SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN EUROPE
THE TEACHING & LEARNING OF LANGUAGES

TEACHING LANGUAGES TO LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

January 2005

INSIGHTS & INNOVATION

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DG EAC 23 03 LOT 3

January 2005

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Public Services Contract DG EAC 23 03 Lot 3

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	January, 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to Timo Ahonen, Hilary McColl, Ian Smythe and David Wilson for their consistently swift responses to requests, and considerable input throughout the research and production process. In addition, to Luca Tomasi, for coordination at the European Commission, and the QCA (UK) for permission to reproduce from Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties (2001).

Special thanks are also extended to the following contributors, drawn from diverse contexts and representing differing types of expertise, for providing direct interventions:

Helena Aikin (Spain), Paul Blenkhorn (United Kingdom), Terry Brady (United Kingdom), Berit Bromseth (Norway), Anna Butkiewicz (Poland), Daniel Charles (United Kingdom), Margaret Crombie (United Kingdom), Franz Dotter (Austria), Bertold Fuchs (Finland), Eva Gyarmathy (Hungary), Christine J. Harvey (United Kingdom), Tarja Hännikäinen (Finland), Petra Kaseva (Finland), Marja Lounaskorpi (Finland), Antero Perttunen (Finland), Christina Richardson (United Kingdom), Roswitha Romonath (Germany), Robin Schwarz (United States), Christine Seifner (Austria), Ruth Shuter (United Kingdom), David Stewart (United Kingdom), Valentina Tommasi (Italy), Annemarie Vicsek (Hungary), Daniel Vidal (France), Vivienne Wire (Scotland, United Kingdom).

The realization of this report has also benefited from information, insight, advice, feedback and support given by:

Nathalie Abela (Malta), Fátima Matos Almeida (Portugal), Victoria Alonso (Spain), Eduardo Bue Alves (Portugal), Lucy Atkinson (France), Vilma Backiute (Lithuania), Lucie Bauer (Austria), Magda Bedynska (Poland), Gemma Berri (Italy), Rita Berry (United Kingdom), Margaretha Biddle (Sweden), Felicienne Mallia Borg (Malta) Maria José Brito (Spain), Jose Oro Cabanas (Spain), Tamzin Caffrey (United Kingdom), Elisa Careddu (Italy), David Carey (Ireland), Carla Carnevale (Austria), Catherine Clément (France), Raija Collin (Finland), Carmel Mary Coonan (Italy), Do Coyle (United Kingdom), Bogdan Dalek (Poland), Megan Dauksta (United Kingdom), Cavanagh Dermot (Ireland), Ingo Descher (Germany), Ingar Ebbestad (Norway), Eva-Lotta Eriksson (Sweden), Tuija Fagerlund (Finland), Emma Ferrari (Italy) Christine Firman (Malta), Anne Frank (Finland), Hannelore Friederichs (Germany), Roberta Garbo (Italy), Barbara Gatz-Kuhn (Germany), Georgiana Ghitulete (Romania), Ron Green (Spain), Louis Greenstock (United Kingdom), Heike Grüter (Germany), Sylvía Guðmundsdóttir (Iceland), Hans ten Ham (Netherlands), Irene Hämälä (Sweden), Anna-Maija Hänninen (Finland), Ruppert Heidenreich (Germany), Rosie Houghton (United Kingdom), Milada Honzikova (Czech republic), Brian Howes (United Kingdom), Anne Jelsøe (Denmark), Jana Jilková (Czech Republic), Markku Jokinen (Finland), Mari Kalaja (Finland), Zuzana Kaprová (Czech Republic), Milena Kelly (Czech Republic), Sandy Kinvig (United Kingdom), Amanda Kirby (United Kingdom), Stefka Kitanova (Bulgaria) Blanka Kocourková (Czech Republic), Rochelle Kenyon (United States), Ton Koenraad (Netherlands), Inge-Anna Koleff (Austria), Katarina Kyselova (Slovakia), Eva-Maria Ladwig (Germany), Gisella Langé (Italy), Riikka Lansisalmi (Finland), Päivi Lappi (Finland), Annemari Laurento (Finland), Jan-Erik Liljergren (Sweden), Owe Lindberg (Sweden), Kaisu Lumme (Finland), Pantelis Makris (Cyprus), Anne Maljers (Netherlands), Boguslaw Marek (Poland), María Jesús Frigols Martín (Spain), Jelena Mazurkievic (Serbia & Montenegro), Gillian McLaughlin (Germany), Duncan Mercieca (Malta), María Luisa García Mínguez (Eurydice), Kari Moilanen (Finland), Cecilia Montes-Alcalá (USA), Carme Munõz (Spain), Stein Nørve (Norway), Margaret O'Donnell (Ireland), Carmel O´Hagan (United Kingdom), Britta Olsson (Sweden), Petra Packalen (Finland), Milena Paganini (Italy), Albertina Palma (Portugal), Concepción Soto Palomo (Spain), Ulla Pehrsson (Finland), Liisa Pekkala (Finland), Madalena Pereira (Netherlands), Stephen Phillips (United Kingdom), Jussi Pihkala (Finland), Anu Piiponen (Finland), Arja Piirainen (Finland), Patricia Pradella (Italy), Ermes Preto (Italy), Anton Prochazka (Austria), Pirkko Puonti (Finland), Liesbeth Pyfers (Netherlands), Nicole Raes (Belgium), Rami Raviv (Israel), Berit Rohstad (Norway), Pirkko Rytkönen (Finland), Helene Rønning (Norway), Stase Sakpiene (Lithuania), Mirva Salokorpi (Finland), Minna Sandberg (Finland), Judith Sanson (Belgium), Minna Saulio (Finland), Heleen Scholte (Netherlands), Petra Schuitemaker (Netherlands), Janis Silis (Latvia), Maria João Soares (Portugal), Valerie Sollars (Malta), Victoria Soriano (Belgium), Barbara Stevens (United Kingdom), Franz Thöneböhn (Germany), Riitta Tiiri (Finland), Jurgita Vaicikauskaite (Lithuania), Sinikka Vanha (Finland), Jyrki Vihriälä (Finland), Kristiina Volmari (Eurydice),Andreas Völkel (Germany), Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter (Eurydice), Sandy Wilson (United Kingdom), Anna Wojtowicz (Italy), Michèle Wolff (Germany), Carol Youngs (United Kingdom), John Young (United Kingdom), Jana Zapletalova (Czech Republic), Bronislawa Zielonka (Poland), Marina Zuanelli (Italy).

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Even though we have come a long way,
language teaching is still like a can of sardines. We
check the label, roll it open, and go for the bulk.
In so doing we are unable to do justice to the rich,
sometimes even richer, nutrients left inside the can.
Too often this potential is side-lined and lost
within a culture of dysfunctionality.

Dainis Dauksta (LV)

. . . . . .

Même si les progrès dans l'enseignement
des langues sont évidents,
cela reste une sorte de boîte de sardines.
On regarde l'étiquette, on
l'ouvre et on sort les poissons.
De ce fait il est impossible de
rendre justice à leur juste valeur aux
nourritures qui restent dans la boîte.
Trop souvent ces richesses potentielles sont écartées et
perdues dans le cadre d'une culture de disfonctionnement.

Dainis Dauksta (LV)

FOREWORD

Like DNA each individual is unique. Being unique makes that individual special. The word special is used to describe something that relates to one particular individual, group or environment. Special also means different from normal. Normal is used to refer to what is ordinary, as in what people expect. When it comes to teaching foreign languages, these words are loaded because they carry so many implications, resulting in positive or negative outcomes for the individual.

Certain learners have special needs, at certain times, and our educational systems need to respond accordingly. This response has sometimes resulted in exclusion – as in 'learning foreign languages is too difficult thus don't impose even more work on this learner, or this group of learners'. This may have been a valid response in certain cases. Alternatively, we can suggest that it may have been valid if expressed at a time when our understanding of cognition and second language learning was less advanced as now.

The arguments for, or against, provision of foreign language learning needs to be considered in relation to newly emerging understanding and realities. These persuasively show that there are no groups of young people who should be denied access to foreign language learning because it is in their 'better interests'. There will be individuals who on a case-by-case basis may not benefit, but the arguments for withdrawal should be made in a fully informed manner which takes the following into consideration.

Individuals have differing intellectual profiles, and educational systems strive to accommodate these when teaching subjects across the curriculum. Foreign language learning may be one of those subjects which is particularly significant in terms of diverse individual learning styles. Proponents of multiple intelligence argue that it is fundamentally misleading to think about 'a single mind, a single intelligence, a single problem-solving capacity'.[1] In accepting this view we can assume that there is no single approach to foreign language learning which will suit the needs of any classroom of learners, whether having SEN or not.

Consider, for example, what is termed Language Learning Disability. In the 1960's when Harvard University required undergraduates to learn a foreign language, a clinical psychologist, Kenneth Dinklage, examined why certain otherwise high academic achievers were having considerable difficulty in learning languages. He identified a solution for these very specifically disabled students, which lay in changing the foreign language learning methods used. Robin Schwarz comments 'students not previously diagnosed as learning disabled showed up as learning disabled in the foreign language classroom'.[2]

The theory of multiple intelligences challenged the concept of there being a single intelligence which could be tested by intelligence quota (IQ) tests. Instead it is argued that we have a range of intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist.

Work on multiple intelligences is now about 20 years old, and if we examine good foreign language learning practice, we can see how these multiple cognitive resources have been exploited, directly or indirectly, by the teaching profession. Grammar-translation; the cognitive,

direct, reading, functional-notional, natural, communicative approaches; the audiolingual method; content and language integrated learning; community language learning; the silent way; total physical response; suggestopedia / suggestology, can all be described in terms of how they attempt to tune into and exploit children's different 'frames of mind' so as to achieve successful foreign language learning.

When we talk of teaching foreign languages to learners with special needs we face a paradox. The language teaching profession has been adapting to learner's diverse needs for some years, with increasing focus on individual learning preferences. Yet there is a prevailing view that SEN pupils are somehow different, and thus require different educational solutions. It is obviously true that some SEN learners need very specific language learning approaches. But it is also true that the same logic applied to good foreign language learning for non-SEN learners applies to those with SEN.

For example, attention given to language learning styles in effective foreign language teaching from the 1990s onwards, is testament to this appreciation that individuals have possibly quite distinct differing needs and preferences when learning additional languages. This has further moved the profession towards focus on the need for individualized learner-based curricula as a result.

This interest has come at the same time as advances in multimedia applications. Given appropriate access to languages in the wider world, children can now build on language learning outside the classroom to a greater extent than earlier unless, for instance, they happened to be brought up in multilingual environments. ICT, mass-media and Internet usage has expanded dramatically in the last ten years, and this is impacting on how the limited hours available for foreign language learning in the curriculum should be used.[3]

When children use ICT applications, they may often be alone, without teachers or parents to assist them, being guided by their own individual 'frame of mind'. For certain SEN pupils ICT is likely to have considerable impact in opening opportunities. In citing Goethe's recognition of our rather recent and possibly transitional written word-bound cultures, Tom West comments 'technology is making it possible for dyslexics to gain access to information and is changing our ideas about what is worth learning and doing. A new class of minds will arise as scientists'.[4] Multimedia presentations could have a considerable impact on a range of SEN foreign language learners, not just dyslexics, because of visual representation and the potential of virtual to enable learners to 'see what is unseen'.[5]

There is a wealth of scientific evidence on how diagnosed conditions influence ways of learning. There have also been considerable advances in understanding language acquisition and how the brain works. But, to quote one interviewee, 'the bridge between research and practice is like a black hole'.[6] In some parts of Europe great strides have been taken in articulating scientific evidence and professional conjecture to practitioners. In others, even if policy is inclusive, there appears to have been less localized consolidation of knowledge and educational practice. However, the issues remain much the same wherever the learner is located in Europe and whatever foreign language s/he is learning.

Advances in knowledge have enabled earlier and one assumes ever more accurate diagnosis. But there appears to be a problem with diagnosis and educational decision-making. An individual with a specific diagnosis, for example ADHD, may have multiple disorders. Indeed some have been said to have 'multiple disorders of multiple disorders'.[7]

Take for example, the case of dyslexia and the following definition: 'dyslexia is evident when fluent and accurate word identification (reading) and/or spelling does not develop or does so very incompletely or with great difficulty'.[8] Even though it is estimated that some 10% of Europe's population are dyslexic to some extent[9] there will be school-aged young people who have sensory and physical difficulties, or emotional, behavioral and social difficulties, or communication and interaction disorders, who will also show signs of dyslexia according to this definition.

So how does the language or SEN teacher who teaches a foreign language respond to the educational needs of one of these learners? Do they learn about dyslexia and then tailor their teaching? Alternatively, do they find out more about Asperger's syndrome and then select appropriate materials and approaches? Which diagnostic label do they choose? Essentially, do they follow prevailing recommendations for the diagnosis, or do they tailor the approach for the individual according to experience, expertise and insight?

We clearly need to label young people so as to determine diagnosis and trigger support services. But we need to de-label them when it comes to educational provision.[10] 'Labels are for bottles, not people' whereas learning foreign language learning in Europe 25+ is for 'people, not bottles'. [11]

The labeling issue is further complicated across Europe because reported rates of pupils with special educational needs differ widely across member states from 0.9% (Greece) to 17.8% (Finland).[12] These figures 'do not reflect differences in the incidence of special needs between the countries'[13], but they do reveal marked disparity. Another related issue concerns the proportion of school-age pupils in segregated educational settings. These range from under 0.5% (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) to 6% (Switzerland). This suggests that any attempt to identify and describe good foreign language learning practice for pupils diagnosed with specific conditions across Europe will be hindered by differences in diagnostic recognition.

The implications for foreign language teaching leads back to the need to focus on developing individualized language learning paths within classroom environments. This is relevant for all children, whether classified as learning disabled or gifted/talented, or simply for those who have serious learning problems but are unclassified for whatever reasons.

There are clearly specific requirements for foreign language development according to different diagnoses. These have been reduced to the following categories in this report: cognition and learning; emotional, behavioral and social; communication and interaction; and sensory and physical. Specific solutions for achieving good practice according to these broad categories can be found in Chapter 2 of this report.

There are also generic good language learning practice issues which need to be addressed reflecting broad principles of quality and good practice. Any classroom, and the pupils it serves, is a microcosm of the diversity of the surrounding society. In recent years we have seen the degree of diversity increase to an unprecedented scale in some localities. Diagnosis, or labeling, should not be the prerequisite factor for discussing if, and how, we are to teach foreign languages to any specific person or group. Diagnosis, at an early stage as possible is essential, as is access to opportunities for periodic re-diagnosis. Diagnosis needs to be directly linked to educational solutions, as is clearly the case in contemporary SEN. It is an essential tool for looking at opportunities, but not an end in itself. The problems arise if the diagnosis is used to block access to specific curricular areas, such as foreign language learning. There are many ways in which this could and reportedly does happen.

Decisions made in segregated SEN schools may be based on views that these specific learners might not benefit from learning foreign languages. In those mainstream schools which are affected by 'market forces' such as competition through examination result profiles, there will be underlying pressures to maximize average performance. This can mean encouraging de-selection of pupils whose grades may be lower than higher from any subjects considered 'difficult' and which are not compulsory. These are but two possibilities, but there are others, as discussed in this report.

Foreign language learning is no longer seen as something which happens exclusively within the school curriculum. It is a lifelong endeavour, and in formal basic education there is an imperative need to lay the foundations – at least a key to the door, if not rooms in the house of language itself.

The prerequisite factor is 'what works for this learner at this given time and place'. This then leads us to address the time and place, and the social and professional variables which are influencing decision-making according to principles of quality foreign language learning such as relevance, transparency and reliability.

The predominant professional issue in language teaching lies in negotiating and designing individualized language learning paths.

A key social variable concerns the recent trends towards inclusion of special needs learners into mainstream schools. Putting aside the controversies surrounding inclusion which are articulated in some environments, if we ask mainstream teachers to accommodate special needs learners into their language learning classrooms, then we need to actively consider how to better prepare them for this task.

Another social factor is countering prejudice, namely in communicating to stakeholders the ethical imperatives of 'languages for all' alongside showing evidence of achievement and success where learners, possibly struggling with considerable handicap, can benefit from the availability of quality foreign language learning. There is evidence of success in schools where pioneering educators have found and implemented solutions for young people with even the most extreme forms of handicap. These successes need to be further put under the spotlight.

The pieces of this socio-professional jigsaw are largely in place. These are advances in:

- adopting an educational paradigm for approaching special needs education rather than one which is principally psycho-medical
- perceiving school-based education as a platform for lifelong learning
- acceptance of the value of inclusion in education
- initial and in-service foreign language teacher education
- understanding of cognitive development and learning with respect to language learning
- diagnosis of special needs and response
- availability of alternative language learning appraisal tools such as the European Language Portfolio which accommodates diverse achievements
- ICT technology which can further support individualize language learning paths
- European networking of learners, stakeholders and professionals

These are complemented by

- European commitment to the imperative of learning languages (MT+2)
- national policies which determine equal access to curricula

Across Europe what appears to be lacking is professional integration. This integration can be achieved through supporting regional and often grassroots (school-based) good practice at a European level so as to facilitate the extension of good practice from one location to another. The single key element appears to rest with professional development of foreign language and SEN teachers, because these people are the main instruments in ensuring that policy is converted into practice. This development is largely dependent on achieving even greater synergy between educationalists, researchers and policy-makers.

During the course of this work it has also become apparent that whereas there is a wealth of information available in two widely used European languages (EN, DE), there appears to be a significant difference with respect to others (in terms of population size). It is not possible to explain why this appears to be the case. Perhaps it reflects a weakness in our approach. Regardless, it does indicate that there is a need for communicating insights and innovation into different languages. This is particularly the case with teacher development and materials.

Quantitatively, SEN pupils are in a minority, although there are indicators that this might be a larger minority than is recognized across Europe as of now. Minorities tend to be marginalized, by, for example, market forces. For instance, publishing companies may not be willing to invest in the development of low-volume SEN-specific foreign language learning materials. In addition, availability is probably restricted to wider-used target languages, especially English. Multi-media applications may be easier to tailor and render into different languages, but there is a need for non-market driven support if a range of target languages are to be taught to SEN pupils across Europe.

During the six months time-frame leading to this report, we have interviewed and corresponded with a wide range of stakeholders. One outcome is the view that teaching languages can and does work with SEN pupils. Another is the possibly transitional problem that whilst recognizing the need to offer foreign languages to all young people, teachers consider that they lack the knowledge and skills to do it. When asked further about how those practitioners who actively

engage in such language teaching measure success, responses range from learners achieving pass rates in tests, through to recognizing both linguistic and other achievements resulting from the experience.

One major issue concerns learner self-confidence, which is widely agreed to be one of the pillars of education itself. These practitioners who have, for whatever reason, become actively engaged in SEN foreign language learning provision often cite not just what can be achieved, but also what is denied if it is not done.

Jean-Baptiste Molière is cited as saying 'we are responsible not only for what we do but also what we do not', and in the course of this work the arguments for provision rest not just on having suitable policies, teachers available and so forth. They also focus on ensuring that when the SEN pupil is in a foreign language classroom, whether in a mainstream or segregated school, they are truly included in the language learning process, and not physically present but pedagogically side-lined. There is no available evidence to argue that this is the case, but there are indicators that pro-foreign language learning policies may not yet be fully implemented to the best possible degree in the classrooms.

This report is one step towards pooling experience on good practice in Europe at policy and classroom level. After failing to identify relevant Europe-wide quantitative data, we decided that it was essential to fulfill the initial reporting specifications through a qualitative approach. This was achieved through direct contact with a range of different stakeholders. Interviews in this very complex field with this wide range of people led us to opt for giving space in the report for a number of direct interventions alongside analysis and provision of information.

We are deeply grateful to all these contributors for enabling us to include 'voices from the field' directly into the body of the report. We are aware that there are leading experts that we did not approach, or who were otherwise unable to respond within this task time-frame. The purpose of this report has not been to provide a comprehensive understanding of scientific advances in this field, but to examine the situation 'on the ground' and make recommendations accordingly. The reason why so much 'grassroots' level expertise has been brought into the body of the report is because it reflects the extent to which localized solutions are being actively explored and implemented.

Sometimes 'necessity is truly the mother of invention' – just take the case of the dyslexic inventor of virtual reality, Daniel Sandean, who initially designed ways to 'walk through data' not just read it as print. In SEN we have found that an extensive number of educational initiatives, including those focused on foreign language development, have arisen from a personal or localized need to identify and handle solutions.

We hope that this report will be one step towards further consolidation of such expertise in the future. We also hope that the recommendations do justice to the complexity of the issue, the solutions within range, and the aspirations of SEN language learners.

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[1] *Howard Gardner 2003. Multiple Intelligences after Twenty Years, 2003. Gardner, H. American Educational Research Association, Chicago, USA. 21.04.03. See, for example, Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983); The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach (1991); Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice (1993); Intelligence Reframed (1999); The Disciplined Mind: Beyond Facts and Standardized tests, The K-12 Education That Every Child Deserves (2001)*

[2] *Schwarz, R. Learning Disabilities and Foreign Language Learning: A Painful Collision, in Chapter 2.*

[3] *See, for example, the OECD study Learning to Change: ICT in Schools (2001).*

[4] *Newsletter of the Tobias Association for Healing Education No.7, 1999, Summary of 1st Conference on Dyslexia in Canada. See Thomas G. West, In the Mind's Eye and Insight- Computer Visualization and the Visual thinkers who are Reshaping the Future of Technology and Business.*

[5] *Tom West, see In the Mind's Eye and Insight - Computer Visualization and the Visual thinkers who are Reshaping the Future of Technology and Business.*

[6] *Roswitha Romonath (DE)*

[7] *Zoltán Poór (HU)*

[8] *Tony Cline (UK)*

[9] *European Dyslexia Association, 2004*

[10] *Interview with Antero Perttunen, Tarja Hännikäinen & Marja Lounaskorpi, 2004*

[11] *Derived from interview data, 2004*

[12] *Special Needs Education in Europe: Thematic Publication (2003) The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (in conjunction with Eurydice)*

[13] *Special Needs Education in Europe: Thematic Publication (2003) The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (in conjunction with Eurydice)*

Topic

This report has been compiled at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in response to Tender DG EAC/23/03 – Teaching Languages to Learners with Special Needs.

The original study 'rationale' notes that:

"The learning of foreign languages is included in the curriculum of compulsory education in all European countries. Provision for teaching languages to students with special needs varies considerably. To date, this is an area in which there has been relatively little sharing of experience on good practice, at either policy or classroom level, in Europe. In line with the objectives of the European Year of People with Disabilities the study is meant to gather and analyse examples of good practice in catering for pupils with special needs in language learning. It should provide a sound basis for future discussion and policy making in this area.

The European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 served to 'pay special attention to the right of children and young people with disabilities to equality in education, so as to encourage and support their full integration in society and to promote the development of European co-operation between those professionally involved in the education of children and young people with disabilities, in order to improve the integration of pupils and students with special needs in ordinary or specialized establishments and in national and European exchange programmes."

Objectives

The objectives of the study are summarized as follows:

- Review and summarize recent relevant literature, materials and developments concerning the teaching of languages to learners with special needs in compulsory education, whether in mainstream or segregated education.
- Analyse the results of the methodologies surveyed according to different kinds of disabilities/special needs encountered.
- Describe the extent to which appropriate methods and materials for teaching languages to learners with special needs are used in Europe.
- Present ten case studies of high quality innovation or good practice in this field, together with practical proposals for extending them to other countries, covering a wide range of disabilities/special needs.

"to date, this is an area in which there has been relatively little sharing of experience on good practice, at either policy or classroom level, in Europe"

- Make proposals about opportunities for further developments in this area at European or national level.

Compilation

This report has been compiled through a collaborative effort involving individuals and organizations throughout Europe and beyond. The breadth and scale led the core team to use various strategies in gathering and analyzing information.

- Consultation was carried out with key stakeholder organizations, research institutes, innovative schools, both special and mainstream, and a selection of individual experts prominent in the field.
- Internet-based 'calls' were put out through established networks.
- Desk research was carried out in various languages.

This report was compiled on the basis that the final outcome would need to include a broad range of stakeholders and perspectives which share interest in the key issue of teaching foreign languages to learners with special needs. The process has thus involved bringing such stakeholders together onto a common platform.

Information has been forthcoming from a range of countries. Initial calls went to the 25 member states of the European Union and 33 member countries of the Council of Europe/ European Centre for Modern Languages (www.ecml.at).

Structure

Chapter 1, Overview, provides an overview of specific special needs education fields: cognition and learning difficulties; emotional, behavioral and social difficulties; communication and interaction difficulties; and sensory and physical difficulties. It also includes comment on issues relating to diagnosis and labeling, and choice of target languages. Chapter 2, Insights, examines good practice in the teaching of foreign languages to SEN pupils in relation to diverse abilities and disabilities. This is done through extensive inclusion of expert input from across Europe and beyond. It opens with set of stakeholder statements reflecting the views of pupils, parents, teachers and others. This is followed by an examination of generic perspectives, professional support resources, and testing. Chapter 3, Innovations, provides examples of good practice and innovation through selected case profiles covering generic and specific SEN fields. Chapter 4, Generic Features of Good Practice, acts as a form of overall conclusion on good practice in terms of SEN and foreign language learning. Chapter 5, Added Value, summarizes the arguments for full inclusion into foreign language learning provision by SEN pupils. Chapter 6 contains proposals for further development, and recommendations for action. Contributor profiles, original non-English language contributions and information on European internet site links and resources on special needs, disabilities and learning difficulties follow.

Key Terms

The terms adopted in this report are in accordance with those found in Special Needs Education: Thematic Key Words.[1] National definitions of special needs education can be found on www.european-agency.org. A useful generic definition is as follows: A child has special educational needs if s/he has learning difficulties that requires special educational provision.[2]

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[1] *Special Needs Education: Thematic Key Words. 2003. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. www.european-agency.org*

[2] *Defining Adult Education, Vocational Training & Special Educational Needs, DG EAC D(2003) EXP LG 21/2003, 13.10.03*

OVERVIEW

1

SUMMARY

Learning disabilities can result from bio-chemical, genetic, development or other causes. Individual learning disability profiles differ within and across those categories which fall under 'special needs'. These categories differ widely across Europe which results in comparative SEN description often being problematic.

The rates of diagnosed or otherwise certified SEN pupils in basic education vary widely across Europe. Diagnostic recognition is equally diverse. This situation means that good foreign language learning practice needs to serve the interests of those with differing learning abilities and disabilities, and those with additional disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment. Quality foreign language teaching is the first fundamental step for these pupils, whether identified as special needs or not. The second step concerns appropriate access, adaptability and achievement according to individual requirements.

If these steps are in order, there are few young people who would not benefit from learning foreign languages. There is tangible evidence of success across all SEN sectors. Likewise, there is anecdotal evidence of the foreign language teaching profession citing inadequate resources, training and assessment systems as obstacles in achieving success.

Pupils with special needs, whether diagnosed or not, appear as a marginalized group within the societies of the European Union. Marginal not necessarily in terms of scale, because some projections suggest that the percentage of those with learning disabilities could be higher than the commonly quoted estimate of 3-5%, but marginal in terms of access to one of the pillars of European citizenship, namely foreign language learning.

Where successes have been achieved and documented, the linguistic achievements of foreign language learning tend to go alongside other educational and experiential benefits ranging from intercultural development to the building of learner self-esteem. For some of the SEN pupils in those schools which provide a quality foreign language learning experience, the benefits can not easily be understated.

"there is tangible evidence of success across all SEN sectors"

PROVISION & PRACTICE IN EUROPE

In attempting to describe provision and practice of foreign language teaching to SEN learners the following needs to be considered: 'The diversity of education systems in Europe and the lack of homogeneity of certain data give rise to the need for caution when comparing and interpreting indicators'.[1]

There are general issues relating to education which help contextualise the foreign language learning issues examined in this report. These have been summarized and adapted according to a recent and authoritative report on special needs education in Europe produced by the Agency

for Development in Special Needs Education (2003) and various Eurydice publications such as Key Data on Education in Europe (2002).[2]

The main background issues are:

- The proportion of young people officially recognised as having special educational needs differing widely from country to country (from about 1% in Greece to over 10% in Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland.[3]
- National levels of diagnosis, or other forms of recognition, not correlating to the proportion of young people receiving segregated educational provision. This ranges from under 1% to over 4%.[4]
- 'Definitions and categories of special needs and handicap varying across countries. Some countries define only one or two types of special needs. Others categorise pupils with special needs into more than ten categories. Most countries distinguish 6 to 10 types of special needs'.[5]
- Parents being involved with educational decision-making to some extent in many countries (particularly Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) but less so in 2004 accession countries, except Romania.[6]
- The tendency in some countries for an early selection of type of specific educational 'lines' which may be detrimental for weaker learners.[7]
- Most countries relying on external and transparent educational monitoring systems which enables some form of performance comparison.
- The minimum time for primary education differing considerably across Europe, as does the proportion of time spent on compulsory subjects. There is a 'growing tendency to include one or several foreign languages as compulsory subjects from primary onwards…. a trend which is entirely consistent with progress towards European integration…the amount of time allocated to…foreign languages is greater in secondary education'.[8]
- The amount of time given to teaching foreign languages in compulsory education being about 10% in most countries, and the introduction of courses for pupil age-range 6, 7 and 8 years becoming increasingly common. This results in about 50% of pupils being taught at least one foreign language.[9]
- The most common foreign language taught being English (pre-May 2004 figures show primary 42% and secondary about 90%).[10] French is the second most taught language in the former EU 15, and German in the 2004 accession countries.
- Learners recognized as having special educational needs being increasingly educated in mainstream school environments in Europe 25 according to 3 approaches; one-track, two-track, multi-track.[11]
- National 'inclusion policies' according to one of these track approaches may be difficult to categorize and subject to change because of policy considerations.[12] The extent to which special needs learners follow mainstream curricula is influenced, partly, by these track approaches.[13]
- Interest in adopting educational, rather than just psycho-medical approaches to special needs learning leading to widespread interest in the development of Individual Educational Plans for learners.
- Tension resulting from the move towards 'inclusive non-segregated education' for special needs learners reportedly affecting both schools and teachers. This tension is noted in relation to shifting focus from 'special' to mainstream schools, and moving more educational responsibilities from 'special' to mainstream teachers. The transformation is said to imply 'huge consequences for special needs education'.[14]

- Difficulty in identifying quantitative indicators which show how the move towards non-segregated education and, in particular, the development of Individual Educational Plans, impact on the availability and quality of foreign language learning educational provision. Monitoring and evaluation procedures which lead to transparency and accountability differ widely across Europe in this respect.[15]

- Trends towards 'inclusive education' reportedly working fairly smoothly at primary level, but 'serious problems emerging' at secondary level.[16] The main problems at secondary level are reportedly inadequate teacher development and negative teacher attitudes.

- Possible problems in availability and provision of quality foreign language teaching; although there is a trend across Europe 25 for early foreign language learning (e.g. starting at primary level), the bulk of available curricula time for languages is at secondary level overall. Thus, if there are 'serious problems' affecting teachers of all subjects, it can be fairly assumed that these would also be prevalent within the secondary foreign language teaching profession.

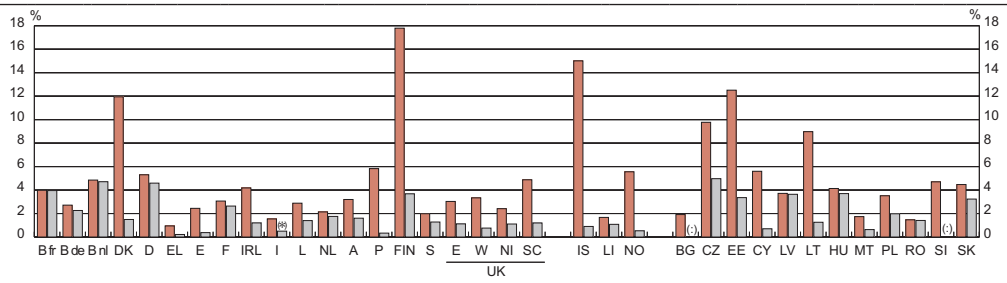
- Insufficient information on what happens in a mainstream foreign language learning classroom which includes certain types of special needs learners who may or may not have previously been educated in segregated schools, in relation to that young person being fully included in the lesson. There is widespread anecdotal opinion that even if such learners are physically present, they may be pedagogically side-lined in various ways.

- Inclusion of SEN learners into mainstream classes opening up access to the curriculum, including foreign language learning, more than might have been the case when taught in certain segregated school environments.

- Weaknesses in preparing foreign language teachers for increased inclusion of SEN learners into mainstream classes.

- If schools become 'market-oriented' and under pressure to show 'results' then this could go against the interests of SEN learners particularly in respect to non-obligatory subjects, or those which are often considered 'hard' – such as has traditionally been the case with languages in some countries. Results-oriented 'competitive' educational systems may place pressure on certain pupils to avoid learning or otherwise taking tests in foreign languages. As noted by the European Agency for development in Special Needs Education '…the wish to achieve higher outputs and to include pupils with special needs can become antithetical'.[17]

When we consider provision of foreign language teaching to SEN pupils across Europe, the primary issues for consideration are official recognition of needs and access. Figure 1 shows the percentage of children 'recognised as having special educational needs and the percentage of these children who are educated within separate structures (special class streams or segregated schools, 2000/2001).[18]



%	B fr	B de	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK E	UK W	UK NI	UK SC
	4.0	2.7	4.9	11.9	5.3	0.9	2.4	3.1	4.2	1.5	2.9	2.1	3.2	5.8	17.8	2.0	3.0	3.3	2.4	4.9
	4.0	2.3	4.7	1.5	4.6	0.2	0.4	2.6	1.2	<0.5 (*)	1.4	1.8	1.6	0.3	3.7	1.3	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.2

%	IS	LI	NO	BG	CZ	EE	CY	LV	LT	HU	MT	PL	RO	SI	SK
	15.0	1.7	5.6	1.9	9.8	12.5	5.6	3.7	9.0	4.1	1.7	3.5	1.5	4.7	4.5
	0.9	1.1	0.5	(:)	5.0	3.4	0.7	3.6	1.3	3.7	0.6	2.0	1.4	(:)	3.2

Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education and Eurydice (in the case of European countries in which the Agency has no representatives).

Additional notes

Germany: In one Land (Saarland), the data does not specifically include pupils with special education needs who are integrated into mainstream education.

Greece, Spain, Ireland, Finland and United Kingdom: 1999/2000.

Greece and Lithuania: Upper secondary education (ISCED 3) is included in the data.

France: Pre-primary education (ISCED 0) and upper secondary education (ISCED 3) are included in the data.

Luxembourg: In the absence of any firmly defined criterion, the percentage is no more than a rough guide (based on pupils catered for by rehabilitation facilities).

Portugal: The data refers solely to public-sector education.

Finland: The vast majority of pupils recognised as having special educational needs receive part-time special education, in which they are given special support for their minor learning or adjustment problems.

United Kingdom (E/W/NI): Figures also include some pre-school and post-compulsory school age children.

Bulgaria: Most children recognised as having special educational needs attend special schools or classes.

Explanatory note

The percentage of children who are recognised as having special educational needs is based on the definition and the

categories established within each country. These vary considerably from one country to the next.

Children recognised as having special educational needs who receive part-time schooling in mainstream provision are not

included.

Percentages are calculated with respect to the total number of pupils in compulsory education.

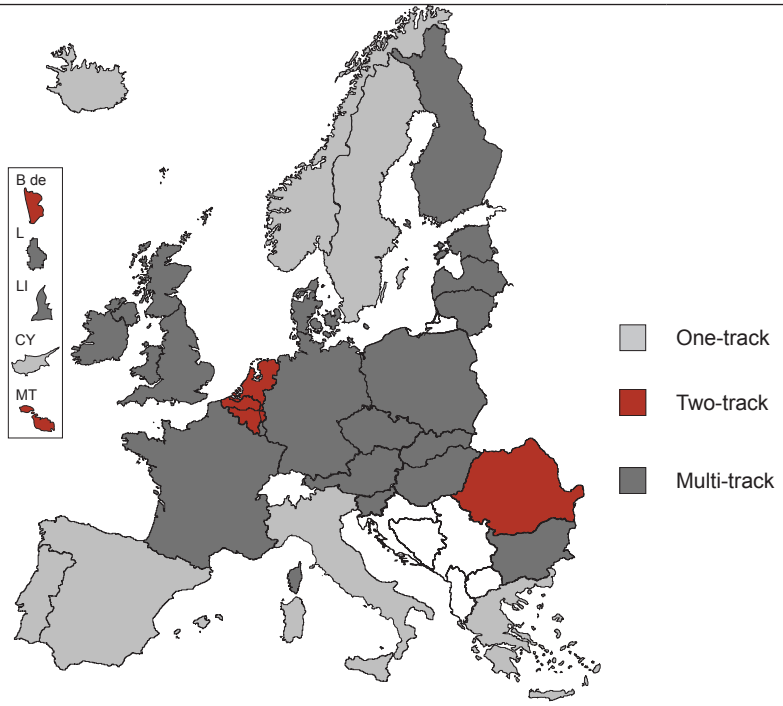
Figure 1. Percentage of pupils recognised as having special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with special needs educated separately (special classes and schools). Compulsory and primary education 2000/2001. Source: Key Data on Education in Europe 2002. Eurydice/Eurostat.

There is widespread interest reported in defining special needs within an educational paradigm. This is encouraging in terms of foreign language provision.

Considering each learner, case-by-case, in relation to educational needs, has led to the development of Individual Educational Plans. Given appropriate policy, resources and motivation, it is possible to have foreign language included in these individual plans. It is likely that in the past, in those cases where diagnosis and appropriate labelling was used, certain cohorts may not have been given access to foreign language learning on various grounds ranging from aptitude through to justification for the investment considering the overall educational needs of these pupils.

The parallel trend towards provision of differing types of education is also on the agenda throughout Europe. This will impact on foreign language education provision.

The following Figure 2 shows the main types of provision.[19]



Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education and Eurydice.
Additional note
Iceland: One-track provision has gradually replaced the multi-track approach.

Figure 2. Main patterns of provision for children with special needs 2000/2001. Source: Key Data on Education in Europe 2002. Eurydice/Eurostat.

One-track provision, found in Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, concerns countries that 'develop policy and practices geared towards the inclusion of almost all pupils within mainstream education'.[20]

Multi-track provision, found in Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and United Kingdom, concerns countries that 'have a multiplicity of approaches to inclusion (i.e. mainstream and special education systems).[21]

Two-track provision involves 'two distinct education systems'.

There is overlap across these types of provision resulting from different social frameworks, or in the case reported for Germany and the Netherlands in particular, as a result of ongoing policy changes.

More recent data is expected in 2005 (Eurydice) but overall there is a trend towards inclusion of special needs learners into mainstream schools. At the same time there have been moves towards establishing resource centres where existing special schools, or newly created centres of expertise, facilitate the educational processes required for successful inclusion. 'Most countries report that they are planning to develop, are developing or have developed a network of resource centres in their countries. These centres are given different names and have different tasks are assigned to them. They may be called knowledge centres, expertise centres or resource centres. In general, the following tasks are given to these centres: provision for training and courses for teachers and other professionals; development and dissemination of materials and methods; support for mainstream schools and parents; short-time or part-time help for individual students; and support in entering the labour market'.[22]

There is no existing single network of these resource centres, thus it is difficult to determine if they commonly include focus on foreign language learning. Those countries which are considered as having experience are Austria, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Those actively implementing these are considered to be Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece and the Netherlands.

However, there are also examples of localized initiatives focussing on competence-building for the learning of foreign languages. A significant example is the study and follow-up of Modern Languages in Special Schools and Mainstream Units in Scotland (2002).[23]

"overall there is a trend towards inclusion of special needs learners into mainstream schools"

This follows an earlier initiative (1994) in which the project 'The European Dimension and Teaching Modern European Languages to Pupils with Special Needs' examined how to 'help education authorities and schools to ensure that the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs takes good account of the European Dimension in education and, in particular, of teaching a modern European language'.[24] This exemplary initial report identified the issues and made recommendations for action.

Even though it is over ten years old, according to the anecdotal evidence gathered during the course of preparing this report, this type of work has direct relevance for other European countries/regions.[25]

A summary of the issues found in the 1994 report is as follows:

clarifying policy

- Policies promoting foreign language learning are not sufficiently explicit in showing that special schools, and by implication, special streams within mainstream schools, should also offer appropriate access to all special needs learners
- Mainstream schools require assistance in implementing appropriate assessment systems for special needs language learners

curriculum and professional development

- Competence-building of special needs teachers to introduce foreign language learning
- Competence-building of mainstream school language teachers to accommodate pupils with special needs
- Developing specific resources for certain types of special needs learners
- Need for better information flow on good language learning practice and access to materials

A summary of the action proposed was as follows:

- Clarification of policy
- Resource-building through networking
- Development of materials bank
- Further development of materials according to need
- Provision of expert consultation services
- Provision of teacher development programmes

The Modern Languages in Special Schools and Mainstream Units in Scotland (2002) report is also of interest in how it examines 'to what extent modern languages figure in the learning

programmes of pupils who attend special schools or units, or who spend a significant amount of their week in a mainstream base, unit or resourced location. Using a questionnaire approach (150 schools in final response rate of 57%) it aimed to discover:

- To what extent the policy of entitlement to foreign language learning is being implemented in the programmes offered in secondary schools to pupils with special educational needs
- What the nature of such programmes might be
- Who is teaching the programmes
- Whether any groups of pupils are more likely than others to be excluded from language learning opportunities[26]

The key findings are summarized as follows:

pupils

- About 50% of SEN pupils follow a modern language programme
- Learners of all abilities and disabilities are included in this 50%, but those with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are less likely to be included. 'The decision whether or not to offer modern languages appears to relate to adult expectations of pupils' capabilities and to staffing resources rather than to the ability of pupils to benefit'.[27]
- Non-provision of foreign language teaching was restricted to a small number of schools

programmes

- There is a trend towards providing appropriate certification programmes
- 'Some schools are operating a policy of lateral progression: that is, where pupils are not expected to be able to progress further in their first language, they are offered a course in a different language at the same level'[28]

teaching staff

- The teaching of foreign languages shows a mixed picture. Sometimes it is handled by a foreign language teacher, sometimes by a special needs teacher/specialist
- Team-teaching is commonplace
- A lack of suitably trained staff is cited as a reason for non-provision by some schools

There are further insights which contribute to our understanding of these issues Europe-wide. The main reasons for special schools and units not providing foreign language learning were identified as:[29]

- Inappropriateness of modern language learning for some pupils
- The need to prioritize basic skills
- The lack of modern languages staff

In this study those schools most likely not to provide foreign language learning were those providing for profound, severe & complex learning needs, and also social, emotional & behavioural difficulties.

In terms of mainstream schools, the findings are summarized as follows:[30]

- Schools were actively searching for ways of making provision for foreign language learning
- About 70% of SEN pupils were offered foreign language learning programmes
- Various forms of support for teachers were being introduced
- Lack of competence in the first language 'no longer seen as a barrier to progress' when appropriate foreign language programmes available

The final conclusions of the work leading to production of the 2002 report also have special relevance in relation to the objectives of this report.

Prior to this work being carried out, 'the proportion of pupils with special educational needs whose curriculum includes a modern language was previously unknown'. The conclusion further notes that: 'It is therefore of considerable interest to discover that, at least in the schools represented in this survey , around half are currently following ML (modern language) programmes, and that the number is increasing. Pupils attending mainstream SEN bases are rather more likely to be included in ML programmes than their counterparts in special schools (70% of mainstream schools make ML provision for some of their pupils with special educational needs, as opposed to 49% of special schools). This may be related, at least in part, to the availability or to lack of information to special schools about the availability of suitable programmes.'[31] What is not known from the survey is the percentage of learners not officially certified as SEN, but who have been deselected from foreign language classes.

In addition, the survey did not find that any specific special needs category should be denied an opportunity to learn a foreign language. The main factors leading to provision or non-provision went beyond the abilities and disabilities of the learner, or category of learners, towards attitudes of stakeholders and staffing resources.

The differing levels of diagnostic recognition reported across Europe have direct and indirect bearing on provision of foreign language learning (see Figure 3).[32] These are reproduced here for easier overview:

Austria	3.2%	Italy	1.5%
Belgium (DE)	2.7%	Latvia	3.7%
Belgium(F)	4.0%	Liechtenstein	2.3%
Belgium (NL)	5.0%	Lithuania	9.4%
Cyprus	5.6%	Luxembourg	2.6%
Czech Republic	9.8%	Netherlands	2.1%
Denmark	11.9%	Norway	5.6%
Estonia	12.5%	Poland	3.5%
Finland	17.8%	Portugal	5.8%
France	3.1%	Slovakia	4.0%
Germany	5.3%	Slovenia	4.7%
Greece	0.9%	Spain	3.7%
Hungary	4.1%	Sweden	2.0%
Iceland	15.0%	Switzerland	6.0%
Ireland	4.2%	United Kingdom	3.2%

Figure 3. SEN Rates as Percentage of School Population. Source: Key Data on Education in Europe 2002. Eurydice/Eurostat.

Even within a single country (Belgium) the reported differences range from 2.7% to 5.0%. In the Nordic zone the differences are equally large, ranging from 2.0% (Sweden) through 5.6% (Norway) to 17.8% (Finland). It is not within the remit of this report to explain such disparities, but it is important to note that diagnosis and labeling may be working to the advantage, or disadvantage, of the learner when it comes to foreign language learning provision. It is also important to recognize the difficulty in handling data trans-nationally, or even within a single country, because of a large number of reasons.

To take one example, the figure above of the percentage of pupils with SENs in Sweden is reported as 2.0% of a total compulsory school population (2001) of 1,062,735. The percentage of pupils in segregated provision (special schools or classes which are almost exclusively for SEN) is stated as 1.3%.

However, in 2003 a study 'Kartläggning av åtgärdsprogram och särskilt stöd i grundskolan' (trans. Survey of the Individual Action Plan and Special Support in Compulsory Education) *http://www2.skolverket.se/BASIS/skolbok/webext/trycksak/DDD/1162.pdf* was conducted which examined the usage of Individual Action Plans (Individual Education Plans). This report estimates that 21% of the total number of pupils in Swedish compulsory education is in need of special support, and that some 17% actually receive it. In addition it suggested that about 13% of all pupils work according to an individual action plan. These figures are far closer to those of Finland and Iceland. In this case, the possible reason for the discrepancy is that the figure of 2.0% for the whole school population found in Key Data on Education in Europe 2002 (Eurydice/Eurostat) is probably based on those SEN pupils educated in Special Programme facilities (Särskolan), and does not include those in other types of education.

This single example confirms the complexity of data gathering, as noted in the original publications. In terms of this report it strengthens the argument that lack of knowledge in determining the overall size of school populations in need of special needs is a major barrier.

In moving on towards foreign language provision, we can ask if the 17.8% of Finnish school pupils officially recognized as having special needs, and the remaining 82.20%, have equal access to foreign language education as compared to, for example, the 0.9% SEN, and 99.1% non-SEN reported for Greece. Is it a case of over-zealous diagnostic recognition in one country, and lack of diagnostic facilities in another? Does the diagnosis lead towards even better and more appropriate individual learning plans which accommodate suitable foreign language learning provision in one country, and a high level of non-individualized attention in the other? What then of the pupils who have not been diagnosed as having special needs but who do have language learning disabilities?[33] There are many such questions which can be raised, but finding answers is highly speculative at this given time. What we may assume is that the movement of pupils from segregated into non-segregated mainstream schools may increase rather than decrease access to foreign language learning, as indicated in Mainstream Languages in Special Schools and Mainstream Units in Scotland (2002), and other sources consulted.

Both the diverse approaches to diagnosis, and shifts towards inclusion, are a substantial transformation process across Europe. This has direct consequences for the teaching of a variety of subjects, including foreign languages. During such a period of major structural change it is essential for stakeholders to ensure that foreign language learning provision is available for the widest possible range of pupils.

Decentralization, the influence of parents/carers, and financing are also important issues relating to change. A 'clear and widespread trend towards decentralization is reported[34], particularly in countries such as the Czech Republic, Netherlands and United Kingdom. In both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom there is also a shift of resources and decision-making to those with closest access to the learner. This means that, overall, local forces can 'more easily influence the organization of SEN. It is not possible to know how this would impact on the number of special needs learners studying foreign languages because even greater localized choice may result in the wider, European dimension being diminished. This is speculative but the anecdotal evidence of negative attitudes towards teaching foreign languages to learners with special needs, and certain other forces, might place undue pressure on such learners, and/or their parents/carers to opt out of foreign language learning.

"the elaboration of an Individual Educational Programme plays a major role in special needs education within the mainstream setting"

The influence of parents is significant in relation to formation of Individual Educational Programmes (IEP) and any role for foreign language learning. '…the elaboration of an Individual Educational Programme plays a major role in special needs education within the mainstream setting. It serves both as an expression and specification of the degree and type of adaptations to the mainstream curriculum and as a tool for evaluating the progress of pupils with special needs. It may also serve as a 'contract' between the different 'actors': parents, teachers and other professionals'.[35]

Funding mechanisms differ across Europe. The interest in pupil-bound budgets, as seen recently in the Netherlands, 'empowers the parents, stimulates accountability and promotes equal access to appropriate education'.[36] If the motivation is there to include foreign language provision, then more individualized funding approaches may cast influence. The funding approaches differ widely and these are considered 'one of the most important factors that may contribute to the further development of inclusive practices.[37]

It is reported that 'class teachers' receive some 'form of compulsory training on pupils with special needs during initial training'.[38] There is also supplementary training available but 'in the majority of countries this is offered as an option'.[39] The depth and duration of both initial and supplementary training for non-specialized teachers clearly varies considerably across Europe.

What is not known is the extent to which focus on special needs education is an integral part of initial foreign language teacher education at both primary and secondary levels. We have anecdotal reporting that there is a need for more supplementary (in-service) teaching for mainstream foreign language teachers. This results from the inclusion of SEN language learners into mainstream schools, but there is little available data upon which to draw conclusions. Considering the scale of special needs being reported in certain countries, there is a case for taking this issue further in relation to across-the-board quality foreign language learning solutions.

"access to appropriate ICT solutions for some pupils with special needs, their families and teachers, is often problematic"

The potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance general educational provision has been clearly given considerable attention across Europe. The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education has reported on this potential noting that 'access to appropriate ICT solutions for some pupils with special needs, their families and teachers, is often problematic'. It also states that 'most countries agree that access to appropriate ICT can reduce inequalities in education and (that) ICT can be a powerful tool in supporting educational inclusion. However, inappropriate or limited access to ICT can be seen to reinforce inequalities in education faced by some pupils including those with SEN. Finally, it argues that 'there is a need for a shift in focus of ICT in special needs education policies and programmes.[40]

It is possible to argue that there is evidence that significant moves have been made to introduce ICT hard and software into education in general, and in some countries specifically for SEN learners.[41] However there may have been less success in training teachers to use this resource for teaching and learning. It appears that in respect to using the new technologies with special needs learners we are at a 'watershed' where initial investment in hard and software needs to be followed by further investment in ICT language learning methodologies.

Even if differences exist according to country, level and subjects, it may be the case that not enough has yet been achieved in equipping foreign language teachers with the pre-requisite skills to use ICT effectively. If this is the case with mainstream language learning classes, then it is correspondingly likely to be the case when teaching languages to learners with special needs.

Although ICT learning programmes are available, there is often a problem with incompatibility and the fact that they may rely on standard pedagogical approaches and methods. 'These packages are potentially suitable for people excluded as a result of physical disabilities, however, they may be made inaccessible through incompatibility with assistive technologies such as screen readers etc. e-Learning materials should always seek to comply with W3C WAI guidelines'.[42]

Web Access Initiative (WAI) is directed by Tim Berners-Lee (MIT/USA), inventor of the World Wide Web: 'The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect'.[43] WAI coordinates efforts at enhancing accessibility to the web through five areas including education.[44]

In reporting on factors which hinder a teacher's use of ICT in special needs education, the four most common reasons cited[45], according to number of countries identifying the problem are:

- Lack of teacher confidence
- Lack of information and expertise-sharing
- Limited availability of hard and software (including upgrades)
- Lack of expert support/information

Three of these relate directly to teacher education in applying ICT into SEN curricula or otherwise adapted curricula. Even if these findings are about teachers in general, there is no reason to assume that they don't equally apply to foreign language teachers as well.

When reporting on those factors which support or otherwise encourage teachers to use ICT in SEN, the four most common factors[46] (as above according to number of countries identifying the issue) are:

- Positive outcomes in pupils' learning/motivation resulting from use
- Teacher's competence (and motivation) in using ICT flexibly
- Access to specialist information and other teacher's practice
- Availability of hard and software, and technical support

There is a need to determine the extent to which knowledge in using ICT for language learning, in particular for individualized learning paths, is integrated into initial foreign language teacher education. Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK are all reported as having 'ICT as a general part of initial teacher training'.47 However, only two countries, Austria and the Czech Republic are reported to have training in the use of ICT specifically for SEN in initial teacher education.[48] Although there are specialist ICT for SEN supplementary / in-service teacher education programmes provided in a range of countries (Austria, Denmark, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden and the UK – there are some regional differences reported in some of these countries).[49] There is no indication of the extent to which specialist ICT courses are available for foreign language teachers.

The relationship between ICT and SEN was examined in a 1999-2001 project conducted by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education which is reported in Information and Communication Technology in Special Needs Education – recent developments in 17 countries (2001). One of the concluding comments is particularly relevant in relation to teaching and learning foreign languages. 'Information on the needs of all potential ICT users should inform the debates on the relationship between technological innovation and development and educational theory.

"the language teacher who teaches in mixed ability classes needs, by definition, to adopt an 'eclectic' approach"

The findings of this project support the view that 'understanding of ICT in SNE users' educational and technological needs should be the basis for the policies and infrastructure of ICT provision which underpin the practice of teachers and the professionals who support them'.[50]

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education has worked on definitions and the different categories of people who belong to the special needs target group. It has argued that these categories should be clarified and detailed, even if terminology differs within respective countries. Generally SEN terminology is seen to cover those people with a difficulty or disability (visual disability, hearing disability, physical disability, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, emotional and behavioural difficulty, learning difficulty, language impairment).[51]

The Bibliography of Modern Foreign Languages and Special Educational Needs produced and managed by David Wilson[52], which contains over 1 100 references Europe-wide, groups these categories according to the following:

- Cognitive and Learning Difficulties
- Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties
- Communication and Interaction Difficulties
- Sensory and Physical Difficulties

It needs to be stressed that, in some cases, with any given pupil, there is the possibility of overlap across and within these broad categories. In addition, the individuals that are affected, to a greater or lesser extent, by any combination of these difficulties, can all be considered in relation to three primary individual learning styles. These are:

- visual (seeing)
- auditory (hearing)
- kinesthetic (physical)

These are further complemented by others which are relevant to certain pupils, especially:

- tactile (learning by doing)
- field-independent (analytic – focusing on details and not the 'broader picture')
- field-dependent (the converse of field independent – focussing on the whole with little concern for details)
- reflective (requiring time for planning and valuing accuracy)
- impulsive (converse of reflective).

