacher Training: initial and Continuous Professional Development:

Programmes of international cooperation have focused on the democratisation of language learning for the mobility of persons and ideas, and on the promotion of the European heritage of cultural and linguistic diversity. An Anglo-French bilateral trainee teachers ‘exchange programme was implemented in 2001 by the TDA, the Training and Development Agency for Schools and Higher Education in England, DCSF and the French Education Minister, the CD IUFM. It was then extended to the Spain. It aimed at developing innovation in language teaching and teacher training in general. It shows mutual recognition of qualifications and co-ordination of policies in each country to train the European teacher of the 21st century. This initiative enables trainee teachers to have a 4 week-placement in a partner school, along with other actions, the European Year of Languages (2001), the European day, the Language Portfolio, CRF….are responses to the new challenges of building common training and teaching curricula. Developing an
awareness of why and how one learns the languages one has chosen, perceiving the link between language and culture, respecting plurilinguism and multiculturalism, observing and analysing a global integrated approach to language learning and developing an awareness of and the ability to use transferable skills in language learning in education.

The TELLP project reported below is a key element to the training of school-based staff and trainees. TELLP (Technologically Enhanced Language Learning Pedagogy) is a Comenius Multilateral project, for which three European universities in Spain, England and France received European funding. The core objectives of TELLP was to train a new generation of primary class-teachers who would be equipped to teach the future generations of European children who, through language learning, will open a window onto the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe (Council of Europe, 2003). By observing lessons and using new technology (learning platform and videoconferences), primary language trainees in the three partner teacher training institutions (Manchester Metropolitan University, in Manchester, UK; the university of Granada (Spain); the Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres, Poitou-Charentes (Niort site) Poitiers University, (France) have learned to plan for language teaching and learning embedded in the schools’ curriculum (CLIL) and enhanced by the new technologies; at the same time, colleagues in the universities have focused on the work being carried out in six schools which received Comenius 1 funding in 2006 to co-operate in a 3-year project. All the schools are in teacher training partnerships with the three university institutions. The university staff have worked with the schools in order to develop a language pedagogy based on specific tools adapted to the 6 schools but transferable to others. The 6 schools’ project and the associated Learning Platform, interactive smart boards and video-conferencing have provides a timely and invaluable context in which to trial approaches and tools that can be later disseminated. The project has also benefited from being located within the university primary teacher training partnerships, and from the established programme of primary languages trainee exchange funded by respective governments of the three universities described above. The next chapter describes in more detail the aims and objectives of the project as well as its implementation.
Chapter 2 Description of project

The role of teacher education

An issue to highlight from the outset is the role of teacher education in the implementation of new initiatives. Both initial and continuing teacher education have a key role to play in promoting, interpreting and developing policy directives, at the same time as seeking to ensure that teachers, be they experienced or beginner, are in a position to engage with and challenge new and innovative ideas. Teacher education provides the ideal context for the implementation, evaluation, exploitation and dissemination of novel and innovative approaches. Without the involvement of teacher education, it is difficult to see how any initiative, however worthy, can be freed from its context and given life in others.

As noted in the previous chapter, the existing cooperation first between France and England and later on between England and Spain enabled trainees from the three different countries to go abroad and undertake teaching placements of four weeks duration. During these placements, the trainees have the chance of experiencing a real school context in schools that work with different situations, a different legal framework, different organising structures and a different language. Those student teachers that have participated in these exchanges have had an extremely good experience, four weeks that have enriched their professional development as well as their personal skills.

What was first a plan to promote the exchange of students was seen as an excellent platform to work on new possibilities, introducing topics to develop and making all the participants being involved in new challenges. The first of these was to link six schools from the three countries mentioned above and share a curriculum, share objectives to achieve with the help of new technologies. This was the “Six Schools Project”.

The TELLP project reported here forms part of the Collaborative Technologies in Languages Initiative (CTLI) project set up by the TDA (Teacher and Development Agency) in England, which brings together six primary schools, three teacher training institutions and local authorities and regional governments in England, France and Spain. Through the use of technology, they are working together on a shared curriculum to improve and develop the teaching and learning of languages in a more cross-curricular and holistic way (see www.tda.gov.uk/ctli). The six schools involved (two in each of the three countries) are supported by the European Union, as is the project reported below entitled ‘Technologically Enhanced Language Learning Pedagogy (TELLP)’ (see www.tellp.org)

From the university perspective, it was seen as necessary to develop a pedagogy that could help class teachers in their new daily task, that is, introduce new technologies and use them to include contents at the time that they use English, Spanish or French. This came to answer the demand of
teachers of knowing how to use properly these new technologies, making them part of their daily teaching and make them close to the needs of primary pupils and their process of learning a foreign language.

The Six Schools Project

This project had European funding under Comenius I for 2006-2009. The goals of the six schools project were the children´s linguistic and cultural development, a European dimension to school experience in initial teacher education and the schools´metamorphosis into international centres for cross-curricular and cross-cultural language teaching and learning. The six schools* are:

- King´s Road Primary School, Trafford, Greater Manchester, UK
- Seymour Park Primary School, Trafford, Greater Manchester, UK
- CEIP San Miguel, Granada, Spain
- Cristo de la Yedra, Granada, Spain
- Ecole élémentaire de Frontenay Rohan Rohan, Niort, Poitou-Charentes
- Ecole élémentaire de Magné, Niort, Poitou-Charentes

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<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Seymour Park Prim School</td>
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The two English schools took, by consensus, the role of co-ordinating schools. All six schools worked closely with their partner institutions of initial teacher education to secure cross-curricular and cross-cultural CLIL experiences in teaching for home and guest primary languages teacher trainees. In terms of information technologies, the ICT activities included surveys, online discussions, one-to-many presentations with video and other resources (e.g. PowerPoint, video clips), document management and video-conferencing sessions.

The aim of the schools was to integrate the project into the pupils´ curriculum. Thus, all the activities in the project were cross-linked to other curriculum areas in the classes´programmes at the stage of drawing up short-term plans. This means, for example, that if as part of the literacy/mother tongue programme children are required to write a report of personal activities, this is covered by the diary of weekend activities that they will write in the foreign language.

The six-schools´teachers worked to a 3 year projection, and detailed long- and medium-term plans for each year were supplemented by short term
plans (lesson by lesson planning) and discussed by email and video-conferencing. The topics chosen were as set out in Appendix i.

TELLP university project:

This Project had as its central aim the provision of an innovative context for initial teacher training within a technologically-enhanced, holistic, cross-curricular approach to teaching languages in the primary schools of the three countries. Within this we set out specifically to provide a context within which trainees as a result of school experience and university input and support, would be able to identify and critically evaluate the characteristics of a holistic cross-curricular (CLIL) approach to language teaching and learning and the impact of the technology. Particularly we wished to establish the impact upon:

- the processes of children’s language learning
- development of intercultural understanding
- children’s motivation as indicated by their own perceptions
- the school community
- the wider school curriculum

At the same time, however, we also set out to describe the emergent pedagogy. Methodologically this was a challenge, as the implementation of new technologies and related methodology is evolving and dynamic, such that is was in many ways through our investigation of the impact of the technologies that the characteristics of an effective pedagogy started to become apparent. As the element of the new technologies to emerge first was the use of video-conferencing, the data collection necessarily reflected this in the earlier parts of the project.

Data collection procedures

Data was collected from a range of people involved in the project: trainee teachers, class teachers, head teachers, pupils and families. This was done variously through questionnaires, interviews, video-recording, observation and visits to schools in the other countries.

History/chronology of implementation

- preliminary activities: initial observation of video-conference sessions and meetings with staff
- placement of trainees in project schools in year 1 of TELLP project; observation by tutors and collection of data by interview etc re their perception of two key elements above
- placement of trainees in project schools (again); extension of participation in project to larger groups of specialist trainees and dissemination to more generalist; questionnaires and interviews with trainees to collect data as per above (again)
- collection of data from children themselves
• collection of **data from teachers** in project schools and other stakeholders such as **parents**

**Observations** of video-conferencing sessions at the beginning of the project in all three countries were undertaken by university staff, initially without any guiding criteria in order to adopt an open-minded approach. At the same time, in all three countries, **meetings** were held between university staff and school staff to clarify roles; **presentations** were made to trainee teachers to inform them of the project. The observations, meetings and presentations also continued through the life of the project.

**Placement/participation of trainees:** in the **first year** of the project, trainees were placed in the project schools as follows. Each of the two schools in England had a French and a Spanish home trainee on placement, four in total. Each of these undertook a placement in the partner French or Spanish school. When French trainees visited England on placement, one was allocated to each of the English schools; equally, when the Spanish trainees came to England for their four-week placement, two were placed in the English schools. On return to their home French of Spanish schools, the same trainees carried out a placement in the school partnered with the English school where they had been placed. This permitted observation by visiting and home tutors, meetings with the trainees and the collection of interview data. Arguably, the backbone of this project and from which we have got the highest amount of data has been the groups of trainees involved. These have participated actively in the preparation of the videoconferences, have attended the local steering committees and even some of them have also been at the six schools steering committees if held in their home cities. Observation has been done by them, sharing experiences and knowledge with their mentors as well as with class teachers.

In the **second year** of the project, the placements, observations and interviews were organised in the same manner as in the first year; in addition the participation of the trainees was extended to much larger groups (for interview questions please see appendix ii). As the first year of the project had been completed, this meant that presentations to new trainees could include the findings of the first year. Thus the trainees in the second year were better informed from the outset; for that matter, the teachers in the six schools were also in a more informed position about the impact of the project thus far as a result of presentations from university staff. In order to extend participation in the project to greater numbers of trainees, in some video-conferencing sessions it proved possible to invite groups of trainees to observe; data collection observation sheets were provided for these. Other groups were given the opportunity to watch unedited video footage of video conferencing sessions in order then to complete questionnaires addressing the key questions concerning the impact of the technology (see appendix iii).
Primary pupils

Observation has been, of course, a frequently used tool by the researchers, taking notes and/or video-recording different sessions so that these could be later on examined and discussed with the trainees. Sessions in the three countries, in the six schools involved and in a total of 12 classes have been used to see patterns such as motivation, level of participation, use of mother tongue vs. foreign language, use of the materials prepared by the class-teachers from the six schools involved, the importance given to the agreed curriculum and the use or not of the learning platform as a tool used not only in the classroom but also at home. In addition to observation, focus group work was carried out with pupils in both years of the project, in order to ascertain their views (see appendix iv).

Headteachers

The headteachers in the project schools were very supportive of the class teachers and pupils for the of life of the project and continue to be so in the new project for which the six schools have received funding for the next three years. They have been a constant source of motivation and have always helped us as researchers facilitating our visits to the schools, interviews with them and class teachers and having access to families. Interview data was collected from the head teachers as well as the class teachers involved. (see appendix v).

Class teachers

Class teachers have worked closely with university tutors as well as with the other class teachers from the rest of the schools involved. For this, we had a number of meetings with them and have had different discussion sessions to clarify their main needs concerning the use of the new technologies and how to implement these in the teaching of foreign languages. Several sessions have been videorecorded and from these, data has been used on the time needed for the preparation of the sessions, the role played by them when their pupils could not communicate with their friends from the other countries, the use of extra materials to achieve the proposed goals as well as their working relation with the trainees. Issues identified during meetings and discussions formed the basis of training sessions. Interviews with a number of the teachers in the six schools also followed a common format (see appendix vi).

Parents

As member of the school communities, parents had much to say in the research, development and implementation of this new pedagogy. Some attended the different local meetings, participated giving their impressions about the importance of the project at their homes and as a source of motivation for the families in the schools involved. Meetings and interviews held with groups of parents added to the dataset, as did observations and comments from staff involved as to the impact of the project (appendix vii).
Not surprisingly, perhaps, parents were extremely positive about the project.

**Data summary**

We were thus able over the course of two years to collect a rich dataset from trainee teachers, some on placement in the schools and others at the university, class teachers and head teachers in the schools, children in the schools and groups of parents. While inevitably there were minor differences in data collection procedures, we were overall able to capture data that throw much light on the impact of the new technologies and that have informed the pedagogic approach that is emerging from the research. The dataset has informed the research questions in a complex way.

First of all, the impact of the technology on the processes of children’s language learning, the development of intercultural understanding and their motivation as indicated by their own perceptions can be ascertained from a range of data – from the trainee teachers’ views, those of their own class teachers head teachers and parents, and also from the data that they themselves provided. In other words, all the data informs these important three issues of intercultural understanding, language learning and motivation.

