



Association of University Language
Centres in the UK and Ireland

**April 2001 AULC Meeting
Queen's University Belfast**

**European Year of Languages
'Technology and Transferability'**

Friday 20 & Saturday 21 April 2001

Present

44 Members attended from 21 institutions in the UK and Ireland

Name	Institution
1. Paul Mahoney	University of Bradford
2. Ray Satchell	Bristol University
3. Giles Couzin	Bristol University
4. Dawn Ebbrell	CILT
5. Steven Dodd	University College Cork
6. Mary Ruane	Dublin – UCD
7. Sandrine Pac	Dublin – UCD
8. Hugo O'Donnell	Dublin – UCD
9. Yvonne Woods	Dublin – UCD
8. Veronique Gauthier	Dublin – UCD
10. Elizabeth Hague	Dublin – UCD
11. Isabell Lemee	Dublin – UCD
12. Anna Cuesta	Dublin – UCD
13. Antonio Flores	Dublin – UCD
14. Chie Oda	Dublin – UCD
15. Fiona Healy	Dublin – UCD
16. David Little	Trinity College Dublin
17. John Glendinning	University of Edinburgh
18. Peter Glasgow	University of Edinburgh
19. Eugene Boyle	Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh
20. Colin Richardson	University of Hull
21. Andy Hagyard	University of Lincolnshire and Humberside
22. David Newton	Imperial College London
23. Sarah Garcia Peralta	Kings College London
24. Nick Byrne	LSE
25. Astrid Kullman-Lee	LSE
26. Roger Frisby	Middlesex University
27. Ines Alonso-Garcia	Middlesex University
28. Mariam Garibyan	Middlesex University
29. John Rees-Smith	Middlesex University
30. Kate Donovan	Middlesex University

31. Alison Robson	Newcastle University
32. Jonathan Lippmann	University of North London
33. Chris O'Reilly	University of North London
34. Pamela McIntyre	Queen's University Belfast
35. Alan Soutar	Queen's University Belfast
29. Nigel Harkness	Queen's University Belfast
36. David Johnston	Queen's University Belfast
37. Jill Shaw	Queen's University Belfast
38. Brenda Boyce	Queen's University Belfast
39. Deirdre Hetherington	Queen's University Belfast
40. Anthony Stenton	University of Toulouse
41. Mike Jones	University of Ulster
42. William Norris	University of Ulster
43. Dr Andrea Dlaska	University of Warwick
44. Marie Christine Press	University of Westminster

Apologies were received from the following members:

Name	Institution
1. Christine Burgess	Aberdeen University
2. Anne Gallagher	NUI Maynooth
3. Vicky Wright	University of Southampton

Day 1 – Friday 20 April

Opening Session – Welcome

Dr David Johnston of Queen's University Belfast welcomed all present and talked briefly of the role and development of University Language Centres in students' cognitive language acquisition. He expressed the hope that the meeting would enable us to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

Ray Satchell, Chair of AULC then welcomed attendees and presented the agenda for the day.

Plenary speaker – Dr Sean Farren, Minister for Higher & Further Education, Employment and Training, Northern Ireland Assembly.

Dr Farren addressed AULC members on the importance of fostering and promoting language learning in society. He talked of a growing multiculturalism in Belfast, resulting in the need for us to encourage linguistic diversity and not to succumb to the pressure to be a monolingual English speaking culture. He referred to the recent decline in the number of students in both the UK and Ireland choosing language courses and the need to provide such students with language learning resources to enable them to learn a language alongside their main programme of study. The recent growth in Language Centres is a positive development in that it does just that: enables students to pick up a language in their own time.

Guest speaker – Professor David Little, Trinity College Dublin. Language Portfolios.

David Little gave a presentation on developing a version of the European Language Portfolio for university students. An electronic version of the talk can be found at:

Special Interest Group Meetings

The three special interest groups met separately. Reports of these meetings are available on the AULC website at: <http://www.aulc.org/minutes.html>

CercleS Update – Mary Ruane, University College Dublin

Mary Ruane gave an update on the recent developments in CercleS. 4 SIG groups have been developed within CercleS, called Focus Groups. They are:

Group	Moderator/Organiser
Technology	Tony Stenton
Structures and Organisation	Thomas Vogel
Commercial Activities	Sandra Kramer
Minority Languages	Anne Gallagher

Mary reported that the next CercleS Conference will be hosted by Paris IX-Dauphine University, France and will take place in September 2002. The Organising Committee for the conference consists of Alain Cazade, President of RANACLES, France; Nicole Chenik, Director of hosting Language Centre and CercleS Deputy Secretary General; Ray Satchell, CercleS Vice-President; and Mary Ruane, CercleS Secretary General. Themes and sub-themes for the conference have yet to be decided, and CercleS would welcome any ideas and suggestions.