These are the components of the basic framework for approaching how to teach a foreign language to the SEN learner. The language teacher who teaches in mixed ability classes needs, by definition, to adopt an 'eclectic' approach. 'Potential classroom problems include disruptions by the SEN student, other students, or both; teacher frustration; and the inability of the learning disabled student to cope with the material and keep pace in class, often eventually lead to failure'.[53] An eclectic pedagogical approach is based on providing an active response to diverse foreign language learning styles.

For example, it has been argued that some SEN learners do not adapt well to mainstream foreign language learning classrooms.[54] If you take a child with an autistic spectrum disorder, that child may be overly social in one-to-one situations, and overly anti-social in group situations, such as in classroom contexts. S/he may respond very well to one approach, and very poorly to another. In such a context the language teacher can consider which of the foreign language learning style approaches might best fit this learner or group of learners be it, for example, largely 'field-independent' and 'reflective' or 'field-dependent' and 'impulsive'.

The same applies to the use of an alternative learning medium such as ICT. The application needs to complement the pupil's preferred learning styles. For instance with ASD, ICT can be highly complementary if the pupil is able to 'repeat learning sequences' and if it provides sensory stimulation such as colour, light, sound, music and so forth. But if the software is inappropriate, or the conditions for use not suitable for preferred basic learning styles, then successful outcomes will be hard to achieve.[55]

The core parameters involved are:

- Scale & Time-Frame – the number (learning volume) of the items to be learnt in a given period
- Complexity – of items to be learnt in a given period
- Relevance – in supporting learner motivation
- Appropriateness – in achieving learner-centeredness
- Input – of teacher delivery and methods
- Output – suitable channels for the pupil to respond & participate
- Participation – extent to which the pupil is involved with tasks and processes
- Performance Indicators – setting appropriate benchmarks reflecting achievable, transparent and recognized goals

- Transferability – so the curriculum and learning goals link to the cognitive and learning characteristics of the pupil

- User Friendliness – Learner-sensitive use of materials and classroom aids

Clearly these parameters are relevant to any foreign language learning classroom. In that classroom there may be pupils who have obvious signs of disability, alongside those that show no outward signs of having special learning needs. It has been noted that it this latter group which may influence negative peer pressure from other pupils.[56] For all learners with special needs, the parameters need to be carefully considered from the use of handwriting such as on a whiteboard,[57] through to sentence and word difficulty,[58] and even the colour of paper used for pupil's materials.[59] The list of recommendations and guidelines in available literature is considerable.[60]

COGNITION & LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Cognition & Learning Difficulties covers moderate, severe and specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia - auditory (dysphonetic dyslexia), visual (dyseidectic dyslexia), mixed or classic (dysphonetic and dyseidectic dyslexia), dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and dysgraphia.

Pupils in this category have a particular difficulty in learning to read, write, spell or use numbers; with limited short-term memory, organisational and coordination skills. 'Pupils with specific learning difficulties cover the whole ability range and the severity of the impairment varies widely.61 Pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD), or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD) also vary considerably in relation to severity of difficulties and needs.

For example, the features of MLD are described as: 'having much greater difficulty than their peers in acquitting basic literacy and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.'

Features of SLD are described as: 'significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on pupil's ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and coordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills'.

Features of PMLD are described as: 'having complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language.[62]

"the only 'disabling' conditions that our pupils have are low expectations and assumptions made by adults"

In reference to language learning and MLD, 'the only 'disabling' conditions that our pupils have are low expectations and assumptions made by adults', comments Keith Bovair, 'I am proud of the educators in my setting who took a belief and turned it into a reality. They were from the 'mainstream' adapting to 'special' and creative in their delivery'. Bovair is describing what happened in a school catering for pupils with moderate learning difficulties which successfully introduced foreign language teaching.[63] There are many examples from across Europe which offer examples of successful teaching of language to pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

In terms of SLD 'until recent years, pupils would rarely have been given the opportunity to experience foreign language teaching, yet such pupils can both enjoy learning a language and progress linguistically, socially and culturally…' At the Shepherd School, UK, a specialist teacher of French was appointed and through application of suitable teamwork and attainable goals, foreign language learning became not only enjoyable but achievable.[64] 'With a multi-model, multi-sensory approach to communication activities, the benefits to pupils' self-esteem

were quite considerable. Songs, rhymes, games, food and drink samples, authentic smells and items pleasant to feel and hold are as essential ingredients to any lesson as meaningful exchanges in (the target language). For students with very little or no vocalisation, the use of signing and symbols to support their language learning is essential. The Makaton system used in school lends itself perfectly to this.'[65]

Pupils with specific learning difficulties, and the educators who teach them foreign languages, have more specific solutions at hand, than is the case with some other SEN categories. For example, certain types of dyslexic pupils can benefit from what is termed the Orton-Gillingham Method which is a 'language-based, multi-sensory, structured, sequential, cumulative, cognitive and flexible educational approach which can be applicable to first and second language learning.[66] For example, the use of phonics and phonemic awareness exercises could widely apply to SLD pupils.[67] The same applies to the types of multi-sensory techniques which can be used and supplemented with other interventionist strategies such as kinetic and mnemonic techniques. Referring to dyslexia 'we can learn to read, write and study efficiently when we use methods geared to our unique learning style'.[68] These methods are widely reported and can be applicable across the SEN category range. Some are as applicable to helping with visual and auditory functioning when learning a first and second language. For example, Schneider and Crombie (2003) list key principles for teaching a foreign language to pupils with dyslexia. These are summarized as follows: use of multi-sensory techniques, making language patterns explicit, over-learning, stimulating metacognition, slowing the pace of presentation and 'engag(ing)' students by activating their personal strengths and interests and by giving them individual space.[69]

"a strong link between learning foreign languages and 'the positive impact this has on the pupils social skills and sensitivity towards others"

EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIOURAL & SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES

There is a very wide variety of special educational needs reflected in this category of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). In the mildest cases, 'pupils may have difficulties with social interaction and find it difficult to work in a group or cope in unstructured time. They may have poor concentration, temper outbursts and be verbally aggressive to peers and adults'.

Moving along the continuum of severity, 'other pupils may provoke peers and be confrontational or openly defiant and sometimes physically aggressive towards peers and adults. They are often off task and have a short concentration span. Their self-esteem is low and they find it hard to accept praise or take responsibility for their behaviour.'

In the most severe cases, 'some pupils may not be able to function at all in group situations and exhibit persistent and frequent violent behaviour which requires physical intervention. Other pupils may display similar signs of low self-esteem, under-achievement and inappropriate social interaction, but without outwardly challenging behavioural outbursts'.

In some serious cases of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty (EBD) a pupil 'may be withdrawn, depressive aggressive, or self-injurious'.[70] Those pupils with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) show short concentration span and higher levels of impulsivity. Those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are similar to ADD but also have a marked level of hyperactivity.

There are some examples of foreign language learning initiatives reported, and possibly many others not in the public eye, whereby languages are successfully taught to BESD pupils. For example, Portal House (UK) caters for boys (5-11 years) with emotional, social and behavioural educational needs. All pupils have been excluded from at least one mainstream school, and some have fallen out of education for one to two years. It is argued that there is a strong link between learning foreign languages and 'the positive impact this has on the pupils social skills and sensitivity towards others'. The focus is on acquiring 'listening and speaking skills – skills which have a positive impact on other areas of the curriculum'.[71]

There is much evidence available that foreign language learning can be successful for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, but there is no set of methodologies which are exclusively applicable across the range.[72]

COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION DIFFICULTIES

This covers speech/language difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). ASD includes Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Semantic-Pragmatic Disorders, Speech and Language Difficulties.

Pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) cover the whole ability range and 'have difficulty in understanding and/or making others understand information conveyed through spoken language. Their acquisition of speech and their oral language skills may be significantly behind their peers. Their speech may be poor or unintelligible. Pupils with speech difficulties may experience problems in articulation and the production of speech sounds. They may also have a severe stammer. Pupils with language impairments find it hard to understand and/or use words in context. They may use incorrectly with inappropriate grammatical patterns, have a reduced vocabulary or find it hard to recall words and express ideas. They may also hear or see a word but not be able to understand its meaning or have trouble getting others to understand what they are trying to say'.[73]

"autism as a different way of thinking and learning, not as a deficit"

'Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) may have a difficulty in understanding the communication of others and in developing effective communication themselves. Many are delayed in learning to speak and some never develop meaningful speech. Pupils find it difficult to understand the social behaviour of others. They are literal thinkers and fail to understand the social context. They can experience high levels of stress and anxiety in settings that don't meet their needs or when routines are changed. This can lead to inappropriate behaviour. Some pupils with autistic spectrum disorders have a different perception of sounds, sights, smell, touch and taste and this affects their response to these sensations.[74] Asperger's syndrome, a form of ASD, which is also known as Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), differs in that 'there are no clinically significant delays in language or cognition or self-help skills or in adaptive behaviour, other than social interaction'.[75]

Speech & language disorders (SLD) may or may not be regarded under special educational needs. These often relate to oral motor function, and range from 'simple sound substitution through to the inability to understand or use language or use the oral-motor mechanism for functional speech and feeding'.[76] Pupils with Semantic-pragmatic Disorders (SPD) have been described as those with 'mild autistic features and specific semantic pragmatic language problems'.[77] SPD, which was originally defined as late as 1983, covers many complex features. In the past some of these were considered 'behavioural' but in more recent years more attention has been given to specific learning features such as information processing, and extracting meaning, and difficulties in focusing on listening. Some pupils display both semantic and pragmatic disorders (as in understanding meaning and having difficulties in using a language socially). Other pupils show one of these more than the other.

In an article on Hillpark School in Scotland, where pupils with Asperger's syndrome learn a foreign language, the following is observed: 'Originally a mainstream teacher, (Vivienne) Wire sees autism as a different way of thinking and learning, not as a deficit. Teaching (a foreign language) to a youngster with Asperger's syndrome, she says, directly addresses the social and communication problems and gives them a chance to overcome these…. also, the pupils have many strengths in favour of language learning, she says. Good rote memory, for example, is ideal for vocabulary learning. Youngsters are keen on routine and this, coupled with a lower level of self-consciousness about speaking out, works well with greetings and instructions in (the foreign language) classes. This lack of self-consciousness brings an added ability to repeat accurately and mimic speech, so a good (target language) accent can develop naturally'.[78] She also notes that '…young people with Asperger's syndrome (who) generally have a high level of language skills. In languages a teacher can really relate to the mood of an individual, using versatility and spontaneity'.

Wire's research work examined autistic spectrum pupils 'in order to explore their experience of learning a foreign language and to see if there were any autism-specific barriers to this subject or any strengths which could be capitalized on'.[79]

In Research into Autism and Language Learning[80], Wire is reported to have found that 'teachers working with such pupils felt that learning a foreign language helped introduce quite 'sheltered' youngsters not only to another language but also to different culture'. Learning a

foreign language was also seen to 'increase opportunities to improve their impaired social interaction and communication skills', and that 'the pupils themselves felt it was no harder to learn a foreign language than to study other non-practical subjects'.[81]

SENSORY & PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES

Sensory and physical difficulties (hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical and medical difficulties), physical and medical difficulties (including Cerebral palsy and traumatic brain injury)

There is a wide range of difficulties which may be sensory and physical. ´The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness (HI) or visual impairment (VI) through to lesser levels of loss, which may only be temporary. A few children will have multi-sensory difficulties (including deaf/blind) some with associated physical difficulties. For some children the inability to take part fully in school life causes significant emotional stress or physical fatigue'.[82]

"about 20% of children experience difficulties at some time"

Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) is used when a pupil has a combination of visually-impaired (VI) and hearing-impaired (HI) difficulties. Physical Difficulties (PD) covers a wide spectrum from those who have one of a number of conditions which result in reduced mobility. Examples of these are cerebral palsy, spina bifida and hydrocephalus and muscular dystrophy. Some PD pupils can learn effectively without additional educational provision'.[83] Some may also have 'sensory impairments, neurological problems or learning difficulties'. Some pupils are mobile but have significant fine motor difficulties which require support. Others may need augmentative or alternative communication aids.[84]

Foreign language learning solutions for the visually and hearing impaired and those with physical and medical difficulties are characterized by a range of additional tailored support features and aids. These specifically gear the pupil towards encouraging the pupil to learn with all available senses.[85]

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES COMMON TO ALL SEN CATEGORIES

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education summarizes the following as effective within inclusive education.[86] These apply to SEN and foreign language learning:

- Cooperative teaching – teachers working together with other teachers (a specialist or colleague), the head teacher and other professionals;
- Co-operative learning – learners that help each other, especially when they have unequal levels of ability, benefit from learning together;
- Collaborative problem solving – for all teachers, clear class rules and a set of borders – agreed with all the learners – alongside appropriate (dis)incentives have proved particularly effective in decreasing the amount and intensity of disturbances during lessons;
- Heterogeneous grouping – mixed ability level groups and a more differentiated approach to teaching are necessary when dealing with a diversity of learners in the classroom;
- Effective teaching and individual planning – all learners, including those with SEN, achieve more when systematic monitoring, assessment, planning and evaluation is applied to their work. The curriculum can be geared to their needs and additional support can be introduced effectively through an Individual Educational Programme (IEP) that fits with the normal curriculum.

"throughout Europe 15 it has been estimated that 37 million people have dyslexia which is about 10-12% of the whole population"

SCALE, LABELLING & POTENTIAL

Enhancing equality of access to foreign languages education by SEN pupils is heavily linked to labelling. The significance of labelling is even more profound when considered in relation to the increasingly multilingual/multicultural classrooms now being found in many European environments.

'About 20% of children experience difficulties at some time. The majority finds ways to overcome them through appropriate teaching and learning methods. But for others it may last longer and they will require specific help from within the school's own resources or outside agencies. Children can come on and off the SEN list and it is reassuring to know that your child's needs are being focused upon.'[87]

"the use of words such as 'difficulty and 'disorder' may be counter-productive when considering equality of access to foreign language learning in SEN"

This is the response to a parent who asks '…the teacher says my child has special needs and should be on the special needs list. What does this mean?'

As argued elsewhere in this report, how we respond to equality of access to foreign language learning by SEN learners depends on a number of factors which are influenced by scale and inclusion. The full scale of special needs across Europe remains difficult to determine. The available figures suggest an overall 2% diagnosed and thus recognized rate, but specialists are inclined towards higher percentages. For example, take dyslexia. 'It is estimated that over 12 million children between 8-13 years old across Europe suffer from dyslexia'.[88] Throughout Europe 15 it has been estimated that 37 million people have dyslexia which is about 10-12% of the whole population. Taking this 10% it has been argued that some 4% have severe dyslexia.[89]

These are substantial figures, even if estimated to some extent. The implications are that foreign language learning classrooms include more SEN pupils than those officially labeled as such. This is the case with a whole range of learning difficulties, in addition to language learning disorders. Perhaps 'learning difficulty' is not the best term to use in opening up further discussion of this issue. The use of words such as 'difficulty and 'disorder' may be counter-productive when considering equality of access to foreign language learning in SEN. An alternative approach involves not having predominant focus on learning disorders and disabilities, but rather on different kinds of learning ability'.[90]

This would help offset one of the problems within the foreign language teaching profession which has been reported widely during the course of this study. This is seeing the special educational needs learner as different – equating this with difficult – and then arguing that insufficient training has been available to handle the situation. A broader definition which helps offset the problems arising from labeling is 'children with special educational needs all have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age. These children may need extra or different help from that given to other children of the same age.'[91] Obvious as it may appear, working definitions such as this are invaluable in ensuring that the teaching profession views the SEN pupil within an educational and medical paradigm.

"teachers often express concerns about their ability to cope with children who they perceive as different"

McConkey et al. (1999) argue that 'the growing emphasis on inclusive education around the world places new demands on serving teachers. Many have had little training on meeting the special educational needs of their pupils and possibly few opportunities to acquire the necessary skills in their practice. Consequently teachers often express concerns about their ability to cope with children who they perceive as different'.[92]

This is clearly a very important issue. But most children, if not all, can be considered 'different' in some ways, at some times of their lives. The SEN pupil needs to be considered as fundamentally 'mainstream'. Not as different and thus differentiated.

"all pupils gain when teachers adapt the curricula and their teaching styles to suit the range of diversity that is found among children in any class"

Teaching certain SEN learners can be a very demanding and highly specialized task. Some of the schools mentioned in Chapter 3 make extraordinary achievements in sometimes very demanding situations. Some of the young people in these schools need to overcome high thresholds because of disability. In responding to this situation, the idea that a Special Needs Programme is there

to cater for a minority, which is not part of the mainstream, is to oversimplify the issue. It is useful to start with the premise that all learners have diverse needs. In accepting this, one of the most important processes in education is in making a school's foreign language programme flexible, so that it can cater for the wide range of student needs, rather than '… trying to mould the student to fit a rigid programme'.[93] As argued in a UNESCO guide (2000) 'all pupils gain when teachers adapt the curricula and their teaching styles to suit the range of diversity that is found among children in any class. Usually these adaptations require little extra equipment but lots of creativity'.[94]

This logic relates directly to orientating foreign language teachers towards achieving best practice with SEN pupils because good practice for the 'minority' will lead to good classroom practice for all. These classes may include 'students with special needs who have disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature, or have a learning disability or have exceptional gifts or talents.[95] Thus we see a spectrum of those that are disadvantaged because of any number of conditions. These range from those which are visible to others which are not immediately obvious or otherwise recognized by outsiders. It could even include learners who are considered particularly 'advantaged' because they are regarded as 'gifted/talented'.

"so many SEN learners have 'multiple disorders of multiple disorders"

If you put these together on a continuum, then the question arises – how many children in a language learning class of 30 actually have 'special language learning needs'? It is reasonable to deduce that the number is high – so high indeed, that one could suggest that achieving best practice for the majority will encompass some part of provision for those considered needing SEN. As one interviewee notes, 'when they say abnormal I sit there thinking well what is normal?'[96]

This is a strong argument, and it carries heavy presumptions, and in no way is it made in order to undervalue the professionalism and commitment of so many educators working in special needs, as foreign language teachers or others. But it is an argument which has come up often during the course of this work, and it relates to the sensitivity by which we need to handle 'labelling' when we consider foreign language learning provision and good practice. One of the reasons why this is so significant relates to inclusion and its impact on mixed ability classrooms.

Put simply, a good foreign language teacher will have generic skills and a diversity-oriented attitude by which to partly adapt teaching to suit the individual needs of learners. It is these generic skills which are the basis of achieving good practice in SEN and foreign language learning. These skills are then complemented by extra input according to abilities and disabilities of the specific learner (e.g. whether hearing or visually impaired, physically handicapped or with behavioural or emotional problems, amongst other conditions).

In terms of foreign language learning, the label needs to act as a signpost, an indicator, of which direction to go in, rather than a key to a solution. This is because so many SEN learners have 'multiple disorders of multiple disorders'[97] which makes off-the-shelf solutions either too simplistic or which leads to avoidance of language learning provision.

Finally, whether labeled or otherwise, the basic question remains: can all children learn foreign languages? In responding to this question Hilary McColl (2000) comments: 'It used to be thought that intelligence was fixed, immutable; that some people were incapable of learning very much. We created separate schools for those of supposedly limited intelligence. We know now that different children learn in different ways, at different rates; we talk of intelligences rather than intelligence, recognizing that different people can be skilled in different ways. Children with physical disabilities or learning difficulties who once were cared for now have educational programmes that acknowledge their capacity to learn and make progress. All children can learn if the targets and the learning activities associated with those targets are appropriate. The whole philosophy and practice of teaching is built on this premise so why should learning languages be any different? There is ample evidence of children's natural ability to learn languages'.[98]

Evidence of successes is described in *Language for All* (2000) and supported by other research and surveys.[99] In a separate publication, McColl (1997) comments that 'all but a very small number of students can…enjoy and benefit from some form of modern language learning experience'.[100]

A final comment brings us back to the issues of labeling. '…we need to be aware of the danger of interposing our own barriers between learners and their potential learning. Believing that a particular student cannot or should not be learning a foreign language, for whatever reason, be it diagnostic or otherwise perceived, will inhibit the search for solutions'.[101] Similarly, the student who is allowed to develop that belief is less likely to succeed.

TARGET LANGUAGES

Although quantitative data is lacking, we have found, during the course of this study, that overall English language appears to be the most common target foreign language taught to SEN learners. In the English-speaking countries, the most common target languages appear to be French and German.

It is beyond the scope of this report to explore if it is possible to argue that certain languages are more difficult to learn as second languages than others. However there are some key issues when comparing the varying learning complexity of different languages. These range from potential of inter-comprehension through to types of grammar distinctions and scale of irregularities. But the starting point has to be the attributes, motivation and the surrounding environment of the individual. Basically, what is difficult for one learner may be easier for the next.

"in terms of SEN learners, however, it might be useful to question if English is the most suitable foreign language to learn"

In terms of SEN learners, however, it might be useful to question if English is the most suitable foreign language to learn, or, in some cases, if it is the ideal choice, if one disregards environmental factors. This relates to the idea of 'lateral progression' whereby a pupil learns a modest amount in one language, and then rather than progressing upwards, takes an alternative language to a similar performance stage.

Reporting on research into the learning of first languages in 15 European countries, Philip Seymour is quoted as saying "despite being the world's most commonly used language (apart from Chinese, I believe), English is the most difficult European language to learn to read. Children learning other languages master the basic elements of literacy within a year, but kids growing up in English-speaking/reading/writing families take two-and-a-half years to reach the same point."

In an extensive cross-national study, 'Philip Seymour of Dundee University UK and his team compared the reading abilities of children in 15 European countries. They found that those learning Romance languages such as Italian and French progressed faster than those learning a Germanic language such as German and English. "Children do seem to find English particularly complex and problematic though," says Seymour.'[102]

Contrary to anecdotal opinion, Seymour argues that Finnish could be the 'easiest European language to learn to read, (because) the relationship between a letter and sound is fixed'.[103] This has also been substantiated by recent research in Finland (Aro, M. 2004)[104] and discussion following analysis of the outstanding success of Finnish pupils in reading literacy reported in PISA 2000.[105] Finnish pupils ranked the highest from the study of 265 000 pupils in 32 countries. Aro (2004) writing from the perspective of reading acquisition, agrees that the most interesting aspect of variation between orthographies is related to orthographic depth, which refers to the consistency of grapheme-morpheme (G-P) correspondences. English is at one end of the continuum (of European languages examined) with inconsistent G-P correspondences, while Finnish is located at the opposite end'.

Suggesting a link between the UK, identified dyslexia rates, and the complex structure and inconsistent spelling of the language, Seymour comments '(English) has a complex syllabic structure, with several consonants often grouped together. Also, most importantly, it has inconsistent mapping between letters and sounds, as for example in *eight* and *ate*'.[106] Commenting further, Maggie Snowling is quoted as saying 'In languages where sounds simply match letters, some (reading difficulty) symptoms just would not show up….people would be struggling but no one would notice'.[107] However, dyslexia rates in Finland are also reportedly high (for example, one study cites 4% UK and 10% Finland[108]) but there are other variables involved which don't detract from the main issue that some languages may be harder to learn

than others in the European context.
Even if there are pressing reasons why special needs learners learn English as a foreign language across Europe, there could also be grounds for examining the potential advantages of adopting alternative target languages to an even greater level than appears to be the case at present.

Finally, it is interesting to re-think even Latin language in this respect. David Wilson writes 'online searches have led me to half a dozen references to the study of Latin by those with SEN, particularly students with specific learning difficulties. Apparently, the language's logical grammar and spelling system is appreciated by bright dyslexics who struggle with English and French'.[109]

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[8] *Key Data on Education in Europe 2002 (16-18)*
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[33] *The Association of English Language Teachers in Finland informally report that some 25% of pupils in mainstream classes have some difficulties in responding to aspects of English as a foreign language programmes*
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[37] *See, for example, Funding Models and Funding Systems, pages 19-25, and page 38 in Special Needs Education in Europe: Thematic publication 2003. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education*
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[52] *NB: The suggested terminology is mainly used in education as the focus is upon the specific needs of the learner and not upon the disability, which is mainly used within the medically based international classifications*
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SUMMARY

In *Stakeholder Perspectives*, Hilary McColl provides a succinct description of how one education community, in Scotland, has responded to the foreign language learning dimension with respect to inclusion of SEN pupils into mainstream schools. This case example is of relevance across Europe because even if local conditions differ, many countries or regions face similar major trends as in Scotland, which directly impact on SEN and foreign languages educational provision.

This is followed by short statement written by Daniel Charles (pseudonym) who attended secondary school in the 1990s. He is now recognised as having multiple-cognition and learning difficulties, and can be considered a severe dyslexic. He presents a personal statement on recent experience of learning a foreign language in mainstream education during the 1990s. The author's parents first sought expert advice when he was 3 years old. His mother reports that both parents tried in vain to have his condition examined and acknowledged by the educational authorities over 12 years. At the age of 11, when shifting from primary to secondary education, a school report suggesting the need for SEN intervention was disregarded, and at the age of 15 he left school prematurely. His statement is representative of the unrecognized at risk pupils who slip through the SEN net but who require special attention in all subjects, including foreign language learning. He has since then trained himself, and successfully entered working life in ICT.

The next statement is by Terry Brady, who attended secondary school some 25 years earlier in the 1960s, and is now a translator, teacher and linguist who has severe visual impairment. Recognized as having SEN, he provides a personal account of how he and other visually handicapped pupils successfully learnt foreign languages through school and beyond. Having reached a very high level of proficiency, which has equipped him for professional working life, he argues that there remains widespread inaccessibility for this particular SEN category.

Petra Kaseva provides a parent's perspective. As a linguist and foreign language teacher trainer, at the time of writing in 2004 she has three children under the age of 12 with different conditions requiring special needs. Her statement echoes those of Charles and Brady, especially in relation to the need to counter negative assumption attitudes towards provision of foreign language education to SEN learners. Whereas both Daniel Charles and Terry Brady provide descriptions mainly based on the past, Petra Kaseva writes about the pressure of 'being steered away from foreign language learning provision' in the present.

David Stewart provides a school's perspective through the eyes of a long-standing head teacher working in a special education school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. He writes about entitlement and prejudice in relation to the achievements to be gained through foreign language learning by the severely disabled.

Opening Generic Perspectives, Robin Schwarz writes from a teacher-training perspective on language learning difficulties and solutions. Her article has direct bearing on the significance of foreign language learning styles in finding solutions for SEN category pupils. In discussion

on the language-learning disabled she describes students who have no specific special learning needs apart from those which arise when attempting to learn foreign languages.

Timo Ahonen addresses SEN methodologies from a research perspective and explores what needs to be considered in foreign language teaching and learning. He outlines generic principles of good practice in SEN according to the learning, cognitive and the socio-emotional characteristics of learners.

David Wilson provides an overview of the use of ICT in teaching foreign languages to SEN pupils from a practitioner's perspective. He suggests that whereas ICT can be used as an instrument of containment and control, it can also provide an essential means for achieving high levels of learner self-achievement and self-esteem.

Opening the section *Cognition and Learning Difficulties*, Ian Smythe provides an overview of specific learning difficulties by focussing on forms of dyslexia and implications for foreign language learning. The term dyslexia covers a range of conditions and definitions of these vary across Europe. Focussing on both these conditions and Europe, he argues that although there is now much understanding of what dyslexia involves, these pupils will remain side-lined until foreign language teaching is adapted for the needs of these pupils.

Margaret Crombie follows by examining what happens in the successful foreign language learning classroom when learners with cognition difficulties are included into mainstream schools. She challenges some traditional views, such as having dyslexic pupils learn mainly through use of the spoken word, and describes how multi-sensory teaching and learning can be advantageous for learning both a first language, and a foreign language.

Annemarie Vicsek then explores the types of knowledge and skill which foreign language teachers require for achieving quality classroom practice. She explores fundamental features which should be incorporated into language teacher training in order that multi-sensory applications can be adapted and used with these learners.

Christina Richardson describes specific solutions in accommodating the foreign language provision needs of dyslexic pupils in a specific educational system by addressing the issue of predominant teaching methodologies. She observes that in her context the predominant teaching methodology is the communicative approach, where the focus is meaning-based rather than form-based. In relation to SEN, she observes that 'form-focused instruction and corrective feedback combined with communicative language learning may be more effective in promoting foreign language learning than approaches which are limited to a virtually exclusive emphasis on either fluency or accuracy'.

Valentina Tommasi focuses on a specific type of SEN category, Down syndrome. Her observations on the potential and value of teaching foreign languages to learners with Down syndrome indicate the similarities in approach optimal for other SEN categories, alongside certain tailored solutions. She also describes how negative assumptions about the capability of Down syndrome learners to learn foreign languages lead to exclusion on grounds that cannot be substantiated according to research and knowledge of what can be achieved.

Roswitha Romonath considers the underlying theoretical aspects of teaching foreign languages to learners with difficulties in reading and spelling. She discusses learners with language learning disabilities and argues that it is necessary to further re-think a number of aspects in contemporary foreign language learning methodologies, which can be found, for example, in communicative language teaching. She points out that SEN pupils of this type may benefit from more explicit, systematic and form-focused approaches. In her theoretical approach Romonath confirms practitioner-oriented statements which foresee problems with a communicative curriculum based on spoken interaction if a learner has difficulties in reading and writing. The shift towards systematic multi-sensory teaching approaches as an alternative is being raised throughout these and other contributions. The focus on contemporary teaching methodologies, which are fundamentally meaning-focused rather than form-focused, is of particular significance. Over the last decade some language teaching professionals in non-SEN mainstream education have questioned, however, whether the swing towards meaning-focused learning has been too strong in certain sectors. If foreign language learners with cognitive deficits and learning difficulties need form-focused input, then this could be advantageous for non-SEN learners as well.

Eva Gyarmathy ends this section by reiterating the view that there is a large unidentified school population with double-exceptionality which needs specific attention given to language learning styles if success is to be achieved in the foreign language classroom. She substantiates the widely-voiced argument that apart from recognised SEN category learners, there are other at risk learners who remain unidentified. As such, foreign language learning solutions for SEN need to accommodate a fairly wide cohort of pupils of cognition and learning difficulties. Her conclusion acts as an overall final statement in this whole section, namely that teaching foreign languages successfully is possible if the teaching profession responds by adapting methods accordingly.

In *Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties*, Christine J. Harvey describes how the teaching of a foreign language was introduced in a school of the emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children (5 – 13 years) in an area of considerable deprivation, and the subsequent outcomes. As in the situation described by David Stewart, Harvey's description succinctly shows the value of foreign language learning in even the most demanding of SEN contexts.

Vivienne Wire discusses *Communication and Interaction Difficulties* by describing how a special unit (Communication Disorder Unit) serves the foreign language learning needs of SEN pupils with specific focus on autistic spectrum disorders. Drawing on research she outlines the types of adjustment optimal for this group. It is an example which shows that if there is political and administrative will to ensure that foreign languages are offered to SEN pupils, that processes of adaptation are within reach, and the outcomes for the learners tangible and significant.

Sensory and Physical Difficulties opens with a statement conducted through interview with three teachers working with the visually impaired, Antero Perttunen, Tarja Hännikäinen & Marja Lounaskorpi. Although each of these contributors is interested in the teaching of foreign languages to the visually impaired, they are primarily SEN specialists, and not foreign language teachers. The significance of this lies in the types of trans-disciplinary teamwork recognized as a critical success factor in SEN education overall. The teaching of foreign languages in segregated schools may require intervention by a non-language teaching specialist. Likewise the teaching of SEN pupils in mainstream classes may require alternative work practices by foreign language teachers which lead towards multidisciplinary and multi-sensory practices. Thus, from an SEN perspective these contributors comment on equality of provision.

This is followed by Helena Aikin who considers educational provision and inclusion, from a foreign language teaching specialist perspective, in relation to the learners with visual impairment. She gives an example of how good language teaching practice for SEN, results in good language teaching practice for non-SEN learners.

The next contribution shifts to the hearing impaired. Franz Dotter describes the basic factors necessary for consideration when teaching languages to those with hearing impairment. Issues concerning sign languages remain controversial and problematic in certain educational circles. There is clearly a need to further clarify the status of sign languages in European institutions, alongside informing educators about language learning and forms of hearing impairment. This contribution provides a framework for enhancing understanding the issues from a pedagogical perspective.

Bertold Fuchs then ends this section by further elaborating issues relating to first and second languages and hearing impairment. He explains how both a written language, and even the most commonly spoken language of the environment, can be foreign languages for some hearing impaired learners. Both Franz Dotter and Bertold Fuchs clarify some of the complexities of teaching foreign languages to those with hearing impairment.

Professional Support Resources is opened by Ian Smythe and Paul Blenkhorn. This contribution examines the core issues involved when adapting information and communication technologies for the teaching and learning of languages in SEN. It is followed by a description of an internet-based bibliography of resources by David Wilson. This addresses curriculum access and management issues with particular reference to foreign languages education, special educational needs, and the appropriate use of information and communications technology.

In Testing, Ruth Shuter reports on policy and practical issues when extending examination access to learners with particular requirements. This draws on provisions and procedures used by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). The second contribution comes from the QCA (UK), and is a direct reproduction of alternative performance descriptors which are of special interest in the teaching of foreign languages to certain SEN pupils.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Entitlement & Delivery, Learner-Parent-School

Modern Languages For All: The Challenge for Schools and Education Managers

Hilary McColl [1]

Since the inception of the idea that we, the people of Europe, could and should develop and celebrate our common European identity, there has been the wish to nurture in our citizens an appreciation not only of our shared interests but also of our rich cultural and linguistic diversity. In schools this has expressed itself chiefly through the development of a European Dimension in education which has embraced both the need to offer better opportunities for young people to learn each other's languages and also the need to foster an increasing awareness in young people of the impact a common European future would have on all aspects of their lives.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that the focus initially would be on language learning, since modern language learning had long been an important element in the schooling of our most able pupils. The new challenge, however, was to extend the opportunities to all young people, regardless of their abilities and disabilities.

In many countries this new aspect of language learning was not seen as a priority and was slow to develop. Even where it became official policy quite early on, few resources were devoted to developing suitable courses and even fewer to re-training modern language teachers in the new teaching approaches, which would be required. Only relatively recently has attention turned to the notion of entitlement to language learning, and with that the realisation that something needs to be done if all young people are to be offered equal opportunities to experience themselves as successful foreign language learners and equal members of the community of Europe.

The following account attempts to trace the path that has been taken in Scotland as the education community has moved from one in which the new learners simply joined classes in the pre-existing framework, which many of them found failed to meet their needs, towards one in which inclusion and an entitlement to successful language learning for all pupils is becoming a practical possibility.

"to extend the opportunities to all young people, regardless of their abilities and disabilities"

Policy and practice in Scotland after 1989

In 1989 the then Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, in his Standard Circular 1178, expressed the view that the learning of foreign languages is a useful experience which can benefit pupils across the whole range of ability. Yet eight years later, in 1997, the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) was still reporting that evidence from inspections of mainstream and special schools indicated that a significant number of pupils with special educational needs were not being taught a modern European language[2]. In fact it had been clear for some time that practice was not keeping pace with policy and in 1994 SOEID set up a two-year project, *Europe, Language Learning and Special Educational Needs*[3], with a remit to explore why pupils were not being given access to foreign language learning; to consider how access could be improved; and to provide advice on effective learning and teaching of modern languages to pupils with special educational needs. SOEID hoped that, following publication of the project report in 1997, modern languages would thereafter *be accepted as a core aspect of the secondary curriculum of all but a very small number of pupils with special educational needs.*

The biggest surprise at the outset of this project was to discover just how much language learning was already being done in special schools. The main limitation these segregated schools reported was not, as might have been expected, the unsuitability of foreign language study for their pupils, but lack of suitable linguistic skills in their teaching workforce. With or without foreign language study, the European dimension was well developed, schools pointing out to the researchers that their pupils were 'Europeans too'. Where schools had felt able to introduce some foreign language learning, it was enthusiastically received by pupils and viewed by pupils, parents and teachers as an enriching educational experience.

This contrasted with the overall picture in mainstream secondary schools where modern language teachers had received little or no preparation, either in their initial teacher-training

course or as in-service training, for developing new approaches to language learning, which would accommodate pupils with a wider range of educational needs. Although Circular 1178 had introduced a statutory requirement that schools should provide classes for all pupils, regardless of ability, from the later stages of primary school until age 16, the courses that were then on offer and the teaching approaches in common use in secondary schools proved to be unsuitable for some of the new generation of learners. This meant that some pupils of lower ability experienced failure on a daily basis; they became discouraged by their inability to learn, and some of them ended up creating serious problems for their teachers.

"the overall picture in mainstream secondary schools where modern language teachers had received little or no preparation"

Some secondary schools reacted by withdrawing certain pupils from foreign language classes, arguing that their time would be better spent on core skills in their first language (English), such as basic number work and reading. Teachers were reporting that, even where problematic pupils managed to complete their course of language learning, some failed to turn up for the final examination and thus had no qualification to show for their four or more years' work. Scottish Examination Board (SEB) figures showed that many others took the examination but scored such low marks that the value of their effort was questionable[4]. Of course there were exceptions; some pupils were fortunate enough to find themselves being taught by teachers who believed in their right to be there and who knew how to make the experience enjoyable and rewarding. However, in the mid-nineties, around 10% of the cohort entered for Standard Grade examinations at the beginning of their final year of compulsory education were either failing to take the examination or failing to achieve worthwhile results.

There is some evidence to suggest that curriculum managers and teachers in mainstream schools, in common with pupils and their parents, tended to see these failures as evidence that modern language study is just too difficult for some pupils and that they would be better spending their time acquiring other, more basic, skills. But the question had to be asked: how could it be that pupils in special schools were finding their European entitlement and foreign language learning a pleasurable and rewarding experience, while children with similar or less significant needs in mainstream schools were not? Here was an anomaly that cried out for further exploration.

The European dimension

The SOEID Project Officers, in their publication of 1997[5], reported that the teachers encountered by project officers in special schools had enthusiastically embraced the need to introduce a European dimension into the curriculum of all of their pupils, and that for some pupils this included elements of language learning. In most of the cases examined, study of foreign culture was explicitly linked to the concept of community and pupils were encouraged to compare what they were learning of foreign cultures with their own experience. This linking of close/familiar communities with distant/unfamiliar communities provided a comprehensible context and a purpose for whatever language learning was undertaken, giving it a validity in the eyes of pupils, parents and teachers that appeared to be lacking in the mainstream setting where there was less experience of cross-curricular working. The Project Officers concluded that, although in mainstream schools modern languages as a subject had always been thought of as having a cultural dimension, this was often taken for granted and culture did not figure explicitly in syllabi or assessment structures. Absence of an explicit cultural context did not appear to worry more able pupils, but its presence evidently provided strong motivation and a sense of purpose for those who were less able linguistically.

Assessment and certification for all, after 1997

It was not until the introduction of the Higher Still reforms in the late nineties that the opportunity arose to incorporate these successful features into a formal system of national assessment, which could then legitimately provide training opportunities for the teachers who would be involved in delivering the new programmes. The National Qualifications which resulted from the reforms, provided a range of certificated programmes designed to accommodate the needs of all but a very small number of learners, regardless of the setting in which they were being educated and regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Pupils who had found the previous modern language programmes and/or the associated examination arrangements unmanageable, now had the opportunity to follow Access programmes in Modern Languages which had been

developed with the successful experiences of special schools in mind.
The new Access units are available at three levels, all of which are assessed internally. The number of topics to be covered is limited, and assessment follows closely on learning. This means that pupils are judged on the standard of performance they are capable of attaining at a given moment, while the language learned is still familiar, rather than on their ability to memorise and retain language and language structures for performance on a future occasion. For some pupils whose working memory and power of recall are limited, these arrangements make it possible for them to be credited with relatively high levels of performance without being penalised for their inability to retain information for significant periods of time before recall is required. The new Arrangements documents make clear to teachers the standards required and the conditions in which they may best be achieved, so that even without additional training, most modern language teachers are now able to offer an alternative programme of study and an assessment regime which are more appropriate for certain learners. One major result of this is that pupils experience success more frequently and are better motivated to learn. Scottish Qualifications Authority[6] statistics for the 2003 diet of examinations in both French and German at Standard Grade show a marked drop in numbers of candidates failing to achieve a satisfactory result only 4.8% of those registered obtaining a Standard Grade 7 or No Award. At the same time, numbers successfully taking the alternative Access 3 units are rising each year.

"one major result of this is that pupils experience success more frequently and are better motivated to learn"

Pupils following the Access 3 programmes are normally assessed in speaking, listening and reading only. Whilst it is recognised that writing in the foreign language can be a useful aid to learning and regular practice is recommended, writing as a discrete skill is not assessed. For some pupils who find writing a great burden, the removal of this barrier is crucial to their success. On the other hand, arrangements are sufficiently flexible for certain pupils (for example, those who are deaf) to be assessed on the basis of their performance in the written (i.e. visual) forms of the language, with less emphasis on speaking and/or listening.

Cultural studies

At Access 2 and Access 1, levels which cater for students for whom previously there had been no nationally assessed modern language programmes, basic foreign language study can be linked to study in English of related aspects of life in a country where the language being studied is spoken. Using the examples of good practice observed in special schools, pupils are required to compare and contrast life in the country studied with the same aspects of life in their local communities; thus, as they move from the familiar to the unfamiliar, providing learning experiences which directly affect their everyday lives as well as providing a broader and richer experience than that which they might otherwise encounter. At Access 1 the focus of the programme can be on sensory experiences related to cultural study and these in turn can be linked to pupils' individualised educational programmes.

Although there is no explicitly cultural unit in the modern languages framework at Access 3, some mainstream teachers who have become aware of its benefits at lower levels have been actively looking for ways of providing a similar context for learning at Access 3. In some cases this involves finding a unit outside the modern languages framework which can serve as a relevant context. For example, one mainstream school is running a Language Experience option for pupils aged 14-16. This is a joint venture between the Home Economics department and the French department and leads to certification in both subjects. Another school is developing a programme involving an enterprise activity which can be certificated alongside the work in French. It may prove possible to incorporate the Core Skill Working With Others into the same activity. These are early days, but pilot projects such as these are providing convincing evidence that appropriately designed programmes of modern languages which exploit some of the resources already existing within the school and local community can provide enjoyable and enriching educational experiences for those pupils for whom a plain diet of French or German has so far proved unpalatable[7].

The current position

"providing an appropriate programme in modern languages for almost every pupil is now a practical possibility"

Providing an appropriate programme in modern languages for almost every pupil is now a practical possibility. It is clear from the rising number of entries for certification in Access programmes that many teachers already feel able to plan and deliver successful schemes of work; others report that they will soon follow suit. Special schools and units responding to researchers in 2002[8] reported a growing interest in developing modern language programmes for their pupils. Local Authorities now have responsibility to provide any training that is required, and some of them have commissioned materials to support the new programmes. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors for Education (HMIE), speaking in autumn 2003 at a series of Conferences to celebrate Good Practice in Modern Language Teaching, reminded participants that *pupils with specific learning difficulties or special educational needs can benefit greatly from studying a modern language. There should be no assumption that such pupils will be excluded from learning a second language*.[9]

Training issues

Successful as these new programmes are proving to be, however, there still remain a number of issues to be resolved, notably issues of training for teachers.

"as more and more young people who experience difficulty in learning are included in mainstream classes, training in the skills developed by teachers who have specialised in learning difficulties needs to be made available to mainstream subject teachers"

Some special schools responding to a research survey[10] explained that they did not offer their pupils a modern language programme because they felt they did not have in their workforce appropriately qualified personnel. In some Authorities, teachers who work in special schools and units and who are not modern language specialists are offered training alongside teachers who are being trained to teach a foreign language in primary schools and this appears to be sufficient for the amount of language required at the Access levels. The availability of such training to those who teach in special schools and units differs across the country. Local authorities, who now have responsibility for in-service training of the teaching workforce, need to examine the level of language proficiency of all those providing modern language programmes, regardless of the sector in which they teach, and to arrange in-service training accordingly.

Access levels are not suitable for all pupils who are experiencing difficulties in foreign language learning. Some young people who have special educational needs or who are experiencing social or emotional difficulties are capable of achieving higher levels of performance if provided with teaching that takes their special needs into account. Training to equip mainstream teachers to recognise these needs and to devise appropriate responses is not readily available, so it is not surprising if problems still remain. As more and more young people who experience difficulty in learning are included in mainstream classes, training in the skills developed by teachers who have specialised in learning difficulties needs to be made available to mainstream subject teachers.

Collaborative practice

In some schools, staff and/or curriculum development has been achieved by providing opportunities for subject specialists and learning support specialists to work together to plan changes to the way in which the modern language curriculum is presented to pupils so that more of them will be able to experience success. Through collaborative planning and teaching, the modern language teacher has an opportunity to reflect on his/her practice, to profit from the knowledge, experience and skill of the learning support specialist, and to broaden his/her repertoire of responses to pupils' learning needs. A pilot project currently under way in four schools in Edinburgh, Scotland, is attempting to demonstrate that well-managed opportunities for collaborative planning and implementation in modern languages result in real benefits to pupils[11].

Using collaborative in-school development projects as ways of managing curriculum and staff development has several advantages over the more traditional away-day in-service courses:

1. They are cost effective

With support of senior management and flexible timetabling, time can be found in school to allow modern languages and learning support staff to meet together at regular intervals over a given time-span to plan and review the development. Training projects of this type are relatively inexpensive if it is considered that:

- They affect transfers of knowledge and skills between teachers already in the school
- There are no outside trainers' fees to pay. Senior members of staff or local authority advisory personnel can be mobilised to act as mentors if required
- Teachers do not leave school or miss their classes, so no additional teacher costs are incurred
- There are no claims for travelling expenses
- They are not limited to a single day's input but can last as long as the school determines is correct for the circumstances

2. They are focused

Each project focuses on a specific pupil or group of pupils who are giving cause for concern, or who seem likely to fail if no change is effected. Both members of the project team (a modern languages and a learning support teacher) observe the group, barriers to learning for pupils in that particular class are identified, and measures are devised which seem likely to remove or at least reduce the barriers. Thus there is an immediate benefit for the pupils who have been targeted.

3. They are 'low-key'

There is no need to change everything. Sometimes a relatively small change to the way in which a single task is organised can result in significant benefits in terms of accessibility for pupils. Pupils may not be aware of deliberate change. Gains can be built up cumulatively as new measures are seen to be successful or are modified in the light of experience.

4. The benefits are transferable

The measures adopted are evaluated on a regular basis and adapted as necessary. The principles behind those that are found to work can be applied to other tasks and/or can be tried out in similar situations elsewhere in the school.

5. They are relevant

Every project is different since this approach does not offer pre-determined solutions. It is simply a method of managing the collaborative process in order to respond to whatever local needs are posited. The outcomes of the project therefore have immediate relevance to the situation identified.

The problems

This approach to staff and curriculum development has many advantages, but there are also many barriers in the way of its implementation. Although suitable learning programmes, assessment regimes and certification arrangements are now in place which should allow all our young people a chance to experience success in the field of foreign language learning, learning support specialists are in short supply in some schools; dedicated time to pursue these improvements is not available; there is not enough slack in the system to facilitate the

collaborative planning that is needed to effect the necessary changes to classroom practice. In such schools there is little hope that languages will become accessible for all pupils.

The challenges

The benefits of successful language learning for children of all abilities and disabilities are incalculable, as so clearly evidenced in the submissions contained in this report. Some of the benefits are predictable, others are not, but all of our pupils are citizens of a multicultural and multilingual world and we now have enough evidence to show that all can be enriched by the experiences that successful language learning has to offer.

The challenge to teachers is to devise ways of presenting foreign language learning in contexts that are meaningful to learners and in ways that are accessible to the least as well as to the most able. But teachers need time and help to do this.

The challenge to those who manage education is to create the conditions in which this can happen; to make available the staffing, the resources, the encouragement and the opportunities which will make it possible for committed schools and teachers to ensure that of their pupils are well-prepared to assume the responsibilities of international citizenship.

Modern Languages has a unique contribution to make to community and international harmony. We have the opportunity to show the way, to show how modern language study is indeed relevant to the lives of all our young people.

One Learner's Perspective (cognition & learning difficulties)

Daniel Charles

I started learning French as a foreign language at the age of 8. I found that it was something that I wanted to do, and I could understand a fair amount of what I was learning. I had problems with different tenses and the different ways some words were spoken and spelled. My main problem was in understanding why some words were masculine and others feminine, the subtlety between them was always hard to see. Yet I had no problems with numbers or simple words. After a while, I soon felt as though I was hitting my head on a brick wall. Reading any long sentences, as with most of the subjects taught at school, just left me feeling hopeless.

I used to be able to follow the structure of lessons, but when I got home and tried to understand the set homework, I hadn't got a clue, even though it was part of the lesson. I just couldn't follow the written instructions. I also had problems with speed. I found that, as long as I didn't try to follow at the same speed of the teacher, I could just about manage. But then I would inevitably get lost. As I was always such a slow learner, I was always in the bottom stream for French.

But it wasn't just reading and writing. I also had problems with listening tests as I could not keep up with the speaker. I think the problem here was probably due to the sound systems used. I believe that, to concentrate on an audio tape, especially something that is unfamiliar, the speaker has to speak slowly and use a quality sound system. But even with good sound, listening to audio tapes, especially with special effects, makes it really difficult for someone in my position.

I could remember translated words easily and my French vocabulary became quite large. But, the testing system was almost impossible because it wouldn't show what I could do only what I couldn't. At the time I felt I was bottom of the class because this was another example of my failing at school. But now, I see this differently. Now, I realise that the system couldn't accommodate me, just as I couldn't accommodate the system.

When I started at Secondary School, French language tests were virtually impossible because although I could remember the words, I couldn't put them into sentences. If only I had been tested in a different way, like mainly through speaking, I could at least have shown specific abilities. But instead the testing showed only my inabilities. The school didn't want pupils performing badly in any non-compulsory exams because of the negative effect on its school examination league tables. So my formal foreign language studies ground to a halt and I didn't sit the examinations.

One Learner's Perspective (sensory & physical difficulties)

Terry Brady

As a visually handicapped person educated at special schools until the age of twenty-one[12], who subsequently went on to attend the fifth and sixth-forms of a local school, before studying for and obtaining a degree in French at The University of Birmingham (UK), it is clear to me just how valuable the learning of extra languages are. Understandably, perhaps, given my circumstances and pedigree, I am not short of suggestions as to how the process of learning foreign languages might be enhanced. I have always believed that if one can acquire one language as most people have, then, given the right conditions there is no reason why other languages cannot be learned. This belief has been confirmed by my own experience.

Furthermore, though I am all too aware of the difficulties surrounding the study of some subjects, the acquisition of languages is something that is well within the compass of visually handicapped people, unlike drawing, painting and much of the sciences.

"given the right conditions there is no reason why other languages cannot be learned"

- Why is it, then, that in the UK, at least, there is a dearth of foreign languages being taught to visually impaired students?
- Why is it, that such a text-based subject is so badly represented in terms of the recognised courses in print being transcribed into Braille?
- Why is it, that out of the minority of visually impaired people of working age in paid employment today, so few of them are using a foreign language in any way?

Whatever the answers to such questions may be, the fact is that it still remains the case that though additional languages are well catered for in print, the provision of such learning material in Braille or indeed, now, electronically, is abysmally low. Though the British in general, are notoriously slow to acquire additional languages, there is little to suggest that the situation is any better in any of the other European Union countries. This scarcity of course materials and grammars in alternative formats is compounded by the absence of reference books such as dictionaries like the *Collins Robert*. This scarcity appears to extend to monolingual dictionaries whose print equivalents, such as Robert, Larouse, Hachette, etc., can be obtained relatively easily. With such a scarcity of course and reference materials, together with a desperately low rate of endeavour at most of the special schools dedicated to the education of blind and partially-sighted young people, it is a miracle that any of them learn languages at all; the fact remains, however, that they do and some of them achieve surprisingly good results.

In the school I attended, where I took Spanish, the first students to sit national examinations in Spanish did so after having studied the language for two years – two years which were punctuated by a year where no language was taught at all. What is remarkable about this endeavour was that one student gained a Grade 1 and several others Grade 2 after just two years of study, while their sighted peers would have been studying Spanish for five years at least before they sat the examination. Interestingly, the student who gained the Grade 1 went on to study Spanish alongside sighted students in a college of further education and successfully sat the higher matriculation examination.

Later on, admittedly I was an adult by then, it took me just three years attending classes three days a week, to pass the examinations (Grades 1 and 2 respectively) I needed for university entrance. Here again, my peers had been studying French for eight years prior to sitting these examinations.

How were these two successes achieved given the difficulties alluded to above?

In the case of the Spanish course followed, the main mode of delivery of the course material was via television programs and recordings which were watched and listened to by the students. Both the associated grammar and vocabulary were dictated to the students in the form of notes prior to each lesson. Other notes were also provided by the teacher such as a series of model verb conjugations to cover the three main verb endings in Spanish. No provision was made for extra work with dictionaries or other lexical tools. It is interesting to note here, however, that

the student who achieved the grade 1 had sufficient sight to be able to read (if comparatively slowly) the printed course book and he decided, as a familiarisation exercise to transcribe the book for his own use. With the aid of a magnifying glass he was also able to consult the Collins English/Spanish Spanish/English dictionary.

For my initial French studies, though the text of the course was not available in Braille, I was provided with a print version of all the course material, (*Tricouleur,* [including the tapes] and all other printed material available to my peers). This distribution of material included a tape recorded vocabulary list for the accompanying oral examination which I subsequently transcribed into Braille. The course material provided by the school was supplemented by a copy in Braille and on cassette, of the BBC language course *Allez France*, the books being bought from the *Royal National Institute for the Blind* (RNIB), and the printed and cassette material purchased from a local book seller. This material was worked through in parallel with the school work. From the commencement of this course, I began regularly to record items from French radio that I used both as material for dictation exercises and oral comprehension. It cannot be stressed enough just how valuable this strategy was to me. This material was shared amongst some of the students studying with me who joined a self-help group I set up to add momentum to my studies and help me with my dictionary work. In this way I was able to access the print versions of the dictionaries such as the *Robert* (unilingue as well as the English French/English).

My higher level studies were characterised by an even greater effort to marshal resources. All the course material was eventually acquired in Braille - a mixture of privately commissioned transcription and borrowed texts from a Braille library. All the lessons and group work with the assistantes was tape recorded throughout both the lower and upper level courses. Written home work was produced on a typewriter and written classroom assignments were produced using one of the students as an assistant. A complete transcription of the book *La Langue des Français* was used as the parallel course to reinforce grammar and make up for the shortfall in exposure to the written word. Wherever possible, the direct method was used for teaching French and the result was a 'B' which met the requirements for entry to Birmingham University.

What stands in the way of visually impaired students being as successful in the acquisition of foreign languages as they are in that of musical skills is the widespread belief amongst educationalists that foreign languages are the prerogative of the exceptionally gifted pupil and that musicality is natural to the blind. This results in language studies not being as available to visually impaired students as music. This is absurd! We all possess highly developed language skills; the same cannot be said in relation to the mastery of a musical instrument.