Secondly, the data provided by the trainees, the class and head teachers, parents and, less directly, the children, informed our understanding of the impact on the broader school curriculum and the school community as a whole.

Thirdly, the data provided by the trainees also allowed us to ascertain the extent to which we had successfully created an innovative teacher training context.

Finally, but importantly, the data collection was itself highly instrumental in informing what we now suggest are the elements of appropriate pedagogy. While in the earlier part of the project, the emphasis was largely on the use of the video-conferencing facilities, the data gathered informed our developing view of what the pedagogic issues were not only with this but also in relation to the use of the learning platform. As noted above, this reflects the developmental and organic nature of the project, as even as we collected views on the technology and its impact, that itself was changing as a result of the information we were being given.

The next chapter sets out the issues surrounding the pedagogy appropriate to the new technologies.
Chapter 3: New technologies and pedagogy

New technologies are potentially powerful tools, not just in language learning, but across the curriculum and in environments other than school itself. If, however, these new technologies are to develop learning and learners, then the critical element is the development of appropriate pedagogy. Put simply, the key issue is how these are used. This is an issue noted by the European Commission STEPS Project (2009), which concludes that there is a need for ‘Stronger focus on the pedagogical use of ICT: there seems to be a new trend in the focus of impact studies, which is shifting from looking at ICT impact per se to how ICT is used in pedagogical processes. ICT shouldn’t be thought in isolation, what counts is the pedagogy of ICT practices’ (see http://insight.eun.org/ww/en/pub/insight/school_innovation/best_practice/steps_findings_presented.htm). This proved to be a challenging and complex issue.

This chapter will outline what the new technologies offered and what language learning and teaching issues arose as a result of our research. We will then suggest some approaches to the use of the technology. The following chapter describes the impact of this technology on the children in this particular project.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the new technologies essentially comprised a learning platform with a number of features, including video-conferencing facilities. Interactive whiteboards in all six classrooms permitted the use of these at a whole class level (photo in appendix viii), whereas laptop computers with webcams were available for individuals and small groups of pupils to communicate with each other. The learning platform consists of a virtual school (see photo in appendix ix), entered through the reception area and giving access to a staffroom, classroom, library and garden, much like a conventional ‘real’ school. Other than the reception area, individual logins and passwords are required to enter the various areas and all children, staff and trainees involved in the project were issued with these.

What does this new technology offer? The learning platform provides essentially two key things: firstly, a range of communication tools, including email, chatter and video-conferencing facilities; secondly, a rich resource bank of documents, photographs and audio and video material. In terms of pedagogy, these two elements need to work in tandem in order to best exploit the technology.

Of the communication tools, the video-conferencing facilities were exploited from an early stage. This is a facility that offers much to the primary language learning experience at a linguistic and cultural level. First of all and most obviously, video-conferencing, whether this is at a whole class level, small group or individual, allows real-time visually-based communication. In this particular project it allows primary school aged children to see and to communicate with children their own age in another country, but crucially, allows them all to develop their skills in another language as well as developing their understanding of other children’s lives. While both individual and larger group video-conferencing offer this potential, the technology used at a whole-class level on an interactive whiteboard (and therefore a large
screen) also allows children a window on another classroom and class of children that is much more ‘real life’ in terms of size and an engagement with a much larger audience. The implications of this for teaching and learning will be explored later in this chapter.

The resources available on the platform are also integral to this pedagogy. Crucially they provide key content for the communicative aspect of the project, by providing a shared location for materials integral to the shared curriculum devised by the teachers in the six schools. Thus, for example, a shared topic area such as ‘the area round my school’ is supported by maps, descriptions, photographs, surveys and so on from all three countries that are then central to the communicative activities and the development of intercultural understanding. The materials include contributions not only from the teachers in the project, but also from the children themselves and from trainees placed in the project schools.

What are the pedagogic issues? First of all, with a whole-class video-conference, there are clear classroom management and organisation issues. The layout of the classroom has to allow for the movement of children into position to speak, if, for example they are coming to the front of the classroom to take a turn, and/or the passing round of a microphone to individual children. At the same time, all children in the class need to able to see and hear not only the other children in their own class but the children in the class in the other country. The nature of the equipment means that children when speaking have to look at the camera, rather than their interlocutor, a problem particular to video-conferencing in a large room with a camera positioned at a distance from the screen, compared to the proximity of the camera to the screen on a laptop. As in all teaching, clarity of instructions is paramount, but in the case of video-conferencing with another class the potential for confusion as to the intended audience of an instruction is much higher. Thus shared planning between the teachers concerned becomes of vital importance, at least until relationships are established and all concerned have gained some familiarity with the practice. The other issue that has significant classroom management implications is the structure and purpose of the video-conferencing session as well as the way in which it is conducted. The importance of ensuring that all children are able to participate at some level cannot be overstated. Thus what is needed are activities that, for example, require children to record the responses of the children from the other country that may be elicited by the child whose turn it is to speak.

There are also interesting linguistic issues to take into consideration. Firstly, there is the question of which language – in other words, target language (L2) or first language (L1)? There is a fine balance to be struck here – and potential tension – between two things. The first is a planned and implemented teacher-led approach designed to allow the children to gain experience of using their L1 with interlocutors that are learning that L1 and also to gain practice in using their L2. This is an approach that seeks to plan and orchestrate linguistic development and ensure that all participants have equally weighted opportunities; however, the second consideration is
allowing the nature of the technology to be exploited in the sense that in the ‘real’ world of communication speakers of a language in a bilingual situation such as this do not plan and stick to the use of one language; rather, they both code-mix (composing utterances that contain both languages) and code-switch from one language to the other at a text and discourse level. This language behaviour is typical of bilingual and multilingual speakers and therefore authentic communicative possibilities offered by VC are potentially very interesting. The tension resides in how (and if) these elements are balanced. The context of the communicative event then assumes an importance. The context includes the status of the languages in question. For example, if the linguistic levels of the two speakers are not quite evenly balanced, the speaker whose L2 competence is the higher may be tempted to take over what we might call the ‘target language space’. Let us imagine, for example, an English child speaking French as the target language in conversation with a French child for whom English is the target language. If the latter has a higher level of competence in English than the English child has in French, it may be tempting to reply in English or, where the English child mixes some English in with the French in an effort to communicate, the French child then may take this as an opportunity to increase the amount of English in the conversation. An opposite scenario is equally possible, where the mixed utterance from one child generates the appropriate unknown words in the reply. None of these things happen necessarily in a way that speakers are aware of, but this illustrates how, however authentic and useful a skill code-switching might be, there are implications for the opportunity to learn to speak and listen to the new language. A further consideration is that in a reciprocal language learning situation such as this, there is the potential to develop one’s own L1 as the need to make oneself comprehensible to a learner is a powerful motivator for speaking with clarity and appropriate pace and speed. Conversely, however, a strict adherence to one language only lacks authenticity and potentially deprives the speakers of the opportunity to supply their interlocutors with new and relevant language. A final issue that this project has included is that the communication between the French and Spanish partners has been in English, thus creating a very different situation where the English is being used as a lingua franca and is not the first language of either partner. Closely related to the issue of L1 and L2 is that of the skills being developed – in spoken language, obtaining a balance between learning to listen and understand and learning to speak is a tricky one; so too is striking a balance between initiating and responding.

The other skills balance to be taken into account more generally with new technologies and sustaining what we might call communicative partnerships is that of the balance between developing oracy and literacy. The technologies available in this project and in many classrooms do of course include opportunities for developing reading and writing skills and the arguments set out in the previous paragraph could equally apply to these skills, as children for example may recognise the need for correct spelling so that a child in another country can understand it and also learn from it.

Uniting both oracy and literacy has always been the issue of audience and purpose. Interesting issues arise in the use of technologies such as those
described here – for example, it is not of course inherent in the technology itself that it is used with children the same age. However, where this is the case, there are pedagogical implications to be taken into account. Children of same or similar ages will speak in a register appropriate to children; this may raise issues of the degree of formality used, with attendant implications for the vocabulary and grammatical structures used. This is particularly the case in spoken language which arguably has its own grammar and this may vary from language to language. In other words, the number and kind of differences between formal and informal language may be greater in English, say, than in Spanish. A further point to consider about audience is whether in informal exchanges local dialects may mean that speakers are using vocabulary and grammar that differs from what is generally deemed to be the ‘standard’ for that language. Indeed, the same point could also be made for accent. The age of the children is relevant here as the younger the child, the less likely in general they are to be aware of their own language use. Finally, too, we must remember that younger children even of the 7-11 age range have not yet gained full mastery of their first language and may still be making errors in constructions that are typically acquired later such as passives and some complex utterances. That said, all of these considerations yield a range of pedagogic opportunities where children can learn about their first as well as their target language. They are, however, important points to bear in mind when considering how to approach language learning in this way. The issue of purpose in language use is another aspect that comes into play. While the notion of purpose is important in a general sense in that the evidence from the project suggest very strongly that the children think that this kind of language learning has a ‘purpose’, in linguistic terms purpose is used to cover the range of uses to which language is put, such as informing, relating, persuading, describing and so on. Thus the recognition that the technologies bring in their wake a purpose for both learning and using language goes hand with the need to ensure that the technology is fully exploited to develop the ability to use language for a range of purposes. Well planned conventional classrooms do of course include the opportunity to practise using language for different purposes but the authentic communication made available through this technology takes language learning beyond practice and into language learning through use. More than this, the different technologies allow language use for different purposes and audiences – in other words, the skills needed and developed in a whole class video-conference are different to those needed when communicating on a one-to-one basis or in a small group.

This takes us into the realm of content in language learning. Whoever the audience, whatever the purpose, in the ‘real’ world, people communicate about something. While the shared curriculum has been a key feature of the schools’ project, it is important to recognise that this means the schools have used common content in their curriculum, at least insofar as it relates to the project. The content-driven approach to language learning and teaching known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has a longer and arguably more developed history in European countries other than England (see www.clilcompendium.com). France International and European sections created in 1992 are being developed in all kinds of schools at all levels and in different subjects and languages. This scheme concerns 200 000 pupils and
this direction not only is expected to be kept but this number will increase in future years. A pupil in France has now the opportunity to get his Baccalauréat with a special European mention. Sites such as Primlangues or Emilangues, Eduscol support this objective. Les Langues Modernes 4/2009, a review for English teachers focused recently on the question of cooperation between the language and the subject teachers “Enseignants de DNL et de LV : à armes égales ?” More widely, the writers raise the questions of didactics of plurilingualism, integration, language opacity, subject density, non-linguistic subject, teacher training, interdisciplinarity, CLIL, didactics, project, curriculum and transferability. Spain’s policy of bilingual schooling place them further ahead in terms of this policy direction, although in England recent government reviews of the curriculum have given an impetus to a more cross-curricular approach to learning in both the primary and secondary phases. While there exists more than one interpretation of such a holistic approach to learning in the arena of early languages, it is nevertheless a more appropriate platform from which to embrace and exploit new technologies than earlier approaches to language curricula. These tended to give a higher profile to more transactional approaches predicated upon the need to cope linguistically with situations that might arise in the target language country. Coupled with an emphasis on skills development observable both in the so-called foreign language curriculum in the UK and in the field of English language teaching, language learning over the last twenty year or so has possibly leaned very heavily towards linguistic accomplishment within a given language. More content-led and cross-curricular approaches have at their heart not just a desire to motivate language learning qua language learning, but a concern to develop intercultural understanding as part of becoming a citizen on the international stage. Thus the communicative opportunities offered by technology are complemented by the adoption of a content-led approach that gives the children in this project substantial scope for sharing, comparing and discussing their lives.

