Inspiration and Fresh Air
ICC Annual Conference—Winterthur 25th & 26th March

This year the ICC took its annual conference to Switzerland – land of clean air, systematic thinking and lots of things to do with cheese. For those who were unable to make it, the theme was the challenges of teaching in a multilingual and multicultural environment. We were honoured by the presence of Waldemar Martynuik whose vision during the introductory panel discussion provided the context for the sessions to follow. Delegates were invited to engage with concepts (how do we define mother tongue? what constitutes inclusiveness? What do we mean by experienced teacher?), technical advances (use of web platforms) and how all of this can be applied to policy and to the classroom. Presentations and workshops ranged from the slightly theoretical through to the intensely practical. No more practical

Still standing (or sitting) Delegates at the end of the conference

could be found than Russell Stannard's keynote address on the use of web 2.0 as a means of empowering not only students but also teachers in their ability to give personalised, detailed feedback to students. Although this was not the largest of events in terms of numbers, perhaps the size of it allowed delegates greater opportunity for discussions and it seemed very clear that many meetings of minds took place in the wings. Thanks go to Edit and Antonio Adrover and Sue Wood from Flying Teachers and to Mike Makosch from Migros Klub Schools for jointly hosting and seamlessly managing the transition from one venue to another, for the copious catering and an excellent dinner. But rather than blow our own trumpet, perhaps it would be good to hear from some delegates.

One of the highlights for me was the sessions with Russell Stannard. In fact, my two colleagues and I felt so inspired that we have contacted Russell about coming to Sweden

and Folkuniversitetet in Lund/ Malmo and Gothenburg later this year.

On the whole I think the conference was well-planned and well-organised with an interesting programme.There was

..and discussions went on into the night

also time for networking which for me is an important part of an event like this. Ann-Christin Hahn — Folkuniversitetet, Lund, Sweden

My rule of thumb is that I'm happy if I encounter two important new ideas per conference. In Winterthur, at the 18th annual conference of the ICC, the International Language Network, my expectations were exceeded by 50 per cent. Ian McMaster—Business Spotlight

Russell Stannard in full flight

Going Forward

We need the support of everyone if we are to go forward

'Going forward' is often used as a euphemism for all sorts of things here in the UK. In the public sector, we are asked to look for new opportunities 'going forward'. This is taken to mean that a size-able portion of the workforce could lose their jobs. As individuals we are asked to review our skills sets 'going forward' which might be understood as *'get yourself up to speed or you will be a dino-saur in the job market'* or *'you realize you will have to do three times as much work for the same pay, don't you?'*

Perhaps this is the traditional quiet complaining, or suffering in quasi silence that we go in for in this corner of the world. But 'going forward' doesn't have to be negative. In the small corner of the world that is the ICC things are definitely moving. At the AGM the membership took steps to help the board work more swiftly and efficiently on behalf of the organisation. We have two new board members with considerable expertise in marketing and profiling companies and institutions. The annual con-ference has shown again the quality of the membership. We have welcomed new members from both the private and public sectors. The ICC has had a presence both in Graz and Strasbourg. So perhaps 'going forward' can be taken positively.

In the spirit of 'going forward' I would like to think that this newsletter grows from being a vehicle for us to tell you what we have been doing on behalf of the membership into a forum to publish ideas and best practice. So if anyone has anything they wish to air, small or large, please feel free to mail me or the head office. I look forward to hearing from you.

Rob Williams: President, ICC

Notes from the Board

The ICC board met on 4th & 5th February in Zurich and held two meetings around the conference in Winterthur. The February meeting largely fo-cussed on European projects and preparation for the confer-ence. The first Winterthur meeting was to conclude the business of the old board in preparation for the AGM.

The new board met on the Saturday morning. On the ta-ble was the future direction of the organisation, especially in the light of the constructive support from the membership. The discussion revolved around branding and how to raise the profile of the ICC. Specifically various straplines were suggested along with some strategies.

However, it would be rash to come to a firm decision at 9 o'clock on a Saturday morning at the end of the annual con-ference.