All the inaccessibility problems stem from this root. The impromptu manner in which teachers gather material for their students exacerbates the problem, thus a great deal of adaptability and imagination, not to mention a good deal of hard work is needed if the visually impaired student is to redress the balance. A more inclusive policy will demand that an effort is made to change the perceptions of modern language teaching, the methods used to acquire learning materials such as newspaper articles and magazines so that they are inherently more accessible than at present, and a concerted effort to persuade publishers and other providers of language courses to produce more inclusive course and reference materials. This will demand changes in form, as much as anything else.

In this respect, the so-called new technologies have a role to play, particularly with the improvements to HTML mark-up which makes language switching possible. As well as providing greater access to the written word, the New Technologies could widen the gamut of audio material so essential in the development of oral skills. MP3 files, CDs, a dedicated language channel on both television and radio, there is room for all these and more.

The participation of successful disabled language graduates in any drive to raise the profile of language learning is essential if we want to help to add impetus and credibility and improve learning conditions not only for their particular group but all who wish to acquire enhanced language skills. It seems to me essential that the experience of those teachers who both have, and are currently teaching languages to visually impaired and other disabled students must be sought. If learning another language has transformed my life (and it undoubtedly has), then why not extend this opportunity to as many people as can take advantage of such learning? Who can tell where they will go or what they might achieve?

One Parent's Perspective

Petra Kaseva

Background

I have worked in Finland as a teacher (trainer) of English as a foreign language for an institute of further education for nearly eight years. There are four children in our family. Three of them are in school and each have slightly different special needs.

Rosa (11) is slightly dyslectic and has been seeing a special needs teacher on and off since her first year at school. She may have to continue her foreign language studies with an adjusted program when she enters secondary school in 2005.

Roni (10) is about to finish his second year at school and will shortly be starting in a special needs group of six pupils because of his amblyopia, and problems in his motor development (both gross and fine motor & hand and eye coordination) and distractibility (ADHD suspected but not diagnosed). So far Roni has not shown any signs of having language-related learning problems. He requires a lot of support to develop his writing, even though he has and will have access to a computer in the classroom. However, he seems to excel in all oral exercises, which compensates to some extent for his inability to express himself in writing.

Ronja (7) has been diagnosed with slight dysphasia. She has only just started school and it is too early to know if special arrangements will be necessary for foreign language learning.

Diagnostic Dilemmas

As a mother, the most alarming fact in our children's situation is that we are quite often told that they are not entitled to the support they need because their problems are not severe enough.

This results in a twilight situation where minor problems that could be alleviated or even solved, with relatively little effort and expense, are left untreated. Even though the problems are 'minor', they still need specialist attention – they do not disappear with age. They may not grow worse either, but they may generate other problems, e.g. social or emotional. So the children are left to simmer until their problems are severe and complex enough for the system to recognise and respond. In addition, when a parent can see an educational stumbling block at the beginning of a child's foreign language studies, it is very hard to watch a child fumble through the crucial start-up and not receive specialist support because of lack of a diagnosis which allows the support system to start. Needless to say this puts immense pressure on the teachers, the parents and - most of all - the child.

In this situation, there is evidence that children who enter education with minor learning problems unattended become adolescents and eventually adults with multiple wash-back problems which are ever more complicated and expensive to solve. Nowadays, when the ability to use more than the mother tongue is becoming so essential, by withholding specialist support in education, the system actively dis-empowers the individual. Opportunities for building a future for themselves are lost, and disappointments pile on each other. They have perhaps had to make choices related to topics they have studied, or even entire training programs they have entered, which of course would have influenced their choice of career.

"nowadays, when the ability to use more than the mother tongue is becoming so essential, by withholding specialist support in education, the system actively dis-empowers the individual"

The lack of support is, as a rule, explained away with the lack of resources (money). Therefore, it is quite infuriating to hear the specialists' frustrated stories about how money is simply thrown away on something else. I was told, for example, that people with severe aphasia are quite frequently allowed funds for extensive speech therapy. This is understandable and justified per se, but: these people will not rehabilitate. So, the therapists are actually providing these patients with basic day care in a situation where their therapeutic expertise and time would be required somewhere else, e.g. in helping out children with (minor) learning problems. The children's hospital advised us to continue with Ronja's speech therapy. However, they would not support our application for funds. The other authority authorised for providing the funds (the city / municipality) would

not support our application, either, due to the mild nature of Ronja's problems. We just have to hope that our and the teachers' support is enough; we will find out in a couple of years.

First-hand experience

In my experience, all available help tends to emphasise "basic skills", i.e. skills related to the mother tongue and mathematics. With the schools and health care centres' – not to say anything about the parents' - limited resources, the teachers and specialists are not even able to cover all the needs around these skills. Learning a foreign language is not considered a basic enough skill, so it does not receive sufficient attention, even when the pupil's problems are minor and helping her/him would not require much. The pupils are discouraged outright to start the studies of a second foreign language. For example, I was informed that Rosa should not start learning a foreign language because of being 'overloaded'. However, teaching more of the first language can both overload a child and reinforce a sense of failure. We need to have a clear understanding of how learning a foreign language can open unexplored routes for a child – not just be a cause for additional stress. A foreign language is not more of the same - I believe it can offer a child fresh opportunities for successful learning.

"a foreign language is not more of the same - I believe it can offer a child fresh opportunities for successful learning"

The big question is: can we really afford to treat foreign language proficiency as a secondary skill? Language skills do dictate career choices to a considerable extent. They may have a profound influence on the choice of career, as well as career development. Actually, it is very difficult for me to imagine any job that could be done to perfection without any skills in, or at least understanding of, a foreign language, English in particular. Even when in the job market, lack of foreign language skills will reduce career prospects in many spheres. The world is becoming more international by the minute. Furthermore, the people who lack foreign language skills will be denied the opportunities arising from European integration.

I remember two descriptions of research I read during my university studies that made a great impression on me and my views on second language acquisition.

Firstly, a study had been carried out on bilingualism in a region with strong influence from two rather different languages. The early research seemed to suggest that being exposed to two languages throughout childhood did not produce bilingual, but a sort of semi-lingual adolescents and adults: they did not turn out proficient in either of the languages. However, a closer study of the circumstances in the region revealed that the lack of sufficient skill in any language did not emerge from the population's exposure to more than one language. Instead, the semi-lingualism was caused by other factors in the people's life, e.g. social factors (such as high unemployment rate, low level of education).

"to deny them access to other languages and worlds may deprive them of strategies they could use to compensate for their problems"

Secondly, I remember reading about a study which involved teaching foreign languages to a mentally challenged girl. To the researchers' surprise, the girl was able to learn up to eight languages (I seem to remember that was the number of languages she was taught, so she may have been able to learn even more). The only difference to a non-challenged child was that she was able to learn all of the languages only up to a certain level. I suppose the level was measured e.g. in terms of the number of words she was able to remember and the level of complexity of her sentence structures.

So it seems to me that it is not about WHAT special needs pupils are able to learn. I feel it is about HOW (and how much) they are taught and tutored.

To deny them access to other languages and worlds may deprive them of strategies they could use to compensate for their problems. In my case, it is possible that I have slight dyslexia, but having been a bilingual child has enhanced my development into a language professional with communicative skills in four languages. Exposure to two languages at the early stage I was learning to speak may have enabled me to find paths and overcome my difficulties. Perhaps in my case, the additional languages have not increased my educational burden, but increased my opportunities for personal development. In addition, I was raised in a bilingual country where a lot of attention has been given to language learning in different ways. Equally, a lot of support has traditionally been offered, especially to bilingual children. My development would probably have been very different in a culture not so aware of language learning issues. I also think that this history of language learning awareness obliges us to give our children all the support they need in learning foreign languages, whether or not they have special needs.

Resourcing

As in everything, the question is one of attitude. We need resources firstly, to develop pedagogic methods that enhance language learning of pupils with specific learning needs; secondly, to provide further education for teachers and trainers (on all levels of the educational system); thirdly, to train more specialists (e.g. special needs teachers & therapists) and fourthly, to actually hire the teachers and specialists to help the pupils. Furthermore, it would not hurt to spend some resources on creating efficient models for more supportive parent-teacher-specialist cooperation.

When the system advises parents not to have a child learn this subject or that, it generally uses a framework bound on financial resourcing. If there is a prevailing attitude that language learning is basically for the normal / gifted children – an attitude which is still surprisingly alive – the SEN children will be officially offered language learning opportunities (for example because of educational legislation) but discreetly steered away on the grounds that learning a foreign language can prove too demanding.

I am an educated parent, and a specialist in languages. Thus, I am in a privileged position to recognise new visions and attitudes within the language teaching practices, but what of most parents? How widely spread is the belief that we offer SEN pupils inclusive education, and how commonplace is denial of opportunity?

"How widely spread is the belief that we offer SEN pupils inclusive education, and how commonplace is denial of opportunity?"

Because of my background, I resent the attempts to keep me in the dark about what is going on with my children. I understand the motivation between the principles of informing the parents of certain things on a need-to-know basis: there are many parents who state that there is nothing wrong with their children and with this statement deny them the help they need. However, I have so unnecessarily spent countless hours on pumping specialists and teachers (and authorities) for information, as well as on worrying myself and everyone else sick about something that I had no way of understanding without the necessary background data. Suspicion is not fertile ground for cooperation, and I do feel that the adults responsible for a child's (education) should find the time to get to know one another to an extent that enables them to form a support network for the child's overall wellbeing. The parents should be given the benefit of the doubt: most parents do want the best for their children, after all, and they do have an important contribution to make also to their children's educational needs. Parents tend to react in an emotion way initially, but usually come around provided they receive the sufficient information and support.

Contrary to a stubbornly persisting perception, most children and adults with learning problems are not lacking in intellect. They may simply be unable to absorb information through the mainstream channels that are used in teaching, or they may not have some physical feature necessary for learning a particular skill or piece of information in the way that it is being taught. Therefore, children with special needs should not be encouraged to avoid foreign language classes. Instead, new didactic solutions should be developed, methods that enable the child to use the channel most efficient for her/him.

One School's Perspective
(The Shepherd School, Nottingham U.K)

David S. Stewart

A group of young people learning songs in French, Polish and English – enjoying the differences and many similarities of language – nothing particular in that one might argue. Yet this is a group of young people with severe learning difficulties – in many countries often regarded as inducible until the last thirty years and indeed in some European countries still not part of the main education system. The group described, drawn from special needs provision in England, France and Poland, were preparing for celebration of their work for members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. With 2003, being marked the European Year for Disabled People, how far have we come in our understanding of the access to the learning of foreign languages for those with learning difficulties?

It must be said first and foremost that before we can discuss how this enhanced language learning is valued, one must examine the broader attitude to those with special educational needs in the European community as a whole. It is clear that there is varied attitude. Some countries provide for these pupils under systems other than Education. Some provide for some pupils with special needs not others. Some talk of total inclusion but it can only be for those deemed worthy of inclusion. In some countries a medical model towards those with disabilities prevails, with educational targets given a secondary place.

"this issue is surely about entitlement"

This issue is surely about entitlement. There should be an entitlement by all children to education and as part of that entitlement access to foreign language learning should be given serious consideration. In holding true to this goal, one will meet much resistance, challenges and low expectations.

Pupils with special needs, and in particular those with learning difficulties, have often to contend with severe lack of opportunities based on the low expectations of those who manage services or form policies. They can often find support from those who resent education playing a major role in their lives. Yet if their main difficulty is one of learning, surely education should be a major player.

As communication is a major factor in the lives of these young people it is surprising that research has not been done into their acquisition of additional languages. As there are usually difficulties with communication, there is an assumption that additional language learning would not be contemplated. Yet to dismiss this, can mean that many young people would be deprived of an opportunity to develop skills and indeed succeed in an area of their life.

The teaching of modern foreign languages in the U.K. has a mixed history, none more so than in the education of those with learning difficulties. (It should be noted that severe learning difficulties in the U.K. refers to those formally called mentally handicapped – having a significant and global delay). In the early l990's with the development of a National Curriculum, there was much debate about modern foreign languages and those with special needs. Some felt it to be irrelevant and unnecessary – 'Why they can't even communicate well in their own language!' For others, this was seen as an exciting challenge – why not? Surely this was an entitlement – is not the role of a teacher to support and encourage learning – to constantly set new and exciting goals for young people?

As a school, we had often met similar prejudice in our arts programme. We regularly take pupils to the theatre, to the ballet, opera and concerts. (Even to this day people cannot understand why we think this as so important).

The Shepherd School rose to the challenge and began the teaching of French in 1991. French had been chosen because that was the traditional language with which most teachers at the school were familiar. However, it is said by some that Spanish and indeed German in the early stages may be easier to learn for English students with learning difficulties.

Lingua B programmes for Teachers from special schools were begun at the nearby Nottingham University in l994, with further learning in French and language teaching methodology. Such courses continue – currently Nottingham Trent University is delivering courses for teachers in primary and special schools in the teaching of Spanish. After two years it was decided to

employ a specialist teacher of French. This brings its own benefits and challenges. The teacher may be a good language teacher but not be experienced in working with pupils with such severe learning needs. There needs to be support and training by all parties – those with a second language skill and those with special needs training and experience.

In truth the second language lessons have proved to be one of the most popular lessons – fun, challenging, even if scary, exciting and successful. Pupils have demonstrated aptitude for a second language albeit at a basic level. Lack of inhibition – often seen as a negative point – is extremely positive in pupils being prepared to have a go! And their learning was not just superficial – they learnt to use words and phrases appropriately.

The skills required for the acquisition of language – attention, listening, responding and communicating are those that are an essential part of special needs education. Doing this in another language brings another dimension. Indeed one might argue that such learning engages another part of the brain. There have been pupils who have been able to do things such as counting more accurately and consistently in a second language than in their mother tongue. It is not dissimilar to people who stutter in speech but who can sing with no hindrance – clearly, other parts of the brain are engaged.

This learning cannot be done in isolation. There needs to be a purpose. The school is very active in its international links, particularly through *Comenius projects*. Awarded the International School Award in 1999 and in 2002, the school has established links with schools in France, Spain, Greece, Finland and Poland. Such links have played a vital role in the development of additional language learning. If the young people are to meet with pupils and staff from these countries they see the value and need of learning how to communicate in different languages. We support students in travelling to other countries which is a great motivation for learning languages.

"people who stutter in speech but who can sing with no hindrance – clearly, other parts of the brain are engaged"

For several years, again through the Lingua B programme the school has employed a French assistant – using a native speaker has proved a rich resource for our pupils and one hopes provide the assistant with a greater insight in the learning of all pupils. Currently at school there is a French assistant, a Polish care assistant and three Spanish teaching students on a month's placement from Madrid. The young people at the Shepherd School see this as a matter of course. It is not exceptional – and this is how it should be – people learning together, respecting and valuing each other's languages and cultures.

Foreign language teaching usually takes place with small groups of eight to ten pupils, often in ability groups – in the world of learning disability there are many needs. Teaching is of a practical verbal nature, with songs and games, supported by practical every day activities, which serve to motivate the pupils. Signing and gestures are also employed to support the learning. For many people with learning difficulties, signing systems such as Makaton (a standardised vocabulary taken from British Sign Language) are used to support mother tongue learning. It is equally valuable for foreign language learning. It prompts in a very visual way, and constantly reinforces the learning issues in the mind of the young person.

The use of such systems to support foreign language learning is met with some resistance, particularly in countries where a medical model towards learning disability still exists. This is often accompanied with a general negative attitude towards much of what education has to offer for these people. This needs to be constantly challenged. We support the pupils in attending international conferences to spread the word of access to foreign language learning. Ironically at most conferences on learning/intellectual disabilities, one can find leading academics in this field who do not, themselves, know how to communicate with the students with learning disabilities in a social setting. Too often, these people are viewed as patients or objects for research. This notion has to be constantly challenged.

"pupils have entitlements to learning – not just of dull functions but that which embraces dynamism and pushes boundaries"

What are the benefits to a school in promoting the teaching of foreign languages? It awakens, stimulates and challenges a school to consider its attitude, beliefs and expectations. Pupils have entitlements to learning – not just of dull functions but that which embraces dynamism and pushes boundaries. It is not for nothing that the inspectorate described the Shepherd School as excellent and exceptional. Such phrases raises the school's esteem and with that the esteem of pupils and their families. Foreign languages have a clear role in supporting the esteem of all involved.

GENERIC PERSPECTIVES

Learning Disabilities and Foreign Language Learning: A Painful Collision13

Robin L. Schwarz

Foreign language study is an increasingly prominent part of education everywhere. Not only are high school students nearly always required to study a foreign language, but many lower and middle schools have added foreign languages to their curricula, whether as an enrichment or a requirement. Foreign language magnet schools have been created in some school districts and seem to be very popular. And of course, it's more common than not that colleges and universities require foreign language study for graduation. For the student unencumbered by a learning disability, foreign language study is indeed an enriching and rewarding experience. For the learning disabled student, however, it can be an unbelievably stressful and humiliating experience, the opposite of what is intended.

While it has long been recognized in the learning disabilities field that foreign language study would be a terrific challenge to learning disabled students, somehow this fact has been widely ignored in the field of foreign language instruction and in schools in general until very recently. Teachers of ESL (English as a Second Language) students have also recognized that there are students who have great difficulty mastering English because of learning disabilities. This fact has added some urgency to the need for recognition of this problem. As more research is being done and more teachers are recognizing the problem, more solutions are being created for the student facing the challenge of learning a foreign or second language and the teachers who teach them.

What causes this difficulty?

The field of second language acquisition has historically blamed language learning failure on a number of factors. Anxiety in the foreign language classroom (anxiety about making mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, about understanding the teacher, about remembering vocabulary) has been prominent as a purported cause of the failure. Among other causes cited in the literature have been lack of effort, lack of motivation, poor language learning habits and low "ability" in language learning. In the late 1960's, Dr. Kenneth Dinklage of Harvard University was compelled to find out why some of Harvard's brightest and best were not passing their language classes. He quickly dismissed lack of effort, seeing that most of these students were putting other courses and their degrees at major risk by devoting unusual amounts of time and effort to their language classes. Similarly, lack of motivation was not a cause, as these students could not graduate without completion of their language requirement. As for anxiety, he realized that the students were coming to see him because they were suffering from extreme anxiety as a result of not being able to pass their language classes. Since most of these students had never failed a class before, he felt that anxiety had not originally played a part in their failure.

"language learning disability"

When he interviewed these students, Dinklage found that a number of the failing language students had in fact been diagnosed as learning disabled and had overcome their disability through good tutoring and very hard work; still, the foreign language course had triggered the problems the students thought were behind them. Others in the group, Dinklage found after testing, had previously undiagnosed learning disabilities; again the problems had not shown up until foreign language classes were attempted. The third part of the group, he felt, had a language learning disability, though Dinklage could not find the usual evidence of problems in testing. Clearly these students were unable to be successful in their foreign language study while at the same time they were excellent students in their other classes. He could find no other explanation. Then, in a kind of experiment years ahead of its time, he arranged for a graduate student who had a learning disabled sibling to teach Spanish to some of these struggling Harvard students using methods of instruction known to be helpful to those with learning disabilities. The students taught in this way were mostly able to pass the exams necessary to complete the foreign language requirement.

Thus nearly 30 years ago, Dr. Dinklage pinpointed most of the basic ideas and principles relating to foreign languages and learning disabilities: The problem was related to being

learning disabled, not to lack of motivation or effort or to anxiety by itself. Anxiety was the result of failure not the cause. Students not previously diagnosed as LD showed up as LD in the foreign language classroom. The learning disability had to be addressed in educational measures taken. Once the LD issues were addressed, the students could learn.

Leonore Ganschow of the University of Miami, Ohio, and Richard Sparks of Mt. St. Joseph's College, both college psychologists who had numerous students referred to them because of problems in foreign language classes, began in the 1980's to look more closely at Dinklage's observations. In their research, they formulated a theory which explained the problems and variations in foreign language acquisition. An extension of earlier research on foreign language acquisition in which language is described as having component parts or linguistic codes, (phonological, semantic and syntactic), Ganschow and Sparks' Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis (LCDH), states that difficulties with foreign language acquisition stem from deficiencies in one or more of these linguistic codes in the student's native language system. These deficiencies result in mild to extreme problems with specific oral and written aspects of language. Their view is that most learners experiencing difficulty with foreign language learning have problems with phonological awareness. That is, they have trouble with the basic sound units of language, phonemes, and do not recognize or otherwise manipulate these basic units of sound efficiently. As a result, the student may have difficulty with the actual perception and production of language necessary for basic comprehension, speaking and spelling, or with language comprehension, which may affect understanding and/or production of language on a broader scale. According to their theory, excellent language learners are strong in all three of the linguistic codes, and conversely, very poor language learners are weak in all three. In between, however, are students who may be quite glib and able to do conversational language, but who have great difficulty with grammar and writing in the new language, or the opposite kind of student who perhaps reads and writes fairly well, but cannot speak with a good accent in the foreign language or cannot understand very much of what is spoken to him or her. These difficulties, the researchers say, spring from deficits in the native language. That these problems may be overt or so subtle as to have been ignored was observed by Dinklage many years ago, and this fact contributes to the difficulty many experts and non-experts have in believing that the problem is in fact based in first language. How can a student be competent, sometimes very competent, in his first language and have difficulties with a new language, difficulties that are supposedly based in the first language? It is hard to accept.

How can learning disabled students be taught foreign languages?

Once they had pinpointed what they felt was the root of the foreign language learning problem, Ganschow and Sparks began investigating ways that learning disabled students could be helped to learn a foreign language. At least two approaches to foreign language instruction different from normal or traditional language instruction have emerged as being effective.

The first and most researched approach is a response to Ganschow and Spark's findings that many, if not most, students having trouble with foreign language acquisition have phonological deficits in their first language. Ganschow and Sparks theorized further that to help these students, the sound system of the target language must be very explicitly taught. In order to test this theory, Ganschow and Sparks collaborated with a high school Spanish teacher who had learned about the Orton-Gillingham method of teaching phonology, reading and spelling to very significantly learning disabled students. In this method, sounds are presented in a highly structured fashion with a great deal of visual, kinesthetic and tactile practice and input. The Spanish teacher, Karen Miller, has tested the effectiveness of teaching Spanish to learning disabled students using the Orton-Gillingham approach. The research on her students has shown quite conclusively that LD students taught Spanish in this way have been able to learn and retain it. Another collaborator, Elke Schneider, has had similar results teaching German to LD students.

In their studies on Karen Miller's students, Ganschow and Sparks found that by being taught phonological skills in one language, the students improved their phonological awareness in English also. This finding has led to a variation on the method of teaching phonology in the target language: teach the fundamentals of phonology in the student's native language before foreign language instruction begins. That is, students are taught to recognize phonemes, to decode, or read words, efficiently and to encode, or apply the sounds to the written language. Basically, they learn what language is and how its sounds and parts function. Application of this knowledge to the language they are trying to learn is the next step. This has proven an

effective remediation as well. In fact, so strongly do Ganschow and Sparks believe this, they now recommend very fervently that such phonological skills be much more heavily stressed when children are learning to read. They feel students' reading and language skills will be much stronger, and future problems with foreign language acquisition will be headed off for many.

The second approach to language instruction which has been effective has been to adapt the foreign language courses according to principles of instruction known to be effective for LD students. This means making such changes as reducing the syllabus to the essential elements, slowing the pace of instruction quite considerably, reducing the vocabulary demand, providing constant review and incorporating as much visual/tactile/kinesthetic (i.e. multisensory) stimulation and support as possible. Many of these course adaptations were also responses to the specific complaints and requests of foreign language students having trouble in their classes. Furthermore, in some schools there are courses designed for the student strong in listening and speaking skills but weak in reading and writing, and vice versa. The University of Colorado at Boulder has shown this latter approach to be effective in Latin and Spanish courses adapted for LD students. A phonological component is part of this adapted curriculum.

What if these instructional conditions can't be met?

While it is good news that the underlying cause of problems with foreign language learning has been tentatively identified and that ways have been found to teach LD students foreign language, two major problems remain. The first is that it is relatively rare that a school can, or more importantly, is willing to, devote an entire foreign language section or class to LD students. The second is that finding teachers trained to teach foreign language to LD students is even rarer. Most often in the real world, LD students find themselves in a classroom of so-called "normal" language learners. In this case, the students must rely on the willingness of the teacher to be inventive and flexible and on the school or school system itself to accommodate the student to the best of its ability and to the requirements of the law. As any LD student and his or her family will tell you, this is rarely a smooth process. It is almost equally painful when a teacher recognizes the needs of a particular student, but does not have the time or resources or support to be able to adequately accommodate that student, except to the degree the law requires.

As with any aspect of learning for any learning disabled student, no single solution is good for everybody. Stories abound of learning disabled students who have learned a foreign language one way or another. The question to be asked however, is what learned means. Students may become highly conversational with excellent accents and still be quite weak in grammar and in written language. Others may be very skilled readers of a foreign language and yet be virtually unable to converse in more than the most rudimentary phrases poorly pronounced. Still others may be fairly competent in all areas but never come close to attaining an accent that is close to native in the foreign language.

Consequently, when a learning disabled student faces foreign language learning, a realistic assessment of the student's situation, problems and needs should be done. In other words, what the student may be able to do in a language and what the learning situation offers may not match at all. A student able to do oral language may be in a situation where passing grammar and translation tests is really what is required. Similarly, someone who reads and translates proficiently may be up against a teacher for whom pronunciation and conversation are of great importance. In cases such as these, reasonable accommodation may indeed mean providing a waiver and/or requiring a substitution. Some colleges are very inventive on the substitution issue. Catholic University in Washington, DC requires literature or history courses in cultures that are not based in romance languages. For example, students can study Middle Eastern culture or African or Chinese history or literature. Sometimes sign language is permitted as a substitution, though there is debate about that as a viable alternative to a foreign language.

Policies on waivers from foreign language requirements vary enormously. Every school has its own set of requirements. Some require full documentation of a learning disability with findings pointing to the deficits which are associated with foreign language learning problems; others might require a score on the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT). Unfortunately for the LD student, many schools, especially colleges, may require evidence of having attempted a foreign language and failed.

The path of the LD student facing a foreign language requirement is made even rougher by the fact that many schools lack personnel who are versed in the problems of foreign language difficulties for learning disabled students. Even prominent universities which boast of their accommodation of learning disabled and other handicapped students may be ignorant of this problem. Certainly, the foreign language departments are even more unaware of its existence. Students and families asking schools for accommodation on this issue need to be well-versed themselves and prepared to provide literature or at least reference to literature that will inform the school of this problem. Even better, when possible, parents or adult students should discuss the problem with a school before enrolling, to be sure that the problem can be dealt with. In one case, an LD student known to have such poor phonological skills that any oral foreign language study was out of the question, worked out an agreement with his college that he would become proficient in the reading of French if the school would accept that for his language requirement. Since he was a European history major and a brilliant student with excellent reasoning and memory skills, this seemed possible. Indeed, in a short time he was reading French texts quite comfortably and was well on his way to a reasonable compromise with his school of choice.

Once again, as with all things associated with learning disabilities, the answers are often complex and long-term, and each student's problem and solution is likely to be different. What is most important is that the problem of foreign language learning for the learning disabled be recognized for what it is and that the student be fairly and reasonably accommodated. Hopefully, as learning disabilities personnel, foreign language professionals and others become more aware of the research and literature, the path for the LD student facing foreign language requirements will become smoother.[14]

Generic Features of Special Education Need Methodologies

Timo Ahonen

Special Education Need (SEN) refers to children's learning needs in school. Students with special education need are a very heterogeneous group and there are many reasons why children may experience difficulties in learning. Some children have sensory or physical disabilities, or chronic illnesses, that may interfere with their learning. Some children have developmental delays or disorders of cognitive, linguistic or social skills that affect their learning in the school. Some other children may have more specific problems in reading, spelling, mathematics or motor coordination. The co-occurrence of different kinds of learning disabilities in the same child is very common and it is more of an exception to see the child who has problems only in one specific area. In the context of this report the most important features are their cognitive problems and motivational and emotional barriers that may affect the learning of a new language.

Children who require special educational provision should be identified on the basis of a detailed profile of their needs following assessment. The level of need experienced is the result of a complex interaction between the child's strengths and weaknesses, the level of support available and the appropriateness of the education provided (Frederickson & Cline, 2002).[15] Special educational needs are not just a reflection of pupil's inherent difficulties or disabilities; they are often related to factors within schools which can prevent or exacerbate problems. For understanding learning difficulties we have to assess: (Dockrell & McShane, 1992):[16]

- the tasks with which a child has difficulty so that the component skills necessary for successful performance can be identified
- the child's current cognitive abilities or neurocognitive functions and other relevant psychological attributes
- the environment – the context in which the child and the task interact, aspects of which may be contributory factors to the child's difficulty.

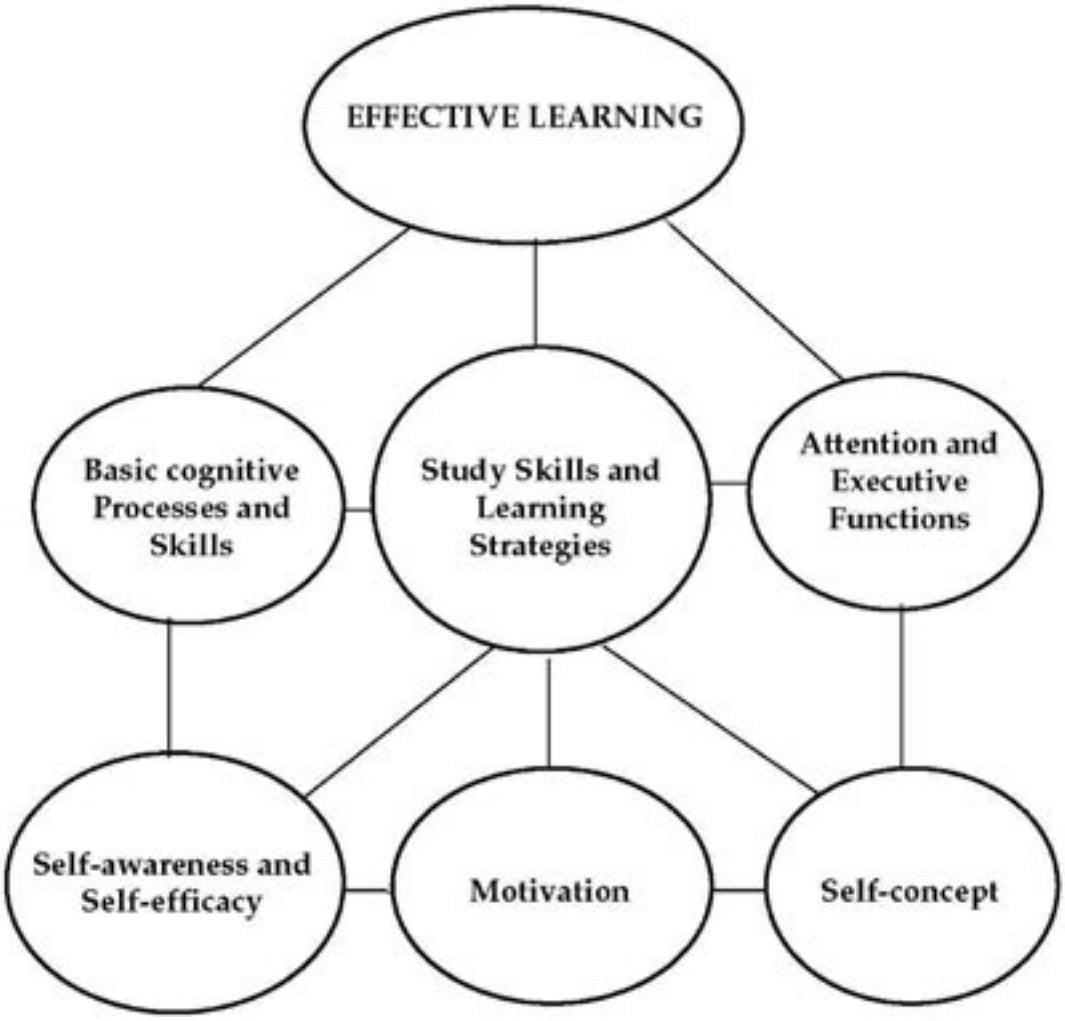
We have to remember, that a child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught. In this case the child may also have special needs but not SEN.

Different children clearly have different special education needs and goals. The extent of disabilities will define how important the goal of learning of foreign language will be for the child. If the school aged child is heavily struggling for learning the native language needed in everyday communication with others, the goals are of course different than with the child who has more specific learning disabilities e.g. difficulties in learning to read. But still we may argue that both children also have the right to learn foreign languages at their own level and we just have to try to find the best ways to support their learning.

At this point I will not go into the important discussion about the inclusion process in special education that is active all over the world. Instead, I will briefly summarize some essential factors that promote effective learning in all children and which are especially important when the child has difficulties in learning.

"the level of need experienced is the result of a complex interaction between the child's strengths and weaknesses"

How to promote effective learning?
In the figure below (adapted from Meltzer, 1996)[17] processes contributing to learning are divided into two levels: the lower level of motivation, self awareness and self-concept, and the upper level of cognitive or neurocognitive processes. All these interacting processes are important for effective learning.



Motivation

Sometimes in everyday discussion we may comment that the student is 'motivated' or 'not motivated', or how highly the student is motivated. In this view motivation is conceptualized as a stable trait of an individual and motivational factors are separated from cognitive factors in understanding student achievement. Nowadays we think that motivation is a dynamic, multifaceted phenomenon that contrasts with the quantitative view taken by traditional models of motivation. Students can be motivated in multiple ways and the important issue is in understanding how and why students are motivated for school achievement. We think now that that motivation is shaped by the student's active regulation of his/her motivation, thinking, and behaviour and that this mediates the relationship between the person, context and eventual achievement. This means that the student's own thoughts about their motivation and learning play a key role in mediating their engagement and subsequent achievements. (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002)[18].

"the student's own thoughts about their motivation and learning play a key role in mediating their engagement and subsequent achievements"

Self-efficacy beliefs, attributions, development of intrinsic motivation and goal orientations are some of the most important constructs in understanding motivation. Self-efficacy has been defined as the individual's beliefs about their performance capabilities in a particular

context or a specific task or domain (Bandura, 1997).[19] In this sense the self-efficacy beliefs are distinct from general self-concept beliefs that are more general affective evaluations of the self. Self-efficacy has been positively related to higher levels of achievement and learning, higher levels of effort, and increased persistence on difficult tasks. Students who have more positive self-efficacy beliefs (i.e. "I can learn to speak a foreign language") are more likely to work harder, persist, and eventually achieve at higher levels. They are also more likely to participate in more difficult courses (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002).[20] Self-efficacy is best facilitated by providing opportunities for the student to succeed on tasks within their range of competence. Through these experiences the student can actually develop new capabilities and skills.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1997)[21], the right correspondence of challenge and skills, or 'optimal experiences', are very important for learning and motivation. He uses the term flow to describe the experiential state characterized by intense focus and involvement that leads to improved performance. In addition to perceived balance of skills and challenge and opportunities for intense concentration the following conditions occur during flow experience: clear task goals, feedback that one is succeeding at the task, a sense of control, lack of self consciousness, and the perception that time passes more quickly. According to flow theory intrinsically rewarding experience associated with flow make people push themselves to higher levels of performance. It has been shown that flow theory is also relevant in foreign language classrooms (Egbert, 2002).[22] Some ideas of the theory are contradictory to the research findings in that 'noticing' or consciously attending to language input is important in language acquisition and more in line with those ideas that 'the best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even forget that the message is encoded in a foreign language (Krashen,1982)'.[23] Flow theory links conditions for learning foreign languages to a deep sense of enjoyment and playfulness. This might be a very important idea, because many students with SEN have difficulties especially in learning based on focused attention and intentional self-regulation.

"the best input is so interesting and relevant that the acquirer may even forget that the message is encoded in a foreign language"

The importance of emotions, motivation and teaching-strategies for learning new words of foreign language, especially in children with learning disabilities, was also shown in a Finnish study (Lyytinen, Rasku-Puttonen, Poikkeus & Ahonen, 1994).[24] The behaviour of mother-child pairs (mothers of sons with learning disabilities, n=30 and normally achieving sons, n=30) was videotaped in a teaching task that was constructed to resemble a homework assignment. The results showed that the mothers of children with LD used fewer high-level strategies and exhibited more dominance and less emotionality and cooperation than did the mothers of control children. Analyses concerning the variation of maternal strategies within the LD group revealed that the mother's motivation, combined with their emotionality and proportion of higher-level strategies, had a strong positive association with their children's success in learning. It seems that children with learning disabilities are especially dependent on adults behaviour, and emotional atmosphere, in learning situations.

Basic processes and skills

Developmental language learning impairments are one of the most prevalent of all developmental disabilities and occur in children for a wide variety of reasons (Tallal & Benasich, 2002).[25] Many developmental cognitive disorders (e.g. mental retardation, autistic spectrum disorders, ADHD, Down syndrome, Fragile X and Klinefelter syndrome) may include delay in language development. It has been estimated that approximately 20% of all children have some form of language (oral or written) learning impairment and 7% of school age children have significantly below average language development of unknown origin (Specific Language Impairment, SLI).

"it has been estimated that approximately 20% of all children have some form of language (oral or written) learning impairment"

Etiological research focused on neuropsychological, neurobiological and genetic aspects has strengthened our knowledge of the brain bases of these impairments. In the Finnish Longitudinal Study of Dyslexia (Lyytinen, Ahonen et.al., 2001, 2004)[26] we have found by using ERP (event-related potentials) methods, that measures of electrical brain activation evoked by speech stimuli differs between newborns with and without familial risk for dyslexia. These responses that reflect feature detection or general responsiveness for speech stimuli per se, differed between at-risk and control newborns. Newborn ERP's could

also be used to predict later language development (receptive language skills at 2.5 and 3.5. years and verbal short-term memory measured by digit and syllable span at 5 years) in these children (Guttorm, 2003).[27] It seems that some genetic factors have affected brain development already before birth so that children with familial risk for language impairments may have compromised perceptual sensitivity to distinctive features of linguistic environment. These very early differences may form the basis for later impairments in different language skills (e.g. phonological processing, verbal working memory and rapid retrieval of words from long-term memory).

These skills are important also in second language learning, because native language skills serve as the foundation for learning foreign languages. Difficulties in these basic or core language skills are likely to have a negative effect on both native and second language learning. It has been shown that successful foreign language learners exhibit significantly stronger native language skills than unsuccessful learners on phonological/orthographic and syntactic skills and in verbal working memory. Service (1992)[28] who studied the acquisition of English as a second language by young Finnish children, found that children with good immediate verbal memory proved to be better at language than those with short spans, not only when measured by vocabulary, but also by acquisition of syntax. Similarly Dufva and Voeten (1999)[29] showed, by following the development of 160 Finnish children from first to third grade, that native language word recognition (Finnish) forms the basis of learning a foreign language (English), even though orthographies may differ, as they do between Finnish and English. They recommend that educators attempt to identify children with native language decoding difficulties early in order to provide intensive literacy instruction, which may in turn enhance learning a foreign language.

"disorders are more like developmental stages"

Based on these findings it seems to be very important to examine the teaching of foreign languages to children with SEN also from a developmental neurocognitive perspective. Children with different kind of SEN may have the core difficulties, possibly genetically based, in different core skills of linguistic processing. That's why some children may have problems already at the level of first language learning or development, some struggle when moving from oral to written language and some with learning a foreign language. But probably most often we see that these disorders are more like developmental stages: the same child has at first difficulties already in preverbal gesture language, after that in learning the oral language, then in learning to read and write and finally in learning a second language. In this case these difficulties are possibly different manifestations of the same language deficit. Depending on the developmental level these children need support in different language skills (e.g. speech perception, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development).

Study Skills and learning strategies. Effective learning results when students' application of specific learning strategies interacts with a wide range of other processes like automatic retrieval of basic skills, appropriate attention in learning situation, self-awareness, motivation and self-concept (Melzer,1996).[30] Learning strategies or study skills are especially important when the child has problems in basic skill or attention deficits. Student's awareness of his or her own study skills and strategies and learning difficulties is an important intermediate step for strategic learning.

Students with learning disabilities often demonstrate ineffective study skills. They tend to assume a passive role in learning and rely on teachers or parents to regulate their studying. These students are not always aware of the purpose of studying and do not monitor their understanding of context. They don't go back in the text when they don't understand the content and they often use similar fixed strategies in dissimilar problem solving tasks. This behaviour demonstrates that they don't exhibit an executive level of thinking in which they plan and evaluate their studying.

Gettinger and Seibert (2002)[31] grouped the most important study skills into four clusters: repetition-based skills, procedural study skills, cognitive-based study skills and metacognitive skills. There is now a lot of evidence supporting the effectiveness of study skills to promote academic competence among students. Overall, study-skills instruction has been shown to improve academic performance, strategic knowledge, and affective responses among students with learning problems across multiple academic domains (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000).[32] Next I will shortly describe these four clusters of study skills (based on Gettinger and Seibert, 2002).[33]

Repetition-rehearsal based strategies. These strategies are most useful when storing small bits of information for the short term, or when content being studied is used frequently. There is extensive evidence of creation and use of mnemonic devices involving mental imagery. Academic performance is significantly better when students receive training in creating mental imagery devices, such as keywords, than when they learn a simple rehearsal technique. Although students do not spontaneously use mental-imagery on their own, they can be thought to do so.

Procedural or organization-based study skills. Lack of organization is common among students with poor study skills. Procedural study skills encompass the behaviours and habits that allow students to maximize the benefits of their study time (e.g. time management, material organization, development of schedules or consistent study routines). Studies offer some guidelines for best-practice: complete difficult work at times when you are most alert and least distracted; divide long assignments into shorter units; vary the type of study tasks and be flexible in scheduling breaks and rescheduling study time if conflicts rise.

Cognitive-based study skills. The goal of these skills is to guide students to engage in appropriate thinking about information they are required to learn. The greater knowledge students have about content, the more likely they are to think about, understand, and remember it. Studying is enhanced when new material is meaningful to learners, and integrated with their existing knowledge. It follows that good studying requires the students to: activate assemble background information prior studying; connect new ideas, information, or concepts to what they already know and develop new schemata, when necessary, to integrate content to be learned. The use of semantic maps as visual representations of the interrelatedness of ideas, question generation and summarizing the main ideas are good examples of cognitive organizers.

Metacognitive-based study skills. The extent to which students apply study skills when the need arises depends largely on their metacognitive capabilities (i.e. ability to assess the need for studying, to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate study approaches). Whereas cognitive-based study strategies relate to how learners process information, metacognitive strategies relate to how students select, monitor, and use strategies in their repertoire. Students with learning difficulties lack the metacognitive skills necessary to become successful independent learners, but research has demonstrated that training can significantly improve students' metacognitive abilities. It is interesting that students with learning problems appear to make the greatest gains when they are thought to use metacognitive-based study strategies (Montague, 1998).[34]

"it is interesting that students with learning problems appear to make the greatest gains when they are thought to use metacognitive-based study strategies"

Strategy training studies that try to combine different strategies to the same program have provided evidence for the positive effects on learning and achievement, especially for low-achieving students. In these studies a sequence of instructional phases is used that proceeds from social modelling to gradually increasing levels of self-directed functioning (Gettinger and Seibert, 2002).[35] During the first phase (modeling) students acquire study strategies through social modelling, task structuring, and social reward. Instruction begins with simplifying the strategy by breaking it down into basic steps, followed by explicit instruction and frequent modelling of strategy use by the teacher. 'Thinking aloud' methods are used in this phase. In the second phase (imitative level) the learner applies the strategy in a way that approximates the model's performance. The teacher provides help to students on an as-needed basis, such that the student continues to make progress in applying a strategy (scaffolding or cognitive coaching process). Responsibility for effective use of a study strategy is gradually released by the teacher and assumed by the student. During the third phase (self-control) learners use the strategy independently while performing transfer tasks and the strategy becomes internalized during this phase. The last phase (self-regulation) is evident when students are able to systematically adapt their learning strategies to different situations.

Conclusions

Successful learning in children with special education needs is based on understanding the learning, cognitive, and social-emotional characteristics of these students. A model for effective learning needs to combine the motivational, neurocognitive and metacognitive processes. Focusing on motivation and emotional aspects of learning is especially important when we are

working with children who have many negative experiences in their learning history. How the children learn is the result of the interaction of motivation, cognitive processes and learning environment. Following Mastopieri et al. (1999)[36] "successful classrooms have the following elements in common: administrative support, appropriate curriculum, accepting environment, effective teaching, peer assistance, and disability-specific instructional modifications".

For developing the practices of SEN we have to implement research-based instructional principles and adaptations in general and special education classrooms (Utley & Obiakor, 2000).[37] Based on the very carefully done meta-analysis of instructing students with learning disabilities, Swanson (2001)[38] concluded that an effective general model of instruction combining the components of direct and strategy instruction supersedes other models for re-mediating learning disabilities. This means that we have to find the best methods for teaching basic skills as systematically as possible and at the same time keep in mind the instruction of study skills and learning strategies. The meta-analysis also shows that an additional factor, small interactive group instruction, significantly improves treatment outcomes.

I believe that the generic principles of effective learning and teaching in SEN are fundamental when developing foreign language teaching and learning approaches.

"the generic principles of effective learning and teaching in SEN are fundamental when developing foreign language teaching and learning approaches"

ICT: Access or control?

David R. Wilson

It is the last lesson of the week. Having just arrived from Physical Education, a couple of girls and a dozen boys are now gathering noisily outside the French room, blocking the corridor. "High as kites" intones a sympathetic colleague of the French teacher, who is wearily coaxing 9R6 into a line. After the French room door is unlocked, the class bursts in, eyeing the computers on the benches along the walls. Some of the boys pull chairs up to the machines, impatient to log on. "Are we on the computers?" asks one of the girls sitting in the rows of desks in the middle of the room.

Many of us who teach modern foreign languages (MFL) to children with special educational needs (SEN) would plead guilty to the charge of using information and communications technology (ICT) once in a while to give ourselves a break and to keep our classes quiet. Yet we would also argue that this worst-case scenario not only misrepresents current practice, but also perpetuates a myth that computer-based MFL lessons with SEN students are just exercises in containment. So what, other than a welcome distraction, does ICT offer MFL teachers and their learners with SEN?

Firstly, ICT usage can reveal which strengths and weaknesses each learner with SEN brings to the process of learning MFL. Screening software such as LASS Secondary (http://www.lucid-research.com) not only challenges and entertains students through games, but also builds standardised graphical profiles of their cognitive and literacy skills, thus contributing to the identification of underlying memory and phonological difficulties. Teachers watching SEN learners as they interact with MFL multimedia programs will observe such students deploying, say, their powers of visual memory to compensate for auditory weaknesses, although the activity was originally designed to develop listening comprehension. Foreknowledge of learning deficits, or differences, means that MFL teachers can modify their lesson plans and set on- and off-computer tasks that enable their charges to experience success.

"ICT usage can reveal which strengths and weaknesses each learner with SEN brings to the process of learning MFL"

Secondly, SEN students boost their self-esteem and employability when they engage with word-processing, presentation and other office applications in MFL lessons. But what is best for MFL learners with SEN: business versions, e.g. Microsoft Word and PowerPoint; or educational versions, e.g. Clicker (http://www.cricksoft.com) and Writing with Symbols (http://www.widgit.com); or multilingual versions, e.g. Accent (http://www.accentsoft.com) and Nisus Writer (http://www.nisus-soft.com)? The version with which they are already familiar is likely to be the best choice when they begin MFL. Productivity software nowadays can display and process text correctly in a variety of European languages. Of greater significance is how appropriately the package meets a particular learner's needs through such features as spellcheckers, voice recognition, synthesised speech, word banks, on-screen grids and graphics handling. Most important of all is what the learner is expected to do with the software. Although autonomy remains the ultimate goal, many students with SEN work best when their teacher sets tightly structured writing tasks necessitating a minimum of keyboarding. A looser agenda may raise the prospect of individuals staring mutely or disaffectedly at their monitors in incomprehension or with writer's block.

"SEN students boost their self-esteem and employability"

Thirdly, via MFL tutorial software, SEN learners may progress at their own level and pace, make mistakes in privacy, play entertaining and challenging games and interact with a multisensory world appealing to their learning styles, whether visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. Such is the capacity of modern digital storage devices that they can deliver complete multimedia courses featuring text, sound, graphics, animations and video. Some, e.g. the Systems Integrated Research (http://www.sirplc.co.uk) Global MFL range, exploit the intelligent branching capabilities of Integrated Learning Systems (ILS) to provide vocabulary and grammar help on demand and to differentiate activities so that each student engages with an appropriate degree of complexity. Others, e.g. the AVP Dix Jeux Français (http://avp.100megs28.com), target specific language topics and teaching points. Authoring programs, e.g. Fun with Texts (http://www.camsoftpartners.co.uk), come to rescue when teachers perceive the need to compile cloze exercises and other word puzzles of their own. There are also whole-class teaching resources, e.g. Boardworks (http://www.theboardworks.co.uk) editable MFL PowerPoint presentations,

designed for use with interactive whiteboards and projectors. Tutorial software is meant to complement what teachers do, not to replace them. How well it integrates into classroom practice and meets the needs of individual learners will determine its ultimate effectiveness.

Fourthly, communications technologies can release SEN learners from the confines of the MFL classroom. The Internet is a veritable cornucopia for teachers and learners alike in MFL/SEN. Its World Wide Web (WWW) not only offers topical target language (TL) text, graphics, sound and video but also lesson plans, interactive exercises and educational advice. Email, forums, newsgroups, bulletin boards, audio conferencing and videoconferencing permit teachers and pupils to share ideas and solve problems. The standard browsers Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape have proven worth, but alternatives exist. As with word-processing and presentation, however, online tasks must be carefully planned to enable MFL learners with SEN to experience success. After the initial exchange of messages about self, family and pets, class email projects may grind to a halt for want of ideas. Challenging web searches to locate TL information may leave learners lost in cyberspace.

"communications technologies can release SEN learners from the confines of the MFL classroom"

Fifthly, assistive technologies may improve the SEN learner's engagement with the computer and/or the MFL curriculum. Settings controlling keyboard, sound, display and mouse options can be customised to the learner's needs. For example, with StickyKeys enabled in Windows, uppercase and foreign characters can be typed using the Shift and Alt keys by pressing and releasing one key at a time. Devices with the potential to facilitate SEN learners' MFL and ICT access are legion. Switches, overlay keyboards, touch-screens and other plug-ins offer data-entry alternatives to typing. Using Optical Character Recognition technology, paper-based text can be transferred from a scanner to a computer or decoded by a handheld reading pen (e.g. Quicktionary: http://www.quick-pen.com). With their small footprints, laptop computers and word processors like AlphaSmart (http://www.alphasmart.com) lend themselves to round-table multiple-activity MFL groupwork. Programs for speakers of English with SEN now often respond to the challenges of broader curricula and global marketing by supporting other languages. Designed for people with reading difficulties, Kurzweil 3000 (http://www.kurzweiledu.com) translates and converts text to speech in Dutch, French, German, Italian and Spanish. French, German and Spanish screens come with My World (http://www.inclusive.co.uk), whose use of draggable words and images appeals to the kinaesthetic learner.

"assistive technologies may improve the SEN learner's engagement with the computer and/or the MFL curriculum"

Sixthly, the appropriate use of ICT is the key to its effective integration into MFL/SEN classroom practice. A baseline audit of a school's existing ICT stock ought to precede any plans to expand its repertoire. Special schools are often the best equipped when it comes to literacy, numeracy, life skills and access technologies. Mainstream school networks always have word-processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation, graphics and Internet packages for cross-curricular use. While some subject- and SEN-specific devices and programs are in constant demand within school departments, others languish inside dusty cupboards. Slow learners lacking concentration and demanding attention often find the computer less of a threat to their poor self-esteem. They too will soon grow disaffected, however, if electronic learning results in isolation from peers and a curriculum without breadth, balance and variety. Appropriate use means that ICT is judiciously, purposefully and effectively integrated into MFL classroom practice so that the challenges of the subject and the needs of the learner are both met.

Seventhly, MFL teachers must feel confident and competent when exploiting digital media with SEN learners. They may have benefited from New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training and other supported self-study ICT initiatives designed to impart the requisite computer literacy and pedagogical expertise. Such professional development should not have left them with a rack of off-the-peg solutions, but encouraged them to build problem-solving skills and to match teaching interventions with learning differences. The Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (http://www.cilt.org.uk) not only publishes a regular bulletin featuring good practice in MFL/SEN, but also owns the Linguanet Forum and MFLSEN Forum online discussion groups where MFL teachers can debate SEN issues. The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (http://www.becta.org.uk) not only provides downloadable MFL, SEN and ICT information sheets but also hosts the Inclusion

website and the SENCo Forum discussion group where questions about MFL and SEN can be answered. Among other SEN resources, I maintain on my own website (http://www.specialeducationalneeds.com) an extensive bibliography of modern foreign languages and special educational needs. I have also posted a SEN/ICT workshop where MFL teachers will find web-based tasks, case studies of MFL learners with SEN from autism to visual impairment and an online portal to relevant external sites.

Eighthly, ICT provides an ideal mechanism for research and development in the teaching of MFL to those with additional needs. For example, I identified French handwriting as a barrier to comprehension when my MFL learners received pen pal letters. I then conducted a small-scale investigation using computer fonts designed by French primary school teachers to emulate the national cursive script. My research confirmed that a difficulty with handwritten French indeed existed and that the availability of a French handwriting font within a word processor represented a potential solution to the problem. As for development work, ICT can assist in creating MFL resources to accommodate the needs of those with SEN. Over the years, using Microsoft Word, I have produced countless units of work in French and German to compensate for commercial courses whose claims to address the full ability range fall somewhat short of the mark in practice. On my website I have posted a sample unit of work in German and a report about my French handwriting readability research.

"ICT provides an ideal mechanism for research and development"

Finally, weary modern foreign language teachers facing troublesome classes may well be tempted to deploy ICT as a short-term instrument of control. They will be much better off in the long run, however, if they treat it as a strategy of access to higher achievement and self-esteem for their students with SEN. If they are prepared to ask questions, to listen to the answers, to share ideas and to collaborate with others, they will find the job of differentiating their lessons more manageable and ultimately more rewarding.

COGNITION & LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (moderate, severe and specific learning difficulties)

The Individual, Defining Factors & Language Learning Case: Dyslexia

Ian Smythe

Introduction

The defining factors of the dyslexic individual are fluency and accuracy in literacy skills (see the definition below). But this does not mean assumptions should be made about the dyslexic individuals' ability to achieve a certain standard, either in their first language, or in additional languages. Every individual is different, and it is important to remember that every individual "has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs" (UNESCO, 1994).[39]

In evaluating the ability of an individual to learn, there are a number of factors that influence the outcome, including context, teaching and learning style and cognitive abilities. These factors, and in particular the last of these, are important within the context of the dyslexic individual, and their ability to learn a new language.