The adoption of a content-led approach, however fulfilling, does not come without potential problems. When content (rather than form) drives the language needed, even with careful selection of the vocabulary and grammar required for a particular topic, planning for linguistic progression can be difficult and real progress in terms of the language itself can be jeopardised. Equally, assessing progress can present problems as it may be more difficult to chart. When this is compounded by tracking gains in other areas – increased confidence or spontaneity, for example – it can become difficult to establish precisely what learning is taking place and how then to plan for the future. A further and related concern is that of error. A pedagogical approach that privileges real time communication about real content is of necessity one that must anticipate a greater degree of error than we might find in a conventional language learning setting. Even more important is the approach that is taken to the errors made by the children, and there is a balance to be struck between the need to allow them the space and scope to communicate in reality and the need at some point to pay attention to the form of the language.
The real time nature of video-conferencing, whether this involves whole classes on a big screen or smaller groups on a laptop with a webcam, is integral to the pedagogic approach needed. But so too are the issues of audience and purpose, as combined with the real time element, they have implications for the degree of preparedness or spontaneity that may characterise the communication event. Whole class events that involve individual children presenting in turn to a large audience will require preparation if time is not to be lost, with the concomitant disengagement of the rest of the class; equally, teams or groups of children who are presenting, for example, how the class celebrates certain festivals will need to have this prepared in advance. However, to focus exclusively on this approach would not allow the children fully to exploit the opportunities that this new technology brings which is essentially that of more spontaneous and authentic communication. This can be a valuable tool during more prepared sessions when the real-time nature of the event means that there may be a communication breakdown of some sort. The ability to communicate without advance preparation is needed to sustain the event. Equally, when children (or language learners of any age) are working in small groups or on an individual basis, the nature of the interaction is a more personal one where the ability to communicate with some spontaneity is very important. A further pertinent issue is that of autonomy, in that the conventional role of the teacher is fundamentally challenged by new technology. This too varies along with the contextual features of the communication event in that, for example, preparation for an event may need lessons that are not necessarily drastically different from conventional ones that allow children to practise, rehearse and use new grammatical structures and vocabulary. Where things change, however, is determining the extent of teacher support and intervention during a video-conference and while to some extent this may depend, as in all teaching and learning, on the age, abilities and so on of different children and classes, it is an issue that needs to be taken into account in both planning and evaluating the sessions. Where children are involved in more personal exchanges individually or in pairs or small groups, the teacher may adopt a more distant approach, either to allow great privacy of exchange and/or opportunity for authentic communication or, more pragmatically, in order to concentrate on the rest of the class! The latter situation of course brings other potential classroom management situations, but judicious use of other adults may solve this; the use of headphones by the children may solve others although their speaking aloud may be a disturbance to the class. These, however, are issues that can only be resolved on a school-by-school basis, but the opportunity for children to work on such a basis, with a adult available if needed, is a very useful preparation for communication that might take place away from the school environment, a crucial point as the children’s personal log-ins permit them to contact their friends in the other countries from their own homes. There are thus opportunities here for learning beyond the classroom, but what happens in the classroom/school may well have an impact upon the children’s ability to communicate outside it.

Central, then, to their ability to communicate, is the issue of communication strategies. This is not something that is typically seen in lesson planning documentation in any of the three countries involved in this project, yet has
proved to be an integral part of the pedagogy. It is also as aspect of language learning that the Common European Framework (CEF) devotes some attention to. Section 4.4.3.5 describes, under the heading of Interaction strategies, the need for: planning, execution, evaluation and repair. Assessment scales are provided for turntaking, co-operating and asking for clarification. The framework also includes attention to non-verbal communication, including both practical actions and paralinguistics. Based on the CEF, as part of this project, a developmental set of levels was devised for use by teachers and children in the project. This proposes the levels of beginners, intermediate, advanced and fluency, as a more easily recognisable and interpretable set of terms than the levels of the CEF, using letters and numbers such as B1, A2 and so on. The descriptors are based on the CEF but again are written to be as accessible as possible, available in English, French and Spanish (please see appendix x). Two annotated versions of the grid are also available: one of these has suggested phrases for use, and another has these and some teaching ideas (See appendices xi and xii). These are also available in all three languages. The intention is that these are not just used to measure progression but that they also assist in planning. A further tool is a lesson planning template that has a section for communication strategies and also for technology to be used, again available in all three languages (see appendix xiii). In order to support the children’s developing independence, a ‘good communicator checklist (see appendix xiv), is also available in French Spanish and English. This can be for individual use or displayed as a poster in the classroom.

The technology described above clearly presents both a challenge and an opportunity. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the communication tools and the resources on the learning platform need to work in tandem and this is arguably the biggest challenge. The communication tools can be used to create content, as in the sequence described above, with the use of email to garner information that is then shared via a videoconference and the results uploaded on to the learning platform. There is, perhaps inevitably, a tendency for material to be uploaded without immediate purpose and all concerned need to ensure that it does become a virtual filing cabinet, however appropriate and rich the resources are! They also have to lend themselves to individual/small group work as well as large class endeavours. The three session sequence of teaching proposed in appendix xiv, using the lesson plan template mentioned above, takes as its starting point a picture of a French classroom. This is at one level a very simple resource, but one with much potential. Let us assume to start with that this is being used for a class of children in England, although the lesson plan sequence is available in Spanish and French also, with English as the target language to be learned. The English version is also available to use with Spanish as the target language. The objectives for Lesson 1 are for the children to be able to describe (in French) a photograph of their partner French classroom, noting similarities and differences; for Lesson 2 they will be able to pose questions to their French partners (in French) about their partners’ French classroom. Furthermore, they should be able to pose questions to their French partners (in English) about a photograph of their own classroom in England in order to give French children opportunity to listen and respond in English. This work
leads up to Lesson 3, which is where they are to be able to conduct a short conversation with a French pupil, comparing their classrooms, using French and English as appropriate. This last ‘lesson’ is intended to be individual pupils communicating via a laptop with webcam, or possibly in pairs. The objectives also include reference to communication strategies, in this case beginner level turntaking, interacting, repair, NV and paralinguistics. Much of the sequence, however, adheres to principles of planning familiar to language teachers, such as the setting of objectives, the careful selection of appropriate grammatical structures and vocabulary and a structure and sequence within the first two lessons that allow a gradual build-up of new language through interactive activities. In the first lesson, prompted by the picture which is retrieved in real time from the platform, children are given the chance to use language to describe the classroom. In the next, they are given opportunities to think of questions in the target language to ask their French counterparts, which they subsequently practise by posing questions to their English classmates. At this point the use of communication strategies is built into the sequence so that teachers can encourage the children to, for example, say they do not know something (‘je ne sais pas’) where appropriate and any relevant communication strategies phrases eg ‘je ne comprends pas’ ‘répète, s’il te plaît’. They then switch to English to consider appropriate questions for their French partners, which the teacher can then upload onto the platform on the blog so that the French children can respond. For the final session in the sequence, the individual communication is underpinned by a game-type activity whereby the children ask their partners questions about a pre-prepared resource such as a drawing of a room and attempt to draw this based on what they understand. The webcam of course allows them to show each other what they have done and compare.

The integrated sequence proposed above is only one example. However, it integrates the learning platform and the webcam technology, includes linguistic and intercultural elements and also allows the children to practise the use of communication strategies and self-assessment. Crucially, the intention is to equip them with the questioning and communication skills that they need for independent communication.

The pedagogic issues outlined above all arise from the current project and the related Six Schools project. However, few schools currently have available this kind of technology and the question arises as to how they might exploit the technology they have at present. A step by step guide is available as an appendix (see appendix xv) and a Powerpoint presentation at www.tellip.org. What we would emphasise here first and foremost is the importance of choosing your participant class(es) and teachers, with enthusiastic and positive outlook, prepared to take risks, innovate and the willingness to deal with setbacks. However, at the same time it important to set up a link with children of a similar language level, that is, at a similar stage of language learning. Thus it is sometimes difficult to make final decisions about who is communicating with whom until you have your partner school. There are various ways of finding a partner, including through organisations such as www.etwinning.net and www.globalgateway.org.uk or charities such as Rafiki (Kidogo) http://www.rafi.ki/site/primaries.php. The next step is to
obtain some equipment, but the minimum needed is simply a laptop with a webcam, if possible two headphone sets and a splitter, and a microphone. This then needs some kind of communication system, such as Skype or the secure on-line environment offered by charities such as Ra.fiki at relatively low cost. Decisions have to be taken as to what the children will communicate about, but overlapping areas of concern or curriculum are not difficult to find and topics of contemporary interest such as healthy eating are easy to include and to tackle in a cross-curricular way. As a central reference point is needed, or something that serves as an information forum, you will need a facility that offers some of what has been made available in the current project. Many schools now have access to a learning platform at school and/or local authority level. If this is not the case, a number of free websites are now available (see, for example, www.wetpaint.com) and although they may not offer the appeal of a virtual school environment like that in the 6 schools project, they nevertheless provide webspace where two schools in a partnership can easily create folders into which resources can be uploaded. There are of course issues to consider, particularly of security and of space. Security is clearly of paramount importance. Free websites do of course have to be vetted for the adverts they carry. In terms of access, however, as only those people who are invited via an email address are able to access these free sites, they offer a relatively secure environment, but if concerns remain about risk, pictures of children involved do not have to be placed on the web. Any topic can make use of resources that do not feature the children themselves. For example, a topic such as healthy eating can place menus, photos of food and surveys of what the children like most on the website. Other related documents could include scanned-in handwritten items and photos of places related to eating such as the school dining room or a local picnic area. Ideally, of course, children would want to place photographs of themselves in formats such as I.D. cards or ‘passports’ but the use of a free website can be combined with email and attachments, and indeed the ‘snail mail’ facility of posting actual photos and documents between classes. The latter suggestion may also provide a partial solution to the other problem, that of web space, as free websites have a limited capacity. Schools in a partnership could simply agree to empty the resources each half-term or at whatever an appropriate interval is. The resources are of course not lost as they can be stored electronically in the usual way.

In terms of creating resources, most schools will have the option of some camera work. While cameras are very useful, this does not need to consist of expensive equipment. Small handheld video cameras are now available at modest cost, but even a mobile phone with a built-in camera will enable children to make short unedited films of their surroundings or take still photos that can be shared with the partner school and used as a basis for teaching. This allows the sharing of real and meaningful content, which serves as a basis for language learning and the development of intercultural understanding. Finally, it is important to return to the pedagogic issues addressed above. It will be important to engage in shared planning with the teacher(s) in the partner school and to make use of planning documentation that incorporates reference to the technology and to communication strategies. Integrating the use of a learning platform or similar facility needs to
be integral to the planning and, fundamentally, teachers in the partnership need to be very clear as to the objectives of the exercise. These objectives need to reflect the opportunities offered by the technology, such the chance to become an independent language learner, build intercultural understanding and so on. Ideally, too, teachers will want to build into this planning a way of measuring attainment and monitoring impact of the new approach.

In this chapter, we have outlined what we see as the key pedagogic issues, along with some suggestions and guidelines as to how colleagues might embark upon a similar venture. It is important to stress that much of what we have to say as a result of this project arises from our research into its impact on the children’s learning. The following chapter outlines the key findings of the project.
Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter will describe the impact on children’s language learning processes, motivation and development of intercultural understanding as perceived by the children themselves as well as through the eyes of trainee teachers, teachers in the project schools and university tutor observation.

Through the children’s own eyes:

Intercultural understanding

Firstly, the impact upon the development of intercultural understanding has been considerable. The children themselves in all three countries are quite clearly captivated by the opportunities the technology affords to gain insights into other children’s lives. Predictably, perhaps, they appeared to be intrigued by the obvious differences in their lives. The immediate insight into other children’s classrooms afforded by the video-conferencing technology prompted observations from both the French and Spanish children about the uniforms worn by the children in England and the differences evident in the layout of the classroom itself, as well as smaller details such as the tendency of children in the English schools to have bottled water. Or, as the English children put it from their perspective, ‘they get to wear their own clothes’; a further observation about teachers was the English children’s comments that ‘they (the French children) get to call their teacher by just their name’. The importance of seeing the other children was emphasised over and over again, with comments such as ‘you can see how they look like’, ‘you can see their personality’, ‘if you just send letters you don’t get the chance to see them and talk to them, but when you do video-conferences they are in front of you…its’ better’. The French and Spanish children noted not just the obvious inter-country differences (‘les anglais portent un uniforme’) but also some differences possibly particular to the schools in England, such as the ethnic diversity of the classes there (‘certains élèves n’ont pas la meme couleur de peau que nous’; ‘certains élèves portent un foulard qui cache leurs cheveux’) and the different names that children had.

