



HERMES NEWS

The Newsletter of the Hermes Network
Tuebingen, Germany Issue No. 02/02

Dear All

First, the latest news:

We have been given permission to continue for the third year of the project. Here are the workshops and activities we are planning:

- Tübingen A students workshop in which they use Web-based case studies to produce presentations.
Nov 29-1 Dec and Dec 6-8 (part of the Minerva project).
- Hohenheim University of Hohenheim: a Professional Development course for teachers of German and French.
22-27 January 2003
- Vienna BOKU: ICT course in German and English
May 2003
- Nitra Slovak Agricultural Univ.: Professional Development Course working with case-studies (English, German)
22-25 May 2003
- Gyöngyös Szent István University: Workshop on language testing (productive skills)
25-30 June 2003
- Bologna Università di Bologna: Professional Development Course working with case studies (French, Italian)
September 2003
- CONFERENCE: 6th Annual Hermes Conference will be held at the University of Tuebingen Germany in July 2003

Full information on all these activities and downloadable application forms will be available on our website: www.uni-tuebingen.de/hermes/

Vienna is a familiar destination for Hermes members but this year we are happy to include Hohenheim, Gyöngyös and Bologna and to return to Nitra in Slovakia.

Remember, there are discounts if you register more than one person from your institution and discounts for early registration. There are also discounts for the teachers in the 'host' universities who attend – Vienna, Hohenheim, Nitra, Gyöngyös and Bologna.

Please support as many of these activities as you can, and tell your colleagues about them. The aim of Hermes is to support and provide resources for foreign language teachers at UCARS: These courses help us all to develop materials and strategies that really work and that can be accessed by all in the future.

Check the AFANet membership: www.clues.abdn.ac.uk:8080/afanet
Does your institution belong? It must be a member (FREE) in order that you can claim expenses - JOIN NOW



Inside

Report from the language testing and assessment workshop which was held in Gödöllő Szent István University in September
page 2

Across Europe News from the CercleS conference held in Paris in September.
page 3

Training destinations Where we are supported and where the 'gaps' are.
page 4

Contacts :

Project co ordinator
johann.fischer@uni-tuebingen.de

Hermes editors:
Johanna Jacobovicova
jj01@fem.uniag.sk
Etain Casey
etain.casey@kcl.ac.uk

Testing!

For those of you interested in taking part in the next course to be held in June 2003 in Gyöngyös, here is a summary of the four-day programme which was offered in Gödöllő, Hungary, in September of this year:

Day one:

- language competence level descriptors
- own testing situation
- ranking of language skills
- ranking of language use settings
- certification
- testing principles
- task types
- do's and don'ts

Day two:

Testing Reading:

- item analysis
- Item writing
- group feedback

Testing Listening

- reading or listening?
- video or audio?
- item analysis

Day three

Testing speaking

- authentic situations and tasks
- warning on testing subject knowledge
- standardisation of tests
- applying marking criteria and bands to video recorded examinations

The next course will follow a similar programme for the productive skills and develop on the comments of the first participants. If you are interested, keep an eye on the HERMES web site and apply early in order to get maximum discount.



Language Levels and Assessment- the Gödöllő experience

Six participants from Western and Central Europe, alongside with Dr. Fischer, the HERMES co-ordinator and the two Hungarian trainers made up the “dream-team” for this friendly workshop. The excellent blend of different teaching and testing experiences, various backgrounds and motivations made these few days a truly memorable event.

Apart from the professional side, where the participants had a strong theoretical input, a lot of other “learning” took place. Friendships have been formed, and the participants have had their glimpse into Hungarian culture and way of life - be it the architecture of the Sissy palace or the busy lifestyle of a student hostel, not to speak of the delicious Hungarian food in restaurants. The cultural programmes had their fair share of surprises, too. Who would have thought, to name but one, that after the fabulous horse-show, in the restaurant where we had Gypsy music with our meal, some of the participants would get up and dance a perfect Hungarian dance of “csárdás”, blended with their own Dutch and Slovak folklore, thus outperforming their hosts?