Language Context

The difficulties of the dyslexic as discussed here are not restricted to the learning of modern foreign languages (MFL), although this is the emphasis. This term MFL usually refers to the individual who is seeking to acquire a language that is taught in an academic environment, is not the language of the home, nor the language of the community. However, as will be demonstrated, the principles outlined here are also important to those who are acquiring English as an additional language, and to those who work in a multilingual community, such as that to be found in Wales (Welsh and English) and Belgium (French and Flemish). Furthermore the same principles are true for the Arabic speaking child in Sweden, or the Hungarian speaker in Romania.

It has been suggested (Posch H, 2004)[40] that everybody is at least bilingual, since they have to speak the language of the home/community, which may be a local dialect, and the language of literacy. This may be demonstrated by an example of the language in south London, where the word another is usually pronounced a nuver. Thus for the child to sound out the word, they will have to reference a second non-native phonological lexicon. The usual principles of sounding out the word and spelling by analogy are seriously compromised by the dialect. Similarly, the Afro-Caribbean community speak English, but not the English of testing or teaching. This development of two phonological lexicons causes problems for the dyslexic individual, but the difficulties may be minimised if the right methods are used.

Definition of dyslexia

There are many definitions of dyslexia that may be used. However, the following has been developed during the course of an international project involving 20 countries of Europe and five beyond Europe. Although the purpose of the project was to review the technology used in different countries, it also provided an opportunity to review processes prior to this, including definitions and assessment processes. The following offers an opportunity to adopt a similar approach.

> *Dyslexia is a difficulty in the acquisition of literacy skills that is neurological in origin. It is evident when accurate and fluent word reading, spelling and writing develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. It may be caused by a combination of phonological, auditory, visual and working memory processing deficits. Word retrieval, speed, morphological and syntactic processing difficulties may also be present. This does not negate the existence of comorbid difficulties, including receptive and expressive oral language deficits, developmental coordination difficulties and dyscalculia. The manifestation of dyslexia in any individual will depend upon not only individual cognitive differences, but also the language used.*
> *Smythe I and Siegel L, 2004*[41]

The issues are confounded by the use of more specific terminology in different countries. In Russia, for example, dyslexia is used strictly for reading difficulties, whilst the term dysgraphia

is used for writing difficulties. However, in Italy the term dysgraphia is used to refer to the motor difficulties, while the term dysorthographia is used for spelling problems. Poland has adopted even greater refinements, splitting the motor difficulties into dysgraphia for general motor difficulties and dysautographia for those repeated motor skills, such as practiced letter formation. It has been argued (Rutter, 1998)[42] that the field of dyslexia is a rare example of where the word has been provided, and then we try to work out what it means. Usually the problems are recognised, and then we look for the word.

Issue specific to the dyslexic

"the field of dyslexia is a rare example of where the word has been provided, and then we try to work out what it means"

One of the main advantages of a causal definition of dyslexia, as used above, is that is set out where we should look for the difficulties. The range of difficulties that the dyslexic may have in different languages are specified above as *phonological, auditory, visual and working memory processing deficits, word retrieval, speed, morphological and syntactic processing*. This provides a starting point for the discussion of the difficulties of the dyslexic, with particular reference to the learning of additional languages.

Phonological refers to the ability to manipulate sounds. Sentences, phrases and words are made of units of sound, including the syllable, rhyme and phoneme. The difficulty in manipulating these sounds is one of the most common causes of dyslexia in English. However, it has been suggested (e.g. Pórpodas C, 1990)[43] that in languages where there is greater regularity (i.e. the relationship between the sounds and the spelling is more consistent) the manipulative skills are not required, or if needed, it is not until they reach the point where increasing word speed can only be achieved by reading units larger than the single phoneme. It is important to note that the manipulative skills are not innate. They need to be learnt. Morais, J., Cary, L., Alegria, J., & Bertelson, P(1979)[44] demonstrated that illiterate adults do not have these skills, but may acquire them. Thus any teaching of languages where it is known that phonological manipulation skills are important must include explicit teaching of these skills as they are not developed in the native language. (Sadly, this is rarely done.) Furthermore, it is important to remember that tests can only be a measure of attainment. A difficulty in the acquisition can only be demonstrated over time, and in comparison to the peer group. Currently the practice in many countries across Europe is to rely on rote learning and not to teach the fundamental components (e.g. phonics), which means that dyslexic individuals tend to struggle at even the most basic level.

Auditory processing refers to the sound processes which are non manipulative, such as auditory short term memory and auditory discrimination. The ability to discriminate between sounds is developed particularly during the early years. The sooner a child is exposed to a new language, the better chance they have of discriminating between sounds. For example, the Japanese have trouble with English pronunciation because they do not usually start learning English at school until they are about 12 years old. Although approaches to teaching are changing, across Europe there is still a heavy emphasis on rote learning. That is, the child has to learn series of words (e.g. new vocabulary lists and declensions), and this requires good auditory memory skills frequently not available to the dyslexic child. The short term memory cannot be improved, but there are strategies and teaching methods to help minimise these difficulties.

"the short term memory cannot be improved, but there are strategies and teaching methods to help minimise these difficulties"

Visual processing difficulties are analogous to the auditory components, with visual short term memory and visual discrimination being very important. In a checklist for adult dyslexics it has been found (Smythe I and Everatt J, 2001)[45] that visual discrimination (i.e. misreading 'tan' as 'ton') is the best predictor for dyslexia in many languages. Failing to note detail is important in reading and comprehending text. Furthermore, where the language is not transparent (i.e. poor sound letter correspondence) visual skills become important. Not all aspects can be attributed to rules (e.g. 'i' before 'e' except before 'c') or sound discrimination. Frequently visual inspection of the word and comparison to a visual memory is the only clue to a spelling error. For those with poor visual skills, memory techniques such as mnemonics can be helpful.

Working memory refers to the ability to process items dynamically, and to bring disparate components together to form further information from the component parts. Thus it may be

manipulation, integration or interpolation with constituent parts. This ability can be a problem for the dyslexic individual, particularly if the teaching has not enabled the development of a structure for the new language.

Word retrieval is frequently an issue with the monolingual dyslexic student. The difficulties may be in the form of speed and difficulty of retrieval, or substitutions. These substitutions may be semantic in nature (such as 'nurse' for 'doctor'), orthographic ('lamppost' for 'lampshade') or phonological (process and possess), and are related to the ability to differentiate between entries in the respective lexica, and retrieve appropriately.

Speed may be seen as a function of the ability to perform these processes and automaticity of the processes. That is, it is a reflection of the processed involved, such as the ease of access to the lexica, the degree of difficulty in processing the phonological components and the limitations on working memory.

Morphological processing refers to the ability to work at the level of the morpheme that is the smallest unit that gives meaning to a word. For example, the Hungarian for 'at risk of dyslexia' is 'diszlexiaveszélyeztetettség'. Sound discrimination and auditory short term memory would obviously be a major factor in the acquisition of a language that has such complex words. But an understanding of the construction of the word, and the words from which it is derived, will lessen the requirements in terms of memory, and to a lesser extent, the sound discrimination task. That is, the word can be built up from first principles using morphemic units and syntactic knowledge. Most individuals learn the morphemic structure implicitly. But the dyslexic individual benefits greatly from an explicit understanding of the structure and construction of words.

Syntactic processing refers to the ability to use the appropriate word form. As noted by Richardson (2004),[46] continuous misuse of words in a semantic- rather than syntactic-led teaching approach (i.e. it is taught that you say and/or write the words to get the meaning across, and do not worry so much about the grammar and syntax) will lead not only to reinforcement of errors, but also confusion as to which is correct when the problem is highlighted.

It will be appreciated that these causal components are interrelated, and that every individual, dyslexic and non-dyslexic, is different. However, an understanding of the areas that can go wrong in the dyslexic individual is the first step towards understanding how to make the teaching and learning experience more rewarding and more effective.

However, it is also important to remember that dyslexia impacts in many other ways, including organisational and study skills. The ability to plan an essay is frequently as much of a problem as writing the words.

Principles of teaching the dyslexic

The dyslexic individual learns best from a structured, sequential, multi-sensory approach, with plenty of reinforcement, and minimal rote learning. The same principles that apply to other subjects also apply to the learning of modern foreign languages. These principles can be found in many books on teaching the dyslexic individual. However, they are not always adopted in the teaching of languages.

"the dyslexic individual learns best from a structured, sequential, multi-sensory approach"

Exam concessions and provisions, including baccalaureates

The dyslexic individual may have greater difficulty than the non-dyslexic in acquiring language skills in a second language, but this should not be seen as a barrier to the acquisition of those skills. As discussed above, success may be a reflection of diverse factors including where holidays are taken and the age of starting to learn the language. With greater emphasis being placed on the need to assess the ability and not the disability of the child, many countries across Europe are reviewing their provision for disabled students including the dyslexic individual. However, when the awareness and understanding of the issues is not widely accepted within society, it becomes difficult to convince parents that giving more time in an exam to only the dyslexic individual is fair to all, and does not give an unfair advantage to the dyslexic person. Although in many countries there is, in principle, agreement that the dyslexic should be given more time in most subjects (e.g. science) and that more time may not be beneficial for all

(research suggests that many students get lower marks when given the same additional time given to dyslexics – Siegel, in press), when it comes to assessment of learning a new language, the questions are more difficult. There is still considerable debate as to what the examination in a language subject is intended to reflect, and therefore how it should be measured. For example, some universities (in the UK) state that poor spelling in psychology exams should not account for deductions of more than 5% of the marks. But what if the spelling and syntax were poor in an exam of modern foreign languages? Clearly the issues are very different, and agreement of what constitutes assessing the ability and not the disability in language exams for dyslexics still has a long way to go in most of Europe. Traditionally, the criteria are set by those who are fluent in the language, and who have difficulty understanding those with difficulties in learning languages. But, for example, if the task is to evaluate the individuals reading comprehension ability, there is no logical reason for them to reply in the language of the text, nor in a written response, since what is being evaluated is only reading comprehension. An oral response in their preferred language will fulfil the criteria of evaluating their ability to comprehend the text. However, few examination boards will allow such differentiation.

The baccalaureate system requires a minimum standard in many subjects usually including skills in a language other than the main language of tuition. This is not good for the dyslexic individual, since it means that they have to have good skills in a subject that may be one of the most difficult for them. This in turn may limit their prospects for going to university. One example is the Belgian boy whose dyslexia did not allow him to acquire the French literacy skills to enter university in his native country. But he was allowed to do his subject, maths, in an English university, as he was able to fulfil criteria that did not include a measure of skills not necessary for the course. Some countries do allow exemptions or provisions (e.g. readers, dictionaries and extra time), but this is not widespread across Europe.

Choosing the language to learn

Recently some dyslexic students (in the UK) heard that dyslexia was rare in Japanese, and therefore decided to study Japanese at university. (In fact dyslexia is as prevalent in Japan as in other countries.) Sadly, nobody pointed out what that would entail, including learning a new alphabet with three times as many symbols as in English (the kana), plus over 1600 kanji (Chinese characters). Furthermore there was the need to learn the vocabulary, syntax, etc, not to mention the traditional problems of the dyslexic, such as study and organisational difficulties.

With a greater understanding of the difficulties of the dyslexic student, there is the potential to ensure that teaching is designed to meet their needs. However, up until now, there has been little attempt throughout Europe to ensure the learning is adapted to the needs of these individuals.

"there has been little attempt throughout Europe to ensure the learning is adapted to the needs of these individuals"

There are a number of issues that should be considered, but frequently this takes second place to motivation. In many cases the dyslexic will try very hard at a new language just because they start with a clean slate, and because having been told it will be impossible, become determined to succeed. Criteria such as where family holidays are taken should also be taken into consideration, as well as other personal interests. Of course, this is also dependent upon what languages are available in the school.

On the more technical side, it should be remembered that all dyslexics are different, and therefore the final choice, if based on the technical components, should be made with respect to the assessment profile. That said the following may need to be considered:

- Transparency – phoneme-grapheme correspondence
- Agglutination and morphemic knowledge
- Relationship to the first language (e.g. Latin derivation)
- Language confusability
- Method of teaching

"all dyslexics are different"

It would be inappropriate to say that one language is better than another. However, it may be noted that Italian and Spanish are fairly transparent. This means that they would not have so much difficulty if their problems were in the area of phonological manipulation. German is

transparent, but the agglutinisation may be problematic. A good morphemic knowledge and understanding of the syntax will help. Despite its irregularities, French is worthy of consideration for English speaking dyslexic individual due to its popularity as a holiday destination for the English, and the number of parents who at least know a little about the language.

Differential dyslexia

If the difficulties of the dyslexic individual depends not only on the personal profile but also the language in question, it is reasonable to assume that it should be possible to be dyslexic in one language but not another. (See Smythe 2004).[47] Thus if the problems are strictly around phonological manipulation skills, then the problems will be less apparent in Spanish than in English. However, it is important to acknowledge the other areas of difficulty, including essay planning, proofreading, note taking, and vocabulary learning.

The role of computers

Computers assist language learning, but at present much of that which is produced to help the language learner is based on the old principles of repetition and rote learning, with a superficial attempt to used multi-sensory (visual and auditory) techniques. Rarely does a structured approach tailored to individual needs, come into the process.

However, there are certain areas of good practice that highlight how computers can play a significant part in the development of language skills, as demonstrated by Siegel and Smythe (2004)[48] in teaching dyslexic Chinese children to learn English. Having been commissioned by the Hong Kong government to produce a teaching resource to help teachers of English in primary schools, they established a number of key criteria. They specified that the software should:

- Support the teacher, but not take over their role
- Be used at the beginning of the lesson, and lead to further reinforcement activities
- Use structured, sequential techniques, including oral ability before written components
- Have good clear native English speakers
- Be built on sound, research based, principles
- Be shown to work in the local environment through local research
- Use exciting imagery to elicit responses from all children
- Implicitly teach the teachers the principles
- Be usable by parents, without teachers feeling their role was being usurped

The success of the Hong Kong experiment has led to the development of pilot projects based on the same material to teach English in Brazil and Sweden, and a version to teach Swedish to immigrant children in Sweden.

This work could not be achieved without the computer, which provides stimulating multi-sensory media which can provide the implicit training, and use natural voices. The computer can also ensure that the techniques used are consistent, and may be widely disseminated. Furthermore, it has been noted that this not only benefits the dyslexic individual, but helps all children.

Conclusions and the future

Dissemination of good practice will continue to be a major issue, particular with respect to the dyslexic individual. Too much of what is provided is based on old principles that 1) were never the best way to teach in the first place and 2) were not suited to the abilities of the dyslexic learner. Furthermore, the increasing importance of computers in language learning has not been matched by an understanding of the underlying pedagogic principles that determine the ability to learn, particularly relevant to the dyslexic individual. Despite the potential, there is still a tendency to develop computerised programs that are one size fits all.

The dyslexic learner has the potential to learn new languages in much the same way as everybody else does. But the teaching has to be tailored to their specific needs, abilities, strengths and weaknesses. Until this happens, the dyslexic will still feel sidelined in the area of language learning.

The second contribution to this section comes from Margaret Crombie of the *Scottish Dyslexia Trust & Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport Service, Scotland, UK*. The focus here is on inclusion and the type of response to foreign language learning which is optimal for learners with cognition and learning difficulties.[49]

> *Inclusion of all pupils into mainstream schools presents teachers and pupils alike with numerous challenges. Teaching additional languages is no longer restricted to those of undoubted ability who will cope irrespective of the teaching style of the educator. For young people, learning in school is not done independently of the peer group and the peer group may present a rich diversity of talents and troubles. The world in which we now live, and work, demands that learning is done in co-operation with others, all of whom differ in terms of abilities and disabilities. Learning however, when it comes to modern foreign languages, should be done in a social and communicative setting with interdependence on those around. Whatever the context or language social communication is the reason for mastering an additional language. It is a purpose of language learning to communicate with others in the language which is most appropriate to the setting. Young people whatever their disability or ability have a right to learn a language of their choice at whatever level they can.*
>
> *Dyslexia in schools has always presented language teachers and their dyslexic pupils with a major challenge. Many believe that young people who have difficulty in learning to read and write in their own mother tongue cannot fail to have problems when it comes to learning an additional language. The reasons for this are now well understood. Young people who lack awareness of the sound system of their own language, which they have spoken since early childhood, are unlikely to quickly grasp an alien tongue (Ganschow, Sparks and Schneider, 1995).[50] Those with short-term memory problems will have difficulty in remembering vocabulary, and even when vocabulary seems to have been memorised, word-finding difficulties will present a challenge when accessing the memorised vocabulary. Dyslexia generally means that information is processed more slowly than for others. Consequently speech presented in another language at normal speed will be too fast to follow, translate and absorb meaning. These are but a few of the problems dyslexic pupils may present with in the classroom (Crombie & McColl, 2001).[51]*
>
> *As dyslexic pupils generally manage to master speaking and understanding of their own language, it was often believed (and still is in some quarters) that if teachers omit the reading and writing elements of additional language learning then dyslexic young people will learn to speak and understand a new language (Javorsky, Sparks & Ganschow, 1992).[52] However, as is plain from what has been said earlier there are good reasons why this is not necessarily so. Firstly, learning a language, as an additional language cannot be equated to mother tongue learning, as a classroom cannot be a complete immersion programme as a baby would experience it from its earliest days. When learning a second and subsequent language new vocabulary has an*

"dyslexia techniques, which apply to first language learning, are appropriate for second and subsequent languages"

already established vocabulary to map onto. Initial learning of an additional language therefore involves a mapping exercise to previously mastered vocabulary learnt in infancy, and later enhanced by specific experiences. Put more simply, instead of absorption through experience, translation to known vocabulary takes place.

Strategies to help additional language learning are about motivating students – all students. Dyslexic students however can be encouraged to learn not just by specific techniques but also by realising the purpose of their learning. The young man therefore who sees himself as a top TV chef with a superior knowledge of cordon bleu, and the young woman who wishes to communicate with her newly discovered Spanish boyfriend will be encouraged to develop their abilities in French and Spanish.

However, motivation is only one aspect of learning which needs to be taken into account when preparing to teach dyslexic young people. Dyslexia techniques, which apply to first language learning, are appropriate for second and subsequent languages (Crombie, 1997).[53] The speed at which a new language is presented needs consideration. The dyslexic pupil will not be likely to absorb new vocabulary at the speed of normal speech, as this does not allow for the translation process. Until the new vocabulary (in words, phrases and sentences) is over learned and fully established, speed of presentation has to be slowed down. This means that the pupil will have the maximum chance of hearing and comprehending, and speech can be gradually accelerated to a normal speed of production. If language teaching is purely oral, dyslexic pupils will have no visual hook to hang their learning on. Learning through words and pictures presented visually will help the pupils' memory processing and also begin to help an understanding of a different phonological system (Ganschow & Sparks, 1995; Ganschow et al, 1998).[54]

While it is inappropriate to formally assess the reading and writing skills of dyslexic pupils in the early stages of learning another language, it is appropriate to use the written word to aid speaking and listening (Schneider & Crombie, 2003).[55] Visual memory then works along with kinaesthetic memory through the reading and writing process and interacts with auditory and oral processes to maximize the young person's opportunities for learning.

The principle of multi-sensory teaching and learning which is vital to first language learning for dyslexic students is vital too in learning an additional language. Provision for over learning through the use of taped material, CD-ROMs, videos with subtitles, picture cards with cue words on one side in the additional language as well as English will promote a multi-sensory approach. The addition of drama, singing and games especially if some writing, typing or other additional kinaesthetic element can be brought in to add to the multi-sensory experience will all help the effectiveness of the programme.

Helping dyslexic pupils to understand how they learn best and to use meta-cognitive processes to aid their understanding of learning styles and techniques is important if there is to be success. Whether a pupil learns best working on their own or with a group or partner can be important information for pupils and their teachers. Organisation within the class should be flexible and respond to the learning needs of all pupils. Knowing whether a pupil learns best in the morning or in the evening can affect the optimal time to do homework. While it may not be possible to meet the learning styles of all the pupils all of the time, it should nonetheless be possible to vary styles at different points so that all of the pupils are suited for some of the time, and when they can suit themselves they can opt for their most effective style or medium.

Technology as a medium for learning is often effective, or can at least increase the effectiveness of other methods. If the student has a computer at home, then the effectiveness of having access to learning out of school hours is an added benefit. Through the use of CD-ROMs and other forms of practice, the dyslexic pupil can reinforce previous learning in a non-threatening way with

as many repetitions as they wish to gain understanding. For work within the classroom, the dyslexic student can be paired with a willing helper who can help provide a social learning experience. They can also provide help in understanding web-based tasks.

Digital language instruction allows students to work with their teacher using specifically designed audio panels. Lessons can be appropriate for one student or a whole class. The teacher is in control of activities and can plan different activities for each session. Lessons can be planned so that the needs of all young people are catered for. The student can hear the teacher's voice through the computer. Activities are pre-programmed to allow for differences within a class so that each pupil is working at their own level. A variety of learning experiences can be presented giving listening comprehension, reading practice, imitation, phone conversations, discussion and a facility to record responses. What benefits all can be of particular benefit to those with specific needs.

While a combination of methods is better than one particular technique, the potential of technology for the future is as yet immeasurable. The facility of computer-based learning which has the potential to translate the human voice speaking its native tongue into the language of the recipient so that it is readily understood may relax our worries for dyslexic pupils in future generations communicating with those in other countries. Nothing however will replace the satisfaction which can be gained from communicating directly with another human being in his or her own language. For dyslexic pupils, this is unlikely to be easy, but will be all the more worthwhile. Learning another language will inevitably challenge both the teacher and the dyslexic learner, but success is a possibility that must be tested. "

The next contribution is by Annemarie Vicsek, President of the *Board of the Napvirag Foundation* in Hungary. She focuses on good classroom practice, from the perspective of a speech and language therapist, in the teaching of foreign languages to pupils with dsyslexia and dysgraphia.[56]

" *Teaching second or foreign languages to dyslexic students is a field in education that has gained a lot on its popularity over the past few years. Nowadays, when the general awareness about dyslexia has increased, there is a rising demand to help dyslexic students when learning additional languages as well. This topic is especially important – and very fashionable – in Europe, where speaking one or more foreign languages is a must. Yet some new ways of sharing our experiences with each other have to be found.*

Why is it hard for dyslexics?

About 90-95 % of dyslexics have a history of having difficulties acquiring their native language. This difficulty usually affects both written and oral, and can affect both receptive and expressive language development. These problems will be identified as delayed speech, problems with articulation of sounds, poor vocabulary, poor phonological awareness, poor understanding of language, etc. Individuals with learning disabilities who have difficulty learning a foreign language often experienced difficulty or delay in learning to speak, received speech therapy early in their lives, or had a family history of language and learning problems. Problems these individuals face in their native language will still be present and sometimes even magnified when learning additional languages.

Most language teaching methods assume that the learner knows grammar in his/her native language. Therefore languages may be taught through explaining grammar, adding some vocabulary and using drills. Thus, in practical terms, it involves those skills that dyslexics are very poor in. Language teaching methods (e.g. grammar-based method, relaxation, emerging classes, communication based method, amongst others) are different in how much they rely on reading. Yet all of the methods assume that the learner knows how to read.

Language teachers facing new challenges

There are several issues that teacher training should address in order to enable general foreign language teachers to give proper assistance and support to their dyslexic students:

- *Awareness about specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia*
- *Knowledge of good SEN teaching practice*
- *Learning how to use special teaching techniques, special methods and special (multi-sensory) tools and equipment*
- *Special focus on adapting, for example, vocabulary development, pronunciation, phonetic awareness, grammar, sound-letter connection, syntax, amongst others*
- *Specific psychological knowledge on handling behaviour problems if and when they arise*

General guidelines for providing support and help for dyslexic students

Being playful is essential. For example practicing new vocabulary through a crossword puzzle, a memory game or a picture-word-connecting game is more fun for the pupils than learning the new words from their vocabulary notebook. These students often have to put extra efforts into completing a task. They often get tired quicker than the other students in the class. Experience has proved that they are more enthusiastically willing to do the tasks if they are done in a creative and playful way.

Gradualism, starting with the simple tasks, and gradually moving towards the more complicated is of importance. It allows enough time for the previously learned skills to become strong before teaching a new ones. Sometimes it seems like dyslexic students often forget what they have thought they have learned already. If skills are to be internalized permanently, it is necessary to offer a lot of opportunities for practice and repetition. This means repeating the content creatively through different means, tools and approaches.

In most languages dyslexia therapy uses a multi-sensory approach, which means enhancing three pathways: visual (what we see), auditory (what we hear) and tactile-kinaesthetic (what we touch or what we feel when moving certain muscles). When teaching a new letter, we don't only teach what the letter looks like, but also how we hear it and what we do with our mouth when we sound it out. This approach should be used in every aspect of teaching these learners, including the teaching of foreign languages. For example when teaching the intonation of a sentence the teacher can give visual signs (dots, accents, lines, curves, etc.) for pointing out the stress marks, and also show the melody of the sentence with a hand motion – alongside letting the learners hear the sentence.

These learners often need more time for finishing a task. Therefore it is often necessary to allow as much time for task completion as needed. In addition, tasks can be split up into sections so that the learner can take sufficient rest during any given activity.

The way of correcting the students' errors needs consideration. Error analysis often provides information on the way of thinking of the specific student. This entails thinking through how the learner provided a certain answer instead of just stating that the answer is wrong. Stating what is wrong, or otherwise showing a correct answer, is unlikely to have positive impact in the long-term. The learner needs to learn how to find solutions him/herself, so that overall learning capability is enhanced.

Christina Richardson[57] describes specific solutions to accommodating the foreign language provision needs of dyslexic pupils in a specific educational system by addressing the issue of predominant teaching methodologies. She observes that in her context the predominant teaching methodology is the communicative approach, where the focus is meaning-based rather than form-based (i.e. to concentrate on getting out the words and not worrying so much about grammar and syntax). This approach has been criticised on the grounds that failure to correct errors in the early stages of learning can lead to fossilisation of errors.

She also notes evidence from a number of studies[58] that 'form-focused instruction and corrective feedback, provided within the context of communicative programmes, are more effective in promoting second language learning than programmes which are limited to a virtually exclusive emphasis on either fluency or accuracy'.

Writing about the implications for dyslexic students, she notes:

> *Commencing the study of a foreign language with pupils aged 11-13 years has been considered by many researchers to provide the dyslexic student with a clean slate, an opportunity to study a different language that may not present the same problems as the first language. This would equally apply if the student started learning a foreign language aged 7-11 years. This would have the added advantage that the student is most likely to be most receptive at this age. Whilst the dangers of language overload are held to be greater in younger dyslexic children, these can be significantly lessened by choosing an appropriate teaching methodology.*
>
> *Some of the principles of good practice for teaching modern languages are also widely recommended as useful and appropriate for dyslexics. These relate to the use of multi-sensory methods for presenting vocabulary, which tap into the visual and auditory channels. In the author's opinion, offering a foreign language in a primary school context provides greater opportunity to make greater use of multi-sensory and active learning methods, which will be beneficial to all students.*
>
> *The point of most interest to emerge from the author's own small-scale research into attitudes towards foreign language learning amongst dyslexics and students with other Special Educational Needs (with pupils aged 11-13 & 14-16 years) is the more positive attitude to foreign language learning of the dyslexic students as opposed to the non-dyslexics. A possible explanation for this difference is that the dyslexics, particularly those who were diagnosed early, have usually developed more advanced study skills and a greater awareness of their own difficulties. These developments can bring with them a more mature approach to learning. On the other hand, there are, of course, dyslexic students who use their dyslexia as an excuse not to learn. However, in the author's own research none of the dyslexic students took this attitude.*
>
> *As regards the actual experience of learning a foreign language, the English first-language dyslexic student is not as disadvantaged as it might initially seem. If the language studied has a closer grapheme-phoneme correspondence than English, then some aspects of it will be easier to master than the student's native language. Furthermore cross-linguistic comparisons of grammar and phonology can play an important role in improving the accuracy of the student's native language. There are, naturally, many aspects of language learning that can be and are often shown to be enjoyable by all, particularly when the learner is actively involved.*

A different SEN type, Down Syndrome, is addressed by Valentina Tommasi of *The University of Foreign Languages and Literatures* Cà Foscari, Venice, Italy. Her observations on the potential and value of teaching foreign languages to learners with Down Syndrome indicate the similarities in approach optimal for other SEN categories, alongside certain tailored solutions.[59]

> *Children with Down syndrome are able to learn foreign languages. Until recently, when having a disability often resulted in prejudice, unease and forms of social isolation, learning a foreign or second language was (and*

possibly still is) thought to be an additional problem for their capabilities. This argument is reinforced by pointing to problems they face learning to communicate in the mother tongue.

However, if we consider how many children with Down syndrome live in a context where an official language and a dialect are spoken, and that they may easily speak both of them, we have initial evidence that this kind of additional language learning is not beyond their capabilities. Experts themselves mention experiences of children who are competently bilingual in English and Welsh, English and French, but also Spanish and Catalan, English and Japanese and even English and British Sign Language.

"teaching a foreign language can be more complex for the teachers and learning harder for the student"

Problems connected with speech and language in children with Down syndrome are nevertheless undeniable, and though bilingualism is a real fact in many families, there are several aspects that have to be considered when thinking of teaching and learning a foreign language as a curricular subject at school.

Teaching a foreign language can be more complex for the teachers and learning harder for the student, as the input is rather reduced by comparison with a bilingual situation, and because children start learning it at school at the age of six years, when basic structures of the mother tongue are already developed. Fortunately, even if this can be an obstacle in opening their minds to new linguistic structures, knowing the names of objects in one language can function as a valid support for understanding the meaning of new sounds and words in the other.

It is necessary to identify and implement specific methodologies for teaching a foreign language, which can link with the language already in use at school. Application needs to account for the specific deficits at the basis of speech and language performance of the Down syndrome pupil, and be based mainly on the methods parents use when teaching the mother tongue.

The most important factor in Down syndrome pupils with respect to language is connected to short-term memory: impairments in the phonological loop, a sub-system of the phonological storage, which seems to be the cause of poor performance in verbal short-term memory tasks, such as digit or word span.

Unfortunately little research has been done so far on the phonological loop in children with Down syndrome to find the reason for their difficulty in holding in mind sequences of information. Basically two hypotheses seem to be the most appropriate: either the phonological loop is reduced in dimension, due to the syndrome itself, or the information is lost abnormally rapidly from the store.

Though it is still not very clear to what degree, there are two more features not depending on memory affecting either comprehension (hearing impairments) or production (articulating difficulties). These two factors are inevitably inter-connected. The first depends on reduced dimensions of the auditory eardrum and on mucus, which often provokes otitis. If the sound is not perfectly heard, identified and discriminated, its reproduction will be difficult and incorrect, due also to their thick tongue moving in a too small palate, which seems to be a rather common feature in children with Down syndrome.

With this in mind there are basically two ways of addressing the problems: the first is to try to work on the deficit itself by stimulating short-term memory as far as it is possible. Though it seems rather heavy for children with Down syndrome to do that, sub-vocal rehearsal should be an important act to be constantly practised; in this way the information would be held in the mind for a longer time-span and probably reproduced with better results. Nevertheless there is evidence that the linguist act of rehearsing is rarely

practised by children, especially when they are very young. There is also other significant evidence which demonstrates that repetition of words only partially solves the problem of memory.

The other way is to find, or to encourage if already in use, adaptive strategies that involve other channels for the reception of information, which are totally dependent on short-term memory. In this case use of visual rather than auditory appears to be the most effective alternative.

Working with parents of children with Down syndrome has enabled us to identify their personal strategies (basically games and other activities) for enhancing the mother tongue. This is an important starting point for approaching how to learn an additional language. Many parents mention early reading as a good way to develop the acquisition of new vocabulary. Though partially involving short-term memory, these children use their stronger visual ability in fixing the visual configuration of letters corresponding to a particular word. At other times they are able to recognise the word's constituent sounds or phonemes, which give them a deeper comprehension and a better disposition to decode new words in the future.

It is therefore very important to get children to start reading short nursery rhymes, or short stories in the foreign language, at an early stage. In addition, music seems to be of considerable significance for giving words or sentences a pattern of rhythm and so to make them easily retained. Either in reading or in this latter case, some degree of visual translation of a song or a musical nursery rhyme, can be very useful. It allows for auditory support for the understanding of the meaning.

In a way this is confirmed by what one mother has reported positively on for enhancing comprehension for her Down syndrome daughter; watching TV films with subtitles. She says this is useful both for her daughter's ability to read, as well as, above all, for her comprehension of what is being said. Finally she states that this has also had a positive impact on vocabulary building. There is potential here for other forms of multi-media materials.

These are just a few examples of what can be done to relieve the problem of auditory input and short-term memory. Basically the method should never neglect the importance of a good language-learning environment, always considering the individual pupil's deficits and inclinations. Working on building motivation for learning a different language should be then at the basis of teaching. By adapting how we teach languages we are fully in a position to ensure that in the case of pupils with Down syndrome, potential is realized and inclusion in the European experience is further developed.[60]

"

Roswitha Romonath, Professor for Pedagogy and Therapy of Language Disorders at the *University of Cologne*, Germany. (Universität zu Köln Pädagogik und Therapie bei Sprech- und Sprachstörungen) was interviewed during the course of this report. Following this she contributed a statement which can be found in 'Original non-English Language Contributions'.

Romonath has specific interest in the learning of foreign languages by children and young people with difficulties in reading and spelling. In her statement she describes a small group of pupils who have difficulties in learning foreign languages although they do not show any remarkable learning difficulties in other subjects. They were found to have problems with a range of language abilities: pronunciation, translation, reading, writing etc.

She cites empirical studies which show that in particular difficulties in first language development as well as difficulties in reading and spelling seem to lead to remarkable problems in learning foreign languages.

Linguistic or psycholinguistic factors are, according to state-of-the-art research, primarily responsible for different learning results in teaching foreign languages. But it has been shown that pupils with less success in learning foreign languages are also likely to have considerable, partly hidden problems with learning their mother tongue. Difficulties in reading and spelling are thus not only a long-term problem in language learning, which make academic communication processes in the mother tongue more difficult, but they also are an obstacle in successfully learning a foreign language.

Romonath's own studies of young people with early diagnosed difficulties in reading and spelling confirm this hypothesis. She argues that this research should be taken into account when enhancing the language learning of pupils with difficulties in reading and spelling.

She points out that explicit and systematic teaching of grammar and orthography of a foreign language plays only a secondary role nowadays, whereas successfully learning of a foreign language means developing oral communication skills. But, especially with SEN learners, it is important to develop both the knowledge of grammar rules and academic language abilities. She suggests that it would thus be desirable that all teachers of foreign languages should get basic information about these special needs of children and young people with difficulties in reading and spelling so that they can be taken care of already during the early years of schooling. Thus teachers would be able to recognize possible language learning problems in time, adapt their teaching according to the students, and work in close association with other professionals.

Finally, she points out that there has been little focus on the foreign language learning needs of dyslexics in international research. She argues that further intensive research is needed in order to give children and young people who have difficulties in reading and spelling better chances to participate in international social, cultural and economic exchanges later in life.

The final contribution concerns an area not covered elsewhere in this report, namely that of gifted/talented pupils. This particular category of learner is included here under cognitive and learning difficulties because as with other types of special educational needs pupils, pupils gifted in languages, and possibly other subjects, are, in some countries, classified as being special and are in need of an appropriate educational response.

The following is one definition[61]:

- 'Gifted' learners as those who have abilities in one or more subjects in the statutory school curriculum other than art and design, music and PE.
- 'Talented' learners as those who have abilities in art and design, music, PE, or performing arts such as dance and drama.

"there is a large unidentified population with double exceptionality"

In relation to inclusion, The QCA notes[62]: *'Pupils who are gifted in modern foreign languages need strategies for learning and coping independently. Teachers should focus on reference materials and tools for linguistic success, such as verb tables, vocabulary lists and mnemonics. They need to ensure that gifted pupils have a firm grasp of grammar and heightened linguistic awareness, so they can progress rapidly'.*

As in discussion of pupils with special educational needs throughout this report a solution commonly cited is that these pupils require individualized learning plans appropriate to preferred language learning styles.

Eva Gyarmathy, Senior Researcher of the Research *Institute for Psychology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, Hungary ends this section by reiterating the view that there is a school population with double-exceptionality which needs specific attention given to language learning styles if success is to be achieved. She notes that: [63]

> *Numerous great creators failed or had serious difficulties in their school achievement. Many of them had some types of specific learning difficulties. Einstein could not speak until aged 3 years; he was a weak learner at school, yet he gained the Nobel Prize when he was 26. Leonardo da Vinci started to speak late as well, and Nietsche had similar difficulties. Anatole France could read early, but had difficulty passing his baccalaureate because of poor spelling. Picasso, Yeats, Flaubert and Agatha Christie all encountered great difficulties in reading. Benoit Mandelbrot the creator of fractal geometry could not count well. Wernher Von Braun, the father of rocketry, failed 9th grade algebra.*

Double exceptionality

There is a large unidentified population with double exceptionality. Gifted children with specific learning difficulties can cover their deficits by their high abilities. However their deficits cover their high abilities.

The fact that both specific learning difficulties and giftedness are even for themselves heterogeneous, and that in origin and appearance many kinds of populations are behind the definitions, makes identification more difficult. We can use identification methods that aim to find the typical, irregular information processes of the gifted persons with specific learning difficulties. Further references, and my own experiences, show that these children achieve at very different levels in their education, and have a specific learning style that may not be catered for so as to ensure educational success.

Poor verbal, sequential, analytic processes cause difficulties for gifted children with specific learning difficulties, though they are bright, when a visual, holistic, parallel approach is required. Verbal-sequential abilities are highly appreciated in our societies, starting at school. Education is based on this way of thinking. Those, who are different, not only suffer from their inability to 'fit in', but fail to acquire abilities and knowledge, such as command of language, which they need for later high achievements.

Results show that gifted children with specific learning difficulties in appropriate learning and testing situations can perform as well as their average peers. Most of their problems stem from their different information processing and learning style.

Gifted education and verbal abilities

Theory and practice in gifted education have shifted from an emphasis primarily on general cognitive ability to an appreciation of the unique information afforded by sequential-verbal abilities.

Given what is known about the structure and organization of human abilities there appears to be at least one dimension of the cognitive spectrum missing in academic assessment and training which is parallel, holistic thinking. Abilities connected to right hemisphere abilities such as spatial visualization, understanding music, humour, emotions, imagination are typically not assessed appropriately.

Why have abilities of parallel information processing been neglected in working with intellectually talented students? This may stem from false beliefs that these abilities are more relevant to the vocational trades than to academic or professional endeavours, inasmuch as the latter tend to place a heavy emphasis on verbal competence An alternative possibility, however, is that evidence of the differential and incremental validity of multiple abilities over and above verbal has been lacking. Tests measuring right hemisphere abilities display limited usefulness for predicting traditional academic criteria, partly because most course grades and academic accomplishment assessments are saturated with content specifically indicative of reasoning with numbers and words. If students were required to operate more in complex physical science laboratories, architectural design studios, or in some of the creative arts, there is reason to suspect that measures of other abilities would contribute to predicting performance and add incremental validity to conjoint verbal and quantitative reasoning assessments.

"specific learning difficulties stem from unusual information processing approaches. It is not something that has to be cured. It is a characteristic of the learner"

Teaching foreign languages seems to be less problematic in gifted provision, because most programmes identify gifted children with verbal-sequential abilities. These pupils easily learn languages, even without any teaching. However those pupils with parallel-global-visual thinking, even if they are highly able, have more difficulties in acquiring languages.

Treatment of specific learning difficulties

"current approaches and methods are deficit-oriented"

The syndrome of specific learning difficulties is considered a deficit, a kind of illness that has to be cured. However in most cases it is not true. According to our results specific learning difficulties stem from unusual information processing approaches. It is not something that has to be cured. It is a characteristic of the learner. The response needs to start from identification of the child's whole cognitive profile, abilities and information processing, and be based on the individual's characteristics.

Current approaches and methods used in the treatment of the children with specific learning difficulties are deficit-oriented. They focus on disabilities. This attitude causes low self-esteem and continuous anxiety. The monotonic drills to treat literacy deficits are hardly endurable for gifted persons. If by chance a child with high intelligence is identified as dyslexic, the pain that the treatment means can lead to extreme problem behaviour, and can hinder the development of a healthy personality.

"it is not only that children should fit into education, but also that education should fit into children"

In this way it is difficult to decide which is less harmful. If the child is identified as suffering from specific learning difficulties and pulled into a treatment described above, or if remains unidentified, and endures the continuous frustration of the everyday failures in the school, while not understanding that many far less bright peers can achieve so well. For instance, some identified SEN learners are encouraged not to learn foreign languages. This false alleviation leads to further frustration, low self-esteem and lack of important abilities. The solution is in using appropriate methods to teach languages for those with special needs.

Consequences

Not only those with high abilities and specific learning difficulties need alternative teaching. Most of the underachievers are not underachievers, but under-served or mis-served because educational provision doesn't suit their rather parallel-holistic abilities. It is not only that children should fit into education, but also that education should fit into children.

Learning languages is a built-in ability of human beings. Those with verbal deficits may need to make more effort, but those who can acquire a language, even with subdominant verbal-sequential information processing, can learn foreign languages. The key is in methodology.

"

EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIOURAL & SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES

"what can be achieved in foreign language learning by some of the most educationally disadvantaged children in a European education system"

The contribution to this section comes from Christine J. Harvey who is an experienced classroom practitioner and in-service teacher trainer with a proven track record of raising achievement in languages across primary, secondary and SEN sectors of education.

She has been responsible for introducing the teaching of foreign languages at Maplewood School, Sunderland, UK,[64] and describes what can be achieved in foreign language learning by some of the most educationally disadvantaged children in a European education system.

Context

Maplewood is a school for emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children within the age range 5 to 13 years. Most of its 90 pupils are the subjects of Statements of Special Educational Needs and are deemed to have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties too severe for their needs to be effectively met in a mainstream school setting. Since the school opened, there have never been more than 10% of girls on role. Consequently some classes are composed entirely of boys.

"a unique opportunity to pupils with learning difficulties as they had no history of failure in this subject"

According to the statements, although pupils have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties as their main presenting problems, in many cases there is also mention of associated learning difficulties. A number of pupils have Tourette syndrome (a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary, rapid and sudden movements and vocalizations), many with Aspergers syndrome and many more with ADHD and general attention difficulties. All have a history of disturbed and often disturbing and challenging behaviour.

The school is situated in Sunderland, one of the most deprived cities in the U.K. Long term unemployment, crime and poor housing conditions are all significantly higher than the national average. Thus, some two thirds of pupils who attend Maplewood are entitled to free school meals.

Introduction of a Foreign Language into the Curriculum

It was against this background, in the summer of 2000, that the school began an ambitious project to offer its pupils new learning experiences within the context of foreign language study. An innovative approach was piloted to challenge the very specific and individual needs of these learners whilst maintaining a strong emphasis on fun and enjoyment. No previous knowledge of a foreign language had been assumed. This offered a unique opportunity to pupils with learning difficulties as they had no history of failure in this subject.

As many pupils have a very short attention span and poor memory recall, a range of reinforcement activities had to be incorporated into lessons in order to teach some basic skills. This was done with the help of classroom support assistants who encouraged active pupil participation to develop both the receptive skills of listening and reading as well as the productive skills of speaking and writing. Negative attitudes towards foreign language learning as well as prejudice had to be challenged because for many pupils, Sunderland is their world, and opportunities to look beyond it are rarely sought or welcomed. Progress, by small achievable steps, soon began to be made but no one expected its impact to spread throughout the school so quickly, as pupils themselves became the catalysts of new learning.

The success of this initial work was far more than good practice or sound methodology. It stemmed from a firm belief that even such disadvantaged children could aim high and achieve success equal to their peers in mainstream education. A goal was set for national accreditation validated by the A.Q.A. (The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, the largest U.K. examination board) and against all the odds this has now been achieved by every single pupil who began the project.

The accreditation scheme used in the Maplewood project is based on a unit or modular approach where topics/themes are presented as a series of individual units. Each unit sets out what the student will learn and outcomes that must be achieved. Evidence is needed to demonstrate achievement as well as how assessments will be made and recorded. At Maplewood, we use the Entry level modern foreign language units as individual stand alone units of work. These include topics such as self, family and friends, food and drink, school, weather, home and home town. Each of these units incorporates assessments in all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Impact of foreign language learning

For these pupils, to gain national accreditation in a foreign language is a triumph but the spin offs have been immense. The experience of language learning has boosted their self esteem and motivation and it has been heartening to see previously disaffected boys engaging with obvious pleasure in language work. Moreover, the experience has produced a confidence that perhaps if they are able to attempt the same work as a mainstream pupil and gain national awards, then reintegration into a mainstream school and social inclusion becomes a real possibility.

"for these pupils, to gain national accreditation in a foreign language is a triumph but the spin offs have been immense"

Other benefits learning a foreign language experience has brought to these children include an improvement in concentration generally. Aspirations have certainly been raised. The pride which pupils feel about their efforts and successes in language learning has inspired them to attempt other areas of the curriculum they had previously considered too demanding. The significance of this alone should not be underestimated. It has indeed made reintegration into secondary school a smoother process for those for whom it is appropriate as they are not disadvantaged by having any unfamiliar curriculum areas. In fact, colleagues in the mainstream secondary sector have complimented Maplewood pupils for being ahead of their peers in French! An awareness that pupils know more in a foreign language than their parents also helps to boost their self esteem.

Despite the huge difficulties these youngsters have, the Maplewood model serves as an example of what can be achieved through foreign language learning for some of the most educationally disadvantaged children in the education system.

"inclusion can be a real possibility and language teaching is, without doubt, a key element in enabling this to happen"

Our experience shows that inclusion can be a real possibility and language teaching is, without doubt, a key element in enabling this to happen. The challenges are immense but not insurmountable. Teachers need to be trained. A higher profile needs to be given to those schools that are demonstrating what can be achieved in order to raise teacher awareness on the value of teaching foreign languages to SEN pupils. Appropriate training on how to motivate, sustain and facilitate progress in languages with such children ought to be available to all teachers, new or experienced. Funding needs to be sought to develop such initiatives and support those who long to see languages and special needs flourish in this country.

It is a fact that pupils with SEN, along with their peers in mainstream education, will have an increasingly important role to play in European citizenship. Equipping them with essential language skills is vital if we are not to deprive them of this right. Indeed, it is our responsibility as teachers to ensure we do all we can to prepare them for that role in the future. "

COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION DIFFICULTIES

This contribution is by Vivienne Wire who works as a teacher in a Communication Disorder Unit (CDU) within a host Secondary School (Hillpark), in Glasgow, Scotland.[65] The focus here is on establishing the means and approach to ensure successful language learning with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders.

Background to the current position for the Secondary education and additional language learning of autistic pupils in Scotland

Autism or Autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) are increasingly being recognised and diagnosed across all age groups in Scotland, as elsewhere in Europe. The cognitive range of the autistic spectrum varies from very low (the majority) to high-functioning, (which means from the top end of moderate learning difficulties to genius level). Those with the most profound autistic difficulties are likely to need lifelong care, and will be educated in a special, sometimes residential, school. For these individuals, many of whom are mute or have severely impaired communication, learning a foreign language is likely to be inappropriate. Whatever the cognitive level, or co-morbid impairments - such as ADHD, dyslexia or dyspraxia - all share the triad of Impairment, with difficulties in social interaction and communication, and a lack of flexibility.

"whatever the cognitive level, all share the triad of Impairment"

Those at the upper cognitive end of the range are said to have High-Functioning Autism, or Asperger Syndrome - whose diagnostic criteria are slightly different. In this group, the ratio of male-female is 5:1. Numbers are increasing dramatically, probably through earlier and better diagnosis. Until recently, many went through school and foreign languages classes, with their Autism unrecognised and unsupported. They were often vulnerable to bullying because of their idiosyncrasies, and were misunderstood by teachers who found them challenging to work with. Some of this group can cope fairly well at Primary level with little or no support, but the situation for them socially, and therefore generally, at Secondary level often deteriorates, as they begin to appear a bit different, and distinctly uncool.

In Scotland, there is now a presumption of mainstreaming all of the higher functioning autistic pupils. Those who are identified as requiring help will usually receive it from the Support for Learning Team within the School.

A Change of Approach

Within the last decade, however, there has been a shift of opinion as to the best way to support ASD pupils at Primary/Secondary level, which is in the process of being established. It has been necessary to take into consideration that more with a diagnosis of Autism are now appearing in schools. In Scotland, a solution has been to set up dedicated Autism units within host primary and secondary schools. These are often referred to as Communication Disorder Units (CDU). In the City of Glasgow, there are now 3 Primary and 3 Secondary CDUs, and most of the Education Authorities in the central belt (the highest population area in Scotland), either now have one, or are on the point of opening one.

The organisation and amount of actual teaching done in the CDUs varies considerably, as they principally serve the purpose of providing an autism-friendly support base or haven (as an alternative to the playground), staffed by specialist staff. Of the 3 CDUs in Glasgow City, Hillpark CDU has the most teaching within the unit, and a foreign language, French, is part of the CDU curriculum, so that these pupils receive their due entitlement to it. Importantly, as the time of transition from Primary to Lower Secondary school is particularly difficult for many pupils on the autistic spectrum, it allows an additional language to be introduced from the start in a quiet, relatively distraction-free environment.

Many educationalists are too quick, in my opinion, to jump to the conclusion that learning a second language is an unnecessary burden on such pupils who may be struggling with their social interaction and communication difficulties and readily withdraw them from the subject when difficulties arise. I believe it is a valuable subject for them and worth persevering.

Recent research on ASD pupils and foreign language learning

I carried out research in 2002, which explored the experience of ASD Secondary level pupils learning a foreign language.

66 Secondary pupils with ASD (the tip of the iceberg), in mainstream/units, were identified by questionnaires sent out to different Education Authorities and of these 20% were, at that time, not learning a foreign language. There seemed to be an opinion that it was only worth continuing with an additional language where the pupil was co-operative and keen to learn, and that otherwise it was an unnecessary burden on a young person with a communication disorder.

Those who persevered found there were many advantages to be gained and that pupils would settle down into the subject and were potentially as able as any other. This concurs with the findings of the father of Autism, Leo Kanner, who did a follow-up to his original case studies of the 1940s, and found that Donald had progressed with learning a foreign language to a high level. Some articulate individuals with Asperger syndrome have even chosen a non-native tongue in which to write autobiographical observations, which corresponds with the liking of some to adopt a different persona (for example, in drama lessons).

The research highlighted that the difficulty some teachers of foreign languages have with certain ASD pupils relate as much as anything to a lack of information about what barriers to learning such pupils may have, how they could address them, and what strengths they have that can be helpful for learning a new language. In addressing these, the following strategies should be considered:

Strategies to enhance the learning of a foreign language for ASD pupils

Addressing Barriers

- *A very structured, quiet classroom situation with obvious rules.*
- *Provision of written as well as verbal instructions. This may be crucial at the beginning of a class when they are coping with the transition from one lesson/classroom to another.*
- *Making allowance for some pupils' poor organisational ability. Help by colour-coding (for example, all green).*
- *Writing homework tasks in a diary and enlisting support of parents.*
- *Being aware that they are likely to find working co-operatively in a pair or group quite difficult, even if it should be gently encouraged for practising social interaction.*
- *Being cautious with direct eye contact. This is difficult for some pupils and can actually physically hurt them. It is necessary to try to avoid confrontation about their idiosyncrasies. For example, their voice may be too loud/quiet in volume, too fast and garbled, or accented in an unusual way.*
- *Helping with organisational study features. For example, these pupils can find it very hard to leave a task incomplete or imperfect in some respect.*

Some have strong feelings about writing with a particular pen or pencil, not tearing a page out, or not using a dirty eraser.

- *Appreciating the sense of being different that some of these pupils feel. One articulate young woman with Asperger syndrome has described being in the school playground with other youngsters as feeling as if she were a Martian from outer space. Others have used similar terminology.*

Using Strengths

- *Focusing on preferred learning orientation. These pupils may have areas of the curriculum where they have real strength and interest. Computing is one – machines may well make more sense to them than people. Many show ability in mathematics and science, which may appeal because they concern concrete facts/figures rather than abstract concepts (such as poetry). Some will have special talent in music or technical subjects. Generally subjects involving gross motor skills are less appealing.*

- *Utilising the characteristic good rote memory learning skills, for example, simple facts and figures, vocabulary and patterns for verbs.*

- *Focusing on production of accented speech. As they are quite literally minded, these pupils will often mimic a foreign accent without any self-consciousness to make it sound localised.*

- *As they usually have encyclopaedic knowledge of some subjects, these should be incorporated into foreign language learning activities, homework or projects to increase their interest. For example, a chapter in a textbook on 'transport' can be expanded to learn extra-related vocabulary, practice numbers, and learn verbs relating to travel.*

- *Concentrating on enhanced reading skills. Often they are excellent fluent readers from an early age and have good general verbal ability.*

The future of ASD pupils learning a foreign language

With the presumption now of mainstreaming high-functioning autistic pupils, young people with ASD entering secondary schools will certainly encounter some challenges in foreign language learning, but these will relate more to problems in social interaction and communication than to a lack of cognitive ability.

"inclusion means some adaptation of mainstream expectation"

Teachers of foreign languages may need to become more accommodating of ASD pupils' typical, but often unpredictable, quirky behaviour and idiosyncrasies. Expecting them to fit the standard pupil mould will only add an extra layer of stress. Inclusion means some adaptation of mainstream expectation, and a need to provide an environment where pupils can feel comfortable and achieve their potential. Pupils on the autistic spectrum will not work well or fulfil this potential where teachers shout at them for poor organisational skills, inappropriate speech or comments, or for their difficulties doing group work. This only causes the pupils undue stress.

Wherever possible, pupils with ASD should be offered appropriate support, from those who have knowledge of the nature of Autism. This may well require an increase in the numbers of foreign language teachers becoming specialised in this field.

So how will it be obvious that such strategies are working? The young person will be achieving his /her potential, becoming almost invisible in the foreign language classroom, indistinguishable from those who are doing the work/ homework of the class, and attaining well in assessments. They will answer

confidently in oral work, speaking with impressively authentic accents, and will have mastered a bank of vocabulary and structures. They will pass examinations and possibly continue to a higher level, or simply have amassed enough of the foreign language to serve them well enough in the future.

This will only be achieved when teachers and educationalists acknowledge that these young people can do very well in learning foreign languages but also when the classroom experience and teacher's approach have been subtly differentiated to suit them. "

Vivienne Wire's practical experience of working in a Communications Disorder Unit correlates with the research work carried out by Simon Baron-Cohen, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge (UK) in the Departments of Experimental Psychology and Psychiatry.[66]

He is cited as arguing that 1 in 200 children, mainly male, have an autism-related condition, whereas an earlier estimate was 1 in 2 500.[67] In terms of foreign language learning, work ongoing at the University of Cambridge (UK) is of interest.[68] It is argued that children with high prenatal testosterone were 'worse in maintaining eye contact, had slower language development, narrower interests, and greater difficulty in developing socially'[69]

"1 in 200 children, mainly male, have an autism-related condition, whereas an earlier estimate was 1 in 2 500"

This is linked to Baron-Cohen's argument that males and females have different basic brain pattern preferences, and that 'kids come into primary school and are all given the same curriculum but, if it's the case that some are better at empathising and some at systemizing, maybe we should be adapting the curriculum to their needs'.[70]

This work has direct implications for the emphasis on abilities and disabilities across the whole spectrum of special educational needs, preferred foreign language learning styles, and the need for individualized learning paths.