Beyond that which was actually visible, however, lay many more differences that the children found interesting. The video-conferences and, more so in the later part of the project the learning platform, were a vehicle for learning much more about the other children’s lives. As one child in England put it, ‘it’s like fact-finding….who they are, their favourite food, favourite places’. And another said, ‘you get to find out what their life is like’; another: ‘it would be really boring just to have lessons, not to be able to see people that actually speak different languages than us, what they wear and what their school is like, because you can see that, and we want to know about their lives’; that for them culture is integral to language learning is suggested by the observation that ‘because you are learning Spanish, you have to know what Spanish people do every day….if you didn’t it would be a bit strange because you’re only learning the language’. This cultural element is a key point reiterated by the children in all three countries, the French and Spanish children offering similar quotes such as ‘c’est important parce qu’on peut connaitre plus sur
leurs habits, leur nourriture’. Thus the shared curriculum, focusing upon their lives, schools and surrounding served to exploit the new technology very effectively. Notable differences included not just eating habits and clothes but also festivals such as the celebration of the 6 January in Spain and the festivals such as Eid that children from different ethnic backgrounds in England celebrated.

Arguably, however, even more striking was the issue of cultural similarity. Even those things that initially seemed so different such as Eid were perceived and understood by the children in terms of their similarities through the common aspects of gift giving, enjoying food and wearing new clothes. Other more day-to-day behaviours were also keenly observed by the children, often through not only video-conferencing but by emails sent on the learning platform. As one child of Muslim background in his English school said of his partner in the Spanish school, ‘my one, he likes pizza and when he gets home he just eats and watches TV just like I do’; ‘when I saw his picture, he’s just like me – smiley!’ The importance of having partners or penfriends was also highlighted by a number of children for whom the individual communication appeared to be important. As one child in England commented, ‘you want to see your pen-friend again’ and another, ‘you want to see your pen-friend and not someone else’s’. One French child commented ‘je ne suis intéressé que par mon correspondant’. This more individualised approach is supported by the facility of the learning platform. One child commented that they enjoyed receiving emails ‘that are just for you, that no-one else can see’. In Spain and France, too, particularly in the second year, the learning platform was welcomed for the same reasons, one French child saying that ‘chez nous, je vérifie seule mon courrier’. It was no surprise to note that the children regarded each other as friends – ‘ce sont de vrais amis’; they are in France but they are our friends too; ‘you actually have more friends and not only normal English ones, you get Spanish ones’; ‘its nice to talk to someone and you can make friends with them even though you have only seen them on the screen’… suggesting a strong affective element to their language learning experience. This, in tandem with the socio-cultural elements of the experience, appears to offer a very robust context for language learning itself.

Motivation

There is considerable evidence that the new technologies are having a positive impact on the children’s motivation to learn languages. Unsurprisingly, a key aspect of this motivation is the importance attached to the intercultural element and the establishing of friendships outlined in the previous section. In terms of language learning, however, they are also motivated by the communicative aspects of the experience. Although, as noted above, a number of children were clearly engaged by the prospect of interacting with their pen-friend, the overall response to video-conferencing is a very positive one. The issue of enjoyment was one highlighted by many. Comments such as ‘on s’amuse et on apprend en même temps’; felt ‘lucky to learn English in a fun way’; ‘I think it’s a good idea because it’s more fun than just learning the language because you can actually talk to people and communicate with them’. The experience of communicating through video-
conferencing was **compared by some with their regular** language lessons. This however, was not a straightforward negative comparison but reflected an understanding on the part of the children that there was a place for both; many saw the video-conferencing as a way of reinforcing and consolidating what had been practised in class – as one child explained, ‘it’s fun because normally when you are in a Spanish lesson, the teacher just goes on and on about counting and stuff but these ones were like practising for video-conferences and then we’d talk to our friends and get to know what they do’ (an issue to be taken up in more detail in terms of pedagogy/impact on language learning). To some degree this reflected a shift in emphasis in terms of the **skills** practised – the children appeared to be motivated by speaking and listening*. ‘you get to talk to people and that’s good’; ‘it’s really good, they can tell us what they do, instead of writing and we can tell them what we do and we can learn more’; ‘on parle alors qu’en autres matières on écrit’. Having said that, in the second year of data collection, an increasing number of children made reference to the role of the leaning platform and the associated email facility, even noting as one child did, that this help with their spelling. While the relative roles of the video-conferencing activities and the learning platform is an issue to be returned to, the data does suggest that there is a difference emerging in the ways in which these new technologies potentially support different skills (and as noted above, personalised and individualised learning). A further issue in motivation was the opportunity to interact with real children **their own age** – ‘you would rather speak to someone your own age’; ‘adults pressurise you sometimes’ and the **authentic** nature of the communication was stressed frequently, eg ‘it’s really fun because instead of just talking to your friends who know English, when you speak to them they say new words that you don’t know and they learn you words often and they learn new English words off us’. One French child observed that ‘you don’t only speak to the teacher, to please the teacher’. The real-time element of the situation was also appreciated, as answers to questions were immediately forthcoming, in comparison to more conventional written exchanges – ‘on se pose des questions, on a des réponses tout de suite’. However, an issue worthy of consideration is the relationship of the teaching and learning activities to the issue of motivation. While on the one hand particular aspects were clearly welcomed, and the children welcomed the presence of games on the learning platform as well as those that played a part ion video-conferencing, the structure of the video-conferencing sessions meant that they were not necessarily rewarding for all children on all occasions. This includes both pedagogic and technical problems. First of all, some children clearly it more motivating to talk to children who are their individual partners than talking to others. A further issue is that some wish to exercise more choice over the topics chosen, prompting such comments as, ‘we’re not doing things we really want to, it’s just getting boring because we talk about food and stuff’; in one of the Spanish-English linked schools, the slightly older Spanish children displayed some slight frustration that the English children were at a lower level of Spanish than they were at English; conversely some of the English children commented on their awareness that their counterparts were more advanced linguistically than they were. As one child expressed it, ‘I feel a bit disappointed about when we learn Spanish because you know the people in Spain they know a lot of Spanish and a lot of English but the we
don’t know that much Spanish’. The French children too pointed to the importance of the children sharing similar ages. The technical problems that arose more often in the first year of the project than the second did not overall dampen enthusiasm for it, but the children’s comments suggested awareness of the difficulties and their impact. Children in all three countries commented on the quality of the image, the microphone volume and freezing of the screen. There were also occasions when the technology failed to connect, prompting a child to say that ‘when the technology doesn’t work, we could be doing something else’. While the technical problems did not appear to put the children off in the longer term, it is not without its consequences. For example, one French child commented in the second year ‘maintenant que le les vois mieux, je suis moins timide’. Despite their patience with the technology, there is a potential influence on their language learning itself.

Language learning processes

What then of the impact of this new technology on children’s language learning processes themselves?

As outlined above, some technical and pedagogical problems notwithstanding, the new technology has undoubtedly had a very positive effect upon children’s motivation. Arising from this appears to be a desire to learn that has allowed the children’s confidence to develop considerably. As this child put it, ‘it’s really good, your ears get pricked up so you learn loads more…it’s exciting so you have to learn’, or as another said, ‘it’s a good opportunity for us to learn French and for them to learn English’. French and Spanish children made similar observations, yet like the English children all reported their initial reactions to the experience to be ones of anxiety and nervousness. In all three languages the word for nervous featured often, but the successful accomplishment of the task meant that the children went quickly from nerves to relief and enthusiasm. As one English child expressed it, ‘at first you think it’s exciting but then you feel scared and nervous and then after that you wish you can do it again’. The children report again and again how it becomes easier as one gets accustomed to it – as one child in England said, ‘what happened was when I met the class in a videoconference and I was shy because I didn’t know that much French but now that I’ve met x [penfriend] and I’ve learned more French I’ve got more confident’. Furthermore, this confidence is reflected in their ability to both risk making errors and their acceptance of others’ mistakes. Although a small number of children were concerned about errors (‘if you get it wrong it’s a bit embarrassing’), the reciprocal nature of the experience in particular was clearly a support: ‘I think it’s good because if I say a French word wrong, we shouldn’t feel embarrassed because they are learning English and they might pronounce things wrong’. Indeed, the awareness of this reciprocity is one of the most striking aspects of this technology. Not only can it assuage the fear of making errors because others do too, it also appears to make the children more aware of their own first language use on the one hand and sensitive to their interlocutors’ potential comprehension plans on the other. The children in England made a number of insightful comments, such as ‘when you are talking to your friends (in England) you don’t say everything properly, but you
say proper traditional English when you are talking to them’, and ‘if they heard us speaking normally it would sound really fast to them’. Both these reflect an understanding of the language learning experiences of the other children. A further comment by a child that ‘it helps you to learn what other people feel and not just think about yourself... it helps you to be more kind’ points to a developing empathy that extends beyond the experience of language learning. That they realise that others may struggle to understand them in turn is suggested by such observations as ‘for us it’s a bit funny when they pronounce the words really wrong, it must be funny to them when we pronounce a word wrong in a conference’. Equally, the children in the other two countries are also sensitive to this issue. The Spanish children, for example, all reported speaking more slowly for their English counterparts and the French children too noted the importance of good articulation, one commenting that ‘il faut bien parler pour bien se faire comprendre, quelquefois ça commence à s’embarouiller’. However, despite this apparent awareness, there remained problems of understanding each other and difficulties with perceived speed and articulation of the other children’s language. A final observation is that the data reported here largely reflects the experience of children in England learning French or Spanish, and that of the children in France or Spain learning English. The exchange between the French and Spanish schools uses English as a lingua franca and there is some evidence emerging that the children perceive this exchange differently from that involving native speakers. As one child in France said, ‘c’est pas le même accent quand c’est un anglais ou un espagnol qui parle anglais’. The increased confidence displayed and reported by the children in all three countries is accompanied by heightened awareness of their own speaking and listening skills. The Spanish children report that they not only improve but ‘check’ their pronunciation, increase their vocabulary and feel that they have made progress. Equally, the French children also report support for their vocabulary development with such comments as ‘cela aide à memoriser les mots difficiles’. The English children show awareness of progress, reflected in such comments as ‘we learn mostly speaking and listening because we hear what they are saying, we take that in and then we can use those words in the next video-conference’. Comments such as ‘I think it’s better to have a video-conference because then if they say a word you’ve got to understand it’ suggest further a determination to communicate.

The awareness that the children have of their own progress in language learning coupled with their sensitivity to the reciprocal nature of the language learning process is a key outcome of the use of new technologies such as video-conferencing. Perhaps inevitably this leads to a different conceptualisation of the respective roles of teachers and learners. While none of the children was asked explicitly to comment on this aspect of the project, their responses to other questions suggested that while on the one hand they were appreciative of having their teachers on hand to support, advise and clarify, on the other they were developing a desire for independence. There is clearly a need for teacher support as articulated by this child: ‘it’s quite fun as well because if you’re forgetting something it’s not like you’ve got a great amount of pressure on you as there is always someone to help you out’ or this: ‘when we do the video-conferences if we get stuck the
teachers help us and then it gets easier’. Yet their desire for a more independent environment is beginning to show. As one child noted, ‘the teachers, they say it for us….I think they are doing too much for us, we should do it ourselves’. Equally, they are increasingly aware of the prepared nature of some of the activities and are beginning to comment on the need for a more spontaneous exchange, with suggestions such as ‘we could ask them in any order and it would be more of a conversation’, ‘with a script it’s like you’re doing a little play’ and ‘[we want] to be able to talk and not have words given to you’. The Spanish children requested more improvisation and the French children more opportunities to talk – ‘plus souvent parler’.

There is thus an issue – children realise the opportunities presented by video-conferencing and how much they learn. However, it would appear that develop increasing confidence with the medium, at the same time as they become aware of the limitations imposed by technical problems and exchanges structured at times in a way that inevitably limit each person’s individual participation. At least for some there is a desire for independence and more spontaneous communication. They all demonstrate an awareness of communication breakdown and to some degree appear to possess ideas of what to do. These vary from trying learned phrases such as ‘repeat please’ to looking immediately for help from an adult. A key component therefore of developing more independence is therefore that of communication strategies.

Through the eyes of trainees and teachers: perceptions of trainees and teachers of impact of project upon children as outlined above

Data collected from trainees and teachers in the project underline the impact described above. First of all, the teachers working in project schools over a period of three years were able to report at some length on what they considered the impact to have been.