The Board has therefore set up working groups among its members and with the help of some outside expert advice. The division of responsibilities is

Quality Assurance: Martin Beck; Sue Wood, Rob Williams

Marketing and Branding: Tim Phillips; Michael Carrier

Liaison with the Membership: Rob Williams and Sue Wood

EU Projects: Christel Schneider and Rob Williams

Treasurer: Nick Maras

At the initial board meeting we set a series of action points to begin to develop and report back by the end of April

Primarily we were looking at a more clearly defined strategy and templates for Quality As-surance and an overall strat-egy for branding and market-ing the ICC.

To help with the quality assur-ance, the board took the step of approaching two experts outside the organisation. This was to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between members who may be seeking quality assurance of products

and services and yet may be involved in the production of the template.

Both sub-groups reported back with draft documentation that will be finalised through the months of May and June.

The board together with the head office consulted with lawyers about trademarking products and services that the ICC has been involved with and where it performs a quality assurance and certification role. This is ongoing.

In order to further facilitate communication and make the board more efficient in its op-eration, monthly skype meet-ings have been scheduled for the next year. In addition, the next board meeting will be together with the Think Tank in Athens.

In the meantime if any mem-ber has any thoughts about any area, please contact the relevant board members. These will be discussed at meetings and where action is needed it will be taken

Conference News

ECML—Graz 2nd Professional Network Forum

The ECML is at the heart of a drive to change the collective mindset in language education.

Despite Jan 6th being a national holiday in Austria, twelve language INGOs came together in Graz for the 2nd Professional Network Forum of the European Centre for Modern Languages. Those represented included associations of language testers, those involved in Higher Education, Networks concerned with quality and those whose overall brief was too wide to be limited to a particular niche. The meeting gave the opportunity for partners to update each other on activities, identify what in their particular fields were 'burning issues' and to consider the dissemination of the Call for proposals in the next medium term ECML round 2012 – 2015.

It also gave us the opportunity to welcome three new associations to the organisation, EUNIC, IAM and the EPA.

Of note were the initiatives that EAQUALS has been involved in to establish a new set of ISO standards, in particular a new set of standards for language competence, the work done be ELC in the field of public service interpreting and the seemingly endless resources of relevant research coming out of Canada.

It is clear that the burning issues are shared by all, and are encapsulated by the Graz declaration, drawn up at the inaugural Forum last year. There is

I strongly urge anyone who wants to safeguard and improve language education to get involved.

a realisation that language is at the heart of all education. In our global society, educators are frequently dealing with plurilingual learners, for whom the language of the host community may be their third or fourth language. In this context, language mastery is no longer a desirable competence or a tool that will enhance employability, it is a fundamental human right. Denying citizens support in language, denies them equal access to education. CLIL initiatives have shown that each topic area has its own language, indeed each walk of life is partially defined by its form of expression, so to separate language education from other subject area content is really to relegate it to a backwater.

There is a common desire to arrive at a meta-understanding of what language education is, as opposed to the teaching of a specific tongue. There is a desire to develop new inclusive education programmes, and a desire to test out the quality of initiatives and education products through long term impact surveys.

As part of the drive for inclusiveness, the Forum discussed at length widening the concept of stakeholders that should have a voice in the language education process. The need to take into account the increasing range of cultural values and attitudes was ex-

pressed by EUNIC, the voice that parents and students should be given was outlined by EPA and the impact of multilingual language acquisition was presented by IAM.

All of this led to the determination of the Forum to mediate the concepts of ECML and the initiatives they undertake. This is more than dissemination, so often a favourite constituent of EU projects. It is not enough merely to publicise our activities and initiatives or to have a discussion where everyone goes away feeling 'warm and fuzzy'. Mediation means getting the active engagement of the target groups, be they government representatives, civil servants, education professionals or 'end users'.

The ECML is at the heart of a drive to change the collective mind set in language education. This is a long term ambition that can only succeed through the active engagement of language education professionals who would like to see change. Its huge range of expertise is readily available. They are willing to lend to support to as many initiatives as they possibly can. If there are any members who are thinking of putting forward a project proposal, I strongly urge anyone who wants to safeguard and improve language education to get involved.