SENSORY & PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES

The first contribution considers visual impairment in relation to broader principles of access to foreign language provision and potential for learning. The contributors, Antero Perttunen, Tarja Hännikäinen and Marja Lounaskorpi, all work as teachers in The School for the Visually Impaired, Jyväskylä, Finland.[71]

" *In our view there are no specific children that should be denied access to foreign language teaching. A disability such as visual impairment itself is not the reason to modify the mainstream curricula and, for instance, exclude foreign language learning. To deny them this is to deny them opportunities for accessing the European experience, which goes beyond even mobility, be it physical or virtual. Language learning is a Iifelong undertaking, and in school education we have a responsibility to get all children started. We likewise have a duty to ensure access to foreign language learning and not allow undue labeling to be used for the purposes of exclusion.*

"a duty to ensure access to foreign language learning and not allow undue labeling to be used for the purposes of exclusion"

Labeling and de-labeling

Think of our world. It was created by sighted people. If it had been created by the visually impaired it would be visually adaptable. If sighted people were a minority, then no doubt the majority would be able to find reasons for denying them opportunities for foreign language learning.

In SEN we need to label children to open up diagnosis and services, and de-label them when it comes to educational provision. We tend to categorize children in education but this often rules against realizing the potential of youngsters. Take age for example. There is nothing wrong with teaching languages to diverse age-range groups. Learning different things at the same time rather than similar things at different times can certainly suit foreign language learning needs. The more we work with SEN pupils the more we learn about individual properties and needs. If you educate two children in the same way you can assume that with one child at least, you will be doing the wrong thing.

"in SEN we need to label children to open up diagnosis and services, and de-label them when it comes to educational provision"

Recent developments in the education of the visually impaired have gone beyond expectations of times gone past especially in the emergence of individual education plans. These allow us to shift away from categorizing the learner as under label x, y or z, towards acknowledging that certain learners have certain needs at certain times and that our educational systems need to respond accordingly.

When you deny something to someone you inevitably label them. But in our experience some 70% of our visually impaired student intake has multiple disorders. So what do we do? Create a new label multiple-disabled visually impaired and then decide if this group should be given access to foreign language learning?

By doing this it is possible to condemn them to be without it, pre-judge them, and lay the grounds for their expectation of failure. In SEN we tend to label individuals because of getting access to services (because you need the diagnosis to trigger provision of resources) but in terms of foreign language learning, it is essential that any categorizing does not extend to recommendations on what they can or should do, and what they should not.

"when you deny something to someone you inevitably label them"

Certain categories of SEN pupils may drop through the foreign language net because of assumptions that they are not suitable. This takes us back to labeling. If you place a special needs learner in a mainstream language class, labeled accordingly, and expect a foreign language teacher to adapt without sufficient training, then although legal requirements are honoured, in practice the educational expectations may be misplaced.

Foreign languages and pupils with visually impairment

There are many aspects to visual impairment and the following categories should be considered somewhat individually as their learning methods and special needs vary considerably: children with low vision, children who are blind and children with multiple impairments (including visual).

The situation of a visually impaired person is quite different when talking about a foreign culture because of past experience and orientation to unfamiliar issues. They very often benefit from and need a far more multi-sensory approach to foreign language learning than is readily used in mainstream education.

In some ways, visually-impaired SEN pupils have already had to learn about another culture, the visual culture, including the language to some extent, of sighted people. This could make these pupils even suitable for learning foreign languages because they have been through a similar process already. One can argue the same about the hearing impaired, and other SEN categories. What is important is that the foreign language teaching approaches adopted by teachers are learner focused, and usually done through learning by doing.

Visual impairment sets demands and conditions on teaching: teachers and school assistants need to he trained, the methods and techniques, as well as use of aids and approaches, need to be known and mastered.

These same youngsters can only benefit from, and contribute to, the networking opportunities across Europe. For example, to deny these young people access to prevailing youth cultures, through exclusion from foreign language learning, may actively erode their self-confidence.

But it is not just a matter of different track records in learning foreign languages that matters. If we don't provide all youngsters with languages nowadays then they will start missing out on the developments of the Internet age. It isn't our job to deny our students access to ICT, and the youth cultures which use this, on grounds such as 'they won't reach the specific equivalent peer group required level' by the end of a course. "

The second contribution examines teaching foreign languages to young learners with visual impairments. Compiled by Helena Aikin, University of Castilla la Mancha, Ciudad Real, Spain, it considers educational provision vis-à-vis inclusion, and the types of solutions which can allow fuller access to quality foreign language learning for these types of SEN pupils.[72]

" *Individuals with visual impairments could particularly benefit from mastering a second language, as it would increase their professional opportunities as well as enhance their integration into the society of the sighted. Foreign language learning is therefore an important school subject for children with* sight loss*.*

Extensive research has been done on the influence of motivation and attitudes upon the learning process and it is generally acknowledged that there exists an interrelationship between a child's disposition towards a certain subject and his/her level of achievement (Strong 1984; Gardner 1985; Crookes & Schmidt 1989; Ellis 1994; Schumann 1997).[73] In the area of foreign languages – particularly where young learners are concerned - the teaching materials developed in recent years are carefully designed to promote the pupils´ motivation by tackling subjects that appeal to their age group as well as by proposing highly stimulating tasks involving their favourite activities. Unfortunately, most of this instructional material concerns the sense of sight and therefore excludes children with visual impairments, thus hampering their full inclusion into the mainstream foreign language classroom.

It can be concluded from the scarce existing literature concerning second language acquisition in blind students that blindness itself does not obstruct the learning process of a foreign language; quite to the contrary, their aural sensitivity and memory training seem to place them in an advantageous position with respect to their sighted counterparts provided there are adequate pedagogical and methodological conditions (Dorstet 1963; Snyder & Kesselman 1972; Nicolic 1987).[74] However, the current instructional materials, unlike those used in more traditional foreign language teaching methods, are highly visual, and blind learners are expected to manage with the Braille version of a regular textbook whose motivational impact relies heavily on illustrations and photographs.

"blind pupils, just like their sighted peers, learn better through meaningful tasks that stimulate the different senses and promote the development of their creativity and expressive powers"

For pupils enrolled in special *schools the situation is not so serious, as in this type of setting teaching aids are carefully adapted to reduce or substitute the visual information. But nowadays most SEN pupils are educated in mainstream schools because an ordinary setting is thought to widen the impaired pupils' opportunities for social interaction with non-disabled peers, as well as ensure that they are exposed to exactly the same academic standards.*

However, full inclusion *can be a great challenge for a visually impaired pupil, who has to conform to a group of fully sighted peers who learn foreign languages –among other subjects- through textbooks and teaching aids full of visual information. This can seriously affect the learning process of the blind, who are supposed to enjoy the same opportunities as their non-impaired counterparts and should therefore have access to instructional material with high motivational impact designed to promote the development of the remaining senses. It is nevertheless common practice, at least in Spain, to use Braille versions of very visual textbooks. This is quite meaningless for a person who cannot see and often results in disappointment, boredom and poor academic performance.*

If impaired learners integrated in mainstream schools are to truly enjoy the same opportunities as their sighted peers they should be taught through appropriate pedagogical methods that promote their interest in other languages and cultures.

The Spanish National Curriculum endorses the view that a foreign language can be acquired the same way as the mother tongue. Therefore priority is given to communicative competence over formal academic learning of rules and grammar. Furthermore, it recommends linguistic contents and related activities that are particularly meaningful and stimulating for each age group in the belief that the learning process is enhanced when the affective side of the pupil is taken into account. As a consequence, modern language textbooks for young learners are full of enjoyable activities that involve artwork, music, drama and physical movement. Most of these are inappropriate for the visually impaired learner unless carefully adapted by the teacher. A problem lies in teachers often feeling overwhelmed in the present educational climate and therefore unable to put in extra preparation time to accommodate an impaired child.

Blind pupils, just like their sighted peers, learn better through meaningful tasks that stimulate the different senses and promote the development of their creativity and expressive powers (Schumann 1997; Gardner 2000).[75] *Unfortunately, current teaching practice in Spain does not provide adequate infrastructure or instructional materials for visually impaired children attending a mainstream foreign language classroom, and therefore these learners do not have the same opportunities as their sighted classmates.*

In order to improve this group's academic performance, often classified as poor, there should be better access to instructional material with high motivational impact specially designed to encourage cooperation between impaired and non-impaired pupils.

I have developed and tested a series of tactile illustrations, consisting of texturised flatshapes easily recognisable by the sense of touch, that substitute the textbook pictures used by the sighted group. This material has proved to be a very useful tool for the foreign language classroom. Not only does it promote the blind child's desire to learn other languages but it also encourages his/her social integration which is particularly important for developing team work. Furthermore, it is also useful for the sighted pupils as it encourages the development of their sense of touch, often neglected in our highly visual society, and helps them become more sensitive towards peers with impairments, thus fostering closer friendships between both groups of learners.

To conclude, the true inclusion of children with visual impairments into the mainstream foreign language classroom entails the use of materials carefully developed to promote their learning skills as well as to awaken their desire to learn. Furthermore, such materials have to synchronize with the regular textbooks used by the non-impaired children in order to ensure that all pupils follow the lesson at the same pace; consequently, a considerable effort on behalf of the teacher is required, who, in many cases, needs to create his/her own tactile material and also find extra time for class preparation so as to adapt lesson plans. However, I believe it is worth the effort, as it is our

duty to eradicate the existing mismatch between the underlying philosophy of integration and the every day reality of mainstream schools. "

The next contribution comes from Franz Dotter, Head of the *Centre for Sign Languages and Deaf Communication at the University of Klagenfurt*, Austria.[76] It moves focus from visual to hearing impairment. Franz Dotter describes the basic factors necessary for consideration when teaching languages to those with hearing impairment. EU 15 said to have 1.6 million deaf and deafened citizens, and some 44 differing sign languages.

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Acoustic perception and spoken language

Compared to salient acoustic phenomena like a strong pulse or a loud noise, the perception of spoken language needs fine differentiation with respect to acoustic data: The differences in intensity between accented and non-accented syllables or words are big; the same is valid for intensity and frequency bands of different sounds. Therefore persons with a restricted hearing ability are in danger of missing some less salient sounds within words or some less salient parts of words, words themselves or even phrases. If a certain limit of this lack of perceptions is reached, the acquisition of spoken language may be negatively influenced: The respective persons acquire gaps during their ontogenesis of language, which lead to a less complete mastering of their mother tongue than subjects with normal hearing show.

Many forms of a hearing restriction have less severe consequences and lead only to slight deficits concerning language or communicative competence. The situation is completely different if the hearing capability of a person is not sufficient in order to acquire spoken language via the acoustic channel (this is the practical definition of deafness).

While many of the hard of hearing people only demand adequate hearing aids in order to amplify acoustic phenomena, the acoustic channel is barred to the deaf so that all acoustic data have to be presented in a visual form in order to be accessible. This is also true for spoken language. Therefore practically all the deaf choose sign language as their preferred language

Spoken and written language

Though it seems sometimes that written language represents language much better than the spoken one, our learning history is the converse, naturally: We have a good competence in spoken language already when we begin to learn the written variant of our mother tongue. Although we should not say that it is impossible for a young child to learn a language first by its written variant, we all know that this would be a very unnatural way. Human beings learn languages in realisations, which are quickly and spontaneously producible and perceivable. For hearing people the acoustic mode is the best one for this enterprise.

We have to follow another rule concerning language use: Our everyday spoken language is not identical with the standardised written language. Due to its production mode and our normal communicative behaviour, it shows some features we normally don't find in written language (we do not always speak as we write), e.g. different registers and styles, breaks and new beginnings, or additional paralinguistic information.

Due to shortcomings in deaf education yet existent in several countries, deaf people often lack a sufficient competence in writing and reading (as spoken language is the main basis for learning the written language). As a consequence, they are not only cut off from acoustically offered information, but often also from written information. This is the reason why many sign language users need help with written language in spite of the fact that it is already in the visual mode.

As deaf people cannot hear spoken language well enough in order to learn them this way, they need a special form of bilingual education, where a sign language gives the linguistic and cognitive base and the/a national written/ spoken language is anchored to the first system (as a second language). There is the need for special research and optimisation of this sort of language learning. There is also the need to offer English as a third language in order to be able to follow the international communication, also in a form specially adapted for deaf people.

A false analogy

The situation of deaf people with written language just described above explains why an appealing analogy is not adequate: Our experience shows that blind persons can easily read if they are offered a tactile version of written language (Braille). The reason is: They had no severe problem to learn the spoken language and can therefore acquire written language from this base like other hearing subjects. In this case the so-called compensation hypothesis applies: If an individual cannot perceive data from a certain sensory channel, these data have to be offered in another, accessible channel.

For deaf people the analogy would be: As they are unable to access the spoken language in the acoustic channel, we simply have to offer them spoken language via written language and all problems should be solved. But, as this solution does not respect the natural learning sequence (spoken to written language) and as written language is not as simply and quickly producible and perceivable as spoken language, the analogy does not work. Therefore we have to acknowledge sign languages as the languages chosen for everyday use and instruction by deaf people.

Written language is of great importance for deaf people, naturally, if they want to integrate in the hearing society and have all written information at their disposal. But the goal of offering them written language competence, comparable to hearing subjects, can only be reached if respective instruction is considerably improved. ICT will have an important role in this task.

Sign language users as a minority within the hearing handicapped

The first principle to be stated here is that of self-determinacy: Everyone has the right to define the form of his life. Parents of a child with hearing difficulties have to decide for their young child, the child itself has to get more and more control over language choices as s/he matures. Self-responsible adults have the right to get language and communicative contexts, as they want them.

"the first principle to be stated here is that of self-determinacy"

To describe the minority state of deaf people within the big group of hearing handicapped, let us turn to numbers: The standard estimation of the number of deaf people in any society is 0.1 to 0.2 per cent. The percentage of hearing impaired people as a whole is rather different from country to country, but with about 6-15 per cent it is at least sixty times the number of deaf people. From this fact it is understandable that the use of the generic term hearing impaired in political or scientific discussion often has as its consequence that only the needs of the overwhelming majority within this group, the hard of hearing, are considered. This fact is the reason that many scientific publications simply ignore the fact that there is an important divide within this group concerning language needs. "

The second contribution on hearing impairment is by Bertold Fuchs of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.[77] This article further elaborates on issues relating to the types of languages knowledge, besides the mother tongue, that those with serious hearing impairment need. It then examines some didactic considerations necessary when considering the teaching of foreign languages. These are framed through a brief description of the linguistic situation of the deaf, and then aspects of learning additional languages.

"

The basic issues relating to hearing impairment are as follows:

The sign language (SL) of each community of deaf and pre-lingually deafened people is considered the mother tongue of these people (e.g. Finnish, British, Swiss German SL etc.) Most deaf people grow up in families with hearing parents, brothers and sisters. Thus they do not learn a sign language from the first days of their lives through natural communication within the family but through contact with the community of the deaf, and with parents and other members of the family when these have started to learn a sign language.

This can retard the lingual input of the primarily learnt language. This retardation can be reduced by making the learning of the sign language more effective already at preschool. Thus, when deaf children start school, their knowledge of sign language is equivalent to the knowledge of mother tongue of hearing children.

Spoken languages as foreign languages

"Which sign language should be taught as a foreign language?"

Although various writing systems have been developed for sign languages, these have not been successful when it comes to written communication within communities of the deaf. Thus the written form of the spoken language of the deaf persons' environment is an important method of communication for them.

This written language is the first foreign language (FL) of the deaf and the learning of the written language begins from the moment when deaf children start reading and writing. In schools where sign language is used as a language of instruction for the deaf, the teaching of the written form of the spoken language is carried out in the mother tongue of the deaf, i.e. in sign language.

The deaf pupils must also be taught in spoken languages which are generally studied as foreign languages in their country. The goal of this instruction is active and passive competence in the written form of the foreign language. Speaking, hearing and lip-reading in the foreign language should not be taught because they do not belong to the communicative needs of deaf persons.

Sign languages as foreign languages

An important question when it comes to teaching foreign languages is whether they should be taught other sign languages as foreign languages as well. The answer is usually yes. Another question is which sign language should be taught as a foreign language. ASL (American Sign Language) is widely spread and turning more and more into a lingua franca among the deaf globally. However, the competence of teachers and quality of necessary teaching materials is a problem which should not be underestimated. These groups must be given a chance to learn both spoken languages and sign languages as foreign languages.

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PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT RESOURCES

This section contains two contributions which examine both ICT and web-based resources. The first, by Ian Smythe and Paul Blenkhorn, examines the core issues involved when adapting ICT for the teaching and learning of languages in special needs education.

The second, by David Wilson, introduces an internet-based bibliography of resources which, addresses curriculum access and management issues, with particular reference to modern foreign languages, special educational needs and the appropriate use of information and communications technology.

Ian Smythe and Paul Blenkhorn's contribution, 'Information and communication technology, special educational needs and learning languages'[78] is as follows:

Introduction

In learning languages, information and communication technology (ICT) may be considered to be of significance in three key areas. These are:

- *Teaching support*
- *E-learning*
- *Assistive technology*

The purpose here is to highlight how their use can assist SEN learners in the area of foreign language learning. Although generic in nature, these guidelines are particularly relevant with respect to people who have difficulties with literacy (dyslexia).

The Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994)[79] state that every individual 'has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs' and that the 'education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs'. Despite this, there is still a tendency to assume that a label such as dyslexia means that all individuals in that group work in the same way. However, unlike most individuals, the SEN learner is less tolerant of material presented in a manner that is outside their personal preferences, and the preference of each individual can be different.

Before discussing how ICT can be used in language learning with respect to SEN individuals, a brief discussion of the key areas with respect to meeting the needs of the individual in language e-learning is presented.

Designing for language e-learning

According to the EU, e-learning is 'the use of new multimedia technologies and the internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration.' When looking at developing and choosing e-learning materials, the key areas to consider are:

- *Accessibility*
- *Usability*
- *Readability*
- *Learnability*
- *Human components*

Accessibility
This refers to the ability to access the structure and content of the information through the use of relevant assistive technologies.

Usability
Usability is the ease of use of the environment within which you learn. Issues that need consideration within usability include:
- *Fonts (style and size)*
- *Colours (backgrounds, fonts, navigation etc.)*
- *Layout and navigation*

These first two issues of accessibility and usability are very similar for all subjects, including foreign language learning.
Readability
– it is important that the text is age, culture and content appropriate. With

the human tutor, text can be appropriately chosen since the ability of the individual is (hopefully) known personally. The material can be changed when it is perceived that the student is failing. However, computer based learning usually assumes all learners progress in a similar way, though at different speeds. However, too frequently prose is provided before the individual is ready for it. If the individual does not have the skills, particularly vocabulary skills, this presents a problem for understanding the text. Computer programs usually make decisions based on the average student. And by definition, the SEN student is not average.

Learnability
It is interesting to note that the introduction of computers into mainstream education has provided the potential for a new level of analysis in education that was rarely seen in traditional teaching. However, many of these ideas are still very new, and have not been integrated into all areas of computer based learning. As a consequence, foreign language learning is still little more than books with a multimedia component, despite claims to the contrary.

Modules need to offer structured sequential learning, with a logical progression tailored to individual needs, particularly for the SEN individual. For example, just because others learn by an immersion principle does not mean everybody should. Many dyslexics prefer to be taught grammar and syntax explicitly as they have trouble acquiring the rules implicitly. Few programmes provide an opportunity to switch between pedagogic approached, and when the approach does change, it is only a sequential change, not a response to failing to learn by another approach. This is very important for those SEN individuals learning languages.

Human components
– The SEN individual frequently needs additional support, including emotional and motivational support, particularly when the software is not user friendly.

A more in depth analysis of these issues, with particular reference to the dyslexic individual, may be found in Dyslexia and E-learning – a guide to good practice by Ian Smythe and EA Draffan (2004).[80]

Uses of computers & teaching support

Computers can be used as a support tool, to assist the teacher in many different ways, other than direct teaching.

CDs and the internet provide a wealth of resources for supporting teaching, in the written and more recently spoken format. Thus the teacher has a greater library of resources at their disposal, either to use personally, or to send children off to learn. There are also resources developed which are intended to provide the stimuli for a lesson, which assist rather than take over the teaching. An example is the structured approach developed to teach English to non-English speaking children developed by Smythe and Siegel (2004).[81]

Some schools promote shared learning environments. Thus an English child could learn French through a dedicated chat zone with a French pen (or more recently live video) pal and the French child could learn English similarly. If handled correctly this could be good for the SEN individual. But its success will depend on the teacher input at both ends.

In addition, the computer may also provide implicit or explicit teacher training. For example, some language teachers fail to acknowledge some of the pedagogic principle of teaching children, ignoring what happens when children learn a language as their first language. For example, in teaching English to children in England, a structured phonics approach is very important, with principles such as rhyming skills, use of analogy and the oral compo-

nent being important components in learning English particularly in the early years. (NB. These principles are also important in most languages, though the emphasis may change.) However, across Europe these principles are not always taught. Rote learning, reading and spelling from drilled lists are still widespread practices.

The teacher support units may provide materials for both the children and teachers to learn.

E-learning

There are many sources of e-learning with respect to foreign language learning, both as CDs and as web based media, and there is no attempt here to discuss them. Their failure to frequently meet the needs of the SEN individual has been discussed above. With respect to the SEN child and language learning, e-learning may be viewed as follows:

The potential advantages of e-learning include:

- *The ability to provide over-learning*
- *Can be stimulating and motivating*
- *It is non-judgemental*
- *Can have the potential to be tailored to specific needs*

The potential disadvantages include:

- *Difficulty in correcting speech related errors*
- *Making generalised assumptions on how children learn*
- *Limited ability to correct errors*
- *Lacks the precision that is possible with real teachers*

It is important to remember that in any learning process, it is necessary to verify that learning has taken place. Sadly again, there is frequently a failure to understand the issues involved, and as a consequence it is the disability rather than the ability that ends up being assessed.

Technology other than the computer is also now being used to teach languages. For example, in Japan DoCoMo offer English language lessons through the mobile phone (USC, 2004).[82] *The handheld device (mobiles and PDAs) have advantages and disadvantages for SEN individuals. Once again, potential benefits will depend on content and how the material is presented.*

Assistive technology

The role of assistive technology, that is the software and hardware which helps the individual access, structure and create information, in helping the SEN individual is discussed in general elsewhere.[83] *However, there are a number of areas that are significant in the learning of foreign languages.*

Text-to-speech
If an appropriate speech engine is used, text-to-speech can provide an excellent way to read and check text for those with special needs. In many cases the spoken form may be known, but the written form may not be recognised or pronounced correctly, and therefore comprehension is limited. Using text-to-speech software allows the language learner to hear how the word should be spoken. Furthermore, many teachers do not have good pronunciation, and this software may assist the teacher with limited language skills. This may be in the form of reading documents, or reading the words as one types, as a speaking word processor. There are several such systems currently available. Some programmes can read in several languages, while handheld scanners can both translate and speak text in a

number of languages, and provide excellent support to those struggling in a new language.

Speech to text and speech analysis
Although useful for many SEN children in other subjects, speech-to-text has limited use in supporting those learning a new language. The accuracy necessary in pronunciation for effective use make this difficult for all but the best speakers. Both Dragon and IBM do speech recognition in some of the European languages, but hesitation, mispronunciation and/or mis-articulation may make it too frustrating to be useful.

Systems such as that developed by Auralog[84] make good used of voice recognition in a limited manner. This may be used for answering questions and for practicing pronunciation. However, the SEN student may find it frustrating since the quality of some of the components is questionable. Although some suggest that it is good to hear the feedback of ones own voice, for many this is not that helpful as it requires good auditory discrimination (the ability to hear the difference between your voice and what it is supposed to sound like) and good auditory short term memory (you have to remember what the real word sounds like when you practice). A simple tape recorder may do just as well.

Typing tools, spellcheckers and grammar checkers
Spellcheckers are limited by the algorithms that govern them, and usually are very restricted in their approach to the correction of mis-spelt words. However, certain programmes are now adopting a more user-led approach. The Swedish company Oribi AB,[85] for example, is adapting its spellchecking software to the needs of poor spellers with Swedish as their first language, trying to write in English. It is anticipated that other versions where different orthographies may produce "unusual" spellings will follow.

Lookup software, dictionaries and handheld devices
These tools can be very useful to the SEN learner. Some software provides look-up capabilities with pop-ups for translations and spoken text (e.g. Word Point),[86] and even semantic representations in the form of pictures (e.g. SpeakOUT).[87] The Reading Pen and the talking Quicktionary[88] provide a novel solution by allowing the student to scan a short piece of text and have it translated or even spoken. Several companies (e.g. Franklin)[89] offer speaking bi- and multilingual dictionaries.

Mind mapping
Mind mapping tools are frequently used as a method to organise ideas, and develop an idea or essay when writing may be a difficulty, such as with the dyslexic individual. However, they can also be very useful when you have a limited vocabulary, such as in learning a new language. MindFull90 is available in a number of languages, though other programmes allow non-English languages to be used alongside the English dropdown menus. "

David Wilson has created a bibliography of modern foreign languages and special educational needs'.[91] This is a substantial and landmark resource in the area of teaching foreign languages and SEN. A brief description follows:

"

On the website at http://www.specialeducationalneeds.com there is a Word file listing documents online and in print about the teaching of modern foreign languages (MFL) to SEN learners. The bibliography is the result of extensive online searches. However, it is very much an ongoing work in progress.

The references come in every shape and size: books, dissertations, conference papers, slideshows, chapters, articles, web pages and even a spider diagram. They are written in CZ, DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, HU, NL, NO, SE, and SK. Although Canada and the United States of America account for many entries, Europe is very well represented, thanks mainly to contributions from the northern and central countries. The additional languages taught include DE, EN, ES, FR, and Latin. Just about every kind of SEN is there: general and specific

learning difficulties, emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical and medical difficulties. There is something from all sectors – primary, secondary, special and higher education – and for learners of all ages – children, adolescents and adults.

This bibliography currently has a thematic organisation which breaks down into six parts. The first, ***Provision and practice****, contains broader references, each covering more than* ***one sector of education or category of SEN. It has eight sections, namely Country profiles, Entitlement, Autonomy, Curriculum development, Differentiation, Information technology, Collaboration*** *and* ***Professional development.*** *Foreign language teachers wanting an overview of language teaching and SEN practice should find what they are looking for here. The focus narrows in Part two,* ***Educational sectors****, which breaks down into four sections:* ***Primary education, Secondary education, Special education*** *and* ***Higher education.***

The remaining four parts relate to particular categories of SEN, narrowing the focus further. They are expected to be of interest to foreign language teachers working with individuals or whole classes diagnosed as having these conditions. Part three covers ***Cognition and learning difficulties,*** *with sections on* ***Moderate learning difficulties, Severe learning difficulties*** *and* ***Specific learning difficulties****. The latter accounts for the bulk of the references there due mainly to the prolific theoretical and experimental work of the psychologists Ganschow and Sparks. Part four concentrates on* ***Emotional, behavioural and social difficulties****, while Part five addresses* ***Communication and interaction difficulties,*** *with* ***Speech and language difficulties*** *and* ***Autistic spectrum disorders*** *sections. Both parts represent relatively neglected areas of foreign language teaching and SEN. The sixth part****, Sensory and physical difficulties****, contains sections on* ***Hearing impairment, Visual impairment*** *and* ***Physical and medical difficulties.*** *To date, the latter has received comparatively sparse attention.*

Thus the bibliography gradually shifts its emphasis from the general to the particular as it proceeds. The thematic arrangement is also designed to assist those contemplating a literature review of the whole field of foreign language learning and SEN.

The bibliography of modern foreign languages and special educational needs is at http://www.specialeducationalneeds/mfl/biblio.doc. At the time of writing, it lists over 1200 entries. The web addresses attributed to online references can and do change frequently. The Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org) may have a copy of any document that is no longer posted online.

TESTING

The first contribution on evaluation has been submitted by Ruth Shuter, Special Circumstances Co-ordinator at the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, UK. It addresses what has been identified throughout this report as a key developmental issue. This is provision and/or adaptation of evaluation systems which both suit specific high performing disabled pupils, and which recognize performance thresholds suitable for lower end and alternative forms of achievement. Drawing on provisions and procedures used by the ALTE - Association of Language Teachers in Europe (Centre International d' Etudes Pedagogique, Instituto Cervantes, Goethe-Institut and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations), Shuter provides a comprehensive description of policy and practical issues when extending examination access to candidates with particular requirements.[92]

Why try to extend access to examinations?

Examinations in additional languages can represent an incentive for learning, where they have a positive impact on teaching; and life chances, where they are used as part of, for example, university admissions and job recruitment procedures.

It is important, therefore, that the assessment tools used in examinations place no unnecessary barriers to candidates who have particular requirements showing their ability in an examination. This means that there should be systems in place to make it possible for special arrangements to be made for such candidates which, as far as possible, fulfil the following criteria:

- *removal as far as possible of the effects of any given disability on the candidate's ability to demonstrate his or her true level of attainment in relation to the assessment objectives*
- *protection of the integrity of the assessment – a test must still test what it purports to test – and protection of the validity of the certificate in certified assessments, such that the user of a certificate will not be misled about the candidate's level of attainment*
- *protection of the rights of other candidates by not allowing candidates with special arrangements to gain an unfair advantage*

In addition to this moral imperative, there is a growing legal obligation in many countries to protect people from discrimination on the grounds of a disability.

Removal, as far as possible, of the effects of a disability

The following is based on the example of the provisions and procedures used by the following partners of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE); Centre International d' Etudes Pedagogique, Instituto Cervantes, Goethe-Institut and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations.

Special Arrangements provisions fall into two main groups; those which are administrative, and those which involve the modification of examination material.

The following are examples of administrative special arrangements:

- *extra time for candidates with dyslexia, or candidates with visual difficulties (who would take longer than usual to read or write)*
- *the use of an amanuensis or scribe, by candidates with writing difficulties caused by, for example, cerebral palsy or a broken hand*
- *supervised breaks for candidates with conditions which result in difficulties with concentrating for long periods*

Modifications to examination papers are designed to make it possible for candidates with, for example, visual difficulties, to read examination material; or for candidates with severe hearing difficulties to take listening tests. In the case of the former, this involves the production of papers in Braille or enlarged print, plus some modifications to the format and layout; in the case of the latter, the production of lip-reading versions of the listening test.

Obviously, although the number of provisions is essentially fixed, the combination of provisions required by any given candidate will need to be worked out on a case by case basis. A blind candidate, for example, would typically need the following:

- *Braille papers*
- *extra time*
- *a special version of the listening test, whereby the tape is stopped periodically to allow time for the questions to be read, and answers written and checked*
- *a special version of the speaking test, in which any visual prompt material is presented as a written description*
- *an arrangement which would allow the recording of the answers, which would typically be chosen from: the use of an amanuensis; the use of a computer with appropriate software; or the use of a Braille typewriter*

The provisions which would meet the needs of a candidate with hearing difficulties again need to be determined on a case by case basis:

- *For some candidates, the use of headphones, and possibly separate invigilation, would be sufficient*
- *Where the difficulty is more severe, the use of the special version of the tape described above, where the tape is paused periodically, allows the candidate enough time to 'register' what has been heard*
- *Where the degree of hearing loss is such that none of the above would be sufficient, a lip reading version of the listening test (for technical reasons not available for all examinations) might be appropriate*
- *Where a candidate cannot lip read in the additional language, the only option would be for the candidate to be exempt from the listening component of the assessment. In this case, the candidate would be given a result based on their performance in the other components, and the certificate, where issued, would be endorsed to show that the full assessment objectives of the examination had not been met (see below)*

Protection of the integrity and standing of the assessment

As far as possible, the candidate taking the test with special arrangements should take the same test as any other candidate. In making modifications to test material, the modified material should be based on the standard material.

If possible, the only changes should be to the format, with the content being left unchanged. Examples of format changes would be to split reading papers into a question booklet and a text booklet, so texts and questions can be referred to side by side. Visually impaired and blind candidates are unlikely to be able to look at the whole page at once, so it is necessary to add extra 'signposts' to instructions and elsewhere in order to tell candidates where they will find the different parts of tasks.

With some material a change to the test content may be necessary (for example with a task based on a map or graph, the information would need to be presented as text for a blind candidate), but such changes should be limited to what is absolutely essential. Also, some tasks would be totally inappropriate for some candidates, for example a writing task asking candidates to describe a favourite picture would need to be replaced for a blind candidate.

Sometimes a candidate may have a disability which is so severe that it is impossible for him/her to deal with the standard assessment, even with modifications. An example would be a candidate who had such a severe speech impediment that it was very difficult for an examiner to assess the

level the candidate's spoken language. In this case, the candidate could opt to be exempt from the speaking component of the exam. An overall grade would then be awarded based on the candidate's performance in the other papers, and then, because the assessment objectives would be judged to have been compromised, the certificate would need to carry an endorsement to highlight the fact that the candidate had been exempt from satisfying the full range of assessment objectives.

The provisions of papers in Braille, or extra time, for example, are not judged to compromise the assessment objectives, and so these would not incur an endorsement.

Ensuring the candidate does not gain an unfair advantage through special arrangements

This involves two elements; ensuring that special arrangements are really justified, and ensuring that candidates are given an appropriate level of provision.

Some provisions such as extra time could be an advantage to any candidate, so it is important to have systems in place to ensure that the system of allowing special arrangements is not abused.

These systems are based on the requirement for the candidate to provide satisfactory medical evidence of the condition requiring the special arrangements.

This is not always as straight forward as one might expect. In the case of dyslexia, for example, arrangements for diagnosis and reporting may vary from country to country. If there is therefore a need for the assessment for dyslexia to be carried out in the country of the target language, it may not always be clear as to which problems with spelling, for example, are due to dyslexia, and which are due to the fact that the language is not the candidate's mother tongue.

There is also the issue of the need for candidates to disclose that they have a disability, which may in some cases, and in some cultures, not be easy. It is worth mentioning the fact that, having disclosed a disability to an examination board, the candidate has a right to expect confidentiality to be respected.

Having established that special arrangements are justified, the next requirement is to determine what levels of provision are needed. Obviously, this will vary considerably from individual to individual.

One example of this would be in the case of a visually impaired candidate, where the medical evidence indicates that the candidate will need extra time. The evidence would usually contain a description of the nature and cause of the impairment. It would, however, be unlikely to make a specific recommendation as to the amount of extra time needed, which might range from 25% to 100% extra time depending on the severity of the problem – and which could even vary from day to day according to the type of condition.

In this case the examination board would need to make a recommendation, arrived at in consultation with the centre, as to the amount of extra time to be given, but then a certain amount of flexibility might be required on the day. One factor which needs to be taken into account by both the candidate and the centre administering the exam is that too much extra time can make the candidate very tired, and there may also be the risk of over-correction.

The future

The area of how to prevent discrimination against disabled people is one which has been receiving increased attention in recent years (for example the European Year of Disability 2003).

There has also been a lot of work done on how to increase equality of opportunity for disabled people in examinations, including examinations in additional languages.

In the future, it will be necessary to cast the spotlight on exactly what happens to the validity and reliability of examinations taken with special arrangements in place. It is to be hoped that European-wide initiatives such as the report of which this paper is a part, will help provide momentum and increased opportunities for collaboration in this important area. "

This contribution is a direct extract from Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties – Modern Foreign Languages (QCA, 2001).[93] It shows examples of alternative performance descriptions, suitable for assessing pupils with significantly below age-related expectations.

These are not only low end descriptors, but alternative ability descriptors which are particularly suitable for certain types of SEN learners. The value of this type of assessment facility is considerable according to case visits carried out during the course of compiling this report. Not only does it enable the learners and teachers to work towards tangible and achievable targets, but it also helps with the design of foreign language programme planning and the provision of certification. The positive impact of the certification stands alone as a major positive influence when teaching certain types of SEN pupils who may have low self-esteem or otherwise have low performance grades when compared to peer earner groups.

"low end' descriptors, but 'alternative ability"

Starting with Performance Indicators 1-3 which are applicable for all subjects, indicators 4-8 describe 'pupil's performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in MFL (modern foreign languages)'[94]. Indicators 1-3 cover 0-9 months of developmental language. Levels 4-6 cover 9-36 months, and 7-8 cover 3-5 years.

David Wilson comments '*This assessment system is much appreciated by special schools, and by special needs teachers in mainstream schools, whose students can make very slow, modest but still, for them, very significant progress'*.[95]

Performance descriptions across the subjects[96]

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance which pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

P1 (i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *for example, startling at sudden noises or movements.* Any participation is fully prompted.

P1 (ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *for example, attending briefly to interactions with a familiar person*. They may give intermittent reactions, *for example, sometimes becoming excited in the midst of social activity.*

P2 (i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *for example, withholding their attention from unfamiliar forms of interaction.* They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, f*or example, smiling at familiar people in familiar circumstances*. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, *for example, focusing their attention, when prompted, on sensory aspects of stories or rhymes in the target language.*

P2 (ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *for example, reaching out to a familiar person in a new setting*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *for example, vocalising or gesturing in a particular way in response to a favourite visitor to their modern foreign languages sessions.* They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses

over short periods of time, *for example, showing pleasure each time a particular character appears in a story dramatised in the target language*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *for example, taking turns in interactions, imitating actions and facial expressions, with a familiar person using the target language.*

P3 (i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, *for example, pointing to key objects or people during modern foreign languages sessions*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, *for example, reaching out and feeling for objects as tactile cues to events in sessions simulating life in other cultural settings*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, *for example, listening to their own vocalisations during sessions in which the target language is used*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, *for example, following the sequence of a familiar routine in modern foreign languages sessions and responding accordingly.*

P3 (ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, *for example, prompting another person to join in with a familiar interactive sequence in the target language*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, *for example, pre-empting sounds or actions in familiar interactions in the target language.* They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, *for example, by nodding or shaking heads at appropriate points during an interaction in the target language.* They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, *for example, scanning the pages of a magazine written in the target language.* They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, *for example, showing or giving an object in response to a request in the target language.*

The performance indicators 4-8 are as follows[97]:

P4 Pupils attempt to repeat, copy or imitate some sounds heard in the target language. They may perform similar or simple actions on request using repetition, sign or gesture as prompts. They listen and may respond to familiar rhymes and songs in a foreign language.

P5 Pupils attempt one or two words in the target language in response to cues in a song or familiar phrase. They respond to simple questions, requests or instructions about familiar events or experiences. Responses may be through vocalisation, sign or gesture and pupil's responses may depend upon repetition and support.

P6 Pupils respond to others in a group. Their attempts to communicate in the target language may rely heavily upon repetition and gesture, and they may use facial expressions and/or intonation to enhance meaning. They communicate positives and negatives in the target language in response to simple questions. They match and select symbols for familiar words, actions or objects presented in the target language.

P7 Pupils introduce themselves by name in response to a question in the target language. They contribute to using the target language for a purpose, for example, using ICT skills to access the internet and exchange information, with guidance from other pupils or adults. They listen, attend to and follow familiar interactions in the target language.

P8 Pupils listen attentively and know that the target language conveys meaning. They understand one or two simple classroom commands in the target language. They respond briefly using single words, signs or symbols. They may need considerable support from a spoken model and from visual clues. They may read and understand a few words presented in a familiar context with visual clues. They can copy out a few words with support. They label one or two objects. With some support, they use the target language for a purpose, *for example, requesting items in simulations of real life encounters in the target language.*

[1] *Hilary McColl taught French for twenty-five years in mainstream schools in Scotland before being seconded as National Curriculum Development Officer to look at how pupils with special educational needs were being catered for in Modern Languages. Now working as an independent trainer, consultant and writer, she has particular interest in bringing together teachers who specialise in modern languages and those who specialise in supporting learners, believing that collaborative working is the best way to ensure viable modern language programmes for learners with special educational needs. The views expressed here are her own.*

[2] *From the Introduction to Europe, Language Learning and Special Educational Needs, McColl, H. Hewitt, C, Baldry, H. (SOEID 1997)*

[3] *The Europe. Language Learning and Special Educational Needs project ran from April 1994 April 1996. The project report of the same name was published in 1997.*

[4] *In 1996, for example, of the candidates entered for Standard Grade French at the beginning of the academic year, 9.6% received the lowest grade or failed to complete the assessments required. The percentage for German was 9.4%. These figures compared unfavourably with figures for other 'core' subjects: 3.1% for English and 2.8% for Mathematics. Ref: Scottish Examination Board: Examination Statistics 1996.*

[5] *As in the Introduction to Europe, Language Learning and Special Educational Needs, McColl, H. Hewitt, C, Baldry, H. (SOEID 1997)*

[6] *The Body now responsible for awarding National Qualifications in Scotland is the Scottish Qualifications Authority.(SQA)*

[7] *Ideas for developing programmes such as those described can be found in documents published by Learning and Teaching Scotland: Access in Modern Languages: a Guide for teachers (2001, updated July 2004) and Modern Languages: Life in Another Country: Access 1/2 (2000). See: http://www.ltscotland.com/nq*

[8] *Modern Languages in Special Schools and Mainstream Units in Scotland 2002, McColl, H. with McPake, J and Picozzi, L. Published in 2003 and available on Scottish CILT's website: http://www.scilt.stir.ac.uk*

[9] *SEED National Conferences: Proceedings. Published by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (Scottish CILT) in March 2004.*

[10] *As in Modern Languages in Special Schools and Mainstream Units in Scotland 2002, McColl, H. with McPake, J and Picozzi, L. Published in 2003 and available on Scottish CILT's website: http://www.scilt.stir.ac.uk*

[11] *Working Together to improve access to the modern languages curriculum. The Edinburgh Schools Project is described in Chapter 3 of this report.*

[12] *I was born in 1951 in North London. From the age of five to sixteen, I attended St. Vincent's School for the Blind and Partially-sighted in Liverpool, after which I trained as an audio shorthand-typist at the Royal National College for the Blind. At the age of twenty-one I joined the Open University at their Headquarters in Milton Keynes and worked there as a largely unfulfilled audio shorthand-typist transcribing research interviews and seminars for some years. From 1989 to 1993 I attended Birmingham University and l'Université François Rabelais in Tours. These four years were arguably among the most enjoyable and productive of my life. Since then I have worked as a freelance translator and teacher and as a researcher at the Open University, UK.*

[13] *This article is based on a speech given at The English Language Institute, American University, Washington, DC, in 10.97. It can be found at Learning Disabilities On-Line. For original please see, www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/ foreign_lang/painful_collision.html - 32k*

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www.mosaicdownsyndrome.com
www.conosciamocimeglio.it
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INNOVATIONS

3

Summary

A significant number of possible case sites were examined during the process leading to this report. Many, particularly from member states in the South and East of Europe, were exemplary in terms of achievement. However, these were often found to involve single schools describing the teaching of foreign languages to relatively few SEN pupils in a given environment. These have not been included in the report. Their significance, however, is considerable. This is because they reflect the reality in many schools where processes of inclusion, in particular, result in a few SEN pupils being accommodated in mainstream foreign language classes, and the need for an appropriate professional response.

The case profiles included here have been selected according to significant initiatives which are clearly transferable from one context to another. These cover key development issues that have surfaced during our enquiries. The issues include the in-service professional development of teachers; self-confidence development and public awareness tools; ICT products and assistive technologies which can be adapted for the learning of foreign languages; existing internet-based resources; the adaptation of mainstream language learning materials; solutions specific to hearing impairment which have implications for other SEN categories, and finally, selected examples of school-based practice.

CASE 1 SEN & FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CENTRALIZED)

OVERVIEW

The Europe-wide recent trends towards inclusion of SEN pupils into mainstream schools are resulting in extra demands being made of teachers. This applies to a range of teachers and includes subject teachers and those specialized in SEN. If foreign language teachers are required to fully accommodate SEN pupils into their lessons then it is necessary to examine competence-building means for this task. In the long-term this should be a significant and integral part of initial teacher education with predominant focus not only on SEN categories, but also on mixed ability teaching and diverse language learning styles. This case profile outlines a more immediate short-term in-service education solution. The possibility of seeing such an approach adopted elsewhere in Europe is rated highly because of the planning and monitoring procedures implemented and reported.

COORDINATES

Sector ~ SEN Generic
& disaffected and underachieving pupils

Age–range ~ 2 Lower Secondary

Title **City of Edinburgh Schools Project "Working Together: improving access to the modern languages curriculum"**

Contact George Reid, Quality Improvement Officer with special remit for Modern Languages, Gaelic and Community languages
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Wellington Court
10 Waterloo Place
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George.Reidl@educ.edin.gov.uk

Hilary McColl
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Creagan, Perth Road
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TYPOLOGY

~ In-service teacher education of SEN and language specialists
~ Teaching/learning
~ Resource development

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Overall aim of all the projects is to improve access to the foreign language curriculum for pupils who had been giving cause for concern.

Pilot schools were asked to:

- Identify individual pupils or a groups of pupils deemed to be struggling or 'at risk of failing' in Modern Languages
- Identify a core team consisting of the foreign language teacher responsible for the class or group and a 'Support for Learning' teacher familiar with the pupils and with supporting in a modern languages context. A member of the School Management Team undertook to support these teachers by arranging time and opportunity for them to plan and work together during the project.
- To closely observe the pupils (or a representative sample of the pupils) at work and to share perspectives in order to identify barriers to learning and to devise strategies for tackling them
- To try out strategies (with the help of the Support for Learning Teacher – referred to here as SFL) and to evaluate them
- To disseminate ideas which, appeared to have promise

The consultant to the project observes: 'The notion of barriers to learning has been a powerful one in this project in that it has helped teachers to focus on what the pupils actually find difficult about modern language learning, to become more aware of individual learning styles and learning needs, and to make adjustments in their teaching which make the tasks they set more accessible to a wider range of pupils. However, this notion is not always familiar to foreign language teachers, so each project begins with an opportunity for the teachers involved to explore this concept together'.

The consultant to the project has developed visual materials which help with this, but they are not essential to the project – the important thing is that foreign language teachers have an opportunity to gain some insights which are normally the province of SFL teachers and that both foreign language and SFL teachers have an opportunity to share professional insights into what helps children's learning and what inhibits it. Sharing perspectives was also helped by foreign language and SFL undertaking classroom observation together, but this too needs to be facilitated by School Management.

The planning procedure used in the project is essentially a problem-solving one. Teachers not used to this approach appreciated the support of the consultant who was able to bring a new perspective to a situation that was all too familiar to them. This entailed an expense, which it may not be possible to replicate, but consideration should be given to making available a senior member of staff or external 'mentor' who can provide the support required.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE
~ Positive - European learner development need
~ Positive - European teacher development need
~ Positive - European policy need
~ Positive – Human Rights inclusion need

ACHIEVEMENT
~ Positive – Prototype approach for training professionals to respond to problem

INNOVATION
Developed since 2002 and put into practice in 2003.
The local coordinator reports: The work of the project was based on certain observations and premises for which evidence has been building up over a number of years:

- that all children can benefit from modern languages provided that they are offered a course that is appropriate for them (e.g. evidence from special schools and units); that there is no justification for considering modern languages as a subject only for the élite.

- that some traditional ways of teaching modern languages are not appropriate for all pupils but actually create barriers which prevent some pupils from learning as well as they might; but that small changes in the way in which modern language learning is presented can sometimes spark significant improvements in motivation and attainment;

- that modern language teachers sometimes need help to identify the barriers and to effect changes which might make a difference; and that this help is available in schools, provided that it can be mobilised effectively. The project was seen as a potentially effective tool for addressing a number of Scotland's National Educational Priorities in the context of modern language learning, in particular:

NEP1 to raise standards of educational attainment for all…

NEP2 to support and develop the skills of teachers, the self discipline of pupils and to enhance school environments so that they are conducive to teaching and learning

NEP3: to promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education, with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and to Gaelic and other lesser used languages

NEP4 … to teach…the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society

NEP4: to equip pupils with the foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society…

The project also contributes to action in line with recently introduced legislation on combating discrimination in educational practice.

SUSTAINABILITY
Initial finance was required and secured from a foreign languages Innovation Fund which was set up by the Scottish Executive to promote experimentation into new approaches to foreign language learning. Schools which chose to join the project received funding which allowed them to employ additional staff to cover classes as necessary. This allowed the 'team' to work together outside the classroom in order to observe pupils and plan teaching/learning strategies which would improve their chances of success.

Extra human resource costs result from team-teaching.

TRANSFERABILITY
~ High - cross-sector
~ High - application in different countries
~ High - administrative commitment required

FUTURE POTENTIAL
~ Learning outcomes reported very positive
~ No formal external evaluation to date but examples of initial feedback are:

- Schools are keen to extend the approach to other foreign languages taught in the school.
- SFL departments are keen to extend the approach to other subject areas.
- Parents have commented on their children's renewed enthusiasm for the foreign language and said 'I wish I had been taught like this.'
- Teachers have noted clear improvements in the 'on task' behaviour in foreign language of pupils who are still causing trouble in other classes.
- Teachers report that there is less absenteeism and that formerly disaffected pupils are 'not reluctant' to come to the foreign language class.

- A teacher involved in the project in the first year, who was moved to another school, reports that she is continuing to use some of the strategies developed during her time with the project.

- Local Authority Officers visiting the school have been impressed by improvements. Inspection reports have noted: the calm, orderly routine; rooms carefully arranged to promote tranquillity; pupils keen to do well, responding well in the target language and confidently in the target language; increased participation in homework

It is reported that if, at the end of the project, the school management is unable or unwilling to allocate time and enable foreign language and SEN teachers to work together, then this approach cannot happen. It is intended to show, during the lifetime of the project that this approach is beneficial to pupils, in that they enjoy and achieve more, and beneficial to the school as a whole in that interested and successful pupils cause less disruption and bring more credit to the school. If school management is convinced, then they can try to make it happen, provided they have sufficient resources.

CASE 2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GRASSROOTS)

OVERVIEW

This case exemplifies how a small group of teachers, both SEN and foreign language, have formed a type of 'help network' by which to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching foreign languages to SEN learners. Geographically located over a wide area (up to 400 km apart) and with access to minimal funding, this group exemplifies the form of 'grassroots' development forum by which practicing teachers seek to share and identify appropriate solutions. Although inclusion has been underway for about 10 years in this country (Finland), and this group received some funding to undergo initial training, it is an example of how an association-based cross-discipline network can form and achieve positive outcomes.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ SEN Generic
Age–range	~ All ages
Title	**SENLA (Special Education Needs in Foreign Language Classrooms**
Contact	Minna Sandberg Lohipadon erityskoulu (Lohipato Special School) Koskitie 39 FIN-90500, Oulu, Finland Tel. + 358 8 56 16 230 Fax. + 358 8 56 16 241 minna.sandberg@lohipato.oulu.net

TYPOLOGY

~ In-service teacher education of foreign language teachers
~ Resource development
~ Regional/national networking

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Grassroots-driven initiative by mainly foreign language teachers
~ Directly related to responding to greater inclusion of SEN pupils into mainstream foreign language teaching classrooms. This process has been underway for some 10 years in the country but the SENLA members report lacking 'skills, support, materials, IEP support and follow-up' in the teaching of foreign languages. They have also reported the problem of 'late diagnosis' leading to failure in examinations. SENLA has been driven by the need to act in this respect.
~ Networking, and otherwise achieving greater understanding and identifying solutions with other teachers, however distant in terms of location, is a major feature.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

~ An example of a grassroots initiative, which is likely to grow in scale and attract cooperation with foreign language teachers in other countries
~ An attempt at 'self-help' to satisfy a professional need for development and support
~ Prototypical of other professional interest groups teaching foreign languages to SEN in Europe

ACHIEVEMENT

~ Establishing self-help framework as an 'association', which is to act as 'platform'.
~ Combines theoretical understanding with heavy emphasis on practice

~ Specific interest in identifying and using appropriate ICT solutions for foreign language learning
~ User-evaluative
~ Communicates the need for the foreign language teaching profession to have support in responding to pressures of inclusion
~ Addresses issues of lack of materials particularly in ISCED 3 where mainstream materials may be too advanced or otherwise specialized for SEN.

INNOVATION
~ Grassroots action and development plan
~ Focus on non-recognized (or otherwise 'statemented') SEN learners
~ Focus on developing multi-sensory methods
~ Leading towards on-line solutions

SUSTAINABILITY
~ Requires necessary commitment, resources and conditions
~ Conversion into recognized in-service SEN/foreign language teacher diploma (c.50 European Credit Units ECTS)

TRANSFERABILITY
~ High, if partly financed regionally/locally

FUTURE POTENTIAL
~ High - as a model for professional response within foreign language teaching towards handling diversity in classrooms

CASE 3 SELF-CONFIDENCE DEVELOPMENT TOOL

OVERVIEW

The aims of teaching foreign languages to SEN learners have been found to go beyond achievement of linguistic and communicative goals. It is linked directly to other developmental outcomes, particularly the building of self-esteem. This case concerns one type of cognition and learning difficulty, dyslexia, which is not only significant in scale but also in its capacity to be a feature affecting diverse SEN categories. It is an example of how a sophisticated tool can be created by which to empower the learner to have greater understanding of his/her learning preferences. Given similar development capacity, it acts as a prototype of what could be achieved within other SEN categories in encouraging the learner, and other stakeholders, to consider understanding more about specific abilities and disabilities in relation to learning languages.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ Cognition & Learning Difficulties
Age-range	~ 2 Lower Secondary
Title	**Roadmap to Success: The Mystery of the Lost Letters – An adventure with Tintin & Snowy on the road to success**
Contact	Judith Sanson Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL, 1 rue Defacqz, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium Tel/fax + 32 2 537 70 66 admin@ditt.online.org

TYPOLOGY

~ multi-media tool

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Overall aim is to support and develop dyslexic learner self-confidence
~ Tri-lingual DE, EN, FR, CD-Rom multi-media self-assessment tool
~ CD-Rom operates with accompanying trilingual online resource centre www.tosuccess.org (not yet operational)
~ Not specifically designed for foreign language learning but directly relevant and applicable

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

~ Directly international in orientation
~ Links to well known European figures which have had dyslexia
~ Acts to empower individual and thus combat social exclusion of 'at risk of failure' young people

ACHIEVEMENT

~ Positive response during testing with native and non-native target group representatives
~ Includes access to research articles
~ Received positive endorsements from key figures including the following taken from www.ditt-online.org:

Andrew Law, Executive Producer, BBC Worldwide Interactive Learning, said: "The program offers positive role models and innovative self-assessment tools that don't shy away from the emotional needs, like self-belief, self-worth, courage and determination, which are so crucial to success. It cuts through the confusing messages and helps with the practicalities of living with dyslexia by, for instance, offering hints, tips and software suggestions to help

with maths and spelling. The overall tone and presentation style, mediated by the ever-popular character Tintin, is unashamedly positive, celebrating diversity and promoting understanding."

Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Culture and Education, said: "This goes hand in hand with the work I have been pursuing since I became Commissioner responsible for Education and Culture. The existing European programmes under my responsibility all have the common objective of enhancing the participation at all stages of life of people with particular needs. I wish to congratulate Dyslexia International: Tools and Technologies asbl, and the BBC which produces the CD-Rom, for having believed in this project."

INNOVATION
~ Focuses on allowing learner to identify preferred learning styles
~ Encourages joint mentor-learner cooperation
~ Provides positive feedback on building on strengths and handling weaknesses
~ Online resource centre www.tosuccess.org is to provide sections for learners and mentors covering research, training and resources
~ Encourages users to participate in developing the on-line resource site

SUSTAINABILITY
~ Theoretically sound
~ Produced by consortium including BBC with input from The Levi Strauss Advised fund at Charities Aid Foundation, The Hergé Foundation, Cable & Wireless, and Microsoft
~ Operated by established non-profit organization with high level and international expert representation

TRANSFERABILITY
~ Highly transferable
~ Developed by 'Europe's leading dyslexic experts'
~ Acts as prototype for other SEN categories.
~ The 'Games' section based on Tintin stories can be developed in 68 languages
~ Initial sales performance may lead to production in other languages

FUTURE POTENTIAL
~ The online Resource centre at www.tosuccess.org is to be further developed 2004-2009. This acts to 'signpost the very latest top technologies and resources recommended for and by young dyslexics'.

CASE 4 PUBLIC AWARENESS PACKAGE

OVERVIEW

The inclusion of SEN pupils into mainstream schools, alongside high level acknowledgement that individuals are protected from any discriminatory practice on grounds including disability and genetic features which would exclude them from full access to educational provision, needs to be articulated throughout societies. The European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 is one example of a coordinated attempt to promote cooperation leading to full integration and accessibility. But there is a need to sustain such initiatives at the grassroots, and this case provides one example of a training package which sets out to raise awareness and provide guidelines for action. Language Shock is specifically about children with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties whose families may be moving from one country to another. However, it serves as an exemplar of what can be achieved in addressing other specific issues which may hinder equality of access by SEN learners in a format easily accessible by the general public.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ Cognition and Learning Difficulties
Age-range	~ Adults
Title	**Language Shock – Dyslexia Across Cultures**
Contact	Judith Sanson Dyslexia International – Tools and Technologies ASBL, 1 rue Defacqz, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium Tel/fax + 32 2 537 70 66 admin@ditt.online.org

TYPOLOGY

~ Multimedia Training Pack

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ The training pack comprises a book (guide), video (28 mins), web site, which sets out to raise awareness of 'children with dyslexia / specific learning difficulties whose families may be moving from one country to another and who are faced with the challenge of learning a new language'.
~ Designed for teachers, parents/carers, and older pupils

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

~ specifically addresses certain SEN needs in relation to mobility and foreign language learning
~ serves to combat school failure and social exclusion

ACHIEVEMENT

~ SEN contains a large proportion of learners who have dyslexia, and dyslexia as one of a set of multiple disorders. Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, SLI & Autistic Spectrum share many features. The significance of addressing the needs of dyslexics is considerable because of impact on foreign language learning and all aspects of education, achievement and social cohesion. Reading difficulties, whether as a result of one of the above, or social reasons, is directly linked to anti-social behaviour, aggression and crime, difficulties leading to a 'powder keg of frustration and anger' as quoted from the video. Figures from the UK argue that about 50% of prisoners are dyslexic to some extent (John Stein, University of

Oxford, UK). The video, with dramatic reconstruction, and interviews, is particularly good at addressing a broad audience. The publication presents expert opinion in a highly reader-friendly format and style.

INNOVATION

~ Language Shock is a remarkable achievement in articulating issues for a broad audience. DITT cites that 1 in every 10th person, amounting to some 37 million people suffers from dyslexia through EU 15. In EU 25, the total figure will be considerably higher. It is not directly about learning a foreign language, but combines SEN, language learning, and environmental factors such as mobility. In so doing, it directly impacts on additional language learning in classrooms, particularly in relation to multiculturalism and special needs. Although it addresses the problem of overloading certain pupils in exposure to languages, it points to the need for individual solutions. One expert observes 'we have not prepared our teachers, we have not prepared our educational systems for this new multilingual society in which we already living' (Ludo Beheydt, University Catholique de Louvain, Belgium). The product does not argue against learning different languages, but for appropriacy according to the pupil.

SUSTAINABILITY

~ It is not known if this product is self-financing. Total EU sales price is quoted as € 45. Given suitable promotion, it is assumed that a product of this type would be financially sustainable without external support.

TRANSFERABILITY

~ The marginalization of SEN and the shift towards assuring equality of access for full educational provision means that there is a considerable need to educate broad sections of the population accordingly. This package, combining European expertise, the mission of a non-governmental organization DITT, and the production expertise of the BBC, is an example of what needs to be provided in different languages, and for other SEN categories.

FUTURE POTENTIAL

~ The scale of the problem of learning disabilities, and what appears to be increasing general public awareness that certain children may be at risk of failure at school for reasons which could lead to diagnosis and action, means that the production of materials such as these is significant. Being authoritative (both in respect to content and association with leading bodies and figures), and user-friendly for a people from broad range of backgrounds, makes this is a landmark product, which can be considered a prototype for further rendition.

CASE 5 ADAPTIVE ICT SUPPORT PRODUCTS

OVERVIEW

The opportunities arising from the development of information and communication technology (ICT) are widely considered huge in relation to education. During the course of this work a range of hard and software was examined with respect to SEN and foreign language learning. Particular attention was given to E-learning and assistive technologies. Although the range of examples that would be particularly suitable for teaching foreign languages to specific SEN categories was limited, there are many examples which could be adapted according to individual requirements and preferences. This case gives a set of examples which have been considered in terms of accessibility and usability.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ SEN Generic
Age–range	~ Various
Title	~ Various
Contact	~ Various

TYPOLOGY

~ ICT support products for the learning disabled which could be used, partially or fully, or otherwise adapted in the teaching of foreign languages in SEN. There are relatively few ICT support products available which are specifically geared for teaching foreign languages in SEN. These examples are given so as to show the breadth of ICT products, which could be used to address specific foreign language learning needs. Inclusion of any given product in this section does not express any form of validation of merits by the reporting team. In addition, no direct contact has been conducted with commercial suppliers.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Multidimensional ICT software and assistive technologies

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

~ Adaptable for European languages

ACHIEVEMENT

~ Not tested

INNOVATION

~ High

SUSTAINABILITY

~ Not tested

TRANSFERABILITY

~ High

FUTURE POTENTIAL

~ High

EXAMPLES

AbleNet Products
http://www.ablenetinc.com/index.html
AbleNet Products learning programmes, and accessories, for the physically and learning disabled. Examples are: **The AbleNet BookWorm™ Literacy Tool** which records and accommodates up to four books in its memory. **The SuperTalker™** progressive communicator is a communication tool with 8 different levels and grid-overlays adaptable to diverse levels of communication ability.

Aurora Systems inc
http://www.aurora-systems.com/standard/spchwin.html
Aurora Systems offers products for those with learning and speech difficulties as well as physical disabilities. These include **Aurora Talk, Aurora Echo, Aurora Prediction and Aurora Realvoice**. These products are designed to improve written and spoken communication. Some of these can be adapted for foreign language learning (DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, NL, PT)

CALL Software
http://www.camsoftpartners.co.uk
Call Software produces programmes and accessories for foreign language learning. **Fun with Texts** is one of their products that can be adapted for use with teaching SEN pupils a foreign language as teachers can produce their own learning texts in any language and also import data from other sources, such as the Internet. Use enables the creation of different learning activities such as cloze exercises (involving short texts where students fill in blanks where words should be), 'decoding' texts, 'unscrambling' and 'prediction' exercises. Fun with Texts can be correlated with any language that uses the Roman alphabet, including DA, DE, EN, ES, FI, FR, GK, IT, NL, PT, and SV.

CAST Universal Design for Learning
http://www.cast.org/udl/index.cfm?i=211
The **CAST eReader** is an electronic screen reader software programme that changes written words into speech. It is designed for those with reading difficulties allowing the student to select those toolbars and settings appropriate for specific needs.

CompAid Ltd.
http://www.compaid.fi/english/index.htm
CompAid Ltd. offers ICT support products for the learning and physically disabled. It offers several programmes that can be adapted for SEN foreign language learning.
Audilex is a computer programme, which does not use the alphabet, only audio-visual codes. The program is comprised of two games that are targeted to enhance a learning-disabled students' capability to combine the use of audio and visual codes.
WordCat is a word processor that enables physical and learning disabled students to compose their own written works by selecting, words and phrases from a comprehensive list. This programme also has the capability to record, in a normal voice, regularly used messages and can be adapted for use with any kind of telephone.
Audiblox is a collection of practical tasks that help to develop basic learning skills. It aims to develop basic learning skills and systemize those skills that are required for learning different subjects. It can be modified to suit the individual learning level of a student and be incorporated into lesson plans.

Crick Software
http://www.cricksoft.com/uk/products/clicker/default.asp
This company provides various products, which can be adapted for foreign language learning through use of 'digalo voice systems'. Some of these products are as follows: Multimedia support tool for writing with words or pictures (**Clicker**), a speech word processor, which activates spoken production of words (**Clicker Writer**), Cloze activities for different subjects/topics (**Clozepro**) and a tool bar/interface for supporting word/speech identification (**Wordbar**).

CSLU Toolkit
http://cslu.cse.ogi.edu/toolkit/
The '**CSLU Toolkit**', which can be converted into a multi-lingual learning environment, comprises a set of support tools for learning spoken language through human-computer interaction. This kit includes tools for speech identification, visual and audio development, language training and systems for changing text into spoken words.

Dolphin Computer Access
http://www.dolphinuk.co.uk/
Dolphin offers software for the sight-impaired computer user, which include speech, Braille and magnifying programs. Examples are as follows:

Lunar™ Screen Magnifier is a computer screen enhancer that is compatible with Windows and Windows applications. The user can also modify the screen according to individual preferences.
Lunar Plus Enhanced Screen Magnifier has the same features as the above but with speech added enabling the user to hear what is being typed. This also reads text on the screen including emails, email site information and menus.
The **Hal Screen Reader** is a programme that uses Braille and speech giving the blind user access to the computer and the Internet. It reads out loud the information found on the computer screen and identifies other screen symbols and text such as menus, controls and icons. Also by using a supported Braille device the screen information can be exhibited in Braille.
The **Supernova Reader Magnifier** is a programme for the blind and visually impaired that includes all three aids: Braille, Speech and screen magnification.

All of the above products are available in different languages, including DA, DE, EN, ES, FI, FR, EL, NL, NO, IT, PL, PT, and SV.

Duxbury Systems
http://www.duxburysystems.com/
Duxbury systems offer software programs for the visually impaired and the blind. The **Duxbury Braille Translator** enables the user to translate from Braille-to-text and text-to-Braille, and is able to import text from sources such as word processing programs and the Internet. The **Duxbury Braille Translator** is available for Windows, DOS and Mac and the translation menu includes eighteen major languages making it easier to convert Braille for foreign language teaching materials.

Ellar Software
http://www.ellar.com/specialneeds/index.htm
Ellar Software provides a variety of computer programmes designed for teaching in SEN from elementary upwards. These are auditory with adaptive levels of difficulty. One example is **Following Directions**, which is designed to improve a student's ability to follow directions. This programme is set up with a variety of techniques in which directions are given: verbally, audibly or using both methods. It also offers a method to help improve short-term auditory memory.

Freedom Scientific
http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/index.asp
Freedom Scientific offers products for the visually impaired and learning disabled, including hardware and software. Their software includes:

JAWS® is a multi-lingual programme that converts written text on the computer screen into spoken words.
MAGic is a visual and audio programme that enlarges the text on the computer screen while also allowing the user to hear the text.
OpenBook scans reading material and for the computer screen. This software can also be used with text to speech programmes to enable the user to also hear the text that has been scanned.
VERA System is for the blind and visually impaired to enable scanning of written materials, allowing the text to be produced as spoken text alongside other related features. It can be used in EN, FR and ES.
VersaPoint Duo is a machine, with synthesized speech, that can produce large amounts of Braille material in different languages including DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, and IT.
Type 'n Speak is a means to transfer written text into Braille. It is available in 14 languages, including DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL, PT, SK, and TR.
Comm Lite is an appliance that aids the deaf and blind to receive and make telephone calls. The Comm Lite converts a notetaker, such as Type 'n Speak, into a teletypewriter/telecommunication device (TTY/TDD). The user types a message into the notetaker, then the Comm Lite converts the Braille message and relays it onto the receiver who uses a conventional teletypewriter/telecommunication device (TTY/TDD) and vice versa when responding.

IntelliTools
http://www.intellitools.com/
IntelliTools®, Inc designs ICT support products for the learning disabled and the physically disabled students. Their products, which are designed for elementary level students, include many different aids that can also be used for teaching foreign languages in SEN.
IntelliKeys is a substitute Keyboard that is compatible with any Windows or Macintosh computer, which can be programmed to accommodate the student's individual needs. The keyboard is adaptable making it much easier for the learning disabled student to use.
IntelliTalk 3 is a progressive word processor, which offers special audio-visual features and a keyboard, which helps to support and develop the students' writing and communication skills by enabling them to use a combination of speech, pictures and text.

Kurzweil Educational Systems
http://www.kurzweiledu.com/products_k3000win.asp
Kurzweil 3000 is a multi-sensory programme designed for those with reading difficulties, which brings text and pictures onto a screen with the capacity to also transform written text into spoken words. It produces audible dictionary definitions in DE, EN, ES, FR, & IT.

LightWRITERSTM
http://www.zygo-usa.com/slsum.htm
LightWRITERs are portable devices that change written words to speech. These devices, though created for persons with speech disabilities, are also designed to support those with other disabilities that may coincide with a speech disability. LightWRITERs can also be used with conversations over the telephone and can produce written text when attached to a computer and printer. This device is available with speech for various languages including DA, DE, EN, ES, FI, FR, NL, IT, PT, and SV.

Link-it ---The Swedish Institute for Special Needs Education
http://www.sit.se/net/Startsida+SIT/In+English/Educational+materials/Deaf+and+Hard+of+Hearing/Products/Link-it
Linki-it is a computer program that enables the user to create bilingual texts for the deaf who are learning a foreign language, and also for the non-deaf who wish to learn sign language.

MINDPLAY® Educational Software Company
http://www.mindplay.com/company.html
MINDPLAY® offers educational ICT support products for SEN pupils. The products are adaptable and appropriate for different methods in teaching the learning disabled. Their software includes such programmes as **One-Pick Pack™**, which incorporated with **Language Pack™** provides a versatile foundation for up to 28 different multi-lingual learning programs.

RJ Cooper & Assoc.
http://www.rjcooper.com/index.html
RJ Cooper & Associates offers hardware and software for SEN. For example, **Turn-Talking** can be adapted for use with teaching the learning disabled a foreign language. This software facilitates development of the ability to converse with others. With this programme the instructor/teacher records the text they want to use, in any language, and then the student listening to this pre-recorded text is prompted to respond, thus partaking in a conversation.

Sensory Software International
http://www.sensorysoftware.com/index.html
This company offers **Reader**, which is used to change written words on the computer screen into spoken words. It is designed to work with most Windows programs such as Outlook, Word and Explorer and also enlarges the written text on the screen along with highlighting the words that are being read. The reader works with a number of synthetic speech programs for foreign languages, including DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, IT and PT.

SignSmith
http://www.shh.is/signplayer.htm
SignSmith is auditory-visual software that helps the deaf with learning a second language based on the principles of bilingual learning. This can be adapted for use with any target language and includes a programme that teachers can use for creating support materials.

SiR Learning Systems Ltd
http://www.sirplc.co.uk
This company offers language learning software that enables the student to actively participate with the learning process by listening, speaking and writing in the target language. The learner can work at a personal complexity level in DE, EN, ES, FR, and IT.

Software Maintenance, Inc.
http://www.ddwin.com/
Software Maintenance Inc. offers several different speech recognition programs, such as **DragonDictate** and **NaturallySpeaking**. These give the user full verbal control over the mouse and keyboard thus facilitating production of text documents. The programmes are available in DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, and SV.

ISpellWell
http://www.ispellwell.com/
iSpellWell is a software product designed to help learners with spelling difficulties. The SpellWell programme uses a written to spoken language system.

The Great Talking Box Company
http://www.greattalkingbox.com
This company offers hardware and software designed for those with speech difficulties. Their e-talk family is made up of 4 different speech devices; **e-talk 12.1, e-talk 8400, e-talk 6400** and **e-talk 5500**. These devices are modifiable to individuals' needs and not restricted to only one kind of speech software. One example is e-talk 2, which includes action buttons, type and talk, text to speech, recorded speech and language flexibility. The software allows the user to choose any language they need or want to use.

The Reading & Computing Place
http://www.readcomp.com/esl_cat/languageimmersion.html
The Reading & Computing Place offer 30+ support programmes, for SEN pupils learning a foreign language from pre-school upwards. Examples are:

All in One is designed to teach the target language through a variety of lessons, exercises and games. The Language Solution is for ES language learners and EN (as a) second language-learners, based on audio-visual methods to help enhance a student's ability to understand written and spoken language, in addition to reading comprehension. **The Teacher Resource Companion Deluxe programme** is designed for SEN and foreign language teachers for the production of materials and tests.

Wida Software
http://www.wida.co.uk/frame.htm
Wida Software offers foreign language teacher support programmes. One example, **Authoring Suite**, is designed to allow teachers to prepare a variety of language-learning computer programmes.

Words+ Inc.
http://www.words-plus.com/website/products/products.htm
Words+ offers different products for the learning and physically disabled. Products offered by include: Communication systems, Communication software, Input/Speech devices and hardware and accessories.

Writing with Symbols 2000 TM
http://www.mayer-johnson.com/software/Wws.html
Writing With Symbols 2000 is a text-picture software programme with speech. It enables the student to produce written text with the aid of pictures and symbols, or pictures in place of text. Writing With Symbols 2000 is available in EN, ES and FR.

Yak-Yak
http://www.yak-yak.com
Yak-Yak is a language learning and support programme, which features word finding, and text-to-speech for supporting articulation, reading and writing. The work station can be modified for the individual student's needs. For example the functions can be set for the student's first language enabling production in another. It is available in DA, DE, EN, ES, FI, FR, IS, IT, NL, NO, and SV.

CASE 6 INTERNET TEACHER SUPPORT RESOURCE SITE

OVERVIEW

There is little networking across Europe, and within respective countries, by teachers specifically interested in SEN and foreign language learning. There are examples of national coordinated networks but these are not common. This is an example of a dedicated internet site which has been developed into a highly focused and accessible resource for teachers of foreign languages, and SEN. Produced by a practising teacher without external funding, this resource site is an example of what can be achieved at the grassroots by those who recognize the ethical and educational imperative for action in this area. The site is increasingly multilingual and could immediately reach a very wide range of users and contributors across Europe if available in languages other than EN.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ SEN Generic
Age-range	~ All ages
Title	**www.specialeducationalneeds.com**
Contact	David Wilson Harton School Lisle Road South Shields NE34 6DL United Kingdom Tel. + 44 191 456 4226 Ext. 246 DavidRitchieWilson@compuserve.com

TYPOLOGY

~ On-line Teacher Support Resource: Foreign Languages & SEN

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Research on foreign language learning, SEN and ICT
~ Web resources, mainly on ICT/SEN and school application
~ Files (word documents) in CZ, DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, HU, NL, NO, SE, SK including bibliography, teaching materials, and insight documents
~ Bibliography covers Provision & Practice, which covers 8 sections: country profiles, entitlement, autonomy, curriculum development, differentiation, information technology, collaboration and professional development. Educational Sectors covers 4 sections, primary, secondary, special and higher education. It then covers different SEN categories.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

~ Includes a landmark bibliography of Modern Foreign Languages and Special Educational Needs
~ Needs of direct relevance to teaching
~ Increasingly multilingual
~ Invites open access
~ Addresses SEN, foreign language learning and social exclusion
~ Supports European networking

ACHIEVEMENT

~ Easy to use
~ Automatic updating
~ Meets demand
~ Culturally adaptive
~ Reasonable distribution channels

INNOVATION
~ Provides new solutions to problems, particularly in respect to ICT, SEN and foreign language learning applications

SUSTAINABILITY
~ Requires continuing site management and expert input

TRANSFERABILITY
~ Highly transferable

FUTURE POTENTIAL
~ Resulted from an individual's 'work in progress' which could be substantially developed and made even more accessible across Europe with further support.

CASE 7 ADAPTING MAINSTREAM FOREIGN LANGUAGE MATERIALS

OVERVIEW

The quality of mainstream foreign language teaching materials obviously differs across Europe. Two key factors relate to size and financial status of markets, and availability of subsidies from centralized bodies. The extent to which available materials are suitable for SEN is however a major issue, particularly as inclusion requires teachers to increasingly working in mixed ability contexts. This case is an example of how a publishing company specifically adapted widely used teacher materials and had these produced at the same level of quality for the SEN learners as for the mainstream. The adaptation would not suit all SEN learners because of the diversity of conditions and learning preferences involved, but it is a step towards production which aims at supporting the use of multi-sensory methods.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ SEN Generic
Age-range	~ ISCED 1 Primary ~ ISCED 2 Lower Secondary
Title	**Adapted Mainstream Materials** Norwegian Board of Education & Cappelen (Bonnier) Publishing
Contact	Ingar Ebbestad J.W. Cappelen Forlag AS Mariboes gt.13 Postboks 350 Sentrum 0101 Oslo, Norway Tel. + 47 22 36 50 00 Fax. + 47 22 36 50 40 Ingar.ebbestad.cappelen.no

TYPOLOGY

~ Paper Materials
~ Audio Aids
~ CD-ROM
~ Software
~ Professional Integration

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Norwegian schools are mainstreamed and all-inclusive. The Norwegian Board of Education made an initiative to have certain mainstream English language materials specifically adapted for SEN foreign language learners (English). This was done in partnership with publishing company
~The outcome means that the same class of foreign language learners, whether SEN or non-SEN, can follow the same lesson and learning materials
~ The printed materials are called Go On! 5-7; Flight Extra 8-10; Flight Extra Teacher's Guide 8-10; Flex Bildeplansjer (pictures for conversation); Flex Day by Day; eat and Dress; Having Fun; Let's Visit; Mysteries; Natives; Our World; Sports; Watch out!
~ CD-ROM Flight Extra 8-10
~ Interactive Learning Arenas Net! For 5-7 grade Go on the Net!. For 8-10 grades Flex Engelsk på nett.
~ Adapted materials produced at same level of quality for SEN as for mainstream

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE
~ Providing equal access to quality foreign language learning

ACHIEVEMENT
~ Satisfies professional need: provision of materials for mixed ability classes
~ Produced by experienced SEN foreign language teaching expertise
~ Cooperative venture between public and private sectors
~ Avoids the tendency to use materials 'aimed at younger children' for older SEN pupils at lower levels of foreign language performance

INNOVATION
~ Supporting internet interactive learning environment
~ Teacher's Guide possibly enabling enhanced materials-led professional development in teaching foreign languages in SEN
~ Audio support through accompanying CD-ROM
~ encourages mentor/carer involvement out-of-class with foreign language learning
~ Production sensitive to SEN generic needs, as for example, inter-disciplinary teamwork leading to special attention being given to layout, text design, pictures, use of colour, structure, fonts, etc – are features identified as important in designing SEN materials.

To give one example, a main author Berit Bromseth (Norway) comments on some aspects of adapting mainstream materials for SEN:

> *Many things need to be taken into consideration when making a textbook for pupils with special needs. If there ever was teamwork in the production of a book, this is the ultimate example of it. Texts, pictures and lay-out are of equal importance in the learning process and must be combined into a unit. A colourful and expressive lay-out will help the pupil notice texts and exercises in a different way and strengthen the motivation for learning. A tidy lay-out will structure the learning material and help the pupil concentrate on essential points. Technical aspects must also be taken into consideration. Some fonts are more readable than others, for instance, the size of the font matters, and shorter lines may work better than longer ones.*
>
> *Pictures, drawings and photos are most important. A picture should never be just a decorative element. Vocabulary may very well be explained by the help of pictures, a drawing or a photo may be an interactive part of an exercise or they could be used as an addition or an explanation to help understand the meaning of a text. Pupils who have problems coping with reading do not have the same problems reading a picture.*
>
> *Undoubtedly, texts are necessary when learning a language. Pupils with learning difficulties need texts that are made to fit their level and that still say something of interest to them and that are language wise correct. This is a challenge to any author. How simple can you possibly make sentence structures without ruining the good language example you want the text to be? There will always be dilemmas here, but given a choice, there is no doubt that the most important thing is making the pupil able to understand the text. Elegancy is not an aim. The sentence structure must be simple; the sentences should be as short as possible. The vocabulary will of course be quite basic, but words are not necessarily what create a problem when it comes to understanding a text. Words and simple expressions can be explained; sentence structures above the level of understanding do create a communication problem.*
>
> *Exercises must also be made to fit this particular group of learners. Pupils with specific literacy problems will need material to help distinguish all the "look-alikes" and "sound-alikes" of the foreign language. Pupils with learning difficulties will obviously need exercises that they are able to understand and master. The doorway to learning varies a lot – and not only among pupils with special needs – so there must be a good variety of exercises to ensure or hope one is able to reach each individual learner. At the same time, familiarity is safety to a lot of pupils. A certain degree of recognition means the pupils knows how to work with the exercise and master it.*

Our young people of today like action. Net-based interactive learning programmes are motivating and fun to work with. Also, many pupils function better in front of a computer screen than they would working with a book or a booklet alone. Letters do not have to be formed by hand; they are already there on the keyboard. You may not need to write much at all; the exercises can be done by clicking the correct answer. Figures may pop up on the screen to applaud your work; you may make nice things out of ready-made elements; you may practise words through games. The computer also makes it possible for teachers to order a set of exercises suited to the individual learner, either to be sure the pupil practises problem areas which she would otherwise avoid or to make it possible for a poor learner to work with tasks at his level, being able to succeed in what he is doing. "

SUSTAINABILITY

~ Set up with full financial support of Norwegian Board of Education. The present materials series market time frame is 1997-2006. Launch of new mainstream materials will inevitably require extra subsidy as the SEN foreign language learning market is unlikely to be large enough to attract publishing house investment. Thus sustainability is dependent on support from the public sector.

TRANSFERABILITY

~ Acts as a model of what could be achieved elsewhere in Europe. Full rendition of market products such as these is not necessary as it could be possible to produce some types of similar materials for a wider European market. This could attract private investment.

FUTURE POTENTIAL

~ Production of quality learner materials, linked to interactive learning environments, produced by inter-disciplinary SEN/foreign language teaching expertise could appear expensive at first sight. However, in the context of the findings of this report, this could, in fact, be a key fast-track solution towards ensuring full access of SEN pupils to foreign language teaching provision. This is assumed because availability of quality foreign language materials, which mirror those used by mainstream pupils enables inclusive classroom practice, professional development of teachers, and a positive response by learners, amongst other reported needs. Thus investment in mainstreaming SEN materials could offset other costs.

CASE 8 MULTIMEDIA PRINT REPRESENTATION

OVERVIEW

There are many forms of assistive and adaptive technologies available for specific SEN learner preferences. This example relates to the major shift from the use of analogue to digital technologies. It is also an example of how a consortium was set up to maximize compatibility so as to increase availability and adaptability. The greater flexibility of use available through digitalization means that this form of digital information system can be used by a wider range of SEN learners than in the past when, for example, books would be read onto cassette tapes so as to be listened to by the visually impaired. It is particularly appropriate as a cost-effective means of adapting and rendering mainstream foreign language learning materials into a format suitable for SEN.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ Visual impairment & other print disabilities such as reading disorders and motor disabilities
Age-range	~ All ages
Title	**Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY)**
Contact	Elsebeth Tank DAISY (President) DBB-Danmarks Blindebibliotek (The Danish National Library for the Blind) Teglvaerksgade 37 DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø Denmark Phone:+45 39 27 4444 Fax: +45 39 27 4454 Email: ETA@dbb.dk Stein Nørve Adviser, Special Needs Education Laeringssenteret (Norwegian Board of Education) P.O.Box 2924, Tøyen, N-0608, Oslo, Norway Tel. + 47 23 30 13 11 Fax. + 47 23 30 13 83 Stein.Norve@ls.no

TYPOLOGY

~ Digital talking books designed for SEN (multimedia representation of a printed publication in human voice)

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ The Daisy Consortium was formed in 1996 in order to 'lead the worldwide transition from analogue to digital talking books'. Originally started in Sweden in 1994, it is now an international association with significant European representation. Full members can be found in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Associate members can be found in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, and Norway.

~ There are six types:

1. Full audio with title element only (actual content is presented as linear audio only)
2. Full audio with navigation centre (NCC or NCX)

3. Full audio with navigation centre and partial text
4. Full audio and full text (allows Braille production)
5. Full text and partial audio (as in use of dictionaries)
6. Text and no audio

(summarized from technology overview, www.daisy.org)

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

~ European countries tend to follow their own system and format when making either analogue or digital audio materials. In 1997, DAISY sought to 'adopt open standards based on file formats being developed for the Internet'. The European added value rests on moving towards compatibility. In addition, it empowers individuals and educational institutions to provide audio renditions of foreign language materials.

ACHIEVEMENT

~ This is a system for producing the publication of choice as a DTB, thus there is considerable flexibility provided. It is not a seller of DTB's itself. The potential for rendering mainstream foreign language learning materials is thus considerable.

INNOVATION

~ In the past analogue representations of printed publications, commonly recorded on cassettes and CD-audio, were limited in meeting the expectations and needs of users. DAISY Talking Books (DTB) is next generation, digital representation, which allows for greater flexibility of use. This provides special potential in the learning and teaching of foreign languages.
~ Cited as significantly innovative, this new range of DTB's 'enables readers with visual and physical disabilities to access the information in DTBs flexibly and efficiently, and allow sighted users with learning or reading disabilities into receive the information through multiple senses'.
~ Regionalised expert support structure

SUSTAINABILITY

~ High

TRANSFERABILITY

~ Adaptable to wide range of ICT products
~ Widely recognized standard for product developers
~ Maximises accessibility
~ Linked to development of a 'global talking book library', which has direct positive linguistic and cultural diversity benefits

As a case example of application in a specific country, Norway, Stein Nørve, Norwegian Board of Education, comments as follows:

> *There are presently 8 producers of DAISY DTB's in Norway, and the Norwegian Board of Education (NBE) is one of the largest of these producers. The Norwegian Board of Education (www.ls.no) is a state institution placed under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research that is responsible for compulsory primary and secondary education. Among others tasks NBE's areas of activity include the production and distribution of talking books to pupils with reading disorders and visually impaired pupils in primary and secondary schools*
>
> *By joining the DAISY Consortium in 2002, NBE wanted to meet its commitment to information access and its core values for all pupils and students.*

These core values are:
1. A common basis of knowledge, culture and values

2. The same education regardless of location, gender, ethnic or social background or disability
3. Identification with the community, and involvement in local activities

4. Tasks and challenges adjusted to the pupil's aptitudes and abilities.

The Norwegian Education Act states that all pupils and apprentices have the right to an education in accordance with their individual needs and qualifications. Pupils and students that are unable to benefit satisfactorily from ordinary tuition have the right to special education.

In spite of the fact that it is the Norwegian publishers that normally publish books and other tutorial materials for use in primary and secondary schools, it is the duty of the State to ensure the availability of educational resources. The Norwegian Education Act states that the Ministry shall ensure that textbooks and other educational resources are prepared for special education. The Norwegian Board of Education is one of the government agencies that meet this task.

One of the activities that NBE administrates, in order to give pupils and students with special needs equivalent tuition, is adapting the textbooks from the publishers in ways that enables those with reading disorders, learning disabilities, motor impairment or visual impairment to gain access to the content of the textbooks.

According to the Norwegian Copyright Act certain state agencies have the right to produce adaptations of textbooks for the use of disabled people. This can be the production of Braille versions or Talking Books.

Digital Talking Books is made as an adaptation of the complete textbook as it is, and NBE makes no editorial changes in the production of the DTB version of a textbook. The making of a DAISY version allows pupils with print disabilities to "read" the textbook by using their ears and their fingers, either instead of or in combination with their eyes. A DAISY DTB is structurally remade in a linear way that makes it easy for blind people to navigate and read the DTB by using their Braille display. Many pupils with reading disorders also comments that they benefit from this structural simplification.

Some DAISY DTB is produced only with audio files; some DTB's also contain the text to be shown on a computer screen or on a Braille display, and some even may contain pictures and illustrations from the printed textbook to be shown on a computer screen. In a full text DAISY DTB there is a synchronisation between a mark up-text that is shown on the screen or on a Braille display and the sound file that is read. This synchronisation makes it possible for some readers to read and listen simultaneously using the combination of two of their senses.

NBE distributes DAISY DTB's on CD-ROM as a loan to specific pupils for one school year. When the school year is over, the DTB is returned to NBE and is then redistributed to another pupil as a loan for the following school year. This loan is free of charge for the pupils, but the pupil's school has to pay an administrative fee for each DTB the pupil borrows.

NBE now produces all Talking Books as Digital Talking Books in accordance with the guidelines set by the DAISY Consortium, as all other Norwegian DAISY producers. This new technology enlarges the possibilities to adapt and meet the special needs of some pupils, as these DAISY DTB's not only can express sound files, but also can show text, pictures and illustrations on a computer screen. A complete DAISY DTB is, in reality, a multimedia product that is highly adapted towards meeting the special needs of visually impaired or print disabled persons.

NBE has had the good fortune of meeting publishers, authors and illustrators with an interest in developing adaptive solutions for print impaired pupils. The Norwegian Board of Education is now, in cooperation with some Norwegian publishers, developing complete DAISY versions of textbooks for pupils with print disabilities.

FUTURE POTENTIAL

~ Very high because of both technological advances and the Consortium composite

CASE 9 VIRTUAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE DEAF

OVERVIEW

The teaching and learning of additional languages to the deaf is under scrutiny in various respects across Europe. A major issue relates to the recognition of sign languages in member states. This project is an example of a teacher development package by which to enable additional language teaching of the deaf to be carried out in vocational education by utilising information and communication technology. Thus it seeks to promote equal educational opportunities for the deaf by taking the sign language of the user as the first language (mother tongue) and written language as the second language. It acts as an example of the types of very specific professional development input necessary for certain SEN categories which can be facilitated through the use of information and communication technologies.

COORDINATES

Sector	~ Sensory & Physical Difficulties
Age-Range	~ 3 Upper Secondary (focus on vocational education throughout)
Title	**DEAFVOC – Sign languages and European Written Languages in Virtual Vocational Education for Deaf**
Contact	Annemari Laurento Finnish Association of the Deaf (FAD) Valkeatalo, Iikantie 4, Haaga, FIN-00400, Helsinki, Finland Tel. + 358 9 5803 529 Fax. + 358 9 5803 774 Annemari.laurento@kl-deaf.fi

TYPOLOGY

~ Curriculum (standard model); sign language as 1st language; written language as 2nd language
~ Survey on the teaching of languages to deaf in Europe http://www.deafvoc.fi/pages.php?class=survey
~ Teaching materials & in-service education & professional integration

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

~ Variation in the recognition of sign languages remains a problematic issue in the EU. As of March 2003, there is 'no European Union policy on sign languages' (Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly Doc. 9738, 17.03.03). It is argued that sign languages are not universal, not derived from the languages spoken in a country and carry the characteristics of other European languages. 'In short, sign languages are languages in their own right' (ibid).

~DEAFVOC (Leonardo Language Competence Project 10.03 – 09.06) is to develop language teaching (vocational) of the deaf. It aims to create two standardized curricula, one of which is 'written language as a second language for the deaf'. Written language can be considered a foreign language in this respect.

~ The main aim is to promote equal educational opportunities for this marginalized group of learners in Europe. It directly links to mobility. The core is in developing the use of bilingual and multilingual educational methods.

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE
~ Trans-national in-service teacher education
~ Trans-linguistic production CZ, DE, EL, EN, FI
~ Promotion of equal educational opportunities for this SEN category through promotion of foreign language learning
~ Dissemination strategy serving to enhance understanding of SEN, hearing impairment and language learning
~ Promotion of labour market mobility in advancing this specialized form of educational provision for the hearing impaired in EU languages

ACHIEVEMENT
~ Addressing issues of illiteracy and semi-literacy amongst the hearing impaired.
~ Collects key data (vocational education sector) not conducted before

INNOVATION
~ Standardizing languages curricula, produced cooperatively by partner countries, for the deaf covering both sign languages and European written languages
~ Use of ICT for education targeting sign and European written languages
~ Production of educational solution to support minority linguistic rights (in certain EU countries)
~ Identification of production needs for digitalized signer language material
~ Potential wash-back impact on how foreign language methodologies can positively influence teaching of predominant environmental languages, previously considered as first languages.

TRANSFERABILITY
~ Highly transferable if final outcomes satisfactory re: digital technology
~ Low if member state does not recognize sign language as the 1st language or preferred language of the hearing impaired
~ High potential for transferring good practice in one member state to another
~ Core professional skills applicable to SEN specialists and mainstream foreign language teachers

FUTURE POTENTIAL
~ As an enabler to influence vocational training systems in member states
~ Close links with major international stakeholder networks could enhance success
~ Future-oriented re: anti-discrimination, labour market opportunities and ICT

CASE 10 SCHOOL-BASED DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

OVERVIEW

It is in the schools where policy and practice can be measured in terms of outcomes. The ways in which schools respond to both inclusion, and increased attention being given to the value of foreign language learning and SEN, have been of particular interest in the course of this study. This case contains a set of different examples representing both mainstream and special/segregated schools. It serves to show the types of achievement which can be made with a range of SEN learners.

Coordinates **Maplewood School**
Redcar Road, Sunderland SR5 5PA, UK
Christine Harvey
Tel. + 44 191 553 5587
charvey@synergybroadband.co.uk

Sector ~ Emotional, Behavioural & Social Difficulties

Type ~ Special

Age-range ~ 1 Primary
~ 2 Lower Secondary

Key Characteristics
(This SEN sector widely regarded as a particularly demanding educational target group in mainstream schools)

~ Maplewood School serves an urban area of social deprivation, with about 90% male pupils, most of whom are considered overall 'to have difficulties too severe for inclusion in mainstream schools'.
~ A number of pupils have Tourettes syndrome, Aspergers syndrome and many with ADHD and general attention difficulties. About 30% receive 'psychiatric oversight'.
~ Low school staff turnover

European Added Value
~ Exemplifies the benefits of foreign language learning, and methodological adaptation for highly socially disadvantaged pupils
~ Introduces European dimension into curriculum through professional teamwork
~ Promotes social inclusion
~ Exemplifies foreign language learning as enhancing overall educational profiling (e.g. self-esteem, attitudes)

Achievement
~ Successful introduction of foreign language learning into SEN school
~ Example of language learning success with highly diverse mixed ability class
~ Pupil Language Learning achievements
~ Professional integration and teamwork
~ In addition to SEN learning dimension, most pupils enter this school 2 years 'below peer level' yet some have been found to have higher than peer group ability in the foreign language on re-entering mainstream schools
~ Combines ICT and foreign language learning specific to SEN pupil needs

Transferability
~ Accreditation system based on modular approach exemplary for other European schools

Coordinates	**Shepherd School** Harvey Road, Nottingham NG3 3BB, UK David Stewart Tel. + 44 115 915 3265 Shepherd_school@hotmail.com
Sector	Severe, Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties
Type	~ Special
Age-range	~ 1 Primary ~ 2 Lower Secondary ~ 3 Upper Secondary

Key Characteristics

~ Shepherd School has about 100 pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. It serves an area of urban social deprivation with some 60% of pupil families on income support.
~ Foreign language teaching was started in 1991 (FR) because of issues on entitlement to national, mainstream curriculum. In 2001, a second foreign language (ES) was launched into the curriculum.
~ External support provided during start-up by local university expertise, and with a staff of 20, some 3 are foreign language teachers.
~ Teaching and learning of the foreign languages through 'learning by doing' and across-the-curriculum approaches common to education in this school due to the profiles of the students

European Added Value

~ Successfully launched teaching in 2 European languages with the severely disabled
~ Model of what can be achieved in foreign language learning with this SEN category
~ Teaching of foreign languages has enhanced school's network links with cooperation partners in other countries
~ Equality of access to foreign language learning
~ Promotes social inclusion

Achievement

~ Given political will and school leadership, this school shows that substantial achievements can be made when teaching foreign languages to the severely disabled, and overcoming negative attitudinal barriers about value, potential, and purpose. 'The person with the stutter can sing beautifully, it involves a different part of the brain - the same can be said of foreign languages' (interview), 'if the least able can succeed in foreign language learning, then anyone can do it´.
~ Success considered due to: positive expectations by staff, commitment to foreign languages entitlement, specialist foreign language teachers, international links, visibility of successful pupil language learners 'these youngsters are ambassadors for the disabled, their compatriots are often locked away'.

Transferability

~High, if school leadership positive, foreign language teacher(s) available and to some extent, access to ICT for realizing the 'international dimension'.

Coordinates	**Perry Common Special Schools** Perry Common Road, Erdlington, Birmingham, B73 7AT, UK Sandy Kinvig (Wilson School) Tel. + 44 121 350 9849 sandyk@wilsonst.bham.sch.uk

Sector	~ Deaf, Blind & Physically Disabled (including muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy)
Type	~ Special
Age-Range	~ 1 primary ~ 2 Lower Secondary ~ 3 Upper Secondary

Key Characteristics
~ Perry Common Special Schools comprises 3 schools sharing the same campus.
~ The foreign language is incorporated across-the-curriculum by different teachers, even into physiotherapy
~ The main foreign language teacher has supporting linguistic skills (such as Braille and sign language)

European Added Value
~ Exemplifies introduction of foreign language learning alongside activating the European dimension' into curricula
~ Linked to cooperative ventures with schools in other countries
~ Equality of access to foreign language learning

Achievement
~ Creating a foreign language-friendly environment
~ Leading pupils to a certified level of achievement
~ Differentiated lessons with multi-sensory methods, which suit IEPs
~ Provision of foreign language learning to wide range of SEN pupils
~ Foreign language learning linked to holistic aspects of education. 'The benefits of teaching a language show through in other areas of the curriculum. Pupil's listening skills have improved and we have noticed that they concentrate more on words generally' (interview Times Educational Supplement 24.10.03)

Transferability
~High, if school leadership positive, foreign language teacher(s) available, and to some extent, access to ICT for realizing the 'international dimension'.

Coordinates	**Hillpark Secondary School** Cairngorm Road, Glasgow G43, UK Vivienne Wire Tel. + 44 141 582 0112 Vivienne.wire@virgin.net
Sector	~ Communication Disorders (autistic spectrum disorders – upper cognitive)
Type	~ Mainstream School, Special Stream Facility
Age-range	~ 2 Lower secondary ~ 3 upper Secondary

Key Characteristics
~ An area of the mainstream school is designated the Communication Disorder Unit (CDU). Here small groups learn a foreign language in an environment designed to be 'autism-friendly'. Also called a Support-for-Learning Base, this is a 'haven where pupils can de-stress from the pressures of mainstream classes'. This is the first CDU to be set up in Scotland.
~ Design of the CDU concept inter-disciplinary (educational psychology, speech & language therapy, autism research, foreign language expertise)
~ The CDU is considered as an educational solution for responding to inclusion and increasing

numbers of pupils diagnosed as SEN. Pupils with communication disorders are particularly affected by social communication and interaction, and can become the target of bullying, thus the need to provide alternative environments within a given school.
~ Teaching in the CDU is an adapted 'shadow' of the mainstream curriculum.
~ A major objective is to facilitate entry of these pupils into mainstream foreign language classes at a later stage.
~ Class sizes are small (3-7 pupils whereas some 30+ in mainstream classes)
~ The foreign language teacher(s) have undergone extra SEN-specific training

European Added Value
~ Equality of access to foreign language learning
~ Promote social inclusion

Achievement
~ Foreign language learning methods developed specific for this type of learner (e.g. high predictability, use of repetition, special focus on areas of particular interest, simulation and drama,
~Adaptation of assistive technologies
~ Courses lead to accreditation
~ Outcomes reported as very positive
~ Development of facility specific to language and communication within a mainstream school

Transferability
~ The CDU requires additional financing. It could serve differing schools in an urban environment but is unlikely to be feasible in mainstream schools with less populated locations
~ Dependent on combination of foreign language and SEN-specific expertise
~ Serves as a model for further development in conjunction with SEN Resource Centres

Coordinates	**Milan Petrovic School** Brace Ribnikar 32, 21000, Novi Sad Serbia & Montenegro Jelena Mazurkievic Milana Tankosica 12, 11000, Beograd Serbia & Montenegro Tel + 381 11 762 647 Jelena [aneley@ptt.yu]
Sector	~ Visual impairment
Type	~ Special / Special Stream

Key Characteristics
~ Specialized in teaching a foreign language to the blind
~ Methods used for the blind reported as differing from teaching foreign languages to visually impairments or partial sight
~ Major method 'The reflective model' This acts as a self-development approach whereby the teacher examines his/her own attitudes and experiences of learning and teaching foreign languages, and adapts methods accordingly.

European Added Value
~ Equality of access to foreign language learning
~ Promotes social inclusion

Achievement
~ Identification of a distinctive approach for this SEN category, which handles limited pupil imitation abilities and responds to good pupil memory skills. Acts as counter-balance to

mainstream popularity of communicative language teaching but also offers insight into good generic teaching practice.

Transferability
~ High with this SEN category

Coordinates

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Fax. + 49 5241 221083
regenbogenschule-guetersloh@t-online.de

Sector	~ Language & Communication Difficulties
Age-range	~ 1 primary
Type	~ Special schools

Key Characteristics
~ Act as 'passage schools' prior to inclusion in mainstream education
~ Shadow parallel mainstream curricula in foreign language educational provision
~ Special in-service training provided for foreign language teachers organised regionally

European Added Value
~ Equality of foreign language learning provision
~ Promotes social inclusion

Achievement
~ Advantages gained through sequencing foreign language provision through school days
~ Main approach adopted is languages across-the-curriculum
~ Positive learning outcomes
~ Adaptation of foreign language learning methods suitable for IEPs

Transferability
~ High - acts as example of what can be achieved when foreign language teachers are provided with SEN-specific in-service education.
~ Needs follow-up appropriate foreign language teaching in secondary sector

Coordinates	**Rheinischen Schule für Hörgeschädigte in Krefeld** Lobbericherstrasse 18-20, D-47839, Krefeld, Germany Barbara Ladwig Tel. + 49 2151 65 60 80 Fax. + 49 2151 65 60 81 9 rsfhg krefeld@lvr.de
Sector	~ Hearing Impairment (and additional disabilities if hearing impairment is the predominant)
Type	~ Special
Age-range	~ 0 Pre-Primary ~ 1 primary ~ 2 lower Secondary

Key Characteristics
~ Serves significant number of pupils from German as a second language families (25-30% at primary, 15-20% at secondary).
~ Recent introduction of foreign language learning (following mainstream curriculum guidelines.
~ Foreign language teachers have special SEN-training for teaching the hearing impaired.
~ Aims at rehabilitation and preparation for entry into mainstream schooling.
~ Special attention given to use of total physical response (TPR) methods.

European Added Value
~ Equality of access to foreign language learning
~ Introduces European dimension into the curriculum
~ Promotes multiculturalism
~ Promotes social inclusion
~ Exemplification of foreign language learning as enhancing overall educational profiling

Achievement
~ Based on regional, and supported, professional networking for development purposes
~ Adapting curricula to suit this specific SEN-category
~ Accommodating the needs of pupils learning an additional language whose first language is not German
~ Specifically integrates foreign language learning with intercultural development
~ Identifying ways in which learning an additional language can positively influence learning of German language
~ Extending foreign language learning provision through use of ICT and related tools

Transferability
~ Specialized knowledge appropriate for other countries
~ Need to develop teaching materials, mainly for older pupils, to ensure successful pupil-based continuation of foreign language learning

Coordinates	**Conrad-von-Soest Gymnasium** Paradieser Weg 92 D-59494, Soest, Germany Ingo Drescher Tel. + 49 2921 64 22 conrad-von-soest-gymnasium@t-online.de
Sector	~ Visual Impairment (Blind to low vision)
Type	~ Mainstream
Age-range	~ 2 Lower Secondary ~ 3 Upper Secondary

Key Characteristics
~ Example of integration of pupils with diverse abilities and disabilities.
~ Mainstream school specializing in teaching equal curricula to pupils with visual impairment ranging from blind to low vision.
~ Educational provision supported by local university expertise.
~ Non-elite pupil intake.
~ Part of regional professional development programme.

European Added Value
~ Exemplifies successful integration of SEN and foreign languages learning
~ Leads to learning of more than one additional language
~ Prepares pupils for equal opportunities when entering working life

Achievement
~ Equal provision and integration of foreign language learning
~ Specialized expertise developed prior to implementation
~ Development of multi-sensory language learning approach
~ Adaptation of 'phonetic transcription' as taught to sighted pupils
~ Successful pupil foreign language learning accreditation
~Successful post-school entry into working life professions
~ Evidence of pupils opting for 2nd language, Latin, and a third European language

Transferability
~ High – professional development network and approach exemplary for application in other regional environments

GENERIC FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

4

Summary

This section describes theoretical issues, trends, concerns and debate, in relation to current and potential provision of the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages within SEN.

It brings together arguments and educational discussions relating to the provision of foreign language teaching in general, and relates these to more general educational issues within SEN. The argument is deliberately generic, focusing on the provision, rights, responsibilities and abilities to deliver a quality education and learning experience in foreign languages for all such learners.

It also assembles the evidence to testify that all learners, regardless of age, ability or circumstance, have a right to a full education. This includes the learning of foreign languages which is recognised as a key part of the preparation for modern life, as exemplified in *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006* (COM2003).

The delivery of learning should include adaptation to specific circumstances, but, it is argued, the principle of such adaptations to individual needs applies in every learning context and classroom. Although taking the framework of Human Rights as its starting point, it is not argued that the general access to language learning necessarily entitles every learner to a full range of opportunities. Rather, that an acceptable basis of language learning be provided by the exploitation of available professional, technical and pedagogical skills and resources. Hence ensuring the best possible provision in any particular circumstances so as to improve and enrich the educational experience of all learners.

Decisions and circumstances vary by country, by system and by political priorities. There is a need to identify the minimum required on behalf of such learners and from there to assert how best to provide a more enriched foreign language curriculum and a wider, richer and more advantageous experience of education for all learners.

"pedagogic principles related to language teaching are universal, differing only in degree of differentiation and the range of abilities catered for"

Evidence collected in preparing this report indicates that there is some considerable distance still to travel to reach this minimal point. The complexity of the issues makes fine definition impossible. However, from the evidence it can be seen that by describing and agreeing general principles within a framework of guidance such minimal provision can be defined. Delivery will depend upon professional judgement involving a number of stakeholders: national educational authorities and politicians as well as teachers, parents and the learners themselves.

A general review of current literature and relevant studies has identified the principal areas of debate and key issues. Studies into SEN provision tend to take a perspective whereby a specific aspect

such as integration, inclusion, setting or mixed ability teaching is analysed. Research into provision for such learners by subject, skill area or stage in the actual educational process is rarely available. Even fewer studies on the value, application and methodologies of foreign languages in relation to SEN are available from this core body of work. In the main, research focuses on specific disabilities or specific issues. Relevant findings from a selection of studies have been integrated to develop the perspectives presented here. Much of the ensuing discussion is then based on extrapolation given that most studies in the SEN field do not differentiate by subject matter and only occasionally by age and sector.

"practice varies greatly at every level with little or no consistency at national, regional or local levels"

Issues in the teaching of foreign languages on the other hand, are distinguished by a close definition of learning outcomes, of levels of attainment by age of learner and the context and culture of the teaching. This set of principles have then been applied to the issues in the SEN provision on the basis that pedagogic principles related to language teaching are universal, differing only in degree of differentiation and the range of abilities catered for.

The creation of a framework applicable across countries and cultures that currently offer very different approaches and varied levels of support or even recognition of such needs is challenging. It is however necessary for a modern society to recognise that the provision of education for all citizens is an individual right and a societal responsibility, irrespective of differences. At this time of rapid development it is for those with less experience or opportunity in the field to look to best practice elsewhere and to collectively agree a standard to which all should strive. As Avrimedis and Norwich [1] state:

'Philosophies regarding the education of children with difficulties and /or disabilities have changed dramatically over the past two decades and several countries have led in the effort to implement policies which foster the integration and, more recently, inclusion, of these students into mainstream environments.'

THEORETICAL ISSUES

1. Challenging perceived difficulties / problems

There are problems in making generalised comments. Avrimidis and Norwich[2] say, studies conducted in different countries '*cannot possibly be comparable given the differences in their education systems. Moreover there are variations within countries in terms of philosophies, policies and systems.'*

Any European-wide survey is problematic. There are different education systems, different philosophies, different policies and different pedagogic approaches. There are problems of terminology and classification. Therefore, one cannot assume uniformity of theory, practice or experience. Firstly, there is a need to distinguish between special schools, specialist schools and mainstream schools. Secondly, there is a need to account for the differing problems of SEN learners, not only in terms of physical, intellectual or behavioural handicaps but also those social, economic and cultural factors that influence the life chance of each individual person.

Despite these national differences and the distinguishing characteristics of the wide range of conditions covered by the term SEN, a number of core features are identifiable which can be addressed across a common basis. One of these concerns what happens *on the ground* across Europe.

Current evidence seems to demonstrate that practice varies greatly at every level with little or no consistency at national, regional or local levels. The same applies to specific SEN categories.

At key points in the educational life of any learner, important decisions will be made. In the case of the SEN learner, it is essential that these should be based on informed judgement, rather than the most expedient solution.

A debate that is ongoing and which is confronted differentially across and within countries is that of the desirability of providing special, specialist or mainstream schooling. Over the years special (segregated) schools - namely those devoted to teaching learners with particular needs - have been established. They have largely developed their own curricula, based on practical considerations and, above all, resources available. Over the years some specialist schools have emerged which are designed to accommodate learners with particular needs and this 'community' with their own demands and interpretations of SEN. Their approach has been largely welcomed by key stakeholder groups of learners, teachers and parents.

Questions around placement in mainstream or special school education raise issues as to the availability and quality of specialist teachers. It is likely that schools outside the mainstream may not be able to make comparable foreign language provision or give any choice of language learned. The placing of learners in mainstream education on the other hand will inevitably require some adjustment by the language teacher, the class and the institution. The issue is then whether this can be handled so as to provide a richer educational experience for the group as a whole. There are two rather polarized positions on this. One is that the quality of education of the majority should be adapted, and possibly compromised, for the sake of the minority. The other is that boundaries should be pushed, and the interface defined more clearly, so that the resources and support should be readily available to enable the best possible decision for all to be reached.