CercleS had also decided to adopt its own version of the ELP.

Sandrine Pac, University College Dublin, reminded members to submit their contact details for the database. This can be done by returning the 'contact details' form distributed or by email: cercles@alc.ucd.ie. Both Sandrine Pac and Mary Ruane ensured members that these details would not be made publicly available.

Day 2 – Saturday 21 April

Anthony Stenton – The University of Toulouse. [Smart Alex and Hypermedia](#)

Anthony Stenton gave a presentation on integrating hypermedia in-house software in a University Language Centre. He spoke of the problems encountered in trying to persuade teachers to incorporate new technology into their teaching.

Anthony outlined the justification of in-house production:

- It's tailor made and responds to needs
- Testing and improving the prototype is made easier
- Students can fine tune their objectives through a wider range and richer choice of documents

Problems frequently encountered with the software were:

- In-house production requires teamwork
- Steep learning curve of authoring tools
- Lack of appropriate training/trainees
- Competition for technicians as university IT activities expand
- The choice of software platforms for the virtual campus
- The web steam-roller fashion

Anthony put forward a case for a new impulse in hypermedia production as:

- Falling prices of digitising cards

- Improved storage: hard disks and DVD-RAM
- MPEG compression and streaming
- Improved IT skills in the student population at large

The use of templates to accelerate production and avoid expensive training was offered as a possible solution to the problems of integrating in-house software.

Full details of the presentation can be found at:

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HECALL Presentation – Deirdre Hetherington and Jill Shaw, Queen’s University Belfast

Deirdre Hetherington and Jill Shaw gave us a demonstration of a new website developed by the Language Centre at Queen’s University Belfast. The site’s main aims are to support and encourage innovative language learning.

The site can be viewed at:

www.hecall.qub.ac.uk

General Meeting

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December 2000 AULC meeting held at LSE and CILT were approved

2. Election Results

Ray Satchel announced the election results. Details of the new Executive Committee are on the AULC website at: <http://www.aulc.org/elections/elections.html>. Ray extended thanks on behalf on the association to all new and retiring Executive members.

3. Upcoming Conferences

It was reported that AULC had been approached to host a conference. It was decided that it would be a large amount of work for a small organisation such as the AULC to do alone, and so we would work alongside SHMUL, UCL and the Subject Centre to arrange a conference in Nottingham in 2002.

4. L.S.P Workshop

AULC are working in conjunction with the Subject Centre on the L.S.P. Workshop. Further details will be available at the next meeting.

5. Treasurer’s Report

Only limited expenditure had occurred since the meeting in December 2000, largely related to expenses involved in organising AULC meetings and additional executive committee meetings. The association account remains healthy, with a balance in the region of £6000. However, this is largely due to the sums inherited from the merger of different organisations in 1999, and it should be remembered that AULC operates on a relatively small budget of around £2000 per year. Plans for future expenditure include inviting visiting speakers to general meetings, and a contribution to a joint conference with the LTSN subject centre in 2002.

For the subscription year 2001, 38 renewals had been received by 18th April, although more are arriving on an almost daily basis. It is likely that total membership will remain in the region of 65 institutions.

5. EYL Competition

Ray Satchell reported that 6 institutions had so far registered to take part in the competition. The closing date for registration is 18th May. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.aulc.org/EYL.htm>

6. Date and Venue of next Meeting

Offers to host the next meeting were made by Glamorgan, Imperial and Kings.

7. Any Other Business

- It was decided that the AULC Executive would make contact with the BALEAP Executive and co-operate in future meetings.
- Nick Byrne, LSE, suggested contacting Language Centres who didn't attend meetings to see if there was anything they would like to see on the agenda in future meeting.
- Ray Satchell expressed thanks to the guest speakers and to Pamela McIntyre and her team at Queen's University for their hospitality.

Kate Donovan

9 May 2001