Members at the Professional Network Forum 2011

Conference News

Conference of INGOs at the Council of Europe

Being actively present in Strasbourg increases the publicity of the ICC and allows us to launch points of exchange

Jean Marie Heydt gave a report on the current discussions and activities of the Standing Committee at the Conference of INGOs. In the summary the proposed changes for the *Conference of INGOs* were summarized. A working group was given the task of proposing adaptations to the ongoing reform of the Conference , on the basis of past experience and within the framework of the new allocated budget. The first analysis has shown seven priorities:

1. Reduction of running costs by reducing the number of sessions and commissions
2. A more efficient inner organization. The working group proposes that the present number of commissions and transversal groups be limited and centered on the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe (Human Rights, Rule of Law, Democracy)
3. A close link with the program 2011 of the Council of Europe (among others) Promoting intercultural dialogue:
4. A follow up of current affairs
5. A wish for a better working connection with the General Secretariat
6. Restructuring the role of commissions
Thematic groups may also be created within the commissions or in transversal groups
7. Ensuring a better visibility of the actions of the Council of Europe among the civil society and public actors.

The background paper of the Standing Committee proposed the following changes:
The conference should change to be more a forum for debate and decisions.
The members would no longer be in a position to speak only on their own behalves at committee meetings as they would have to discuss the issues with their own INGOs in advance and therefore would have a much more representative voice.
All information would be passed on in advance during the entire period between formal committee meetings.
Then, during committee meetings, the members would discuss issues face to face. This would be a proper debate.
As a result the number of meetings can be restricted to two annual sessions. In 2011 the new system will be set up and tested and will be put in place in June.
The number of committees should be restricted to three thematic committees.
-Rights Committee
-Living Together Committee
-Education Committee

covering: formal and non-formal education; culture; all subjects relating to action against violence; new technologies and their use
These three committees will meet formally twice a year. Their work will be used as a basis for the major themes to be discussed at the Great European Civil Debate.

Conclusion and suggestion:
I would recommend that the ICC actively participates in the new "Education Committee"
We can see the current restructuring process of the Conference of INGOs as an ideal opportunity for us and the right moment to step in. Being actively present in Strasbourg increases the publicity of the ICC and allows us to launch points of exchange. The aim will be to highlight the representativeness of our activities. This will be a benefit for our members

Martin Beck / Jan 2011
Vice President of the ICC

For more information on the conference of INGOs go to

http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/conf_intro_en.asp

EU Projects Update

Jana Cepickova presenting PELLIC

LeTS GO
The Project Partners of the **LeTS GO** project couldn't have chosen a better time and place for their third partner meeting in Hamburg where they were welcomed with Mediterranean weather and being able to enjoy the 822nd Harbour Birthday, the world's biggest port festival from 6 – 8 May 2011. The partner meeting was hosted by the ICC. The partner organisations from Italy, Spain, Romania and Germany presented their individual projects they had been working on with their teachers and which resulted in a great variety of web based courses created by their teachers. These units together with guidelines how to use them, the LeTS GO portal also contains a great database of e-learning products and e-learning experiences.

www.leonardo-lets.net. Under tools you will find a selection of software for the production of e-learning materials for language teaching and learning.

PELLIC
Jana Cepickova and Christel Schneider presented **PELLIC (**Practice Enterprise for Language Learning and Intercultural Communication at the ICC 18th Annual Conference 2011 in Winterthur, Switzerland. www.pellic.eu.
The pilot courses have taken place in four countries:
Germany, Spain, Czech Republic and Finland.Practice Enterprise companies in these countries have been trading and interacting through the VLE. Further courses are planned

on Second Life this year using the facilities of setting up an exhibition space for the companies. Jana vividly demonstrated some online sessions including some authentic video learning material.

If you wish to get an insight into the course you can check the Course DEMO in the virtual learning environment. (www.pellic.com)

ELTACS

The front page of the ELTACS site

The ELTACS Master Trainers Course started in April on the virtual learning platform Moodle www.onlinetraining.icc-languages.eu with 20 participants from 7 European countries in order to implement EUROLTA courses in their organisations and offer Trainer courses in their countries. The colleagues taking part in the course are all very experienced teachers and teacher trainers and their contributions to the forums contain a wealth of knowledge, experience and good ideas. If you wish to find out more about the ELTACS project visit the ELTACS website on

www.eltacs.eu

Tell Me How

In his presentation of the 'Tell Me How' project at the ICC Conference in Winterthur, Boian Savtchev reviewed the approaches used in the development of a European Language Portfolio for Blind and Visually-Impaired learners of foreign languages, validated by the Council of Europe (No 108.2010-electronic ELP model for the Blind and Visually Impaired) ELPBVI.