2. Perceptions of learning a modern foreign language

The learning of a modern foreign language exposes individuals to a range of new experiences. It touches upon social interaction, personal development and creative exploration in addition to intellectual and skills development. At its best, language learning opens up new worlds to learners within which self-discovery is a pre-requisite.

New technologies have revolutionised language teaching, transforming an experience which for some can be difficult and uncomfortable, into a more personally controlled, and successful one. The individual can develop skills, possibly become highly skilful, and can acquire new dimensions of social interaction which even at their simplest open up new areas of communicative potential. If then foreign language learning brings such value to the lives of any learner, how much more can it bring to the learner with special needs?

For the learner who flourishes, something only experience can determine, the value is far greater. Socially it provides a skill to enhance their general experience of personal and social life and travel, whilst it may also bring a useful career or professional skill. In more personal terms, a competent linguist is valued as such and for an individual with a disadvantage of any sort, it hopefully also brings new social values and an identity beyond that of an individual with a 'special need'.

Any teacher of languages is aware that active individual and group interaction, as well as positive personal development, are integral to successful classroom practice. A lack of recognition of the complexity of this process when applied to foreign language learning, and most notably the lack of understanding or application of the social psychological and group interactivity within it, is one of the main causes of negative experiences of language learning.

"providing for individual needs is already an accepted and acknowledged part of learning"

3. Organising inclusive language teaching

Language learning is then a process of personal development, be it within the skill development or social context. Learners with any sort of special or acknowledged need have as much right to this experience as other learners who also have individual needs that do not happen to be identified as such. As with any other learner, catering for individual learning needs is the paramount consideration in the classroom.

However, classrooms are usually organised as a group process. Inevitably compromise and shared learning is an important part of the overall process. The ratio of learning patterns involving individual, paired, group or whole class learning in classrooms will vary according to the teacher, class size and general context. It is undeniable that extending the mix of learners

to include a greater variety and extent of individual needs beyond those 'normally' located in any one group will inevitably affect the pattern of teaching.

As the pedagogical processes are better understood, and as technology brings new learning environments into classroom settings, so the model of individual development, in effect the individualised learning paths within a classroom and group setting, can apply to a wider spectrum of learners. Providing for individual needs is already an accepted and acknowledged part of learning. It can be applied equally to the learning of languages among those with specific limitations or particular physical or emotional needs.

CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING PROVISION

1. Perceived value of learning a foreign language

Alongside the studies and initiatives related to SEN provision, the teaching and learning of foreign languages is also undergoing something of a revolution. It is now widely recognised that successful learning relates not only to pedagogical methodology, but also to individual attitudes and aspirations, and therefore to affective and motivational factors as well. Each of these issues also features in the successful implementation of SEN teaching more widely.

It can then be argued that in addressing issues related to foreign language teaching, and applying them to the SEN context, is a mere extension of best practice. A better understanding of why and how individuals learn languages, the effect of their learning and their apparent ability to learn a language later in life despite earlier labelling as a 'non-linguist', are all prompting a more detailed and rigorous investigation of the factors that lead to a successful language learning experience.

In general, learners often have a poor perceived quality of teaching and learning experience in languages and this affects their attitudes towards languages over a long time. Greater emphasis is now placed on identifying factors in successful learning and applying these more widely. As new approaches develop – often initiated by commercially based interests - more is revealed about the language learning process. Evidence from a wide range of studies shows that language learning in later life is consistently positive and popular when learners perceive themselves as 'successful' defined according to their own terms of positive achievement. Across all groups, defined by gender or age, the motivation to learn is the key factor. The labelling used within the school system to set, assess and attribute classifications is then arguably a determining factor in whether the process is successful or not. Where motivation and personal ambition can be harnessed, learning improves. This is also the case for the SEN foreign language learner.

"work-related applications of language skills are growing and opening new job market opportunities"

For this group, successful language learning can affect actual life quality; it can bring new dimensions and open new opportunities in career terms. As technology is increasingly applied to language tasks, work-related applications of language skills are growing and opening new job market opportunities.

2. Changes in teaching and learning

There is often a failure within the curriculum to excite interest and provide appropriate motivation for language learning. Efforts are now in hand to improve teaching, increase the perceived value of learning, and to create new learning environments. Important changes in the identification and assessment of skills development are taking place where recognition of individual language skills is recognised and defined. The Common European Framework serves this purpose as the common benchmark. In addition, there is an ever greater acknowledgement of the value of individual language skills such that learners can achieve accreditation based on skills sets suited to their abilities and needs.

This is being achieved in different ways. For instance, alongside new ways of learning, more varied assessment and self-evaluation is used. Language learning is increasingly based in life-

skills contexts, not only employment but also training and learning. Many language courses are designed around vocational or even curricular considerations. The teaching and learning of languages structured within contexts rooted in extra-curricular or integrated curriculum contexts are growing. There remains however, much still to achieve in recognising new assessment methods and flexibility of approach in accepting different sets of skills as having equal value to those that are traditionally tested.

The new teaching contexts which have adapted learning paradigms reflecting specific needs are defined by age, level ability and the proposed application of the language skill. In this way appropriate learning is undertaken and hopefully realistic and attainable targets are set for learners. This is of considerable importance in relation to foreign language learning and SEN.

3. Underlying issues

There are a number of issues in relation to changing the dynamic of the teaching of foreign languages that are possibly true in most European countries. One concerns the supply of suitably qualified teachers. Recognition of SEN as an integral part of all professional training is as yet far from recognised. Provision of later professional development in this area is also rare. Yet studies demonstrate that this is fundamental to successful provision.

"recognition of SEN as an integral part of all professional training is as yet far from recognised"

Lack of adequate resources and infrastructure is general, and the recognition of the cost and complexity of proper provision remains understated or unrecognised for the most part. For instance the use and integration of new technologies in any classroom is often perceived as a cost cutting means of reducing the need for specialist teacher provision, when in fact it brings higher quality learning experiences and should be prompted by wider and better provision.

Any efforts to move forward need policy and strategic plans that include targeted and protected funding. This is rarely the case within national or political budgets or financial planning. This is the first place where change is needed and leadership exercised.

Should provision not be adequately planned, researched and resourced, then experience demonstrates that the results are generally more negative than positive and harmful to the overall process of extending the provision to all learners.

4. Providing better learning experiences

The teaching of foreign languages to SEN groups of learners ultimately leads to the need for extra resources. It requires specific professional training, appropriate teaching materials to ensure that every learner can be catered for, and a teaching environment that offers adequate support. Beyond these considerations, SEN learners embrace a wide spectrum of individual differences and potential talent.

These needs can now be better met through the new technologies. Adaptations to hard and software not only address the problems, but also allow for the individual to explore learning and build confidence in private, to rehearse and practise, and take more control of the learning process.

"communication technologies allow individuals to create their own approach to the learning"

Communication technologies allow individuals to create their own approach to the learning. They can pace the process, and plan levels of practice and rehearsal prior to actual public 'performance', be this is in a classroom, workplace or among friends. This rehearsal time is proving an important factor in individual learning programmes exemplified most emphatically by the success of the U.K. Open University language programmes where individual learning is proving the approach of first choice for large numbers of learners of all abilities.

For learners with any disability this is advantageous. For the SEN learner this amounts to

providing a protected context within which foreign language learning is defined according to individual abilities. It also allows for rehearsal until the individual feels competent to speak up in front of peers or others. For learners with any sort of disability this removes a huge psychological barrier to the practice of language skills – the goal of language learning.

5. Developing learner autonomy

The concept of autonomous learning relates to mixed ability foreign language teaching. The work of David Little[3] has led the argument for learner autonomy in the language learning process. This is to encourage the learner to develop the capacity to plan, monitor and edit personal progress by way of internalised experiences. The teacher changes role from being the feeder of information to the manager of learning resources and the facilitator of the learning process. The students learn to solve their own problems with the teacher acting as counsellor and guide rather than instructor. In effect the learner takes on responsibility for the learning and the teacher encourages and supports rather than directs the process.

Zeni Dam[4] says that an '*autonomous learner is an active participant in the social process of learning and also an active interpreter of new information in term of what the individual already and uniquely knows*'.

CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN SEN PROVISION

1. Social considerations

As societal considerations move on and the Human Rights of all citizens are increasingly recognised and addressed, provision is increasingly made within mainstream education systems as this can provide a richer and more relevant curriculum. Curricula and support have changed beyond recognition over the past decade and some would argue that SEN recipients can only receive this quality within the mainstream system. It is increasingly difficult be it in specialist institutions or in the private sector for providers to resource the ever-changing and costly resource-based learning that now prevails and then ensure that it is adapted to any specific personal needs.

2. Integration or inclusion? Implications for foreign language provision

The push for integration reflects an ideology of social inclusion, a celebration of differences, a maximisation of diversity, a moral imperative, an entitlement of citizenship, and an aspect of human rights.[5]

"the push for integration reflects an ideology of social inclusion, a celebration of differences, a maximisation of diversity, a moral imperative, an entitlement of citizenship, and an aspect of human rights"

A consideration of learners with any sort of special needs inevitably tends to focus on the deprivation of some aspect of physical or mental well-being that inhibits learning, yet planning for special needs includes ensuring proper provision for more able / gifted learners as well. In the case of foreign languages it is likely that a percentage of the group not dissimilar to that of the general population will in fact be gifted or above average in their aptitude for foreign languages.

For this group the issue of integration and specialist provision takes on particular significance. If the SEN provision is considered and appropriated within the wider context then the needs of this group will be catered for. If, on the other hand, separate and differentiated provision is made for different groups and a variety of conditions then it is unlikely that such needs will even be identified and less likely that they will be catered for.

The scenario is exemplified in the work of Smith6 in her studies in Scotland. Smith and Sutherland discuss the Scottish experience in relation to more able SEN learners. They conclude: '*.... Inclusion is not so much concerned with provision for one or other group of students as for student diversity per se. The issue for schools is not that they have to accommodate a*

small number of atypical students into their standard practices, but that they have to respond simultaneously to students who all differ from each other in important ways: some of which pose particular challenges to the school…. '

A related study states: *'Inclusion is not simply about maintaining the presence of children in schools but about maximising their participation in specified aspects of the school … inclusion is a process that can be shaped by school-level action'.*

So then the conditions for improving the educational experience of the SEN learner via inclusion pose the same challenges as does a mixed ability class to the foreign language practitioner. At the level of implementation, the school and individual teacher decisions and practice ultimately determine the quality of the experience. Hence within an inclusive framework of a school the teachers themselves must be viewed as learners. The schools are learning organisations. There is a need for the teachers to see inclusion as a delicate balancing act of building on what all have in common, yet, at the same time, recognising, celebrating and developing the diversities of every learner.

3. Current learning patterns

In their study that considers mixed ability groups as opposed to whole class settings, Smith and Sutherland7 found that by contrast with those schools operating setting systems, those which used mixed ability approaches were found to be less dependent on whole class sessions. Mixed ability teaching includes small group teaching and individual tuition as well as occasional whole class sessions. Smith and Sutherland argue that mixed ability teaching encourages and possibly facilitates independent learning by pupils. Teachers operating with mixed ability classes were very aware of the ability range, and identified the use of all forms of direct teaching as a means of covering this diversity. One can hypothesise therefore that when applied to foreign language teaching, mixed ability can enable the teacher to better provide for the individual needs of the more diverse group of language learners.

"foreign language learning provides a set of life skills and personal development channels that embrace, define, and extend social development for many learners"

There are certain advantages to mixed ability identified by Smith and Sutherland if appropriate classroom techniques are applied. There is less likelihood of pupil stigmatisation; it is easier to maintain the motivation of those pupils working at a slower rate; there is greater flexibility for pupils to progress at their own rate; and pupils benefit from peer support.

There are however identifiable disadvantages: it requires a considerable amount of organisation and preparation for staff; it could be difficult to provide appropriate challenges for the most able pupils; and it means that whole class lessons are difficult to undertake because of the range of ability in the class.

There are therefore certain positive advantages in place. Mixed ability teaching encourages teamwork and collaboration with colleagues, especially in primary schools, and permits a different ethos to be created. In particular it focuses attention and work becomes more purposeful. It also has its disadvantages. Motivating pupils in slower/lower sets is difficult; and group formation can often be found to be fairly rigid and inflexible.

Studies tend to show that on the whole teachers find mixed ability teaching fairly easy to manage. It may then be feasible in terms of teacher workload but not necessarily more appropriate in terms of pupil learning overall.

Handling Change

1. Pushing societal boundaries

European society is developing and changing, and human rights issues are being applied to everyone more openly and defended more vigorously than ever before. Such basic rights have arguably always been part of societal responsibilities but it is the more recent legal framework

that provides the backdrop to current debate and discussion related to rights and responsibilities for all learners. As membership of the EU widens and more diverse communities are linked in common aims, such rights are recognised across many more cultures and political systems. Educational structure is just as varied. Making provision across such diversity implies then a basic level of provision, a recognition of rights and access to minimum defined resource in order, wherever possible, to maximise the potential and actual abilities of all citizens to play a full and active part in their society and in the wider global community.

2. Changing perceptions of foreign languages in the curriculum

The learning of modern languages is currently associated with defining a skills base that will be of benefit in employment and, for many, as a social skill, assuming that travel and global employment are both integral to modern living. Proponents of limited provision would argue that in the SEN context, the learning of foreign languages can only be justified for those who have a reasonable chance of applying them at some point in their lives. These arguments are open to refutation in any context. They are vigorously opposed by those who consider that education should provide a preparation for life, and thus for predictable and unforeseen circumstances. Education should open up potential, not limit it.

Foreign language learning provides a set of life skills and personal development channels that embrace, define, and extend social development for many learners. In effect language learning is akin to an expressive art or creative learning curriculum. In order to succeed, all involved - teacher and learners alike must assume a new identity - via the culture, shape and sounds of the language. This opens up contexts within which play-acting – or role-plays in teaching terms, give the chance for learners to act out new roles and try new approaches to expression and, above all, behaviours.

Growth in personal confidence in dealing with social situations, often outside direct experience and equally often transposed into social arenas not experienced by learners beforehand, provides a learning experience that moves far beyond the language acquisition itself. Such social and personal benefits are all the more pronounced when the syllabus, curriculum, and learning emphasis, is placed upon communicative skills, and where resources are created to enable all learners to actively develop their own scenarios.

3. Enhancing lifestyles

Once the development of personal and life skills is taken into account, the value base of the learning becomes wider. In the modern world, the value of even a limited knowledge of a language other than one's own offers many other advantages. In terms of life opportunities, some foreign language skill enhances life chances for everyone. For the SEN learner who may well prove to have an aptitude for languages it could prove vital. These are skills which have a recognised value in a modern economic environment.

Within the context where the social position of learners is enhanced and enriched, foreign language learning can build confidence and provide the self-motivation and assurance to move into new and different circles. All such experiences must be positive for such individuals and enable them to live and work more autonomously. Whatever their ability, both in the everyday world and the wider international community at home and abroad, foreign language learning offers the individual opportunities to try new ideas, encounter new places and people, and hopefully enhance self-esteem.

In a world where employment opportunities are changing and patterns of work as well as types of employment offer new opportunities, intercultural understanding, social interaction and personal empowerment offer new opportunities. A number of key roles can be fulfilled where physical disabilities are no barrier. The advent of new technologies, new working environments, and new roles in the workplace, result in specific and focused skill areas being increasingly in demand. Foreign languages is one of these skills areas. Hence employment opportunities for those with some special needs can be enhanced.

RAISING EXPECTATIONS

1. Pedagogic and didactic

In his discussions on inter-culturality and pedagogy Byram et al[8] state that classrooms '*should be the place where there is not only cognitive but also affective challenge – and the opportunity to reflect on one's response*'. This is just as true of the classroom which has SEN learners whether it is located in a special or mainstream school. It is as true of the teacher as it is of the students.

The successful application of these teaching principles will depend upon the resource, investment and professional training of teachers and their institutional commitment to ensuring quality teaching in these areas. These issues are being raised in relation to SEN provision more widely and are recognised as key factors in the success of attaining maximum achievement levels for learners.

As studies testify, many positive steps have been achieved, as well as considerable barriers overcome, due to particular circumstances, resource availability and the availability of adequately trained staff with appropriate experience.

2. Parental

What parents of SEN pupils want is the best education possible for their children. Their concerns tend to be related to accessibility to staff, security, especially the prevention of bullying, and availability of necessary resources.

One major study provides findings that arguably can be applied more widely. Priestley and Rabblee[9] made a study evaluating two pilot projects where pupils from special schools were integrated into mainstream schools in an English educational authority. The schemes are indicative of current European trends in special needs education, particularly with regard to fostering more inclusion within mainstream schools. Their review of recent literature on this subject indicates a groundswell of popular opinion in the UK among professionals favouring integration and therefore critical of segregation.

3. Teacher attitudes

Evidence would seem to suggest that teachers could, in general, be led towards a more receptive attitude towards integration. It would seem that those that frame and implement policies may have to overcome initial hostilities in some countries. A UK[10] investigation into the attitudes of some 584 teachers towards integration indicated a more positive view. This seemed to point to a shift in attitude over a relatively short period of time. It seems that despite initial suspicion and resistance, once policies become initiated, experience overcomes these early prejudices. Attitudes thus become more positive over time. This has direct implications for the foreign language teaching profession across Europe.

A UNESCO study[11] of around 100 teachers in 14 different countries teaching SEN children found a wide range of opinion among teachers on the issue of integration. Among the countries studied were four European countries. Teachers in countries that had policies favouring integration were found to be more receptive to the concept than others. Teachers from countries which had segregated schooling for SEN learners were least receptive to integration.

"teachers' pre-existing attitudes are therefore a key factor in the overall outcome and this must be recognised and challenged"

Another study[12] finds that classroom teachers tend to be more cautious about integration than pre-school professionals and administrators, and this would seem to confirm the idea that policy-makers have to set the pace as well as the agenda.

The acceptance of SEN children by teachers also seems to be more positively demonstrated towards those with mild physical disability rather than psychological and behavioural disabilities. About half were favourable to children with specific learning difficulties, but were less

accepting of children with more serious difficulties, and severe emotional and behavioural problems. Even less were accepting of children with visual and hearing impairment and hardly any were accepting of children with severe mental impairment or multiple handicaps. Bowman's study showed that teachers were generally more favourable to children with medical and physical disabilities. Little is known about whether this changes according to the age of the learners, including those in adult education.

Teachers' pre-existing attitudes are therefore a key factor in the overall outcome and this must be recognised and challenged. The problem of teaching foreign languages to SEN children integrated into mainstream schools would depend upon not merely the specific condition of such learners but also on the number of such pupils within a class, the overall balance of numbers and general conditions, even where professional help is available. There are then practical problems of accommodating SEN learners within a mainstream classroom when their handicap is likely to influence to a marked extent the teaching process and the social interactions of the group as a whole.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

1. Supporting the professionals

Stakeholders in the field need an injection of support at the highest levels with appropriate resource allocation. Studies identifying successful applications refer consistently to the need for quality input. The proper and high quality of all teaching is also claimed to be a key factor in creating more positive attitudes towards the issues themselves – in other words the investment is in the whole process rather than in parts reaching only those enthusiasts and supporters. If the systemic changes required are to be delivered, then a wholesale change in attitudes among teachers, employers and policy-makers is called for. Success and recognition will be the key drivers. Any policy needs then to ensure that success is assured and this in turn requires proper investment and support.

It is increasingly recognised that effective learning puts the individual needs at the centre of the teaching programme. The approach is well suited to the learner with special needs, but it may be very demanding. 'Normal' practices for a teacher of SEN children will inevitably make new demands upon the teacher in mainstream systems.
In order to succeed, proper and adequate training is required, and the teacher who chooses to work in such teams should feel confident not only of their ability to work effectively but also to impart a sense of well-being to all the members of their class. They need to work confidently, within a context and environment where they feel supported, and where their professional duties are enhanced rather than threatened by such innovation.

None of this is achieved very fast, nor may the approach suit all teachers. The integration of SEN learners into mainstream educational systems needs to be handled sensitively and at the outset at least based on individual teacher choice, and with good support. Studies demonstrate that success leads to positive attitudes towards such integrative teaching, emphasising the importance of successful implication of such approaches.

If the requirements are fulfilled then there is no reason why more SEN learners should not successfully be integrated into mainstream foreign language classrooms where they can enjoy, to the best of their ability, the full range of educational offerings. Such an approach would also prove more cost effective and would in principle at least allow for a higher level of investment in the more extreme cases where learners may not be capable of such integration, but where specialist teachers can then be found and funded with appropriate support for such teaching.

2. Assessing and acknowledging achievement

A less recognised problem is that of appropriate measuring and recognition of output and the assessment of defined learning outcomes. As the move towards integration and inclusion increases and grows, so the measure of achievement for learners presenting specific limitations in areas of learning that are related to physical emotional or mental conditions should be adapted. Education at all levels is becoming ever more open and transparent in measuring, assessing and recognising outcomes. This approach brings greater transparency and recognition

of achievement and as learning progresses beyond school, allows learning plans to match individual needs.

Within this global dynamic, SEN learners have equal rights and arguably greater need for an active and worthwhile learning experience both within formal structures and processes, and more informally throughout life. To achieve this, they must be prepared adequately in their understanding of their own learning capabilities and limitations to enable them to take personal responsibility, make appropriate choices, and access suitable opportunities and provision.

Within this framework, the place of skills in foreign languages is undeniable. *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006* (COM2003) recognises the importance of language skills in equipping citizens for a place in the modern global economy and in a workplace where travel and communication technologies have few boundaries. These principles apply equally to SEN learners.

3. Applying new technologies

New technologies offer many solutions. Evidence to date suggests that the application of technological solutions is in its infancy and as a solution to wider engagement is often overlooked. Technology presents a basic dichotomy which only intervention and policy can move forward. On the one hand it allows for personalised learning solutions, shared resources, and hardware and software solutions. On the other, such development is not cost effective, not designed for major market sectors, and on a local or even national basis is probably not an economic proposition. However opportunities to share expertise and resource is also possible through the new technologies so that via shared platforms, collaboratively developed adaptations, learning schemes and curricular changes, all learners can be catered for.

Technologies offer the opportunity to create tailored resources geared to specific needs. The world of language teaching is now separately adapting and responding to the potential of ICT. Bringing these two developments together has the potential to yield enormous benefits to the educational outcomes of many learners with individual needs, including SEN learners of foreign languages.

4. Call to action - resourcing

Movement and change can only be achieved by creating a critical mass of opinion, of influence at the highest levels and a will to succeed in taking through such developments. Collective action can and should lead to identified programmes of support enabling a wide range of learners to actively plan their learning, their long term goals and their life plans on a richer and more varied basis. Most importantly these resources can enable these learners to become proficient in assessing their own needs, identifying what is available, and ensuring that they can access what they need throughout their lives within the context of individual responsibilities, self awareness and self-knowledge and understanding.

TEACHING FOR INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL LEARNERS

1. Creativity in the curriculum

In order to address the curriculum from the perspective of the needs of learners and especially those with specific limitations, national policies should take account of such differences and establish a parity of value in a more diverse and flexible system of assessment, academic credibility and the recognition of qualifications.

As skills and knowledge grow increasingly complex and diverse, so the systems for measuring, defining and assessing them multiply and proliferate. Within any mainstream curriculum, debate is increasingly focused upon the need for more joint recognition of awards, for greater flexibility across national boundaries of awards and qualifications, and greater mutuality in the acceptability of credit awarded across boundaries.

To date little discussion has been devoted to the adaptability of such recognition in relation to the need for flexible awards in terms of SEN and foreign language learning. The nature of the flexibility required depends upon individual cases. However, obvious examples are within major SEN fields such as hearing or visually impaired foreign languages learners gaining credit and awards of equal status for learning outcomes weighted and adjusted to take account of sensory deprivation. Such is the force of the need for the recognition of quality in awards that there appears to be a certain reluctance to offer such flexibility.

Arguably a less regulated system would be more likely to embrace, for instance, additional testing in one skill area in foreign languages as compensatory for other areas where the SEN learner cannot compete or even opt to take examinations. It seems extraordinary that such basic adaptations within an educational assessment framework are not commonplace, normal and quite acceptable. In fact they are rarely, if ever, acknowledged and implemented.

2. Call to action – flexibility in skills recognition

A logical next step in recognising the human right of every citizen applied to this field is a cross-national call for such flexibility in awards and qualifications. This would then locate the issues associated with SEN learning and its recognition within any debate on mainstream educational discussions and decision-making.

It is this step from marginalisation to mainstream in terms of outcomes and public recognition across the spectrum of achievement which, whilst applied openly and liberally elsewhere, is barely discernible in the field of SEN and within that in the assessment of foreign language skills.

DEVELOPING A WORKING FRAMEWORK

1. Personal development plans

Personal Development Plans are now increasingly a part of mainstream educational provision. The following schema is based on one particular initiative, but this is being replicated elsewhere. The development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP) is of particular importance in SEN. Once trained in self-assessment, the approach should work equally well for such learners. Arguably it offers greater benefits to SEN learners than those in mainstream education. For the latter this is seen as enhancing the learning process, empowering the individual and increasing self-awareness. All of these apply equally to the SEN learners but additionally the plans allow the learner to develop a personal plan where mainstream provision fails to recognize special skills and where the balance and set of skills differ from the 'norm'. It allows, in other words, any learner with any set of skills to develop a personal profile and development plan that can inform their learning in formal and informal settings, improve self esteem and allow them to bring particular skills to the attention of employers and others where traditional qualifications may mask or even deny such recognition.

2. Learning styles

Learning styles are important not only for learning but also for helping individuals through everyday life situations. They relate to personal preferences for absorbing information, for solving problems, and for success in social and personal situations. They can have implications for learning, family life, leisure and work. It is important that individuals are aware of their learning styles because they can relate these to life preferences and personality. This can lead to greater self-knowledge.

To develop the ability of individuals to assess and evaluate their own learning and aims in the context of their personal strengths, an understanding of how they best learn and what therefore constitutes an effective approach to study is helpful. Achieving such an understanding is especially valuable for SEN learners with their specific problems in learning foreign languages. Their styles will categorise as for other learners and they can then adapt and work towards optimising their achievements based on this knowledge.

A key aspect of effective learning is the physical environment. At one level this relates to aspects such as ease of access and suitable physical conditions, but at a deeper level it impacts upon factors such as types of ergonomics, lighting, levels of background noise etc., each of which will have differing but significant effects upon the quality of the language learning output.

Beyond these physical attributes SEN learners should be made aware of and work within what best suits their own personal style of learning. A learning style is a primary influence with tasks adapted to suit what learners need, not the other way about. This is not about hierarchies or priorities but rather of an understanding of how best to affect quality learning. The accepted principles of learning style theory relate to five widely recognized categories of learning style:

- Auditory learners – listening and reading as predominate channels
- Visual learners – predominant need to see and visualise
- Kinaesthetic learners – learning from direct experience and activities
- Social and emotional learners – strongly influenced by affective environment
- Meta-cognitive – reflecting and evaluative learners

3. Key skill areas

Development areas highlighted through Individual Educational Plans can then be recognised in a personal portfolio. This would allow all learners to record progress across a variety of levels and type of achievement. With more appropriate means and methods of assessment all SEN learners would have available to them a range of recognised qualifications.

Equally, skill sets related to intellectual, analytical and thinking skills would then be applied across special scales and measures to SEN groups. These too would apply to all learners for charting individual progress and further developing motivation to learn.

4. Career choice – life choices

Personal planning routes should be a lifelong dimension for every individual. It is the natural and most positive response to life in a changing world, of new opportunities and of the technological developments that arise within it. The learner with special needs and special talents should be equipped equally well to deal with this life pattern, so as to take full advantage of opportunities as and when they arise.

The portfolio approach and the record of a broad range of skills and personal development profiles provide this. Some of the priorities should reflect areas of development such as:

- Enabling pupils to interact and communicate
- Enabling pupils to express preferences and make their needs known
- Promoting pupil self-advocacy
- Preparing pupils for adult life
- Increasing pupil understanding of their environment and the world
- Encouraging pupils to explore, question and challenge

*5. Possible structure and framework for planning provision**

Skill development	*Learners encouraged to gain new skills, to practise, maintain combine, develop, refine, transfer or generalise existing skills; to reactivate existing skills and apply e.g. to a vocational context in working life.*
Breadth of curricular content	*Extend learner access to new knowledge and understanding. Explore the culture and understanding of the people whose languages is being learned.*
Range of contexts for learning	*Learners offered a range of activities resources and environments appropriate to their learning needs, age, interests and prior achievements.*
Variety of support	*Enable pupils to take control of their environment. Increase mobility where possible. Develop and practise communication skills. Use basic technology skills to enable the individuals to use a communication device to enable them to improve their ability to interact with others.*
Range of teaching methods	*Determined by pupils' individual strengths and learning styles at different stages of development.*
Personal learning plans	*Encourage learners to take a greater part in the learning process and in planning or measuring success. Encourage self-recording via use of a portfolio or progress file.*
Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in new settings	*Offer learners opportunities in specialist, mainstream and community environments. Take learning outside the classroom where possible.*
Strategies for independence	*Learners encouraged to move away from adult support and class- based activities towards autonomy and self-advocacy to prepare for life beyond school.*

- *Adapted from UK General Guidelines: Planning teaching and assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties, DfEE 2001*

Moving forward

It is the case that much can be achieved by ensuring equal access to foreign languages education for all pupils. Individual learning preferences and achievement will differ but the educational systems, and those who work within these, need to ensure that opportunities are within reach of all pupils.

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[1] *Avrimidis, E. Norwich . in European Journal of Special Needs Education, Vol 17 No 2*
[2] *Op cit*
[3] *Little, D. Definitions, issues and problems, Authentik Language Learning Resources, 1991*
[4] *Dam, Z. in Little, D. Autonomy and Language Learning: some theoretical and practical considerations, CILT, London, 1900*
[5] *Priestley, M. & Rablee, P. Hopes and fears: stakeholder views on the transfer of special school resources, International Journal of inclusive education, Vol. 6 No4 2002*
[6] *Smith, C. & Sutherland, M.J.: Teachers' Views of the organisation of pupils for learning, Journal of research into Special Educational Needs, Vol 3 No3 2003*
[7] *op cit*
[8] *Byram, M., Talkington, B. and Langel, L. :Setting the context, highlighting the importance: reflections on inter-culturality and pedagogy, IALIC / Subject Centre pedagogical Forum, 2004*
[9] *op cit*
[10] *Avramidis & Norwich, op cit*
[11] *Bowman. I.: Teacher training and the integration of handicapped pupils: some findings from a fourteen-nation UNESCO study, European Journal of Special Needs Education Vol 1, 1986*
[12] *Priestley & Rablee op cit*

ADDED VALUE

5

In Responding to *Pupil's Needs when Teaching MFL* (modern foreign languages)[1], the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (UK) provides the following:

> *Learning a modern foreign language helps all pupils develop their interest and curiosity in the similarities and differences between themselves and others. This includes learning about countries, cultures, people and communities. Meeting people from other countries and cultures helps to broaden pupils' horizons by experiencing new and different languages and cultures. Learning the basics of a foreign language helps pupils to extend and develop their language and communication skills and can enhance self-esteem. In particular MFL (modern foreign languages) offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:*

- *Become aware of themselves as citizens of the world, as well as in their own immediate environment and society*
- *Become more aware of language, sounds, smells, tastes, images and artifacts from other countries and cultures by working with materials from these countries*
- *Become more familiar with the sounds of an MFL (modern foreign language) and use a range of methods which develop speaking and listening skills rather than relying on the written word*
- *Meet people from other countries and communicate with them in their own language*
- *Develop imitation skills and the motivation to produce sounds and an expressive language*
- *Use ICT for direct electronic contact, e-mail or the internet so they can use a new language to communicate with schools and people in other countries*
- *Support their learning in other subjects*
- *Develop listening, concentration and social skills through partnership and group work*
- *Work in a range of contexts and topics adapted to suit individual interests and motivations*

"we can observe students of all abilities successfully learning foreign languages"

In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in MFL (a modern foreign language) by:

- *Expanding their breadth and depth of experience, knowledge and understanding*
- *Developing and extending new language and communication skills*
- *Moving from the familiar to the less familiar*
- *Developing understanding, for example, from the concrete to the abstract'*

Hilary McColl (2000) observes 'The desire and need to communicate with the people around us is a powerful motivator and enabler. If that need is not there, then some other motivation has to be found. There has to be a reason to learn another language, and the benefits must be palpable. It is this requirement, perhaps, that provides modern language teachers with their greatest challenge.

Since we can observe students of all abilities successfully learning foreign languages, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that all of our students have a potential for foreign language learning and that, given the right opportunity, conditions and motivation, they can succeed. We need only look at what they can achieve in their first language – that is their potential. The question for us educators is: how close to that potential can we enable them to get?'[2]

The QCA (2001) also describes how appropriate modern foreign language learning provision can lead to diverse benefits:[3]

Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the target language

Knowledge and understanding of an MFL begin with pupils exploring their immediate physical environment through the senses. They may become aware of, and understand, the differences between such an environment and a more distant locality. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of differences in language and culture through materials, artefacts and meeting people from places, which are socially and culturally different from their home environment.

Developing language skills and language-learning skills

Teaching MFL across the key stages can help pupils to develop both of these aspects of the programme of study by encouraging them to:

- *Listen and respond to foreign language songs, poems, or stories, which have rhyming or repeated words. Staff may vary the repetition by saying things loudly, quietly, quickly or slowly*
- *Listen carefully and discriminate between sounds, identify some meaning from words and intonations, and develop auditory awareness, for example, using audio, video tape or CD-ROM*
- *Respond to a certain word or phrase, for example, a greeting*
- *Use symbols and audio-recordings, for example, a Language Master, to associate a word and object, and to record themselves or others*
- *Increase social skills by providing new context for communication and interaction, for example, taking part in pair and group work and developing turn-taking skills*
- *Express their own views about people, places and environments by showing a preference or by expressing likes and dislikes, for example, using a growing vocabulary of words, symbols, gestures and facial expressions*

- *Develop general language skills through new learning experiences, resulting in the positive acquisition of a simple, relevant vocabulary that can be used for practical communication at a level appropriate to their ability*
- *Respond to, use and understand words and phrases which are reinforced with visual aids, for example, in a game with real objects, using puppets, video, picture flashcards and gestures*
- *Communicate messages by sending information in the form of pictures or text by e-mail*
- *Enhance self-esteem through opportunities for new achievements.*

Developing cultural awareness

Cultural awareness begins with pupils' recognition that everybody is different. Contact with people and material from other countries brings cultures alive and gives meaning and purpose to the study of MFL. Inviting people who speak other languages into school or using the internet, videos, brochures and magazines, can help pupils to see the differences in language and culture. This helps pupils see themselves as part of a multi-cultural society with a wide variety of languages, foods, festivals and celebrations. There may be opportunities to meet pupils' parents and families who may speak other languages, to create links with local schools which have foreign language assistants on the staff or to make contact with a partner school abroad. Teaching this aspect across key stages can help pupils to:

- *Collect, explore and sort objects and artefacts from a foreign country*
- *Respond to, and use, a range of resources for information and exploration, for example, photographs, tactile pictures, postcards, CD-ROMS, videos, artefacts, and stories*
- *Be aware of other people and observe similarities and differences, for example, focus on specific aspects of culture, such as people, food, festivals, dance, music or art in cross-curricular learning.* "

The added value realized through quality foreign language education provision to learners with special needs can be summarized as enhanced:

- Equal opportunities and social integration
- Access to the European dimension
- Enhanced personal and social development
- Enhanced professional development and preparation for working life
- Enhanced foreign language teaching applicable to SEN and non-SEN learners
- Social cohesion

In Conclusion

Cooperative and collaborative action is called for where commercial interests cannot be served. Collectively the population with some special needs whose lives are fundamentally affected by the quality of their educational experiences is very significant. Its fragmentation by difference, by age and country belies the real truth and disguises the potential of

"collectively the population with some special needs whose lives are fundamentally affected by the quality of their educational experiences is very significant"

collective action. Technology, modern communications, European policies and recognition of collective responsibility make this the time when calls for action are answered and lives improved.

The tools are available and evidence of success can be found. The worlds of foreign language teaching and SEN provision are both positively embracing new approaches and technologies which will ultimately benefit learners. Each provides formal education processes with the means to equip all learners to face their world with an understanding of personal potential and limitations and a view of positive realism. Life chances are possibly limited but an awareness of where to seek opportunities and how to exercise individual rights to training or further education are broadly understood.

Such is the vision. Much of this operates successfully already, but in limited and small scale developments and often in barely visible actions. Yet they must be the aims of any educational system claiming to do the best for those in its charge. Finally, the current reportedly very limited provision for the learning of foreign languages across all SEN learners will only change if their needs are addressed alongside and with equal vigour as those of language learners in all settings.

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[1] *Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties – Modern Foreign Languages. P. 6, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, UK, 2001 www.qca.org.uk*
[2] *McColl, H. 2000. Modern Languages for All, p. 5, London: David Fulton Publishers*
[3] *As in Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties – Modern Foreign Languages. P. 6-9, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, UK, 2001 www.qca.org.uk*

RECOMMENDATIONS

TEACHING LANGUAGES TO LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG EAC 23 03 LOT 3

The Teaching of Foreign Languages to Learners with Special Educational Needs

This list of recommendations has been compiled according to several policy and implementation levels which are inter-connected. Each relate to the equality of foreign language educational provision, and access to the European educational dimension. The recommendations aim at ensuring that the momentum of earlier relevant initiatives, particularly those highlighted in the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003, is maintained and enhanced.

Each recommendation has been considered in terms of feasibility, impact and potential multiplier effects. The levels are societal (societies, and the social collective of the European Union); systems (member state educational systems); strategy (where professional research and practice-based expertise is used to provide specialist insight and development); and practice (the schools, colleges or other learning environments where implementation occurs).

SOCIETAL (societies and the social collective of the European Union)

- ***Establishing Right of Entitlement Appropriate to Needs and Abilities***
  Reiterate that language learning in basic education is fundamental in ensuring a broad and balanced education within the member states, and that all learners should have the right of entitlement to opportunities for foreign language learning appropriate to their needs and abilities.

- ***Satisfying the Need for Data***
  Provide an indicator of Europe-wide foreign language learning uptake and duration by special needs pupils, in special and mainstream schools, according to age, category and target languages.

- ***Articulating Good Practice, Success and Added Value***
  Establish a resonance group geared to production of a publication for policy-makers and educators, which exemplifies good practice, success and added value in foreign language learning by special needs pupils across Europe. This would re-assert the role of foreign language learning in personal and social development as defined within human rights legislation, and exemplify its role as a cornerstone of education in Europe for all citizens. This could be similar to similar to ICT in SNE (c.50 pages) www.european-agency.org. The resonance group should act in cooperation with existing providers which have produced similar localized documents, so as to facilitate transferability of insight into localized landmark examples of good practice being communicated across the Union.

- ***Examining ICT Accessibility, Interoperability and Applicability***
  Establish a think tank to explore web site accessibility, interoperable technologies, and usability of language learning resources, particularly in relation to the potential of assistive technologies.

  This could be based on and partly utilize SEN-IST-NET resources 2001-2003, Information Society Technologies (IST) for Special Educational Needs (SEN) http://www.senist.net, but be focused on foreign language and related learning.

- ***Developing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages***
  Further develop the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and the European Language Portfolio, so as to discriminate between achievement levels at the lower end of the scale such as those developed by the UK-based Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (P- Performance Indicator Scales). In addition, examine if it is possible to develop specific CEF methodological features/guidelines for teaching foreign languages to SEN pupils.

- ***Adapting Existing On-Line Autonomous Language Learning Diagnostic Instruments***
  Examine the feasibility of providing adapted autonomous foreign language diagnostic tools and instruments for older SEN pupils which support the self-assessment of learning progress at the lower end of the scale.

- ***Creating a Parent-Learner-Teacher Decision-making Support System***
  Establish a specific project consortium to design a collaborative virtual learning environment based on language learning strategies, and use of assistive technologies, which enables a teacher and pupil, or parent and pupil, to outline optimal language learning paths. This would provide an individual pupil profile based on the language learning abilities and disabilities of each pupil which can then be used in Individual Educational Plans (IEP).

- ***Establishing and Extending European Network Platforms***
  Establish a specific project consortium to further develop European networking on foreign language learning for both pupils and teachers which allow for direct contact within and across SEN groups.

- ***Defining the Status of Sign Languages***
  Further clarify the status of sign languages so that appropriate language learning project funding can be accessed accordingly.

- ***Establishing a Multilingual Internet-based Materials Repository***
  Establish a multilingual internet-based materials bank (repository) suitable for those with learning, sensory and other difficulties. This should also include appropriate training resources for teachers. It is recommended that this be set up as a Language Portal according to the principles used with the Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) database. ERIC operates as an information system which provides access to a range of resources and teaching/learning materials. An ERIC-style database could contain teacher/school produced materials, alongside others, according to SEN categories, and provide extra support for teachers during the process of inclusion of SEN pupils into mainstream schools.

- ***Consolidating Expertise for Designing Developmental Solutions***
  Assemble an inter-disciplinary fusion group of researchers, policy makers and practitioners across Europe, to identify key foreign language/SEN teacher competence-building solutions.

SYSTEMS
(member state educational systems)

- ***Articulating the Rights and Potential Achievements of SEN pupils Learning Foreign Languages***
  Further articulate the right to foreign language learning by all pupils to schools, teachers and parents, alongside showing localized 'landmark' examples of good practice and successful educational outcomes. This could be done through national European Language Label groups, and other relevant bodies, so as to further support the Charter of Luxembourg (1996) *A School for All*, The Treaty of Amsterdam (2000) *Article 13*, and the European Parliament Resolution (2001) *Equal Rights for People* with Disabilities, and The European Disability Forum *Madrid Declaration* (2002). These outcomes should be described in relation to both linguistic and communicative competence, and enrichment in terms of European citizenship, multiculturalism, interculturalism and individual confidence-building.

- ***Developing Local Resource Centres***
  Set up, or further develop, SEN resource centres so as to include SEN foreign language advisory services for teachers, parents, and pupils. Likewise, existing Language Resource Centres should include provision of expertise on foreign language learning and SEN.

- ***Developing Means for Identifying 'at risk' Learners***
  Examine comparative diagnostic approaches and frameworks used to identify pupils at risk of encountering learning difficulties in languages.

- ***Articulating the Need for Further Professional Competence-building***
  Articulate the need for all language teachers, not just those employed as SEN specialists, to be sufficiently trained so as to accommodate the interests of SEN pupils learning foreign languages in mainstream schools.

- ***Collecting Data on Creating Localized Professional Competence-building Solutions***
  Conduct localized surveys on how teachers respond to the inclusion of SEN pupils into foreign language mainstream classes so as to inform decision-making on the cost, development and provision of appropriate initial and in-service educational programmes.

  Specific attention should be given to identifying those pupils who are not formally recognized as having special educational needs, but who have been withdrawn from foreign language learning, particularly those whose first language is not the major medium of instruction in the environment.

  Such data also needs to be considered in terms of the amount of time devoted to special needs theory and practice in general, and within this the teaching and learning of languages, both first and additional, in initial teacher education for primary and secondary levels.

- ***Preparing Foreign Language Teachers for Diverse Learning Needs***
  Examine the extent to which understanding of individual foreign language learning strategies is incorporated into initial language teacher education for SEN and non-SEN specialists.

- ***Providing Teaching/Learning Materials***
  Construct multi-sensory thematic units (10+ hours) in the form of modules, preferably drawing on topics which contextualize the European experience. These should be flexible enough to accommodate a broad range of SEN pupils and be accompanied by 'teacher/parent guidance' information packs. Such modules would not only act as learner-based materials, but also as a means of developing teacher competence in SEN and foreign languages.

- ***Providing and Maintaining ICT Financial Support***
  Provide the financial incentives to subsidize development of improved access to ICT hard and software for SEN foreign language learning, teacher training in using applications, and ongoing technical support for schools.

- ***Learning Languages across the Curriculum***
  Examine the potential of alternative language learning programmes by which foreign languages could be learnt across the curriculum (content and language integrated learning) in SEN curricula.

- ***Recognizing Foreign Language Learning Achievement***
  Provide evaluation processes which recognize performance thresholds suitable for lower end, and alternative, forms of achievement. This would help ensure that performance appraisal does not act as a disincentive for inclusion of SEN pupils into mainstream foreign language learning classrooms.

STRATEGY

(where professional research and practice-based expertise is used to provide specialist insight and development);

- ***Consolidating Researcher-Practitioner Expertise***
  Assemble a researcher-teacher fusion group to produce a pan-European literature review of SEN and language teaching/learning including a specific section on ICT, SEN and language learning within the framework of a project. This would ideally build on the existing resource found at http://www.specialeducationalneeds.com/mfl/biblio.doc

- D***esigning Examples of Good Practice and Quality Appraisal***
  Examine how to develop good practice and develop instruments of quality appraisal of language learning provision for SEN pupils.

- ***Encouraging Inter-disciplinary Cooperation***
  Support trans-professional resourcing so that research institutes, professional associations, schools and other bodies could further cooperate in:

  ♦ Establishing inter-disciplinary forums, by which to greater integrate knowledge of theory and practice of both SEN and language learning.

  ♦ Examining the possibility of supporting Local Area Networks (LAN) by which more experienced language and SEN-language oriented teachers cooperate with less experienced teachers in identifying good language learning practice suitable for specific types of school, class and learner.

  ♦ Managing the professional threats resulting from inclusion through providing newsgroup style bulletin boards enabling educators to voice opinions and share insights on SEN and language learning.

  ♦ Producing evidence in accessible form for SEN pupil parents and carers so as to engage them fully in decision-making on whether, or not, their child should learn foreign languages by providing clear but authoritative guidelines and evidence of first-hand experience.

  ♦ Designing localized benchmarks suitable for the learning of any additional languages which lead to alternative certified language learning programmes for adoption into Individual Educational Plans, and thus encourage a positive approach towards learning achievement.

  ♦ Developing the modules required for teacher in-service training so as to be better able to manage such certified language learning programmes.

  ♦ Designing frameworks for teachers, parents, and pupils, handling Individual Educational Plans (IEP) on foreign language learning approaches, performance and goals. Special attention should be given to alternative certification performance levels which may be reached by pupils with modest linguistic aims. This should also be linked to the possibility of 'lateral progression' whereby a pupil learns a modest amount in one language, and then rather than progressing onwards, takes an alternative language up a similar performance stage.

PRACTICE
(the schools, colleges or other learning environments where implementation occurs).

- ***Articulating School Policies***
  Produce school-based policy statements on provision and value of language teaching for all pupils irrespective of SEN status, whether temporary or longer-term, in relation to European citizenship.

- ***Identifying Language Learning Objectives beyond Communicative Competence***
  Articulate the goals of SEN pupils learning foreign languages such as European citizenship, intercultural learning, communicator self-esteem, social networking, amongst others. These should be described holistically and be linked to the potential of 'lateral progression' – involving the achievement of modest learning outcomes in more than one language.

- ***Identifying Educator Foreign Language Competencies***
  Examine the potential of SEN teachers, who are not qualified as language teachers, but who have sufficient competence in a target language, to use it as a medium of learning in relation to teaching across the curriculum and curricular 'lateral progression'. Recognition of these resources, and appropriate guidance could facilitate overall access to language learning provision within a given school.

APPENDICES

CONTRIBUTOR PROFILES

Timo Ahonen is a professor of developmental psychology at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. As a clinical neuropsychologist he has carried out clinical work with children with different kinds of learning disabilities for many years. His main research areas cover dyslexia, developmental coordination disorders, specific language disorders and attention deficit disorders. He has acted as senior researcher in the Jyväskylä Longitudinal Study of Dyslexia. He is also a member of the Niilo Mäki Institute Board at the University of Jyväskylä and consulting editor in the Journal of Learning Disabilities.

Helena Aikin works in the department of Modern Languages at the University of Castilla la Mancha (Ciudad Real, Spain). Her doctoral thesis focused on the teaching of foreign languages to young learners with visual impairments, and her research included the creation and use of tactile illustrations for the development of the spatial intelligence in children with sight loss. She is currently in charge of organising and conducting the extra-curricular EFL seminars at the School for the Blind (ONCE) in Madrid.

Fátima Matos Almeida is a secondary school teacher, graduated from the University of Lisbon with a degree in English and German Language, Literature and Culture; a Masters degree in Special Educational Needs; and a degree in Psychology. She is Co-founder and, since 1992, president of ASPEA, The Portuguese Association for Environmental Education; a member of the board of Caretakers of the Environment International as Director of Networking; a teacher trainer in special needs, educational projects, environmental education and citizenship, and art and the environment. She is also a participant in different European projects regarding Sustainability Education and School Agenda 21.

Paul Blenkhorn is currently Professor of Assistive Technology at UMIST (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology). For around twenty years he has been involved in the development of computer-based systems to support people with disabilities in daily life, education, communication and to support access to computer systems. His two main areas of interest are in the support of people with print impairments and people with profound and multiple disabilities.

Terry Brady attended a school for the blind and partially-sighted in Liverpool, after which he trained as an audio shorthand-typist. At the age of twenty-one, he gained employment with the Open University, UK. From 1989 to 1993 he attended Birmingham University and l'Université François Rabelais at Tours. He was awarded a BA honours degree by Birmingham University in 1993. Since then he has worked as a freelance translator and teacher and as a researcher at the Open University.

Berit Haugnes Bromseth was educated in Trondheim, Norway, except for one year of studies in the USA. She has been working as a teacher for 8th -10th graders in Trondheim for 31 years, covering different subjects, English being the her main area of interest. She has a wide range of experience in teaching pupils with different kinds of special educational needs as well as

minority language pupils and mainstream pupils. Since 1995 she has also been working for the Cappelen Publishing House as an author of English teaching materials. The Flight series consists of regular textbooks, Flight Extra for learners with special needs, Flex for very poor learners and Flex on the Net, a net based interactive version of Flex.

Anna M. Butkiewicz, has taught English, trained teacher-trainees and in-service teachers, and run short courses in a number of educational institutions including the Universities of Gdañsk and Warsaw, and The Pomeranian University and the Teachers Training Centre. She specializes in SEN ELT methodology. She has published articles and papers in journals and is the author of various books including the following all published by The University of Gdañsk Press: Teaching English to students with SEN (2000), Teaching English to cerebral palsy students (2003) She has also designed a course for adult learners with dyslexia and is a consultant and co-author of the Dyslexia in ELT teachers' manual [including a tools cd-rom] for teachers dealing with dyslexic students. She has written a practical approach book, which provides hands on accounts of dealing with SEN students. She has been an editorial advisor to a number of local journals. She currently teaches future ESL educators at the Teachers Training College, University of Gdañsk, and also conducts special vocational courses for SEN adult language students.

Elisa Careddu: Da alcuni anni svolgo l'attività di educatrice in ambito extrascolastico e scolastico per l'Assessorato ai Servizi Sociali della Provincia di Cagliari. Ho approfondito le diverse tematiche legate all'utilizzo della Lingua dei Segni Italiana nel contesto didattico, in special modo l'apprendimento dell'italiano come L2 in sordi segnanti. Dall'Anno Accademico 2002/2003 insegno "Riabilitazione sensoriale generale e speciale per non udenti e non vedenti" presso la Facoltà di Scienze della Formazione Primaria. Dal 2000 collaboro con l'Ente Nazionale Sordomuti di Cagliari. Da quest'anno insegno, sempre presso l'ENS, in un corso propedeutico di "italiano scritto" per adulti.

Margaret Crombie is Support for Learning Manager with The Highland Council Education, Culture and Sport Service and has considerable previous experience of working in the dyslexia field. She is co-author of the book, Dyslexia and Foreign Language Learning (Schneider & Crombie, 2003) and has contributed to a considerable number of other publications. She has researched into various aspects of dyslexia and has a particular interest in the learning of foreign languages in school. She is closely involved in the work of the Scottish Dyslexia Trust.

Franz Dotter has, since 1973, worked at the Institute for Linguistics and Computer linguistics of Klagenfurt University. He carried out his 'Habilitation' on iconicity in syntax in1990, and became Associate Professor for General Linguistics. Since 1996 he has been Head of the Centre for Sign languages and Deaf Communication (http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/fzgs). His main interests are in typology and cognitive linguistics, sign languages, sociolinguistics of politics and minorities, and text/discourse analysis.

Ingo Drescher studied English and French at Heidelberg and Münster Universities in 1963. He taught at Realschule (Secondary Modern School) in 1967 and at Conrad-von-Soest-Gymnasium (Grammar School) in 1974. In 1980 preparations for Project of Integration of the Visually Impaired began and the project started with six blind pupils in mainstream classes in 1981, which became officially supported by the Federal Government in 1996. Initial international contacts were with Norway, Switzerland, Belgium and Belarus in 1987. In 1988, he was involved with the Foundation of the FIBS (support Centre for the Integration of the Visually Impaired), an institution run by the government of North-Rhine-Westfalia, (now a maximum of 45 integrated special needs children in NRW) and has also participated in an EU Comenius Project in cooperation with the Netherlands, Wales, Ireland, Spain and Norway in 1990.

Bertold Fuchs has been working at the University of Jyväskylä as a lecturer of German since 1987. He has studied Finnish Sign Language at university level and written his PhD on teaching Finnish Sign Language as a foreign language. The thesis will be published in September 2004. He is member of the DEAFVOC Leonardo da Vinci project (Sign Languages and European Written Languages in Virtual Vocational Education for the Deaf, www.deafvoc.fi). He has published several articles about teaching dictionary use to students of German and a course book about German pronunciation.

Georgiana Ghitulete is a special needs teacher in a school for the deaf in Bucharest. She has been working extensively with international colleagues to develop resources for the deaf, and in particular computer based multimedia materials. As well as working with the deaf, Georgiana has recently established the Romanian Dyslexia Organisation and is involved in developing a series of resources for teaching special needs children with diverse needs.

Éva Gyarmathy is a senior researcher at the Research Institute for Psychology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her research area is on the gifted person with specific learning difficulties. Her PhD thesis was on identification of gifted children with specific learning difficulties. She constructed methods to identify specific learning difficulties by identifying deviant information processing. She is a lecturer at the Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest and at the University of Szeged, where she leads among other topics a seminar on specific learning difficulties and giftedness. She gives lectures and leads workshops on specific learning difficulties, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and learning styles. She is a main consultant in two private schools for dyslexics and hyperactive highly able children. She does psychotherapy at the outpatient department of a university hospital.

Christine Harvey is an experienced classroom practitioner and INSET trainer with a proven track record of raising achievement in languages across primary, secondary and SEN sectors of education. Having been a Head of Modern foreign Languages departments in three large comprehensive schools in the North East of England, she now teaches part time in two schools - a Special School in Sunderland and in total contrast, an independent girls' school in Darlington. In between, she trains language teachers on behalf of the AQA (Assessment & Qualifications Alliance), one of the largest examination boards in the country. Amongst her major achievements, Christine includes winning the European Curriculum Award twice. In addition, she has had material published regionally and nationally for ALL (the Association for Language Learning) and with the publication of a course book on Reading Skills in French.

