



## AULC

The Association of University Language Centres in the UK and Ireland  
University of Edinburgh 17 - 18 December 1999

Theme : "Open and Distance Learning"

*Minutes approved at AULC General Meeting 7 April 2000*

### **Friday 17 December**

#### ***Present***

The meeting was attended by 31 people representing 22 separate institutions (see attached list)

#### ***Apologies***

Apologies were received from :

Laura Rundle (Secretary), Goldsmith's College London; Bill Oleske (Vice-Chair), Leeds University; Derek Lewis, Exeter University; Mike Howell, Solent; Tim Hooton, Aston University; John Gray plus 2, UEA; Patsy Kemp plus 2, University of North London; Michael Hammond, Clare Power, CILT; David Morley, Strathclyde

#### ***Welcome and Introduction***

Ray Satchell (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the programme for the two days. He announced that the next meeting would be hosted by University College Dublin on 7-8 April 2000, and invited members to think of a possible theme. He also announced the resignation from the committee of Edith Esch, whose new post at Cambridge University will be outside the Language Centre.

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#### ***Special Interest Group Meetings***

The 4 SIGs met separately. Reports of these meetings are available on the Internet at <http://www.aulc.org>

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#### ***Guest Speaker :***

**Robin Mason**  
**Head of Centre for Information Technology in Education**  
**Open University**

Robin Mason gave a presentation on Open and Distance Learning in the Open University, with particular focus on the use and effectiveness of computer conferencing and other means of on-line communication to create virtual learning environments.

There are now some 50,000 OU students using computer conferencing systems, not for delivery of content but purely as a means of creating a social environment. Computer-conferencing has the advantage of being both intimate and anonymous, although it must be recognised that not all students enjoy using it. However, there is evidence that on-line teaching can be as intimate as face-to-face, or even more so.

One of the main points made by Robin Mason is that students can find a virtual environment more stimulating than a real one, and that rather than a simple way of compensating for geographical remoteness of students, ODL provides opportunities for all learners. She refers to this concept as 'close-distance learning', i.e. a virtual element even for students on-campus.

However, it is also clear that on-line tutoring is more time-consuming than some of the alternatives, simply because it is more interactive.

OU tutors (including language tutors) have run occasional live events on the internet, both in the form of text-based chat and also using streaming audio either one-way or two-way. While this has been highly successful, these events cannot cope with large numbers of students (max. 16 at a time).

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### ***Tour of Language Centre***

Peter Glasgow, Head of the Language and Humanities Centre, organised a tour of the facilities, including the languages computer laboratory. A full description of the centre is available on the Edinburgh University web site at <http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/langhum/index.html>

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### ***Main Business Meeting***

#### **Web Site**

Thanks were expressed to Roger Frisby for his excellent work in creating an attractive site, and keeping it up-to-date. The site will continue to evolve and will include a list of members, with links to institutional home pages, as well as clearer information on how to join the association.

#### **Treasurer's report**

57 institutions subscribed to AULC in 1999 giving an income of £1995. Expenditure for the year was not yet finalised (awaiting costs related to Edinburgh meeting), but was likely to be in the region of £1500. Subscriptions for 2000 will be held at the current level of £35.

## CERCLES

The next meeting of CERCLES will be in Antwerp in September 2000. The theme will be 'Quality Assurance'.

### External links

Marina Mozzon-McPherson has put forward a proposal to disseminate findings from the SMILE project through AULC. This would be discussed on Saturday morning in the TALC group.

A proposal from the CIEL project regarding the sharing of learning materials would also be discussed.

### AOB

Following the resignation of Edith Esch, it was proposed that Marina Mozzon-Mcpherson should be invited to replace her on the committee as a co-opted member, as she had already stood for election and received a number of votes. This was agreed unanimously. Marie-Christine Press had already been asked to chair the Research group meeting.

A proposal for the new Modern Languages subject centre has just been approved and will shortly be announced publicly. The new centre will be based in Southampton University and chaired by Mike Kelly, with involvement from the existing CTICML in Hull, and CILT.

Marie-Christine Press informed the group that the Research SIG intends to produce a database of current research in Language Centres.

There was a request for a list of people willing to act as external examiners.

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## **Saturday 18 December**

### ***Special Interest Group Meetings***

The 4 SIGs again met separately. Reports of these meetings are available on the AULC web site.

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### ***General Meeting***

Each SIG moderator reported back on the individual meetings.

A theme for the next meeting in Dublin was discussed, and agreement was reached on the title "**Tailoring Resources for Quality**"

Ray Satchell thanked everyone for attending. Particular thanks were expressed to Peter Glasgow and his staff for their hospitality and the smooth running of the meeting

# AULC Meeting - University of Edinburgh

17th December 1999

## Attendance List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>
Nick Byrne	London School of Economics	n.byrne@lse.ac.uk
Mike Forshaw	Leeds Metropolitan University	m.forshaw@lmu.ac.uk
Marta Nunez	King's College London	marta.nunez@kcl.ac.uk
Caroline Graham	University of Limerick	Caroline.Graham@ul.ie
Anne Gallagher	National University of Ireland, Maynooth	an.gallagher@may.ie
Mary Ruane	University College Dublin	Mary.Ruane@alc.ie
Sheryl Simon	Royal Holloway, University of London	s.simon@rhbc.ac.uk
Colin Richardson	University of Hull	c.richardson@selc.hull.ac.uk
Roger Frisby	Middlesex University	roger4@mdx.ac.uk
Marie-Christine Press	University of Westminster	pressmc@wmin.ac.uk
Dolorès Ditner	University College London	d.ditner@ucl.ac.uk
Peter Glasgow	University of Edinburgh	Peter.Glasgow@ed.ac.uk
Mar Menéndez	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	mar.dslc@gtnet.gov.uk
Carmen Mortara	King's College London	carmen.mortara@kcl.ac.uk
Rob Kennedy	S.O.A.S.	rk12@soas.ac.uk
Pamela McIntyre	Queen's University Belfast	pmcintyre@qub.ac.uk
Jean-Pierre Mailhac	Salford University	j.p.mailhac@salford.ac.uk
Nigel Crouch	Coventry University	n.crouch@coventry.ac.uk
Chris Dunk	Coventry University	c.dunk@coventry.ac.uk
Mike Thacker	Surrey University	M.Thacker@surrey.ac.uk
Gertrud Aub-Buscher	University of Hull	g.e.buscher@selc.hull.ac.uk
Alister Robson	University of Durham	A.N.Robson@durham.ac.uk
Lieve Van Espen	University of Durham	Lieve.Van-Espen@durham.ac.uk
Inés Alonso	Middlesex University	ines1@mdx.ac.uk
Veronica North	Middlesex University	Veronica6@mdx.ac.uk
Andy Hagyard	University of Lincolnshire and Humberside	ahagyard@humber.ac.uk
John Rees-Smith	Middlesex University	John2@nw.mdx.ac.uk
Jacky Devis	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	jdevis.dslc.fco@gtnet.gov.uk
Janice Wigley	Strathclyde University	j.wigley@strath.ac.uk
John Glendinning	University of Edinburgh	j.glendinning@ed.ac.uk
Ray Satchell	University of Bristol	ray.satchell@bristol.ac.uk