The 'Tell Me How!' project started in January 2011 with the aim of promoting and disseminating the European Language Portfolio for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ELPBVI). http://www.elpforblind.eu

The ELPBVI is an electronic model of the European Language Portfolio created for the blind visually impaired language learners by a consortium of European partners in 2008-2009.

Christel Schneider, Director

New Member Profile

Speedlingua

Our ear is the main driver of our ability to communicate fluently and intelligibly in foreign languages.

Our ear is the main driver of our ability to communicate fluently and intelligibly in foreign languages. Each language works in different auditory frequencies. Even if at birth we can ear most frequencies, within months our ear will specialise in the frequencies of our mother tongue. We will then perceive little or none of the frequencies of other languages. This is the reason for our difficulties to understand, pronounce and express ourselves in foreign languages.

For instance, French has very few dominant frequencies in common with most languages and none with British English. It explains why French-speaking people have such a difficulties speaking English and vice-versa.

A Swiss-based company called Speedlingua has developed a patented software system to "open" the ear to the specifics frequencies of the targeted language and improve sounds discrimination. By allowing the ear to hear the frequencies correctly, the software allows almost instantaneous to improve the speaking capabilities and therefore provides rapid progress in communication.

The method is based on the audio phonology principles. It

has its roots in the three scientific laws:

1 - The voice can only reproduces what the ear hears perfectly.

2 - If we change the hearing, we unconsciously and naturally alter the pronunciation.

3 - It is possible to alter durably the phonation by stimulating the hearing.

As the ear and the positioning of the mouth are so linked in the process of expression, the software allows significant progress in the communication (comprehension and expression).

A working session with Speedlingua lasts about 45 minutes. It includes a phase of listening to music, followed by series of pronunciation exercises:

Musical phase: a session always starts with a "language bath" of 10 to 15 minutes. The ear is open through music filtered into the dominant frequencies of the chosen language. This phase will physiologically stimulate the ear and therefore "open" it to the dominants frequencies of the targeted language.

Pronunciation phase: The leaner listen to phonemes,

words and phrases from a native speaker and repeat them. The software analyses the voice, modifies it in real time to the right frequencies. The learner will then hear his voice modified, allowing him/her to ear correctly and start to pronounce like a native.

It will take 10 to 12 sessions of 45 minutes, one or two times a week to achieve substantial results in both hearing and speaking. Speedlingua adapts to any level (beginner to advanced), rhythms and needs of each students. It is available in 9 languages: American English, British English, German, Chinese, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, Dutch and a special International Aviation Language geared to pilots and air traffic controllers.

While Speedlingua only concentrates on oral skills, language schools around the world are using it daily in complement to their own language methods. Tens of thousands of students have using it and reported fast and sustainable progress in their comprehension and speaking capabilities.

For more information refer to the company's website (www.speedlingua.com) or by e-mail at info@speedlingua.com

Calls for Papers

We thought that members and readers would be interested in what is coming up in the conference circuit within Europe. Here is a selected list of some events that are happening in 2011 and 2012 with the deadlines for papers if you feel the urge to contribute actively.

If you are organizing other events or know of conferences that could be of interest, please let us know and we can put them in a future edition.

To keep up to date with more conference developments check the EU website

www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/conference_EN.asp

Conference	Date	City / Country	Paper submission deadlines	Web
June 2011				
School of Languages 2nd International Conference on Language Education	2 – 4	Istanbul, TR	passed	http://eclipsing-expectations.sabanciuniv.edu/
Pains and Gains: New Trends in ELT, 1st International ELT Conference	3 – 4	Near EAST UNIVERSITY Cyprus, TR	passed	http://eltconference.neu.edu.tr/
Information and Communication Technologies in Teaching Foreign Languages	21 – 22	Podebrady, Czech Republic	passed	http://ujop.cuni.cz/vtc/konference_en.php
BESIG Summer Symposium	24 – 25	University of Central Lancashire, UK	passed	http://www.besig.org/events/Lancaster2011/index.htm
July 2011				
ALTE	7 – 9	Krakow, PL	passed	http://www.alte.org/2011/
6th International Symposium on Politeness: Corpus Approaches	11 – 13	Ankara, TR	passed	http://www.arber.com.tr/isp2011.org/index.php/home
August 2011				
EUROCALL	31/08 – 03/09	Nottingham , UK	passed	http://www.eurocall-languages.org/confs/index.html
September 2011				
Across Languages and Cultures University of Venice	1 – 3	Venice. IT	15 June	http://alc.unive.teoriacomunicazione.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53
BAAL Conference	1 – 3	Bristol UK	passed	http://www.baal.org.uk/baal_conf.html
IATEFL Poland	9 – 11	Warszaw. PL	01.06.2011	http://iatefl.org.pl/warszawa2011/invitation
ETAS Switzerland SIG Day	17	Zug, CH	Passed	http://www.e-tas.ch/events/sig-day/287-sig-day-2011
ESP Conference	30/09 – 1/10	Ulm, DE	Passed	http://www.esp-conference.de/