The issue of intercultural understanding was underlined by all the teachers involved in the project. As one of the key staff in one of the English schools commented, ‘when they first saw children from France on the screen, they commented that the children looked just like them. We did wonder what they thought. The best way is to have children from that country teaching about that, rather than us. It is has had a massive impact upon intercultural understanding. ‘Equally, the same teacher noted the extent to which many of the English children had increased their awareness of their own culture through the experience of describing it to children from other countries. Her awareness of the impact on the children in France and Spain was also evident, from comments such as ‘the French children have also talked about things that they have found out about English children that they have got wrong. It has been a two-way project.’ The teachers in both France and Spain endorsed the view that intercultural understanding had been positively affected, with the Spanish schools attributing the increased focus on this element in the curriculum to the project and the French schools too noting the children’s engagement with the cultural elements of the exchange. Trainee teachers too frequently commented on the opportunities offered in the intercultural domain, although the possibility that this was an element that
varied across country context was raised by one of the English trainees who had been placed in a French project school. His suggestion that the intercultural aspect might be more intriguing to children in English schools because of the relatively limited exposure to other European cultures compared to the availability of information about English-speaking cultures is one worthy of investigation and opens up intriguing research questions about the balance between the development of intercultural understanding and linguistic skills that pertains in a project such as this one. Such nuances aside, however, teachers and trainees also endorsed the motivational impact of the project on the children, a message that came through strongly from both. Indeed, within the trainees, both those who had participated in the project by working in the project schools and those who had observed (either at first hand or through observation of footage) were keen to stress many of the same points that the children themselves had made, relating to enjoyment, authenticity and the value of engaging with children their own age. Some trainees, usually those less involved, sounded a cautionary note in raising the issue of sustainability of motivation and the challenge of ensuring class participation and engagement. These observations, along with teachers actively addressing these concerns as the project progressed, served to inform the pedagogy approach discussed in the previous chapter. It has to be remembered that the trainees who drew on observation were in a different position from either the teachers or the trainees placed in the project schools as they were often making a judgement based on a single experience, whereas the second group were able to draw conclusions that were more broadly based, having had a longer term and more immediate experience of the project. That said, the general consensus across three country contexts was that quite striking in its message that was a very promising approach to language teaching and learning. The impact on the actual language learning processes was also an issue responded to with some enthusiasm by trainees and teachers. While they again made many comments that echoed those of the children themselves, noting, for example the impact that a real communicative context has on language – misunderstandings cannot be avoided, there is a need for accuracy despite the importance of meaning taking precedence, and the positive impact on the children’s confidence was a recurring theme. So too was the observed impact (both real and potential) on children’s listening and pronunciation skills, an aspect raised much more by trainees and teachers than by the children themselves, suggesting that the role of a teacher possibly disposes them to make assessments of attainment rather than the process itself. This is of course no bad thing and points us all in the direction of future work. Again, however, the suggestion that there may be differences between countries was hinted at by some comments in the data. In both France and Spain there was a slight tendency for teachers to report on the language development and attainment of the children more than was the case in the schools in England. This may simply reflect the longer-standing status of languages in the primary curriculum in the two other countries. On the other hand, this also suggests a counterpoint to the possibility that the interest in intercultural issues is not identical in all three countries. Thus it may be the case that the balance between language learning and the development of intercultural understanding varies as a result of context. A further issue to address here might be the relative value
attached to exchanges between France and Spain in English. Finally, the issue of autonomy implicit (or possibly explicit) in a number of the comments from the children themselves also found expression in the contributions of teachers and trainees. Through their observations of the impact upon children’s listening and speaking skills, as well as of their obvious confidence, they displayed a concern to approach error in a positive way, (quote from Anthony), a desire in some cases to take a ‘step back’ during a video-conference and a willingness to embrace the teaching of communication strategies and to involve the children in peer and self assessment. These concerns suggest a growing awareness of the potential impact of the new technologies on the role of the teacher. Related to this is the adoption of more explicit teaching of communication strategies to enable the children to work more independently and spontaneously.

In summary, then, the impact of the new technologies on the children’s learning in all three countries has been considerable. However, the impact on the wider school curriculum and school community as perceived by trainees, teachers and parents is also a worthwhile issue to consider and has important implications for the sustainability of innovative approaches to teaching and learning. It is to this that we now turn.

What evidence is there that the project has led to a more cross-curricular approach to language teaching and learning? As noted in the previous chapter, one of the characteristics of pedagogy appropriate to the new technologies is that of meaningful content. The curriculum shared by the six schools was led by this rather than by linguistic structures or vocabulary and it is difficult to separate this from the motivational element of the technology per se. However, given the positive impact of the project in terms of the development of intercultural understanding it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the focus on the content of the curriculum was a key feature. As noted above, the children themselves reported great satisfaction in sharing information about their lives with the children in other countries; in turn this is instrumental in promoting language learning across the school. As one teacher in England put it, ‘it (language learning) is permeating the whole school’. The two Spanish schools both reported an increase in cross-curricular working, an increase in cultural input in language classes, and within the framework of the project, the French schools were able to implement the art curriculum exclusively in English, following EMILE pedagogy. The teachers delivered the learning, monitored activities and evaluated their teaching in the target language. They successfully chose and negotiated the learning objectives in both subjects. The children were particularly attentive and active during these lessons. They never refused to cooperate and when interviewed, they showed they understood the interest of such pedagogy, very challenging but at reach for most of them too. The recurrent idea that the children were using language for a real purpose highlights the vital role played by relevant content. To what extent the children themselves were able to consider this part of the project in any explicit way is less clear, but their motivation that came from the meaningful use of language was very evident and trainees and teachers were in no doubt that this was of paramount importance. Interestingly one trainee reported that it was the
addition of technology that permitted the sharing of the content that appeared to validate the CLIL approach – that is, the notion of content becomes very convincing when it has to be communicated to someone else, suggesting that these new technologies may give the notion of CLIL an added and valuable dimension. Closely related to a more holistic approach is what appears to be a move away from teaching based on the language itself. For example, the French teachers reported a sense of ‘risk’ in departing from textbook teaching and embracing a more task-based approach. Interestingly, this chimes with observations made by some of the English trainees, several of whom saw the opportunity that the technology offered in terms of taking risks; one commented that the project gave her a ‘sky is the limit feel’. Overall, thus, there is a tangible shift from a more teacher-centred and language led curriculum to one that is more focussed on meaning, content and communication and at a more ‘macro’ level, one that is predicated on greater risk taking and creativity than might otherwise have been the case.

In terms of the language curriculum, the impact appears to have been largely in the arena of the oral skills, which were referred to on a number of occasions by trainees and teachers alike. In fact, the children, in expressing enthusiasm for the speaking elements (eg Spanish children reporting that they enjoyed the technology more than text books or reading and writing) also indicate the way in which the technology can privilege oral skills. Many of the trainees observed that talk was potentially given central stage by this technology – one Spanish trainee was of the view that ‘it involves speaking, the communicative skill traditionally ignored but probably the most important one to get mastery of a language’. French and English trainees alike commented on the way in which target language use was encouraged and how talking was potentially ‘reinforced’. Teachers in the project also reported changes in their approach to the language curriculum that support use of the target language, such as the French teachers’ increased reluctance to provide translations, their increased use of visual aids and a ‘particular focus on spoken interaction’. These observations are entirely consistent with the children’s heightened awareness of their own speaking and listening skills reported above. To what extent, however, the impact varies in terms of different countries and education systems is unclear; it is almost certainly the case that there were different starting points in terms of a typical language curriculum, an issue thus that merits further investigation. Nevertheless, it would appear that, at a general level, the project has been instrumental in promoting a curriculum that gives real importance to oral skills, although all teachers were eager to remind us that writing skills had not been wholly sidelined.

The impact upon the place of language teaching within the curriculum is considerable. While we reported above the effect that the project appears to have had on the children’s language learning experience, there has been a broader impact in that language teaching within the schools has been given a higher priority. For example, in the Spanish context, the schools report that the teaching of English has grown tremendously in status and this is supported by the interest shown by staff in learning English themselves: in one school 13 staff took up language lessons. The teachers in the schools in England and France also report greater confidence in their use of the target language and,
over time, less anxiety about making errors. Having said this, however, as the teachers in Spain noted, the use of English as a lingua franca in the project had probably been to the greater advantage of the teachers in France and Spain than those in England.

A final consideration in terms of the more general language curriculum is arguably the ways in which the project has impacted upon the development of children's *first languages*. Resonating with the children's awareness that they were in a reciprocal language learning and teaching situation, teachers were clear that there were gains in the development of the first languages. As a teacher in one English school noted, 'for example, with adjectives after nouns, the children will also compare to their home languages. It has made them think a lot more about their own languages'. The French teachers reported adopting a contrastive approach, for example, asking the children to consider why English children might have made a particular mistake. As we see in more detail later, this also had an impact upon the trainees' views of what is important in language learning.

There was specifically also an effect upon ICT in the schools involved. As one English teacher put it, ‘they (the children) are happy using methods of communication that adults would find difficult’. In the Spanish and French schools, it is true to say that there was a novel element to the technology in that interactive whiteboards were a relatively new phenomenon, unlike in England. These new technologies have had an impact beyond the immediate boundaries of the project and children, staff and trainees have observed this. Within the project, digital cameras have permitted the taking of photos and videos for uploading on to the platform to provide, for example, material about the different playground games played in other countries. Thus there has undoubtedly been at least a breaking down of subject barriers in all schools between the languages provision and other curricular areas. Again there appears to be some differences between countries and as before this may reflect the different histories of language teaching at primary level that pertain in different country contexts.

In terms of the **school as a whole**, in all three countries, the project has clearly had an impact. The outlook of the schools has changed in that, as one teacher in England said, ‘it has added a whole new European dimension to the school, right across the school, not just the children involved in the project’. Interestingly, a Spanish teacher interviewed said he felt 'more than European, I've never felt like being out of Europe, I feel similar to all the other teachers we are working with. Knowing their ways of working, their educational systems, their priorities and objectives …makes me feel closer to them and respectful of the differences between the educational systems’. The French teachers report a ‘deeper understanding of professional practice’. The schools all report positive gains from the experience of having trainee teachers working with them on the project.

In all the schools, the project had a **high profile**, visible through displays in classrooms and corridors and through events focused upon it. These included, for example, school fairs (Fête d’école) at the end of each year in
the French schools to showcase the work done, and beyond the confines of the school itself, an art exhibition in the village and in England this included class assemblies, information on the website and an invitation to parents to an ICT event to observe the learning platform in operation. This visibility ensured that parents of the children were aware of the project, and the data suggest that they are very supportive. The French schools report that their parents’ views changed in terms of not just what constituted ‘school work’ and language learning, but also opened their eyes to cultural knowledge. As one French teacher said, ‘being British nowadays is very different to what they imagined’. Clearly the context of the schools is relevant here – the schools in France saw themselves as ‘modern schools in rural areas’, offering the chance to develop ‘cultural understanding’. The all white population of the two schools in a relatively remote part of France therefore may mean that they experience the project in a different way, as the schools in England with their more ethnically diverse populations offer a window on to festivals such as Eid and Diwali as well as different religious and dress codes. As noted above, the suggestion that English ‘culture’ is more available in the rest of Europe than other cultures are to children in England is an intriguing one; however, an important variable may be the particular local context, and indeed the age of those participants in the project, as the children’s parents may be less exposed to wider cultures than the children themselves. In the English schools, the parents were also overwhelmingly positive about the experience. In terms of videoconferencing they felt that the links with authentic classroom/pupils was the major advantage/benefit. In terms of the LP parents were less aware of this but still reflected that it was a really good thing – although the use of it at home is limited, underlining the issues raised by others in the project (notably the children themselves) about the need to be able to communicate independently. In Spain, parents’ enthusiasm was reflected in their own increased interest in learning English as well as in requests for the project to be extended to secondary schools.

To conclude this section, the findings from the project suggest very strongly that this has been a challenging, rewarding and transformative experience for all. The data are convincing in the sense that this is undoubtedly a worthwhile way forward for language learning and teaching. At the same time, however, they also paint a complex picture in terms of the impact and the appropriate pedagogy. The implications are taken up in the final chapter, where we explore the future steps and a possible research agenda. Next, however, we consider the impact on the teacher trainees themselves in terms of their development as language teachers.
Chapter 5: impact on training in the 3 countries

As noted earlier, we set out to create an innovative teacher training context. To what extent did we achieve this? While in previous chapters we have reported from the trainee data the impact on the children’s learning and the broader curriculum and school context, in this section, we attempt to discern the impact on the trainees themselves as developing teachers. While there is clearly overlap, it is possible to begin to distil from the data the extent to which their teacher training experience was in some way innovative for them. Inevitably of course, this was a greater innovation for some than for others. Those who were on placement in the project schools had the most in-depth experience. As outlined in chapter 2, they were able to participate at a number of levels. They were for the most part placed in classes involved with the project, learned how to use the technology at first-hand, observed and analysed the lessons with class teachers, with home or partner trainees, with their university lecturer or the partner university, prepared lessons, interviewed all the project participants, including children and teachers, they uploaded resources to use or for teachers to use, they conducted videoconferences themselves using their first or target language and gave CLIL lessons. The other trainees whose experience was more of an observational nature nevertheless were exposed to a very different approach to language learning and teaching than they had experienced previously. Overall, however, their observations bore some interesting similarities.