All in all, all the parties involved agree that this workshop and the time spent in Gödöllő was a success. I am certainly looking forward to the continuation, the follow-up workshop on testing productive skills planned for June, in Gyöngyös this time. I hope to meet old and new interested participants there, too. See you all there, or, as the Hungarians say: “a viszontlátásra!”

Tóth Ildikó (Trainer, lecturer in Foreign Languages Szent István University, Chief Examiner of the LSP Examination Centre in Gödöllő)

ICT course
Vienna
May 2002

The course was led by Hermien Miltenburg of the University of Wageningen and Lisa-Lena Opas-Hänninen of the University of Joensuu and was very well attended.

The venue was the computer suite in the University of Agricultural Sciences, Vienna (BOKU).

Our host was Elke Gigl, a lecturer in German at the Sprachenzentrum in Boku, who took care of all the many arrangements necessary for visiting teachers from travel and accommodation to coffee and sightseeing.

HERMES ICT group have always been insistent that all teachers should have access to computer training, even those who have previously never used a machine before. Hermien and Lisa Lena were able to give the group confidence and introduce them to authoring techniques and software. The next course will be held in Vienna again and will be delivered in English and German.

One of the important duties of our HERMES project is to inform as many people as possible in university language training centres and elsewhere of what we are doing. Our work will have little impact on the attitudes of teachers and students if we keep it to ourselves and no one knows anything about us.

Students at UCARS are not necessarily the best linguists and so are not always included in professional discussions on language learning and methodology so we have to spread our ideas and achievements in these circles (CercleS - sorry!).

The conference in Paris was hosted by the Université Paris Dauphine and ran from September 19 to 21. It was an ideal venue to present our workpackages as there were over 60 different sessions over the three days and a large number of participants.

We presented the results of our Professional Development workpackage, followed by the results of our enquiries into possible interactions between Subject Area Specialists and University Language Centres. The questions were quite familiar: Professional development courses, how do you integrate the work that you do with the teachers in the morning into afternoon classes with the students? Do you do the same course in English, German and French? How?

How can you find Subject Specialists in the university who are interested in languages? How can you make contact with these people? What are the benefits of making materials with them? Why did you choose Case-Studies to work on? Don't you think this is education not languages?

The last question was interesting because it appears that case-studies have fallen out of favour with language teachers in recent years. They are thought to be dull, containing too much content and limiting for the teachers' linguistic aims. Students find them uninspiring. We tried to counter these views by explaining the interactive nature of the new web-based and paper-based case studies and how they allowed for European contact - which the earlier class-based exercises did not. Information about the other presentations at the conference and about the activities of CercleS can be found on their website:

<<http://www.cercles.org>>

Professional Development with HERMES

Over the past project years we carried out a total of nine Professional Development Courses for teachers of English and German at Universities and Colleges of Agriculture & Related Sciences in different European countries. The purpose of these courses is to familiarise language teachers with teaching methods stimulating oral competence and interaction. Therefore problem-based learning and task-orientated teaching methods are the focus of our activities, and we provide ideas and material for project work, global simulations and case studies. These case studies are based on authentic material dealing with an realistic problem in the area of agriculture, agribusiness, food production or natural sciences – produced in co-operation with subject area specialists.

In project year 3 we will offer professional development courses for French and Italian alongside with the “traditional” programme for English and German. We will also offer shorter workshops concentrating on the use of case studies, both on paper and delivered via Internet, and the use of ICT in language teaching and learning. These case study workshops will provide the participants with useful teaching material for their own classes.

HERMES

**is constantly looking for new
partners**

In order to reflect a true European dimension we need partners in Spain, more partners in Italy and in France and elsewhere!

On our website you can find full information about the background to the workpackages and our plans for the future. Those who are interested can download questionnaires and return them without any commitment.

www.uni-tuebingen.de/hermes