Conference	Date	City / Country	Paper submission deadlines	Web
October 2011				
IICE-2011 Ireland International Conference on Education	3 – 5	Dublin, IE	passed	http://www.iicedu.org/
IATEFL Hungary	7 – 9	Budapest, HU	passed	http://www.iatefl.hu/
IAF EUROPE Conference	14 – 16	Istanbul, TR	passed	http://www.iaf-europe-conference.org/sessionproposal.html
PIXEL 'ICT for Language Learning'	20 – 21	Florence	24th June	conference@pixel-online.net
Languages & Business	26 – 28	Berlin, DE	passed	http://www.sprachen-beruf.com/pages/en/
November 2011 and beyond				
ICT for Languages	10 /11 – 11/11	Florence	25th June 2011	http://www.real-association.eu/news
BESIG	18/11 – 20/11	Dubrownik CROATIA	5th June 2011	http://www.besig.org/events/conf2011/index.htm
Online Educa	30/11 – 02/12	Berlin . DE	June 1st 2011	http://www.online-educa.com
LEARNTEC 2012	31/1 – 2/2/ 2012	Karlsruhe, DE	5th June 2011	http://www.messeninfo.de/Learntec-M2742/Karlsruhe.html
didacta	14/2 – 18/2/2012	Hannover, DE	Passed	http://www.didacta-hannover.de
ICC Conference	9/3 – 10/3/2012	Pilsen, CZ	10 October 2011	www.icc-languages.eu
IATEFL	19/3 – 20/3/2012	Glasgow, UK	17th September 2011	http://www.iatefl.org/events

Think Tank 2— 12th June, Athens, Greece

The Currency and Marketability of Testing Mechanisms

In a world that is increasingly preoccupied with qualifications there is ample opportunity for anyone to produce a test and to claim it proves ability. With the increase in web based testing, it seems that user friendliness and speed of scoring mechanism may be taking precedent over a genuine profile of what an individual can really do in a language. Then there is the issue of marketing. Is it the case that the test mechanism with the greatest financial backing is the most appropriate for one's needs? Is it the case that the one that shouts loudest in the market place becomes the best test in people's minds? Also, in with such an increase in testing mechanisms, how can a school or training centre decide what is best for them? How can a group of people with a desire to devise and sell a new mechanism begin to compete with the established players?

The 2nd ICC Think Tank in Athens invites interested professionals to a forum to consider these and other factors involved in what makes a testing mechanism both valid and desirable. The day will take the form of focussed discussion groups with a view to producing a framework to define how currency and marketability might be measured and guidelines for how it might be achieved. If you want a thought provoking weekend away in Greece there are still places and we would welcome all comers.

For more information contact the Head Office or go to the website www.icc-languages.eu

Annual Conference 2012—9th & 10th March, Pilzen, Czech Republic

Next year we will be in the beautiful surroundings of Pilzen in the Czech Republic as guests of the University of West Bohemia.

The theme of the conference is **Perception and Reality in Language Education**

It seems that there are many disconnects nowadays. What learners perceive as good learning is often at odds with what teachers claim to know. What teachers consider conditions for good learning seems to be at odds with projects like the Indian hole in the wall initiative. The claims made by advocates of the new technologies are often at odds with the realities experienced by users. There are increasing doubts about the reliability of information on the new interactive databases – anyone is now an author and anyone is an information consumer – so who can trust who? Language is perceived as a unifying force in globalisation and yet language and culture are what are often used precisely to define in-groups and national identities. The conference will consider these issues among others and invites all members to join in. If you are interested in leading a session please get in touch with the Head Office.