The general reaction was enthusiasm when they saw children’s motivation and involvement in the project. They could evaluate the impact of offering an authentic situation of communication in real time and where one can see and hear the conversation partner, just as or nearly as in “real life”. Preparing children for tasks they will do in “real life”(CECRL): “on dit bonjour avant de commencer le jeu”. As others did, they stressed the authentic aspect “real children to communicate with” They were impressed by children who were not afraid of the camera, for example and who had developed “confidence in speaking TL” As a trainee put it: “they see a sense in learning a foreign language – they need the language to communicate with” They were impressed by children who were not afraid of the camera, for example and who had developed “confidence in speaking TL”. As others did, they stressed the authentic aspect “real children to communicate with” They were impressed by children who were not afraid of the camera, for example and who had developed “confidence in speaking TL”. The enthusiasm of the children appears to prompt a similar response in those who are onlookers, although this does of course raise the issue of how critical this permits them to be. As already noted, there was enthusiasm both from those trainees directly involved and also from those who were observing, suggesting that a degree of distance does not necessarily provoke a more nuanced response. However, their responses went beyond the initial warm response that seeing enthusiastic children is admittedly likely to generate. The project served also to open their eyes to a different approach to language learning and teaching. As one English trainee put it, ‘this is nothing like the language learning I knew at school’. They perceived how task-based language learning effectively supported learning when linked to “action”, such as in a game with a real challenge or perhaps a survey. Trainees also saw how learning with a purpose, making a project visible in the classroom, in the school and beyond (exhibitions, presentations) served to support what happened in the
classroom. They also planned and taught cross-curricular lessons when on placement abroad, the partners being their home school. For example, one trainee who was on placement in France, conducted a collaborative video game or survey about what children have for breakfast. She used the video preparation sheet made by the international team of teachers. She then with the class teacher’s help ended the lesson with the usual “feedback” part.

What happened during the lesson? The class reading the notes about their perceptions of how the videoconference was, if instructions were respected, what was difficult, why... This gave her the opportunity to build learning strategies with children, to clarify children’s work (learning to learn), which is so important in initial training. A French trainee on placement in England taught a geography lesson with photos from her region in France, which she showed to her pupils in England. Not only cross-curricular but more specifically CLIL lessons were developed in some of the project classes. The language is not the visible aim, it is just a means to convey something, the language is a tool to learn art. For example, one said “EMILE permet de développer des compétences en TICE, arts visuels et anglais.” An English trainee taught a whole sequence on Landscapes with Turner and Monet, comparing their styles and the use of light and its effects in different paintings. The lessons ended with an outdoor activity where pupils had to draw the school nearby environment. They also learned how to integrate this teaching into the technology. An English trainee prepared and taught a French lesson about a legend in Niort with a dragon. The learning objective was to produce a text in French for the English partners. He uploaded the work done after on the platform for pupils and colleagues abroad. This was also a good example of teamwork, with the integrated use of a platform. It was evident that the trainees used the new technology easily and were very inventive. This was confirmed by their feedback that the technology was something that they quickly adapted to. While it is true that those trainees who had the opportunity to handle and use the technology quickly confirmed its ease, they did of course express some concern about the time needed to prepare for such events as video-conferencing. So too did trainees who were only able to observe at a distance. Nevertheless, any reservations were counterbalanced by an appreciation of what the technology offered. This included the focus on oral skills and communication already discussed, where the trainees often expressed positive views about the way that the technology could privilege meaning and spoken interaction. Putting communication first was seen as positive by French trainees who made the distinction between correct language production and communication. One noted: “La valeur de la langue change. Elle n’est plus exemplaire” She concluded it was “less stressful for teachers and pupils”. The reference is the partner, even if they were aware the project had helped develop the class-teachers’ target language fluency. They saw examples of peer learning and of the different values of languages in this project a pupil is still learning his first language but he is considered by his partner as an “expert”. When confronted with learners, he develops teaching strategies to help his peers. Learning English, a French pupil is exposed to native speakers’ language(English) but also non native’s( the Spanish). Producing correct language to understand and to be understood: “Les enfants sentent la nécessité de s’appliquer à l’oral pour être compris » Trainees have different points of views on first and second or third
language development. Teachers on placement also insisted on the fantastic opportunity for pupils to listen to the target language spoken by native and non-native speakers. They were also able to review the question of producing correct language (pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary) in the communication process. Trainees were therefore able to consider the importance of error when communication is the first aim in order to play a game or complete a table. In other words, the issue of the tension between meaning and form was brought to the fore in a way in which conventional teacher training programmes might struggle to exemplify. Finally, we should also note that the project prompted positive comments about what technology could provide, with one trainee saying that “it is another string to my bow, not only is the language teaching but the ICT….learning to use another tool for teaching is very important”. Another trainee’s response was to say ‘at first I though oh no not more ICT but now I think it’s great!’. This reinforces the notion that it is only the way in which technology is used that renders it of value, and also reminds us of the importance of ensuring trainees are appropriately critical of it.

The data suggest that we succeeded in demonstrating to trainees that there are different ways of teaching languages. In particular, the project showed them how linking learning and teaching to using the language could be an effective approach, with all the implications as far as the teacher’s role is concerned. Trainees evaluated as a priority how children had to use what they had learnt if not immediately, at least rapidly in a real communication situation. If the first part “learning” is controlled by the teacher who leads the group and controls the production, possibly also correcting the language, when it comes to the video session or the use of the platform, chatting, sending an email, then potentially the role of the teacher alters as s/he may then only monitor the activity. The teacher’s approach to error is seen as critical by the trainees. For example, video-conferencing sessions have demonstrated to them that it is possible not to correct an error until after the video, except when the partner misunderstands the message. Trainees have shown themselves able to critique teacher intervention and preparation more generally, remarking on the occasions when in their view the communication was overly scripted and promoting the importance of spontaneity, seeing the technology as an ideal opportunity for this. They have noticed that less prepared language is of importance, commenting for example that “children don’t read”, “no scripts”, “direct link between children, children more involved”. They have also seen how from a formal point of view, more complex language may be produced in the target language, one French trainee noting for example that “le niveau des élèves est vraiment d’une autre mesure par rapport à celui d’une classe qui travaille de manière plus traditionnelle”. One English trainee adopted a very pragmatic approach, noting that “what I have seen is that most of the exchanges have been scripted, this is to be expected due to the lack of fluency of the children… I have been impressed with the extent of the extra vocab that they are learning, they are learning far more useful vocab, this is for communicative processes. They are learning far more useful and highly relevant to them and their experiences abroad. This is a very age appropriate approach”. There of course resides a tension between the ability of children to produce grammatically complex utterances that are
appropriate for a particular exchange and the need to prepare the children accordingly. For example, in the second year of the project, children were exchanging opinions about what they thought their partners ate, requiring sentences such as ‘we think that you all prefer x for lunch’, a structure beyond their general level of grammatical competence, but one needed because of the focus on content of the message. This is of course illustrative of the balance between meaning and form noted above, as well as that between preparation and spontaneity; again, this serves to highlight the complexity that is inherent in language learning and teaching not always evident in a more teacher-directed and language-led approach. It also raised for them how independent learning with autonomy, more spontaneity, and the development of a sense of responsibility are keys to long term learning. As one commented, I am impressed by the confidence of the children from both countries”. Pupils were seen to be more active and responsible for what and how they learn. “C’est une façon d’enseigner les langues dans laquelle les élèves sont beaucoup plus actifs et autonomes”, one trainee concluded. Autonomy is facilitated by technology, children being partly responsible for the material aspect too” Because teachers work in collaboration with other teachers for their own pupils and others too, the need to clarify what we are going to teach and learn and the how are we going to do it is of paramount importance. As a consequence, teachers spend more time explaining, motivating their pupils. Moreover, children see their teacher as a partner and they feel they are partners too in the “bigger” project. They develop a sense of responsibility, individually and collectively in the videoconference for example. Every single child has an active part in the game, at some time fixed in advance, so pupils have no choice of escaping their responsibility for the group and the groups. Their role is somehow more visible than in traditional lessons. It is also immediately assessed by the other class. So they have to answer, to ask, to play, to write and also to use the technology which supports the exchanges.

As trainee teachers, they are of course still learning how to plan a lesson. Thus the project highlights the importance of precise planning. If anything, the importance of clear outcomes, detailed activities and time management assume greater importance than ever. For the trainees actually on placement in the six schools, the teaching situation trainees experience in the schools is very rich and constructive. This is first because of the presence of partners, because also of technology which adds to what the teacher must control. In turn therefore the demands of classroom management also need to be anticipated. They perceive the necessity of giving a task to every child, those who speak, those who observe and write and those who speak; they are also very attuned to the differences that pertain between countries. For example, one trainee observed that “In France: each child has to move to a specific place to be in front of the camera. In England, there is a line of tables in front of the white board, every child speaks where he is.” This suggests that their participation in the project promotes an acute awareness of the need for detailed planning.

Trainees have also stressed obstacles or at least difficulties which we managed to solve or not. It was and it is very helpful to have their critical point
of view and perception. The main problems, especially in the first year, were linked to technology, which was not always reliable. But after a new platform was built and the videoconference equipment changed, the quality of communication improved considerably: clear pictures and sound. Trainees also noted how difficult planning work was due to the huge differences between time-tables, school holidays, school projects, but much of this information is accessible now on the platform and has proved to be very useful. The last point they focused on concerned the workload and the time teachers have to spend on a programme such as this. Preparation time, training to master the technology and in short being involved in such a project is demanding and this should not be underestimated, even if team work is seen as positive by trainee teachers.

Finally, we need to consider the impact upon trainees at a cultural level. Arguably, in working together trainees experienced themselves what they observed with teachers and children: interpersonal and intercultural understanding. They saw the way pupils noticed similarities and differences with tolerance (no rejection) with confidence and self-esteem too (pupils are aware simultaneously they belong to, a class with a project, a community, a village..) Double / dual process is highlighted and experienced by children and also by trainees themselves when they work abroad or with trainees or lecturer from partner’s university in joint and peer lesson observations and planning.

Related to this issue of intercultural experience and understanding is that of adopting a more European perspective. To what extent did our trainee teachers feel more European in outlook? It is difficult to separate the experience of a project involving new technologies from that of spending four weeks on placement in another educational system. The teachers involved in the programme find the contacts and exchanges very valuable. In one French trainee’s perception: “C’est un exemple concret qui nous permet d’observer des situations d’apprentissage différentes puisque issues de la coopération entre 3 pays, cas non traité dans la formation donnée à l’IUFM, sauf stage à l’étranger”. In other words, the exchange programme itself allows a window on another world. Trainees are enabled to exchanging teaching strategies in the 3 countries: “I liked the way children worked in groups. I will try to do it in France.” Thus they appreciate the opportunity to experience different ways of doing things.

The project, however, may well point them in more specific directions. The comment that “we create links, we build bridges with European teachers” suggests that the teachers’ involvement with new pedagogy across countries is something that builds connections, something different from an opportunity to compare and contrast teaching approaches. One trainee commented that the project encouraged teachers’ mobility and this again is an element that is important: that trainees become aware that this kind of engagement at a European level is part of being a teacher. Some trainees quoted the European teacher competences, for example, saying “Teachers using this pedagogic approach can work on these European competences: EC6/9/16/17/19”.

134244-2007-UK-COMENIUS-CMP
In conclusion, then, the trainees in this project have developed insights into pedagogy in general, classroom management, lesson planning, the use of technology, the teacher’s role and very specifically what the pedagogic issues surrounding technology and language learning might be. Strikingly, as an English trainee put it “this has made me re-evaluate what it means to be a languages teacher”, which suggests how radical a change there may have been between initial representations and what the project has brought.

To summarise thus far, we believe that we have been able to offer an innovative training context that will have far-reaching consequences for the design and implementation of future training. Trainees have observed and participated in a innovative project, allowing them the opportunity to gauge the impact of new technologies on children and to offer and critique these experiences in a way that has allowed us to begin to describe the emerging pedagogy and the language learning issues that are its context. In this regard, the trainees themselves have been instrumental in the creation of the innovative context in which they find themselves. They have active contributors rather than passive observers and learners. The schools involved have greatly appreciated their input and as one school in England put it, ‘the ITT role is important. We have two trainees in school at the moment who are part of the project, they come back with those experiences, that impacts on their work and they understand how children learn in France and Spain and one of the benefits of having trainees is that it gives us a wider perspective. This has an impact upon their training and their future teaching but it also impacts upon our staff when they bring those experiences’. Thus we see a potential shift in the roles of trainers and trainees paralleling that discussed in terms of the roles of teachers and learners. We have come to expect a more active, egalitarian and contributory role from our trainee teachers than in the past and this too contributes to the sense of innovation in initial teacher training.

The findings reported above have provided us with invaluable insights into the impact of the new technologies on children’s learning as well as their school curriculum and environment. They are also illuminating in terms of how they in turn inform appropriate pedagogic approaches to language learning in the primary school (and for that matter, in older learners). But they are at the same time highly informative as to how we innovate in teacher training in such a way that there is a synergetic relationship between teaching children, teaching trainees and learning ourselves. They also lay the groundwork for future work, an issue to which we now turn.
Chapter 6 Towards a research agenda

This project essentially set out to do three things: to develop a pedagogy appropriate to the new technology, to investigate the impact upon children’s learning and the wider school curriculum and environment, but ultimately to create an innovative teacher education context. All of these areas would benefit from further research.

Technologically enhanced language learning pedagogy

We outlined above some notions of appropriate pedagogy. These however are in need of validation. We do not by any means consider, for example, that the explicit teaching of communication strategies is automatically likely to lead to greater independence. Of paramount importance is the tracking of children’s language development along a number of lines – including pronunciation, listening skills, grammatical development and literacy skills; equally, the impact upon first language and overall metalinguistic development is deserving of attention and in particular the interplay of this with the linguistic development of children who are already bilingual or multilingual, particularly the case with the more ethnically mixed school populations in the schools in England. At the level of teaching activities, it is important to continue to create not just a bank of resources and lesson plans, but to research and analyse the impact on children’s participation and engagement in different kinds of sessions involving the technologies. For example, the schools have only latterly begun to use digital cameras to make films to share on the learning platform – this element alone could yield data that might further illuminate issues such as motivation, confidence and recall of language learned. And finally, we must not forget or abandon more traditional or conventional approaches to language teaching; rather we must seek the best ways of integrating these with more innovative technology-based opportunities, bearing in mind of course that different countries are at different stages in terms of the introduction on technology. For example, although Spain is now only introducing interactive whiteboards, all children aged 9-10 have been given a notebook for use at home.

The impact upon children’s learning and the school environment

Motivation – a possible area of investigation is whether are there differences between children of different ages, genders, ethnic background and ability. Also, how does motivation interact with different technologies, eg video-conferencing and using a webcam; emailing, filming, uploading on to a platform? Does greater use of new technologies have an effect on other subjects and on the general attitudes of pupils? Do trainees feel more motivated towards learning in general using new technologies after experiences like this? Do families get closer to schools, participate and cooperate more in the education process of their children?

Language learning – we need to look more in more detail as to how reciprocity in language learning works. We could consider which tools lend themselves to which language skills – eg video-conferencing for class
presentations vs individual or small group exchanges? A further issue is precisely how the technology enhanced pedagogy impacts upon children’s developing metalinguistic skills? What are the best tools for measuring and recording children’s attainment in language? How do we approach code-mixing, code-switching and use of the target language? More broadly, we may wish to consider the whole issue of language learning strategies and the preparatory work that could be done (cf Michel Candelier, Eveil aux Langues), that could be done before the age of 7, for example, as a basis for future linguistic learning and the role that new technologies could play in this. How do we assess the progress of pupils if we do not focus wholly on linguistic aspects?

**Intercultural understanding** – this is a much discussed issue and precisely how this is evident in children’s behaviours is in need of investigation. How exactly does this manifest itself? What tensions reside in the balance of the intercultural aspects and the linguistic aspects of a project such as this? Are there differences between different country contexts that merit closer scrutiny? Which cultural aspects are used by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds: do they use the English, French or Spanish or do they use those from their original countries? How is this understanding assessed?

**Impact on the curriculum** – the issue of CLIL is worthy of further research. As outlined above, the variables that affect motivation (eg gender) may well play a part in the contribution to learning that a more holistic approach makes. The choice of topic too may have an effect. The extent to which form and meaning are balanced out is also important. Again, this has implications for assessment – how do we balance assessing the content of the topic and the language used?

**Impact on the school community** – further research with all teachers in the schools is needed to explore this element, as it is with parents and other interested parties, to establish not only the impact but the most productive ways of maximising that impact. For example, ‘out-of-school’ learning involving the learning platform and the use of webcams is something that is still in its infancy in terms of a language learning agenda at this phase of education. This is an element with much potential that also has implications for inclusion and differentiation. Children excluded for some reason from so-called ‘mainstream’ school – including, for example, long-term hospital stay – have much to gain from a technology that permits them to develop their skills from their own home or place of residence. The interest shown by parents also suggests that they may have a role to play in supporting their children at home and/or developing their own skills – we should not rule out, for example, the possibility of parents communicating with other parents through the technology. Insights gained so far into different school systems could be complemented by some understandings of different (and similar) approaches to upbringing.
Teacher training and development: innovative teacher training contexts

It is, we believe, worth reiterating the importance of linking curriculum development with teacher training. Without involvement of initial teacher training, projects, however successful, ambitious and innovative, risk remaining locked in their own context. Ensuring the involvement of new beginning teachers allows the lessons learned to be applied in other contexts and taken forward in time – as these teachers are at the beginning of their careers, potentially there is a huge long term impact. But equally, without the welcome into innovative projects that these schools have allowed, it is difficult to train new generations of teachers that will change, challenge and develop the teaching and learning in our schools. More specifically, we might want to establish the changes there might be in teachers’ thinking about pedagogy, assessment and evaluation; explore the contribution that as new teachers they may make to pedagogy; and investigate schools’ responses to the role they play in developing pedagogy. In terms of continuing professional development (CPD) too, we need to explore how best to train more experienced teachers to make use of this kind of technology. Dissemination in other contexts, such as setting up smaller partnerships that rely on less extensive technology is one way forward, but the monitoring and evaluation of such initiatives is essential to their long term success.

Different country contexts

The lines of enquiry suggested above are of course important in all three countries implicated in the current project, but possibilities clearly exist beyond the scope of England, France and Spain, and for that matter, beyond the borders of Europe. The possibilities for comparison are rich in the extreme and joint efforts to explore these in turn offer the opportunities for co-operation and collaboration that enrich all our curricula.

Conclusions

A central and enduring concern is that of long term impact and sustainability. There is clearly an impressive array of issues to explore in future curriculum development and research. While much progress has undoubtedly been made so far, the springboard that is now provided for future development is invaluable. Perhaps it is as per the quote above from a trainee, that the sky is indeed the limit!
## Appendix i

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our school, Our way of life (a day / a week / in a family / food), Locality: history and geography</strong></td>
<td><strong>The environment (climate / weather /landscape)</strong></td>
<td><strong>People + different ethnic groups (migration), Types of homes, Monuments and buildings</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate date</th>
<th>Activity description</th>
<th>Actors involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(month/year)</td>
<td>(describe the nature of the activity planned)</td>
<td>(identify the institution(s) and, if relevant, the function of the individual(s) involved in the activity, e.g. teaching staff, management staff, associated partners etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Presenting myself and my class.</td>
<td>6 schools – teaching staff /pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Where is Niort / Granada / Manchester? Mobility 1. Niort. 8th &amp; 9th</td>
<td>All teachers from Project classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Compare Winter celebrations in each country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>Who lives in my house? Where do my family come from?</td>
<td>Spanish &amp; French trainees in English schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>How do we travel to school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>What do we do after school? Consolidation of topics covered so far. Mobility 2. Granada 6th &amp; 7th</td>
<td>All teachers from Project classes. English trainees in French &amp; Spanish schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>The area around my school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Compare with partner schools. Mobility 3. Manchester 19th &amp; 20th</td>
<td>All teachers from Project classes. MMU trainees in English schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Places to visit in my region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2008</td>
<td>My European Passport or Identity Card.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>My school timetable and favourite subjects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Celebration food in Winter i.e. Christmas, Diwali, Eid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>What do we eat at school and when?</td>
<td>Spanish &amp; French trainees in English schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>What sports do we play / learn at school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Consolidation of topics covered.</td>
<td>English trainees in French &amp; Spanish schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>The Geography and History of the three European towns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>MMU trainees in English schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There will also be three mobility meetings planned, dates to be decided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix ii
Questions for trainee interviews

To what extent have you been able to:

- acquire skills of planning effective video-conferencing sessions between international classes?
- gain familiarity with primary pedagogy in the partner countries?
- engage in joint planning (home and abroad)?
- carry out focussed observation of impact of use of technology on children’s learning?

To what extent do you think you can identify and evaluate the characteristics of a holistic cross-curricular approach to language teaching and learning?

- what are for you the key characteristics?
- to what extent have you seen these in the schools in the project (ie here and abroad?)
- what is your view (evaluation) of a holistic cross-curricular approach?

To what extent can you identify and critically evaluate the impact of the technology on:

- Processes of children’s learning
- Development of intercultural understanding
- Children’s motivations
- School community
- Wider school curriculum

What has enabled you to identify/evaluate in this way?

What barriers have there been to you developing these skills?

How might we improve things?

To what extent have we succeeded in providing an innovative context for initial teacher training?

What suggestions can you give us so that we may improve things?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your time.
Appendix iii
TELLP: Technologically Enhanced Language Learning Pedagogy

What is your immediate reaction?

How might this pedagogic approach affect the children’s impact upon the process of language learning?

To what extent do you think that this pedagogic approach can develop the children’s intercultural understanding?

How might this pedagogic approach make a contribution to a cross-curricular or CLIL approach to language teaching?

How might it help to make teachers feel more European in outlook?
Appendix iv

Questions for focus groups (children)

What do you think of the video-conferencing?

Tell me about the first time you did it.

What are the good things about it?

What do you think you have learned (culture, TL, L1)?

How has it helped you with your learning of French/Spanish/English?

Are there ways in which we could make the video-conferencing better?

How does the learning platform help your learning?
Appendix v

Questions for headteachers in project schools

General
What do you consider to be key impact of this project?

Children
Specifically, how has it had an impact on children’s language learning?
What about the development of intercultural understanding?

The whole school context
Has it had a broader impact on their learning/on the curriculum?
To what extent is the wider school community aware of the project?
What involvement do you think there should be of, for example, parents and governors?

The new pedagogy
To what extent to you think the pedagogy is different when the technology is involved? How?
How confident do you think the teachers are with this pedagogic approach?
What further support do you think you or they need with it?

The European teacher/school
Do you feel more European in outlook as a result of this project?
What is the impact on the school as a whole in terms of a wider international perspective?

Teacher training
How do you see the place of teacher training in relation to the project?

The future
How do you see the future of this project in relation to language learning – and more generally?
Is there anything further you would like to add?
Appendix vi

Questions for class teachers / MFL co-ordinators in project schools

General
What do you consider to be key impact of this project?

Children
Specifically, how has it had an impact on children’s language learning?
What about the development of intercultural understanding?
Has it had a broader impact on their learning/on the curriculum?

The new pedagogy
To what extent do you think the pedagogy is different when the technology is involved? How?
What is your view on the characteristics of effective pedagogy so far identified?
How confident do you feel with this pedagogic approach?
What further support do you think you need with it?

The European teacher
Do you feel more European in outlook as a result of this project?

Teacher training
What role do you consider teacher trainees (home and visiting trainees) need to play in this project?

The future
How do you see the future of this project in relation to language learning?
Is there anything further you would like to add?
Appendix vii

Parents

What do you know about the 6 schools project?

What do you think of the school having links with France and Spain?

How do your children enjoy the VC?

How do they use the LP?

Has their language learning benefited?
Appendix viii

Interactive whiteboard
Appendix ix

Photograph of the learning platform: the gateway
## Appendix x
### COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES PROGRESSION GRID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turntaking</th>
<th>Interacting</th>
<th>Repair</th>
<th>NV Communication</th>
<th>Paralinguistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can intervene appropriately in discussion, exploiting appropriate language to do so.</td>
<td>Introduce and respond to a new but related topic.</td>
<td>Can ask follow-up questions to check that he/she has understood what a speaker intended to say.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>Inviting other person to speak and responding to same in order to continue and develop a discussion.</td>
<td>Can ask and respond to follow-up questions in order to develop the conversation.</td>
<td>Can ask someone to clarify and be able to rephrase statements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate</strong></td>
<td>Can also maintain simple, face-to-face conversation by being aware of whose turn it is to speak.</td>
<td>Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding</td>
<td>Can ask for and give clarification about key words or phrases not understood using stock phrases.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginners</strong></td>
<td>Can initiate and close simple, face-to-face conversation.</td>
<td>Can indicate verbally when he/she is following. Speak slowly and clearly to allow others to follow.</td>
<td>Can ask very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand. Can say he/she didn’t follow.</td>
<td><strong>Body language</strong>&lt;br&gt;Pointing&lt;br&gt;Demonstration /actions&lt;br&gt;Gesture&lt;br&gt;Facial expressions&lt;br&gt;Posture&lt;br&gt;Eye contact</td>
<td><strong>Sounds for:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Requesting silence&lt;br&gt;Expressing dislike/like&lt;br&gt;Expressing disgruntlement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

#### English with French examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turntaking</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>Sustain a conversation through a number of turns.</td>
<td>Can ask and respond to follow-up questions in order to develop the conversation.</td>
<td>Can ask someone to clarify and be able to rephrase statements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate</strong></td>
<td>Can also maintain simple, face-to-face conversation by being aware of whose turn it is to speak. Inviting other person to speak and responding to same in order to continue and develop a discussion.</td>
<td>Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.</td>
<td>Can ask for and give clarification about key words or phrases not understood using stock phrases.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginners</strong></td>
<td>Can initiate and close simple, face-to-face conversation. <strong>Bonjour, salut, ça va? Et toi? Au revoir, à plus, à bientôt Merci</strong></td>
<td>Can indicate verbally when he/she is following. <strong>Ca va, oui, d’accord, c’est bon, j’écoute</strong></td>
<td>Can ask very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand. <strong>Répète, s’il te plaît</strong></td>
<td>Can say he/she didn’t follow. <strong>Body language</strong> Pointing Demonstration /actions Gesture Facial expressions Posture Eye contact <strong>Sounds for:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Je ne comprends pas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Je n'entends pas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix xii Teaching ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Teaching ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate</strong></td>
<td>Can also maintain simple, face-to-face conversation by being aware of whose turn it is to speak. Inviting other person to speak and responding to same in order to continue and develop a discussion (e.g., making comparisons).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|             | *Et toi?*  
|             | *Qu’est-que tu penses?*  
|             | *Je pense que…*  
|             | *C’est bizarre/rigolo/génial, ennuyeux, intéressant, nul, difficile, facile, différent, pareil*  
|             | *Pair work and role play; teach opinions*  
| **Beginners** | Can initiate and close simple, face-to-face conversation.  
|             | *Bonjour, salut, ça va?*  
|             | *Et toi?*  
|             | *Au revoir, à plus, à bientôt*  
|             | *Merci*  
|             | *Daily use in classroom and school; pair work and role play; smiley face prompt; teacher modelling*  
|             | Can indicate verbally when he/she is following.  
|             | *Ca va, oui, d’accord, c’est bon, j’écoute*  
|             | *Display vocabulary; build into role play activities; green prompt card*  
|             | *Speak slowly and clearly to allow others to follow.*  
| **Can indicate very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand.*  
|             | *Répète, s’il te plaît*  
|             | *Can say he/she didn’t follow.*  
|             | *Je ne comprends pas Comment? Je n’entends pas*  
|             | *Display vocabulary; build into role play activities; red prompt*  
| **Can ask for and give clarification about key words or phrases not understood using stock phrases.*  
|             | *Je ne comprends pas x X, c’est quoi? X, ? X, c’est quoi en anglais?*  
|             | *Learn to identify key words and phrases (e.g., spotting unfamiliar word in a sentence)*  
| **Can ask for and give clarification about key words or phrases not understood using stock phrases.*  
|             | *Et toi?*  
|             | *Qu’est-que tu penses?*  
|             | *Je pense que…*  
|             | *Ét toi?*  
|             | *Qu’est-ce que tu penses?*  
|             | *Je pense que…*  
|             | *C’est bizarre/rigolo/génial, ennuyeux, intéressant, nul, difficile, facile, différent, pareil*  
| **Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.*  
|             | *Ah oui… X, je vois*  
| **Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.*  
| **Display language** | *Pointing*  
|             | *Demonstratio*  
|             | *n /actions*  
|             | *Gesture*  
|             | *Facial expressions*  
|             | *Posture*  
|             | *Eye contact*  
| **Body language** | *Mime, drama and role play activities*  
| **Sounds for:** | *Requesting silence*  
|             | *Chut!*  
|             | *Expressing dislike/like*  
|             | *Pouah!*  
|             | *Expressing disgruntlement*  
|             | *bof!*  
|             | *Expressing agreement*  
|             | *uhuh*  
|             | *Expressing pain*  
|             | *Aie!*  
| **Mime, drama and role play activities; matching gestures/words** | *Mime, drama and role play activities; matching gestures/words*  

134244-2007-UK-COMENIUS-CMP
|   |   | card |   |   |   |
LESSON PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Language: French/German/Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Topic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives/Learning Outcomes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literacy**
- Recently introduced language (structures, vocabulary):

**Oracy**

**Intercultural understanding**
- New language for this lesson (structures, vocabulary):

**Communication strategies**

**Technology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Teacher Activities</th>
<th>Pupil Activities</th>
<th>Opportunities For Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Starter</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Plenary</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATION:

a. Pupils’ learning

b. Classroom management and methods

c. Implications for next lesson
Appendix xiv

The good communicator checklist!
Did I:

- Start off the conversation okay? How did I do it?
- Show my partner that I understood? How?
- Show my partner when I didn’t understand? How?
- Ask my partner to repeat when I didn’t understand?
- Speak clearly so my partner could follow me?
- Use body language to communicate?
- Look at my partner’s body language to help me understand?
- Did I point to objects, use flashcards to be understood?
- Did I ask my classmates for help to find the right way to say what I meant?
- Did I finish the conversation okay?
Appendix xv LESSON SEQUENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Language: French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Topic: Classrooms in France and England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 2 x 30 min whole class lessons</td>
<td>Resources: Photos of classrooms in France and England to project and to distribute; texts describing classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

Lesson 1: To be able to describe (in French) a photograph of their partner French classroom, noting similarities and differences;

Lesson 2: To be able to pose questions to their French partners (in French) about their partner French classroom; to be able to pose questions to their French partners (in English) about a photograph of their own classroom in England to give French children opportunity to listen and respond in English.

Lesson 3: To be able to conduct a short conversation with a French pupil, comparing their classrooms, using French and English as appropriate

Follow-up work: blog

Literacy
Read an understand main points from a short written text

Oracy
Prepare and practise a short conversation

Intercultural understanding
Recognise similarities and differences between places

Communication strategies
Turntaking, interacting, repair, NV and paralinguistics: beginner level

Technology
Blog
Webcam (pupil-pupil)
Learning platform

Recently introduced language (structures, vocabulary):
Communication Strategies: beginner level language
Colours, numbers 1-10, size (grand(e), petit(e))
Classroom objects eg une chaise
une table
un stylo
un crayon
une trousse
un tableau blanc interactif
un tableau noir
une fenêtre
un évier
un livre
un cahier
il y a

New language for this lesson (structures, vocabulary):
Je vois... En France,... En Angleterre....
La salle de classe
Est-ce que tu aimes....?
Est-ce qu’il y a ....?
C’est de quelle couleur, le/la x ,?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 1</th>
<th>Starter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher greets class in French as appropriate and class respond; Teacher on LP flashes photograph of French classroom up briefly; qu'est-ce que c'est? (une salle de classe); c'est où? En France ou en Angleterre?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main**

Display photo of French classroom on IWB. In pairs, pupils brainstorm French words that they know and compile a list to feedback (5 mins); teacher provides correct spelling during feedback, eg

- une chaise
- une table
- un stylo
- un crayon
- une trousse
- un tableau blanc interactif
- un tableau noir
- une fenêtre
- un évier
- un livre
- un cahier

Pupils in pairs compose sentences beginning with ‘en France, il y a…’ and ‘dans la salle de classe, je vois…’; ‘moi, je vois…’.

Teacher takes oral feedback.

Teacher gives out short written text identifying 3 things in the French classroom (photo with text underneath, available on LP). Pupils spot the 3 things in the text and circle on photograph.

Teacher displays photo on IWB and reads text; pupils come up and circle relevant part of photo.

**Plenary**

Teacher says sentences based on photo (je vois x, il y a x) - pupils repeat if true.

Teachers close session as appropriate (au

---

**Opportunities For Assessment**

Teacher monitors already known vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall pupil participation

Teacher monitors understanding of text

Monitor understanding of spoken TL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 2</th>
<th><strong>Starter</strong></th>
<th>Monitor understanding of spoken TL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher greets class in French as appropriate and class respond;</td>
<td>Recap of previous lesson - how much about the photo can they remember without seeing it (in French)? OR: teach plays true/false game eg 'les murs sont bleus - oui ou non?'.</td>
<td>Monitor number of different questions produced based on example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main</strong></td>
<td>Display photo on IWB; teacher displays questions and models 4 examples of questions, one of each type; class in groups are given one question starter per group from the following so that all are covered: Est-ce que tu aimes….? Est-ce qu'il y a…..? C'est de quelle couleur, le/la x ,? Il y a combien de  x ?</td>
<td>Monitor pronunciation and use of communication strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many questions can you make?</td>
<td>Group of pupils ask the rest of the class their questions; pupils answer where possible, incorporating 'je ne sais pas' where appropriate and any relevant communication strategies phrases eg 'je ne comprends pas' ‘répète, s'il te plait’...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher displays photograph of classroom in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
England; in English, pupils in groups decide upon questions to pose to French partners on blog. Teacher takes suggestions and class agree on set of questions to post on blog - do as whole group.

**Plenary**

Teacher asks questions based on English picture to elicit comparisons.

---

**Lesson 3**

**Independent pupil-pupil communication session (2 countries)**

Prior to communication session, pupils in pairs to draw picture of their own classroom or an ideal classroom or fantasy-based classroom, based upon a picture template that they add detail and colour to (eg draw/colour desks, chairs, bags).

**Communication session:**

Pupils to initiate communication and respond as appropriate (using taught communication strategies);

Pupils in TL to ask partner in other country about drawing of classroom, using questions practised as set out above:

- Est-ce que tu aimes....?
- Est-ce qu’il y a.....?
- C’est de quelle couleur, le/la x ,?
- Il y a combien de x ?
- Quoi d’autre?

Pupils to listen to answers, indicating whether they are following or not and requesting repetition where needed; pupils draw a picture based on the information understood on a blank template. Hold

**Monitor /guide pupils to posing questions at appropriate linguistic level**

**Pupil self-assessment after session, using checklist**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow-up work</th>
<th>Blogging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class work in groups: on alternate weeks, each class checks blog and in groups seek to understand responses in TL and pose further questions and comments in L1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of lesson sequence:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dans la salle de classe il y a un tableau blanc interactif, un tableau noir et des étagères pour les livres sous les tables.
Il y a une carte de la France et des murs jaunes.
Il y a une carte de l'Angleterre et sous la carte il y a un évier blanc.
Appendix xvii

Application in other contexts

Application in other contexts: checklist

How?
- **Choose** an enthusiastic class & teacher(s); evaluate language progress, attitude, comparison with level of English in partner class
- **Find a partner** school (e-twinning; global gateway, SLP, primary exchange programme)
- **Equipment**: minimum for each country = one laptop with webcam; two headphone sets and a splitter; microphone; communication systems eg Skype, Rafiki
- Optional but really useful: **camera** equipment (even a mobile phone)
- **Information forum**: learning platform; wiki; one provided by etwinning or rafiki
- **TELLP Pedagogy**: planning appropriate to the new technology
- Make **links** with your local MFL teacher training institution

References