Petra Kaseva graduated from the Finnish Commercial College in 1986 and worked for a forwarding company for nearly ten years. She started her studies in Helsinki University in 1988, studying English philology (major), Nordic philology and adult pedagogy, and (after several longer brakes) received her Master's degree in 2002. Since 1997, she has worked as a language teacher for one of the largest institutes of further education in Finland. In addition to language teaching, she has taken part in development work in production of teaching materials.

Sandy Kinvig trained as a teacher at Westminster College, Oxford, UK, in the 1960s and taught in mainstream schools from 1965-1994. In 1994 she became language coordinator on a campus made up of three schools for pupils with physical disabilities: The Wilson Stuart for physical disabilities, the Priestly Smith for blind/visually impaired pupils and Braidwood for profoundly deaf/hearing impaired pupils.

Eva-Maria Ladwig: 1973 Erstes Staatsexamen für das Lehramt an Grund- und Hauptschulen mit dem Wahlfach Englisch; 1973 – 1976 Studium an der Universität Dortmund Abteilung Sonderpädagogik; 1975 Erstes Staatexamen für das Lehramt an Sonderschulen in der Fachrichtung Lernbehindertenpädagogik und Sprachbehinderten-pädagogik;1976 Diplom in Erziehungswissenschaften mit dem Schwerpunkt Sprachheilpädagogik; 1977 – 1978 Zweite Lehrerausbildung in Bielefeld; 1978 Zweites Staatsexamen - Seit meinem Eintritt in den Schuldienst bin ich an mehreren Sonderschulen tätig gewesen. Mein Arbeitsschwerpunkt ist die sonderpädagogische Förderung sprachbehinderter Kinder. Ich war viele Jahre in der Frühförderung (Beratung, Diagnostik, Fortbildung von Erzieherinnen)tätig. Neben meiner Tätigkeit an der Schule für Sprachbehinderte arbeite ich als Moderatorin für die didaktisch-methodische Qualifizierung im Unterrichtsfach Englisch von Primarstufenlehrern.

Maija-Liisa Linnilä has worked as a special education teacher specializing in reading and writing difficulties, speech disorders, and behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. She has recently been involved with the development of The Curriculum of Pre-school and Comprehensive School Education with the Finnish National Board of education. Her doctoral studies are on school readiness and exceptional school entry in relation to special educational needs.

David Marsh is a specialist at UNICOM, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, on the analysis and development of educational contexts and learning environments in relation to languages and communication. He also works on structural and organizational aspects of trans-national working life. Over recent years he has been particularly involved with issues concerning medium of instruction in Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Boguslaw Marek is a professor of English at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. His interest in SEN goes back to early nineties when he realized that despite obvious advantages such as well trained memory, good listening skills and concentration, there were no visually impaired students studying English at a university level. Parallel to his work in the area of phonetics and linguistics he developed a programme for teaching English as a foreign language to totally blind and partially sighted children and students. With British qualifications in visual impairment, acquired in 1996, he now runs M.A. SEN courses for teachers of English at his university, as well as seminars and workshops in several European countries.

Jelena Mazurkievic works in a school for primary and secondary education "Milan Petrovic" in Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro. During this period she has worked as a therapist of children with different developmental disorders and blind children. She specializes in teaching English as a foreign language to children with special needs. Apart from working with the rehabilitation of children she works as a foreign language teacher for blind children, and as a teacher trainer in Serbia and Montenegro. During her professional career she has been involved with projects on teaching children from the aspect of developmental neuropsychology. She currently teaches first grade children with highly functional autism, and continues her work in teaching English language and information technology to children with visual impairment.

Hilary McColl taught French for twenty-five years in mainstream schools in Scotland before being seconded as National Curriculum Development Officer to look at how pupils with special educational needs were being catered for in Modern Languages. Now working as an independent trainer, consultant and writer, she has particular interest in bringing together teachers who specialise in modern languages and those who specialise in supporting learners, believing that collaborative working is the best way to ensure viable modern language programmes for learners with special educational needs.

Kari Moilanen is a specialist in the field of language learning difficulties. He is a teacher/trainer in the in-service education in foreign language teaching methodology and language learning difficulties and has teaching experience of children, adults and immigrants at the lower and upper secondary level. His primary interest is in language learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia, and has published a book and several articles in this field.

Terhi Ojala had eight years teaching experience as special needs teachers in basic education prior to taking up a post as a specialist at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in 1996. Having coordinated the 1997-2001 Qualitative Development of Special Education (QDSE), she is now responsible for the LATU (2002-2004) project, and teacher trainer on SEN, she is currently engaged on aspects of inclusion and quality at the national level. Since 2000 she has jointly authored three books on the area focussed on young learners, inclusion and quality assurance. Closely involved with various professional networks, she also coordinates the annual SEN focussed KOK congress (c.800-1000 active participants).

Nicole Raes studied Dutch and English at the University of Leuven. She received a secondary education teacher's degree from the same university. She taught English in general secondary and adult education from 1974 onwards and was for some time, head of an adult language education centre. She is presently working within the Department of Educational Development (Flemish Ministry of Education). She is in charge of adult education matters and of informing the Department on foreign language policy developments. For the latter task, she represents Flanders in the European Commission's Expert Group on Languages set up within the programme following up the Lisbon process.

Roswitha Romonath: Lehramtsstudium mit Schwerpunkt Germanistik an der Pädagogischen Hochschule Kiel, Studium der Sprachbehindertenpädagogik und Verhaltsauffälligenpädago gik in Berlin, Studium der Germanistischen Linguistik, Lehraufträge und Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Institut für Sonderpädagogik der FU Berlin, Promotion 1990, mehrjährige Tätigkeit in schulischen Praxisfeldern der Sprachbehindertenpädagogik, 1992-2002 Professur für Sprachbehindertenpädagogik an der Universität Rostock, ab März 2002 Professur für Pädagogik und Therapie von Sprech- und Sprachstörungen an der Universität zu Köln, seit 1992 Mitglied des „Child Language Committee" der IALP, ab 2001 gleichzeitig Board Member of IALP (International Association of Logopedics & Phoniatrics). Mitglied des Wissenschaftliches Beirats des Bundesverbandes Legasthenie und Dyskalkulie, Forschungsschwerpunkte: Phonologische Entwicklungsstörungen, Sprachentwicklungsstörungen im Jugendalter, Dyslexie und Vergleichende Sprachheilpädagogik / Sprachtherapie.

Robin Schwarz is currently Coordinator of Tutoring Services at the Learning Lab @ Lesley University, Cambridge, MA, USA, and pursuing a doctorate focusing on evaluating adult English as a Second Language Learners (ESOL) with learning disabilities. A former Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa, she has had separate and combined careers in ESOL and learning disabilities for over 30 years. As a private consultant, she now trains adult ESOL teachers and presents internationally. She has published numerous articles for ESOL teachers and has chapters in two books.

Ian Smythe is an international dyslexia consultant, working on specific learning difficulties in different languages and cultures. He has worked with government departments and non-governmental organisations around the world. He is senior editor of the International Book of Dyslexia, and is Project Director for two EU projects with respect to assistive technology and e-learning. His recent work includes developing assessment and teaching resources, with particular respect to information and communication technology.

Anne Stevens has experience of teaching languages in secondary schools, further education and higher education. She specialises in the teaching of modern languages for special purposes, for non-specialists and vocational learning, including bespoke programmes for major corporations and UK Government departments. For the past 12 years she has worked at the Open University where she headed up the development of the new language courses taught via supported open learning and distance teaching. She is currently responsible for the development of joint online learning projects in collaboration with the British Broadcasting Corporation and the use of broadcast as a vehicle for widening participation through new learning routes.

David S. Stewart is Head Teacher of the Shepherd School, Nottingham where he has taught for the last twenty-four years. He has ensured that the education for persons with severe learning difficulties is kept open as a very active debate. The school holds many awards for its work particularly in the Arts, Sport, Health Education and its International work.

Valentina Tommasi studied at The University of Foreign Languages Cà Foscari, Venice, Italy, where she specialized in Speech and Language Teaching methodologies. Her experience as a member of a voluntary Association for disabled people encouraged her to study to Special Needs Education and to start a research project on specific methodologies for teaching an additional language to children with Down Syndrome which, while receiving contributions from all Europe, is mainly aimed at the Italian scholastic situation.

Annemarie Vicsek has studied Special Education and Speech & Language Therapy in Budapest, Hungary. During her career she has worked with pre-school children with severe speech and language developmental problems involving students with dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscaculia. She has published in the field of teaching foreign languages to students with learning difficulties. She is currently President of the Board of The Napvirag Foundation (dedicated to the research of language teaching to dyslexics).

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for Secondary pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Prior to working in the CDU, and a year preceding that working with more severely autistic youngsters, she worked and lived in Merseyside, England, for 10 years, where she taught languages in a Further Education College. When first qualified as a teacher of French/Russian, and before a career break raising her own family, she taught languages in mainstream Secondary Schools in Scotland.

Dieter Wolff has been working in foreign language education for the last 30 years. While he first specialised in methodological questions he then developed a very strong interest in questions of second language reception and production. Now his main interests are with constructivism as a philosophical and a learning theoretical concept and with bilingual education. He has been working as a consultant for several ministries of education and also been involved in curriculum development. He is responsible at his university for a teacher training programme for teachers in bilingual education. His latest publications include articles on content and language educated learning published in journals all over Europe and a book called Fremdsprachenlernen als Konstruktion: Grundlagen für eine konstruktivistische Fremdsprachendidaktik, published in 2002 by Peter Lang.

EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTIONS: Original Titles

Generic Features of SEN methodologies
Timo Ahonen
Teaching Foreign languages to Young Learners with Visual Impairments
Helena Aikin
One Learner's Perspective (sensory and physical difficulties)
Terry Brady
SEN and Foreign Languages (Poland)
Anna M. Butkiewicz
One Learner's Perspective (cognition and learning difficulties)
Daniel Charles
Enhancing the Learning of Additional Languages in School: Focus Dyslexia
Margaret Crombie
The Special Needs of Sign Language Users
Franz Dotter
Teaching Foreign Languages in Mainstream Classes Integrating Blind and Low-vision Pupils
Ingo Drescher
Fremdsprachenunterricht für gehörlose Lerner.
Bertold Fuchs
Teaching a Foreign Language to Profoundly Deaf Romanian Children
Georgiana Ghitulete and Ian Smythe
Gifted Children with Specific Learning Difficulties and Teaching Foreign Languages
Eva Gyarmathy
Achievements in Modern Foreign Languages by some of the most Educationally Disadvantaged Children in the Education System
Christine J. Harvey
One Parent's Perspective
Petra Kaseva
Teaching a Modern Language to Pupils with a Physical Disability
Sandy Kinvig
Teaching a Foreign Language to Blind Children
Jelena Mazurkievic
Modern Languages for All: The Challenge for Schools
Hilary McColl
Teaching Additional Languages to Dyslexic Students.
Kari Moilanen
Sensory and Physical Difficulties – Broad Principles
Antero Perttunen, Tarja Hännikäinen and Marja Lounaskorpi
Modern Foreign Languages and Dyslexia in England - Issues in Modern Foreign Language Learning
Christina Richardson
Förderung des Fremdsprachlernens bei Kindern und Jugendlichen mit einer Lese-Rechtschreibstörung (Dyslexie)
Roswitha Romonath,
Learning Disabilities and Foreign Language Learning: A Painful Collision
Robin Schwarz
Report on Vienna Board of Education's Implementation of Modern Language Teaching to Learners with Special Educational Needs
(as submitted by) Christine Seifner
Extending Examination Access to Candidates with Particular Requirements
(as submitted by) Ruth Shuter
Information and Communication Technology, Special Educational Needs and Learning Languages
Ian Smythe & Paul Blenkhorn
The Individual, Defining Factors & Language Learning Case: Dyslexia
Ian Smythe

Fremdsprachenunterricht für gehörlose Lerner

(Beitrag zum Report für die Europäische Kommission zum Thema „Fremdsprachenunterricht für Lerner mit besonderen Bedürfnissen“)

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In diesem Text wird zu den Fragen Stellung genommen, welche Sprachkenntnisse Gehörlose – neben ihrer Muttersprache – benötigen, welche Kompetenz sie in diesen Fremdsprachen erreichen sollten und welche didaktischen Überlegungen zu dem Fremdsprachenunterricht für Gehörlose angestellt werden müssen. Zu Beginn wird die sprachliche Situation der Gehörlosen dargestellt. Am Ende des Textes wird kurz auf den Fremdsprachenbedarf und -unterricht für andere Hörbehindertengruppen eingegangen (Ertaubte, Schwerhörige, Taubblinde).

1) Sprachliche Situation der Gehörlosen

Die Muttersprache der Gehörlosen und prälingual Ertaubten ist die Gebärdensprache (im folgenden GS) der jeweiligen Gehörlosengemeinschaft (z.B. Finnische GS, Britische GS, Deutschschweizer GS usw.). Die Kommunikation in GS entspricht der Art der Gehörlosen, die Umwelt in erster Linie visuell zu erfassen. Da die meisten Gehörlosen in Familien mit hörenden Eltern und Geschwistern aufwachsen, erwerben sie die GS nicht vom ersten Lebenstag an durch die natürliche Kommunikation innerhalb der Familie, sondern durch den Kontakt mit der Gehörlosengemeinschaft und von den Eltern und anderen Familienangehörigen, wenn diese angefangen haben, GS zu lernen. Das kann zu einer Verzögerung des sprachlichen Inputs für den primären Spracherwerb führen. Durch verstärkte Förderung des GS-Erwerbs im Vorschulalter kann diese Verzögerung aber ausgeglichen werden, so dass gehörlose Kinder bei Schuleintritt über GS-Kenntnisse verfügen, die den Muttersprach-Kenntnissen hörender Kinder entsprechen und die eine voll funktionsfähige Unterrichtskommunikation in GS ermöglichen. Die GS ist für Gehörlose die natürlichste Art der sprachlichen Kommunikation, da sie ihren physischen Voraussetzungen entspricht. GS ist die Kommunikationssprache nicht nur innerhalb der Gehörlosengemeinschaft, sondern auch im Kontakt mit Hörenden (entweder direkt, wenn die Hörenden GS-Kenntnisse haben, oder mit einem GS-Dolmetscher). Da die GS die Muttersprache der Gehörlosen ist und sich dieser Text mit Fremdsprachenunterricht beschäftigt, wird auf den GS-Erwerb der Gehörlosen im Folgenden nicht weiter eingegangen.

2) Lautsprachen als Fremdsprachen

Es sind zwar Schreibsysteme für GSen entwickelt worden, aber sie haben sich für die schriftliche Kommunikation innerhalb der Gehörlosengemeinschaften nicht durchsetzen können. So bildet die schriftliche Form der in der Lebensumgebung der Gehörlosen gesprochenen Lautsprache (LS) ein wichtiges Kommunikationsmittel der Gehörlosen. Diese LS ist die erste Fremdsprache (im folgenden FS) der Gehörlosen, und der LS-Erwerb beginnt in dem Moment, in dem die gehörlosen Kinder anfangen zu lesen und zu schreiben. Die geschriebene LS gehört zur täglichen Lebensumgebung der Gehörlosen. Es handelt sich aber für sie um eine FS, da sie sich in der Struktur erheblich von der GS unterscheidet und die Gehörlosen sie nicht natürlich, sondern nur durch formale Instruktion erlernen können. Die geschriebene LS wird in visueller Form gelernt, und die Lexik und Morphosyntax muss gelernt werden wie bei jeder FS. Der Schriftspracherwerb Gehörloser ist also auf keinen Fall mit dem Schriftspracherwerb Hörender gleichzusetzen, die beim Schreiben nur die natürlich gelernte gehörte und gesprochene Sprache in schriftliche Form umsetzen.

In Ländern, in denen sich die GS als Unterrichtsprache in allgemein bildenden Schulen für Gehörlose durchgesetzt hat, findet der LS-Unterricht in der Muttersprache der Gehörlosen, also in der GS statt. Dadurch können die Besonderheiten der zu lernenden FS eindeutig erklärt werden und die Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen der Muttersprache und der zu lernenden FS können den Lernern bewusst gemacht werden.

In Ländern mit oralistischer Tradition im Schulunterricht für Gehörlose ist die GS als Unterrichtssprache nicht anerkannt, und ein Ziel des Unterrichts in Gehörlosenschulen ist das Entwickeln einer mündlichen Kompetenz in der LS. Es wird davon ausgegangen, dass die Gehörlosen durch den mündlichen Input in der LS lernen, gesprochene Sprache von den Lippen abzulesen und selber mit Einsatz der Sprechstimme, die sie selber nicht hören, zu produzieren. Diese Methode führt zu höchst unterschiedlichen Resultaten in der Kompetenz in der gesprochenen und geschriebenen LS. Und da den Schülern die Informationsvermittlung in

der GS verweigert wird, entsteht bei ihnen ein erhebliches allgemeines Bildungsdefizit.

Die Forschung der letzten Jahre hat ergeben, dass der Kontakt mit der LS im Vorschulalter nicht Voraussetzung ist für den erfolgreichen Erwerb der schriftlichen Form der LS als FS. Dagegen bietet die Beherrschung der GS als Muttersprache die beste Grundlage für den Schriftspracherwerb: gehörlose Kinder gehörloser Eltern, die die GS natürlich in der gebärdensprachigen Familie erwerben, erreichen i.A. eine besonders gute Kompetenz in der geschriebenen LS.

Der FS-Erwerb in der geschriebenen LS ist bei gehörlosen Lernern mit dem Abschluss der allgemein bildenden Schule nicht abgeschlossen, sondern muss im Zuge der Berufsausbildung oder akademischen Ausbildung fortgesetzt werden, um auch die Fachkommunikation in der LS zu gewährleisten.

In einer besonderen Situation sind gehörlose Angehörige sprachlicher Minderheiten, wie etwa der schwedischsprachigen Bevölkerung in Finnland, der Russischsprachigen in Estland und Lettland oder der Türken in Deutschland. Für die schriftsprachliche Kommunikation innerhalb der Minderheitengruppe und in der Gesellschaft, in der sie leben, müssen sie beide LSen als FSen lernen.

Um Gehörlosen eine Gleichstellung im Bildungswesen zu gewährleisten und internationale LS-Kommunikation zu ermöglichen, müssen sie auch in LSen unterrichtet werden, die in ihrem Land allgemein als FSen gelernt werden. Hierbei ist Englisch wichtig als Lingua franca, vor allem auch im Internet. Andere FSen müssen entsprechend den gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen in den jeweiligen Ländern angeboten werden. Es ist zu betonen, dass das Lernziel aktive und passive Fertigkeiten in der geschriebenen FS sind, Sprechen, Hören durch Hörreste und Mundablesen sollten auf keinen Fall zum Unterrichtsgegenstand gemacht werden, da sie nicht den kommunikativen Bedürfnissen der Gehörlosen in der FS entsprechen. Das muss bei der Erstellung eines Lehrplans für gehörlose FS-Lerner und in den Statuten für das Abitur und ähnliche Prüfungen festgeschrieben werde

3) Gebärdensprachen als Fremdsprachen
Eine wichtige Frage im Bereich FS-Unterricht für Gehörlose ist, ob sie auch in anderen GSen als FSen unterrichtet werden sollten. Im Allgemeinen ist diese Frage zu bejahen. Schon für die sprachliche Identität als Sprecher der jeweiligen nationalen GS ist es förderlich, andere GSen kennen zu lernen. Gehörlose reisen viel und haben intensive Kontakte zu Gehörlosen anderer Länder. Für diese Kontakte sollten im Schulunterricht die sprachlichen Voraussetzungen geschaffen werden. Außerdem ist das Erlernen einer visuellen FS, die den eigenen physischen Voraussetzung und kommunikativen Gewohnheiten entspricht, förderlich für die kognitive Entwicklung im Kindes- und Jugendalter ebenso wie das Erlernen einer LS als FS bei hörenden Kindern.

Der Unterricht in der GS als FS kann mit dem Unterricht der LS des jeweiligen Landes kombiniert werden. Dadurch wird der kommunikativen Situation der Gehörlosen im Land der jeweiligen Sprache Rechnung getragen. Außerdem können sprachliche Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen der LS und der GS des jeweiligen Landes herausgearbeitet werden (z.B. die Verwendung gefingerter englischer Wörter in ASL, der amerikanischen GS). Es stellt sich die Frage, welche GS als FS unterrichtet werden soll. ASL ist weit verbreitet und wird, neben dem sog. „internationalen Gebärden“, immer mehr zur Lingua franca unter den Gehörlosen der ganzen Welt. Es bietet sich an, ASL im Rahmen des Englischunterrichts zu unterrichten. Falls die Gehörlosengemeinschaft starke Beziehungen nach Großbritannien hat, kann auch BSL (Britische GS) gelehrt werden (damit hat man Erfahrungen in Norwegen), oder aber sowohl ASL als auch BSL. Welche GS als FS gelehrt werden soll, muss nach den kommunikativen Bedürfnissen der jeweiligen GS-Gemeinschaft entschieden werden. So ist es z.B. sinnvoll, den Gehörlosen in der französischsprachigen Schweiz DSGS (Deutschschweizer GS) beizubringen.

Ein nicht zu unterschätzendes Problem ist die Kompetenz der Lehrer und das Unterrichtsmaterial im Unterricht von GS als FS für Gehörlose. Eine eigene Fachlehrerausbildung und eigene Lehrwerke zu entwickeln, ist nicht sinnvoll. Vielmehr sollten durch Lehreraustausch native Sprecher der jeweiligen GS eingesetzt werden (dafür bietet sich Blockunterricht an). Den Lernern sollte durch Schüleraustausch die Möglichkeit gegeben werden, einen Teil des FS-Erwerbs in der GS-Sprachgemeinschaft der jeweiligen FS zu verbringen. Als Unterrichtsmaterial bieten sich Video- und Internettexte an. Es ist hervorzuheben, dass das Unterrichtsmaterial, das für hörende GS-Lerner entwickelt worden ist, nicht in gleichem Maße für den Unterricht mit

gehörlosen FS-Lernern eingesetzt werden kann. In diesem Bereich (GS als FS für Gehörlose) liegen noch sehr wenige Forschungsergebnisse vor.

4) Fremdsprachenunterricht für Ertaubte, Schwerhörige und Taubblinde
Neben den Gehörlosen als gebärdensprachige Minderheit mit eigenen Bildungseinrichtungen sind im Rahmen dieser Überlegungen auch andere Hörbehindertengruppen zu betrachten: Ertaubte, Schwerhörige und Taubblinde. Auch ihnen muss die Möglichkeit gegeben werden, sowohl LSen als auch GSen als FSen zu erwerben. Auf die sprachliche Situation dieser Gruppen kann hier nicht im Einzelnen eingegangen werden.

Menschen, die erst nach dem kindlichen Erstspracherwerb ihr Gehör verloren haben (Ertaubte), sprechen die LS als Muttersprache, und der Schriftspracherwerb entspricht weitgehend demjenigen Hörender. Besonders wichtig für diese Gruppe ist der Erwerb der nationalen GS als FS, die ihnen eine ungehinderte visuelle Kommunikation und Kontakte mit der Gebärdens prachgemeinschaft erlaubt. Das gilt auch und vor allem für im Erwachsenenalter Ertaubte. Für andere FS-Kenntnisse bei Ertaubten gilt Ähnliches wie für Gehörlose. Dabei ist anzumerken, dass im Erwachsenenalter Ertaubte meist schon über FS-Kenntnisse in LSen verfügen.

Schwerhörige werden immer mehr gemeinsam mit hörenden Kindern unterrichtet und nehmen daher auch am FS-Unterricht teil. Die Lernziele in der mündlichen Kommunikation für schwerhörige FS-Lerner müssen individuell ihren Hör- und Sprechfähigkeiten angepasst werden. Vor allem bei der Aussprache muss berücksichtig werden, dass sie Lautunterschiede in der FS ggf. nicht hören und daher auch nicht produzieren können. Von mündlichen Prüfungen müssen Schwerhörige evtl. befreit werden. Schwerhörigen Kindern und Erwachsenen sollte die Gelegenheit gegeben werden, die nationale GS als FS zu lernen, um es ihnen möglich zu machen, mit der Gehörlosengemeinschaft in Kontakt zu treten. Viele Schwerhörige, die in der lautsprachlichen Kommunikation ständigem Druck und Informationsdefizit ausgeliefert sind, empfinden es als Erleichterung, als Mitglied der GS-Gemeinschaft in einer Sprache zu kommunizieren, die ihren physischen Voraussetzungen besser entspricht.

Taubblinde haben durch die elektronischen Medien heute bessere kommunikative Bedingungen als früher. Daher ist es für Taubblinde wichtig, die LS ihrer Umgebung zu lernen, um über das Internet mit Braille-Schrift Informationen zu bekommen und mit ihrer Umwelt zu kommunizieren. Auch Kenntnisse in geschriebenem Englisch sind anzustreben, damit sich der Gebrauch des Internets nicht auf die nationale Ebene beschränkt. Auf die sprachlichen Bedürfnisse ertaubter Blinder und erblindeter Gehörloser kann hier nicht gesondert eingegangen werden.

Förderung des Fremdsprachlernens bei Kindern und Jugendlichen mit einer Lese-Rechtschreibstörung (Dyslexie)

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In aktuellen, Länder übergreifenden Bildungsdiskussionen, wird der Vermittlung von Schlüsselqualifikationen eine zentrale Bedeutung zuerkannt. Neben Kommunikations- und Teamfähigkeit sowie der Beherrschung von elektronischen Informationstechnologien bilden interkulturelle Kompetenzen und Fremdsprachenkenntnisse substantielle Bestandteile dieser Fähigkeiten (Dtsch. Wissenschaftsrat 2000). Insbesondere die Kenntnis von Fremdsprachen stellt eine wichtige Voraussetzung dar, um an Wirtschafts- und Arbeitsprozessen partizipieren zu können, die im Zuge einer europäischen Vereinigung nationale Grenzen und Sprachräume zunehmend überschreiten und eine erhöhte Mobilität von Beschäftigten bedingen. Die Beherrschung einer oder mehrerer moderner Fremdsprachen wird daher als ein wesentliches Merkmal beruflicher Qualifikations- und Kompetenzprofile vom Arbeitsmarkt eingefordert (Dtsch. Wissenschaftsrat 2000). Die erfolgreiche Vermittlung von Fremdsprachenkenntnissen erweist sich folglich als eine zentrale Aufgabenstellung aller Bildungsgänge und Schulstufen. Dieses schließt auch die Notwendigkeit eines frühen Fremdsprachenunterrichts von Beginn der Grundschulzeit an ein (KMK-Empfehlungen 2.7.1970 in der Fassung v. 6.5.1994).

Während ein großer Teil der Schüler und Schülerinnen des Regelschulsystems den Fremdsprachenunterricht mehr oder weniger problemlos bewältigt, sieht sich dabei eine Minderheit von Fremdsprachenlernern, trotz unauffälligen bzw. erwartungsgemäßen Schulleistungen in anderen Unterrichtsfächern, mit erheblichen Schwierigkeiten konfrontiert.

Diese Schüler und Schülerinnen zeigen große Probleme, verbale Instruktionen in der Fremdsprache umzusetzen und auf Fragen zu antworten. Daneben bereitet ihnen die richtige Aussprache Mühe und bei vielen von ihnen scheint das Verständnis selbst elementarster Satzkonstruktionen der zu erlernenden Fremdsprache eingeschränkt zu sein. Sie lesen nur langsam und fehlerhaft. Ihre schriftlichen Arbeiten weisen viele Rechtschreibfehler auf (Schneider 1999, Romonath & Gregg 2003, Wölms 2003).

Empirische Studien zeigen, dass insbesondere spezifische Sprachentwicklungsstörun gen sowie umschriebene Störungen des Lesen und Schreibens sich als ein erhebliches Risiko für das Versagen im Fremdsprachenlernen erweisen. Schülerinnen und Schüler mit Sprachlernstörungen bedürfen daher nicht nur einer individuellen schulischen Förderung bei der Aneignung muttersprachlicher Kompetenzen, sondern ebenso einer störungsspezifischen Unterstützung im Fremdsprachenunterricht, um Bildungschancen in angemessener Weise ausschöpfen zu können und dadurch im späteren Berufsleben konkurrenzfähig zu sein.

Wurde zunächst ein negativer Einfluss von affektiven und kognitiven Faktoren auf die Leistungen im Fremdsprachenunterricht angenommen, so zeigen vorliegende Studien, dass keine signifikanten Unterschiede in den allgemeinen intellektuellen Fähigkeiten bestehen. Eine beobachtbare geringere Motivation sowie eine mangelhafte, oft auch ängstliche Einstellung zum Fremdsprachenlernen muss eher als Ergebnis denn als Ursache für die Misserfolge bewertet werden (Sparks & Ganschow 1991, Sparks et al. 1997, Sparks 2001).

Nach heutigen Erkenntnissen sind primär linguistische bzw. psycholinguistische Faktoren verantwortlich für unterschiedliche Lernergebnisse im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Dabei zeigt sich, dass wenig erfolgreiche Fremdsprachenlerner bereits bei der Aneignung muttersprachlicher Fähigkeiten erkennbare, teilweise auch verdeckte Schwierigkeiten aufweisen. Das Ausmaß muttersprachlicher Kompetenzen stellt daher einen hohen Prognosewert für den Erfolg im Fremdsprachenlernen dar (Ganschow & Sparks 2001, Romonath & Gregg 2003, Wölms 2003). Lese-Rechtschreibstörungen bilden somit nicht nur ein langüberdauerndes Sprachlernproblem, das schriftsprachliche Kommunikationsprozesse in der Muttersprache erschwert, sondern erweisen sich zusätzlich als ein Hemmnis für die erfolgreiche Bewältigung des Fremds prachenunterrichts. Gute Fertigkeiten der Muttersprache lassen demgegenüber auch ein erfolgreiches Erlernen einer Fremdsprache erwarten. Sie bilden die Grundlage für den Aufbau eines angemessenen fremdsprachlichen Vokabulars, das wiederum befähigt, elaboriertere Sprachkenntnisse zu erwerben.

Eigene Untersuchungen an Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen mit einer im Grundschulalter

diagnostizierten Lese-Rechtschreibstörung bestätigen diesen Zusammenhang (Romonath & Gregg 2003). Die Untersuchungsgruppe erbrachte gegenüber einer unauffälligen Altersvergleichsgruppe sowohl in der Muttersprache wie in der Fremdsprache deutliche geringere Leistungen in der Worterkennung und in der Rechtschreibung. Die ebenfalls untersuchten phonologischen und orthographischen Verarbeitungsfähigkeiten waren bei ihnen signifikant geringer entwickelt. Sie erwiesen sich als stabile Vorhersagevariablen für das schlechte Abschneiden im Lesen und in der Rechtschreibung in beiden Sprachen. Insbesondere die geringeren Fähigkeiten, Wörter nach phonologischen Kriterien zu segmentieren und zu manipulieren sowie Differenzierungen von orthographischen Wortgestalten automatisiert vornehmen zu können, hatten einen nachhaltigen Effekt auf Worterkennungs- und Rechtschreibleistung im Deutschen wie auf die zu erlernende Sprache Englisch. Eine linguistische Fehleranalyse von Verlesungen und Rechtschreibfehlern ließ trotz einer größeren Fehlerhäufigkeit eine weitgehende Übereinstimmung in der Verteilung auf einzelne Fehlerkategorien erkennen.

Diese Erkenntnisse dürfen bei einer schulischen Förderung von Schülern und Schülerinnen mit einer Lese- und Rechtschreibstörung nicht unberücksichtigt bleiben. Sie weisen darauf hin, dass die vorherrschende, an der Sprachpraxis orientierte Fremdsprachendidaktik und ihre Ausrichtung am Lernen in natürlichen Kontexten, den besonderen Lernbedürfnissen dieser Lerngruppe allein nicht gerecht wird.

Im Vordergrund der Vermittlung von Fremdsprachenkenntnissen stehen heute kommunikative Lernziele verbunden mit sozial interaktiven Aktivitäten. Einer expliziten systematischen Instruktion der Grammatik sowie der Orthographie fällt dabei nur eine sekundäre Rolle zu (Edmondson & House 1993). Der Erfolg im Fremdsprachenlernen bemisst sich daher heute vornehmlich an der Entwicklung mündlicher Kommunikationsfähigkeiten. Es darf dabei allerdings nicht übersehen werden, dass gleichzeitig –prozeßimmanent – ein implizites Regelwissen über die Strukturen der zu erlernenden Lautsprache sowie ihre Transformation in die Schriftsprache aufgebaut werden muss. Denn nicht nur der kompetente Gebrauch einer Fremdsprache in Alltagsgesprächen, sondern auch die sichere, an Sprachnormen orientierte Beherrschung der Schriftsprache wird in medialen, Sprachgrenzen überschreitenden Kommunikationsprozessen gefordert.

Phonologische und orthographische Verarbeitungsdefizite verbunden mit den ebenfalls bei Lese-Rechtschreibstörungen festgestellten Einschränkungen des Arbeitsgedächtnisses sowie in der Schnelligkeit der Informationsverarbeitung erschweren jedoch den impliziten Wissensaufbau über die Strukturprinzipien der zu erlernenden Fremdsprache. Ohne diese grundlegenden Erkenntnisse über das Regelsystem ist jedoch ein erfolgreicher kommunikativer Gebrauch einer Fremdsprache beim Hören, Sprechen, Lesen und Schreiben kaum möglich.

Schüler und Schülerinnen mit einer Lese-Rechtschreibstörung benötigen daher – unabhängig vom Lebensalter und von der Schulstufe – eine modifizierte Fremdsprachenvermittlung, die in ihren Lernzielen die lebensweltliche Bedeutung der Fremdsprache herausstellt, gleichzeitig aber in methodisch angemessener Weise das Regelsystem der zu erlernenden Fremdsprache hochstrukturiert und systematisch vermittelt.

Da sie bereits bei der Aneignung muttersprachlicher Kompetenzen Misserfolge erfahren haben, benötigen sie darüber hinaus eine Lernatmosphäre, die angstreduzierend wirkt, Fehler zulässt, ihre Erfolge aufgreift und daneben ihr Selbstvertrauen in ihre Fremdsprachenlernfähigkeit stärkt (Schneider & Ganschow 2000).

Um eine konsistente und für die betreffenden Kinder und Jugendlichen effektive und effiziente schulische Unterstützung zu gewährleisten, bedarf es einer Vernetzung und Abstimmung der muttersprachlichen und fremdsprachlichen Förderstrategien. Eine professionelle Zusammenarbeit von sonderpädagogischen Fachkräften und den unterrichtenden Lehrkräften ist daher unverzichtbar. Zu wünschen wäre, dass Fremdsprachenlehrkräfte bereits in der Erstausbildung grundlegende Informationen über die besonderen Lernschwierigkeiten lese- und rechtschreibgestörter Kinder und Jugendliche erhalten, um auftretende Lernprobleme rechtzeitig erkennen zu können, individuelle didaktische Anpassungen zu leisten und mit anderen Fachkräften wirkungsvolle Kooperationen aufzubauen.

Ebenso wie der muttersprachliche Unterricht sollte auch die Fremdsprachenvermittlung bei Lese- Rechtschreibstörungen Diagnose geleitet und an den individuellen Stärken und Schwächen der Schüler und Schülerinnen ansetzen. Ausgangspunkte bilden dabei die sprachlichen Fertigkeiten in der Muttersprache, die zugrundeliegenden phonologischen und

orthographischen Verarbeitungsfähigkeiten sowie die spezifischen strukturellen Merkmale der zu erlernenden Fremdsprache.

Auch wenn die heute vorliegenden Erkenntnisse über die Fremdsprachenlernschwierigkeit en bei Kindern und Jugendlichen mit einer Lese-Rechtschreibstörung erste Grundlagen für eine störungsbezogene modifizierte Fremdsprachenvermittlung bzw. individuelle schulische Förderung zur Verfügung stellen, so ist aber auch zu konstatieren, dass die internationale Dyslexieforschung die Fremdsprachenlernproblematik bisher nur wenig fokussiert hat. Es bedarf daher weiterer intensiver Forschungen im Bereich der Grundlagen, der Diagnostik, der Vermittlungsmethoden und des Fremdsprachenfrühbeginns, um die Chancen von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit einer Lese-Rechtschreibstörung an einer Partizipation an Nationalgrenzen überschreitenden sozialen, kulturellen und ökonomischen Austauschprozessen im späteren Erwachsenenalter zu erhöhen

EUROPEAN INTERNET SITE LINKS & RESOURCES:

Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

The membership list of EDF - European Disability Forum
http://www.edf-feph.org/en/about/membership/memli.htm

Action européenne des handicapés (AEH)
Nr: 4A Wurzerstr. - 53175 Bonn
Tel: 49 228 82093 0 - Fax: 49 228 82093 46
E-mail: laschet@vdk.de

The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families
http://www.inclusion-europe.org/

The European Intellectual Disability Network on Central and Eastern Europe (eurIDnet-CEE)
http://www.inclusion-europe.org/euridnet/

European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities People
http://www.easpd.org/

The International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet (ICDRI)
http://www.icdri.org/

The Croatian Association of deaf/blind persons DODIR
http://petar.ffdi.hr/dodir

Danish Society for Persons with Learning Disabilities
http://www.lev.dk/levhp.nsf?Open

The Danish Council of Youth Organizations of Disabled People - DSI-Ungdom
(A Danish umbrella organisation of 11 organisations of young disabled people)
http://www.dsiungdom.dk/

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities
http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/index.cfm?js=1&dom=1

ADD/ADHD

Austria-- ADAPT
http://www.adapt.at/

Austria--Verein für hyperaktive Kinder Oberösterreich
http://www.hyperaktivekinder.at/

Belgium-- Hyperactivité et troubles associés
http://users.pandora.be/scarlett/

Belgium--Centrum ZIT STIL-ADHD/ADD
http://www.zitstil.be/

Bulgaria-- ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКА ПОМОЩ /ЕМОЦИОНАЛНОТО РАЗВИТИЕ НА ЧОВЕКА (Educo School for parents,educators and social workers)
http://212.95.167.151/center/bg/consulting1.htm

Bulgaria--Министерство на Здравеопазването
http://www.mh.government.bg/

Denmark--DAMP-foreningen (ADHD/ADD)
http://www.damp.dk/

Estonia--Eesti Lastefond
http://www.elf.ee/

Finland--ADHD-liitto ry
http://www.adhd-liitto.fi/

France--Hyperactivité et déficit d'attention
http://perso.wanadoo.fr/thada-france/hyper/indexhyper.htm

France-- Association « HyperSupers - Thada France »
http://www.hypersupers.org/

Germany-- Bundesverband Arbeitskreis Überaktives Kind e.V.
http://www.bv-auek.de/

Germany--Bundesverband Elterninitiativen
http://www.osn.de/user/hunter/badd.htm

Germany--Hypies of Berlin/
Very comprehensive and popular German ADD Website
http://www.hypies.com/

Iceland-- Association for ADHD
http://www.obi.is/ADHD.htm

Iceland-- Society of Parents of Children with ADHD
http://www.obi.is/English/Members/ADHD.htm

Ireland--ADD/ADHD Support Group, Republic Of Ireland
http://homepage.eircom.net/~pknightly/add.htm

Italy-- Association Disturbs Attenzione And Iperattivita
http://www.aidai.org/

Italy-- L'Associazione Italiana Famiglie ADHD
http://www.aifa.it/home.htm

Italy--Attenzione- ADHD
http://www.attenzione-adhd.it/

Luxembourg--ADD/ADHD information for Luxembourg
http://www.ads-add-helpzone.co.uk/

Luxembourg EHK-ADHD (Fr & De)
http://www.ehk.lu/

Malta-- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
http://www.ngo-caring.global.net.mt/items.asp?item=449

Norway-- ADHD-foreningen
http://www.mbd.no/

Norway--Nasjonalt Kompetansesenter for AD/HD, Tourettes Syndrom og Narkolepsi
http://www.nasjkomp.no/

Romania--Fundatia "Pentru Voi"
http://www.pentruvoi.ro

Romania Asociatia Reninco Romania
http://www.reninco.ro/

Romania--Impreuna - spre o societate pentru toti
http://www.intermeding.com/speranta/

Spain-- Trastorno Por Déficit de Atención con Hiperactividad
http://www.tda-h.com/

Spain--AMADÁ
http://www.tda-h.com/Amada.html

Spain-- Asociación Aragonesa del Trastorno por Déficit de Atención con/sin Hiperactividad
http://www.tda-h.com/Aateda.html

Spain--ADANA FUNDACION
http://www.f-adana.org/

Spain--Spanish Psychological & Educational Resources
http://www.speres.com/

Sweden-- Riksförbundet Attention
http://www.attention-riks.nu/

Sweden--NeuroNätet
http://user.tninet.se/~fxg297r/index.htm

Switzerland - ADD-online
http://www.adhs.ch/

United Kingdom--The ADHD National Alliance
http://www.adhdalliance.org.uk/

Switzerland--Hyperactivité SOS
http://www.hypsos.ch/

Switzerland--Association Aspedah (Association Suisse de Parents d'Enfants avec Deficit d'Attention et/ou Hyperactivité)
http://www.aspedah.ch/

The Netherlands--De-ADHD-beweging
http://www.hersenstorm.com/

The Netherlands--ADHD, dyslexie and PDD-NOS. Assessment
http://www.balansdigitaal.nl/

The Netherlands-- Afdeling en Kenniscentrum ADHD bij volwassenen
http://www.parnassia.nl/publiek/over_parnassia/Kenniscentra/Kenniscentrum_ADHD_bij_volwassenen/ADHD_index

United Kingdom--adders.org
http://www.adders.org

United Kingdom-- ADDISS-The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service
http://www.addiss.co.uk/

United Kingdom--One A.D.D. Place
http://www.oneaddplace.com/

AUTISM

Autism-Europe
http://www.autismeurope.org/

Austria- Österreichische Autistenhilfe
http://members.magnet.at/autistenhilfe

Belgium--Autismevlaanderen
http://www.autismevlaanderen.be

Belgium-- Vlaamese Veriniging Autisme
http://www.autisme-vl.be/

Belgium-- Association de parents pour l'épanouissement des personnes autistes
http://www.ulg.ac.be/apepa/

Bulgaria--ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКА ПОМОЩ /ЕМОЦИОНАЛНОТО РАЗВИТИЕ НА ЧОВЕКА (Educo School for parents,educators and social workers)
http://212.95.167.151/center/bg/consulting1.htm

Bulgaria--Министерство на Здравеопазването
http://www.mh.government.bg/

Denmark – Aspergers Syndrom DK/Asperger på
http://www.aspergerdk.org/

Denmark-- Asperger Ressourceguide
http://ix.db.dk/asperger/indholdas.html

Denmark-- Landsforeningen Autisme
http://www.autismeforening.dk/default.as

Denmark-- Videnscenter for Autisme
http://www.autisme.dk/

Finland--Autismi- ja Aspergerliitto ry
http://www.autismiliitto.fi/

Finland--Asperger syndrooma -projekti
http://www.kaapeli.fi/asperger/

Finland--Asperger-syndroomaisten kohtauspaikka
http://212.246.189.38/asperger/index_ie.html

France--Autisme France
http://autisme.france.free.fr/

France-- Autisme France association reconnue d'utilité publique
http://autisme.france.free.fr/asper.htm

France-- Autisme France association reconnue d'utilité publique/Asperger
http://www.autismefrance.org

France--Syndrome d'Asperger
http://perso.wanadoo.fr/asperweb

France-- Association de Parents pour l'Intégration des Personnes Atteintes d'autisme de haut-niveau, du syndrome d'Asperger, ou de troubles apparentés
http://www.asperger-integration.com/

France--Le site de L'Association Asperger Aide
http://www.aspergeraide.com

France-- Autisme Actualités
http://www.autismeactus.org/

France-- Autisme, jour apres jour
http://membres.lycos.fr/MATY33/INDEX2.isa

Germany-- Asperger-online
http://www.asperger-online.de/index.html

Germany-- Bundesverband Hilfe für das autistische Kind, Vereinigung zur Förderung autistischer Menschen e.V.
http://www.autismus.de/

Germany--Autismus in Deutschland
http://www.autismus.org/

Germany--Autismus Therapie Ambulanz LiNie
http://www.autismus-online.de/index.htm

Germany-- Hilfe für das autistische Kind Regionalverband Südbaden e. V
http://www.autismus-freiburg.de/index.htm

Greece-- σε μια σελίδα που αναφέρεται στον Αυτισμό
http://users.otenet.gr/~dromos/a1.htm

Hungary-- autizmus
http://autizmus.hpconline.com/

Hungary-- autizmus.lap.hu
http://autizmus.lap.hu/index.html

Iceland--Association for the Care of the Autistic
http://www.obi.is/Adildarfelog/Umsjonarfel_einhverfra.htm

Iceland--Umsjonarfelag Einhverfra
http://www.einhverfa.is

Ireland-- Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland (aspire)
http://www.aspire-irl.org/

Ireland—The Irish Society for Autism
http://www.iol.ie/~isa1/

Ireland-- Autism - Current Research
http://www.iol.ie/frontline/

Italy-- Autismo Italia
http://www.autismoitalia.org

Italy-- AUTISMO E PSICOSI INFANTILI
http://www.alihandicap.org/ali/

Italy--Autismo on-line
http://autismo.inews.it/

Luxembourg-- Autisme Luxembourg asbl
http://www.appa.autism.lu/

Luxembourg--Autisme
http://www.autisme-luxembourg.lu/

Malta--Autism Parents Support Group
http://www.ngo-caring.global.
net.mt/items.asp?item=472

Malta- The Eden Foundation
http://www.ngo-caring.global.
net.mt/items.asp?item=717

Norway--Asperger.NO
http://home.c2i.net/sorgjerd/
velkommen.html

Norway-- Autismeforeningen
http://www.autismeforeningen.com

Poland-- twój œwiat autyzmu
http://www.dzieci.bci.pl/
strony/autyzm/twoj.html

Poland-- Autyzm.PL
http://www.autyzm.pl/

Poland-- Inny œwiat/¯ycie z
Zespo³em Aspergera w rodzinie
http://asperger.republika.pl/

Portugal-- Associacâo Portuguesa para
Proteccâo aos Deficientes Autistas
http://www.appda.rcts.pt

Portugal--APPDA - Assoc. Port.
p/ Protecção aos Def. Autistas
http://www.appda.rcts.pt/

Portugal--Autism on-line
http://www.autismonline.org/
languages/portuguese.htm

Romania-- Autism Romania
http://www.autismromania.ro

Slovakia-- Spolocnost na pomoc
osobám s autizmom (SPOSA)
http://www.sposa.sk

Slovakia-- Autistické Centrum Andreas n.o
http://www.andreas.sk/_main.htm

Slovakia-- Aspergerov Syndróm
http://www.andreas.sk/B_08-asperger.htm

Spain-- ASOCIACIÓN
ASPERGER ESPAÑA
http://www.asperger.es/

Spain--Autismo-España
http://www.autismo.com/

Spain-- Autism on-line
http://www.autismonline.org/
languages/spanish.htm

Spain-- Asociación de Padres
de Niños Autistas (APNA)
http://www.apna.es/

Sweden- Nätverket Asperger/HFA
http://www.inlv.demon.nl/ashfa/

Sweden-- Aspergercenter,
Handikapp & Habilitering
http://www.aspergercenter.nu/main.shtm

Sweden-- Certec/Diagnoskriterier
för Asperger syndrom (DSM-IV)
http://www.certec.lth.se/lectures/
gunillag/asperger.html

Sweden--Riksföreningen Autism, RFA
http://www.autism.se/

Sweden--FÖRENINGEN AUTISM
http://www.goteborg.autism.se/

Sweden--Riksföreningen Autism (RFA)
http://home4.swipnet.se/~w-49723/

Sweden--NeuroNätet
http://user.tninet.se/~fxg297r/index.htm

Sweden--Certec/ Autism
- ett funktionshinder
http://www.certec.lth.se/lectures/gunillag/

Switzerland-- Autisme Suisse
Association de Parents
http://www.autism.ch

Switzerland-- Autismus Deutsche Schweiz
http://www.autismus.ch

Switzerland-- Autisme Suisse romande
http://www.autisme-suisse.ch

Switzerland-- Fondation Pour
L'Education Des Enfants Autistes
http://www.hapi.ch/FEDEA.htm

The Netherlands -- Eindhovense
Asperger Homepage
http://home.iae.nl/users/jhjess/
asperger/asphome.html

The Netherlands-- Asperger syndroom
http://www.autsider.net/spectrum/asperger-syndroom.htm

The Netherlands--Autisme-Asperger
http://autisme-asperger.pagina.nl/

The Netherlands-- Nederlandes Vereninging voor Autisme (NVA)
http://www.autisme-nva.nl

The Netherlands-- PERSONEN UIT HET AUTISME SPECTRUM (PAS)
http://www.pasnederland.nl/pas/

The Netherlands--Autisme-Asperger
http://autisme-asperger.pagina.nl/

Turkey--Autism on-line
http://www.autismonline.org/languages/turkish.htm

Turkey--ODOR Otizm
http://www.otizm.org

Turkey--TURKIY'DE OTIZM
http://www.autism-tr.org/

United Kingdom-- Southampton Education of Aspergers Syndrome
http://www.seas.0catch.com/

United Kingdom--Asperger's Passport
http://www.aspergia.com/passport/

United Kingdom--SACAR is a registered charity dedicated to support people with autism, Asperger's syndrome and disabilities.
http://www.sacartrust.org/info.htm

United Kingdom--As-IF (Asperger Information) UK
http://www.aspergerinformation.net/

United Kingdom --National Autistic Society
http://www.nas.org.uk

United Kingdom--SACAR-dedicated to support people with autism, Asperger's syndrome and disabilities.
http://www.sacar-trust.org/info.html

United Kingdom-- The National Autistic Society (Surrey Branch)
http://www.mugsy.org/

United Kingdom-- Parents and Professionals and Autism (PAPA)
http://www.autismni.org

United Kingdom-- Scottish Society for Autism
http://www.autism-in-scotland.org.uk

United Kingdom-- Society for the Autistically Handicapped (SFTAH)
http://www.rmplc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/autism/

BLIND/VISUALLY IMPAIRED

European Blind Union
http://www.euroblind.org/

The World Blind Union (WBU)
http://www.worldblindunion.org/

Austria-- Österreichischer Blinden - und Sehbehindertenverband (ÖBSV)
http://www.oebsv.at/

Austria-- Bundes-Blindenerziehungstitut
www.bbi.at

Belgium-- Blindenzorg Licht en Liefde Vzw
http://www.blindenzorglichtenliefde.be/

Belgium--Brailleliga (Ligue Braille)
http://www.braille.be/

Bulgaria-- СЛЯП ОСВЕДОМЕНОСТ
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_b/bulgaria.htm#bulgaria

Cyprus-- Pancyprian Organization of the Blind
http://www.pot-cyprus.de/

Cyprus—Blind associations
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_c/cyprus.htm#cyprus

Czech Republic--Braillnet Describes the centres, services, and products of Czech Blind United, with a link to the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic. (Czech language with some English).
http://is.braillnet.cz/

Czech Republic-- Rehabilitation and Training Centre for the Blind DEDINA
http://www.braillnet.cz/sons/dedina/dedinaen.htm

Czech Republic--Úvodní strana Blind Friendly Web
http://www.blindfriendly.cz/index.php

Fond Slepych (Fund for the Blind Foundation)
http://www.brailcom.cz

Denmark-- Association of the Blind
http://www.dkblind.dk/

Denmark-- Instituttet for Blinde og Svagsynede
http://www.ibos.dk/

Estonia-- Eesti Pimedate Liit (Estonian Federation of the Blind)
http://www.ngonet.ee/ab/ngo?rec=00109

Finland--Arla Instituutti
http://www.arlainst.fi/

France--Fédération des Aveugles et Handicapés Visuels de France
http://www.faf.asso.fr/sommaire.htm

Germany--DBSV/Deutscher Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband e.V.
http://www.dbsv.org/

Germany-- Der Deutsche Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband e. V.
http://home.t-online.de/home/dbsv_/

Greece-- ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟΣ ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΤΥΦΛΩΝ
http://www.pst.gr/

Greece-- Πληροφορίες για τον τυφλός
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_g/greece.htm

Hungary-- Vakok Es Gyengenlatok Orszagos Szövetsege
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_h/hungary.htm#hungary

Iceland--Blindrafélagið
http://www.obi.is/Adildarfelog/Blindrafelag.htm

Iceland—Blindrafelagid
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_i/iceland.htm#iceland

Ireland-- The National Council for the Blind of Ireland
http://www.ncbi.ie/

Ireland--Sites for the Blind
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_i/ireland.htm#ireland

Italy--Unione Italiana dei Ciechi
http://www.uiciechi.it/

Italy--Associazione Nazionale Subvedenti (ANS)
http://www.subvedenti.it/

Italy--Fondazione Robert Hollman Centro di Intervento Precoce per Bambini con Deficit Visivo
http://www.fondazionehollman.it/

Latvia-- LATVIJAS NEREDZÎGO BIEDRÎBA
http://www.lnbrc.lv/

Lithuania-- LIETUVOS AKLØJØ IR SILPNAREGIØ SVETAINË
http://www.lass.lt/index.htm

Luxembourg-- Institut pour Deficients Visuels
http://www.socialnet.lu/org/idv/idvhome.html

Luxembourg-- Association des Aveugles et Malvoyants du Luxembourg
http://www.blannenheem.lu/

Malta--Gozo Aid for the Visually Impaired
http://www.ngo-caring.global.net.mt/items.asp?item=654

Malta- Society of the Blind
http://www.ngo-caring.global.net.mt/items.asp?item=223

Malta-- Torball Blind Association
http://www.ngo-caring.global.net.mt/items.asp?item=221

Norway--Stiftelsen Signo
http://www.signo.no/

Poland--Polski Zwiazek Niewidomych
http://pzn.org.pl/serwis/index.php

Portugal--Associacao dos Cegos e Ambliopes de Portugal (ACAPO)
http://www.acapo.pt/

Portugal--Associação Promotora de Emprego Edeficientes Visuais (APEDV)
http://www.apedv.rcts.pt/

Romania--Association of the Blind of Romania
http://www.fcc.ro/anr/uk_anr.html

Slovakia--Únia nevidiacich a slabozrakých Slovenska
http://www.unss.sk/index.htm

Slovenia--Zveza društev slepih in slabovidnih Slovenije
http://www.arctur.si/zdsss/

Slovenia-- Center Slepih In Slabovidnih (CSS)
http://www.css-sl.si/www/index.asp

Spain--Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos de Espanoles (ONCE)
http://www.once.es

Sweden--Synskadades Riksforbund
http://www.srfriks.org/

Sweden--Unga Synskadade (US)
http://www.ungasyn.se/index.html

Switzerland-- Ostschweizerischer Blindenfürsorgeverein
http://www.obvsg.ch/

Switzerland--Schweizerischer Zentralverein für das Blindenwesen SZB/ Union centrale suisse pour le bien des aveugles UCBA
http://www.szb.ch

The Netherlands--Resources for the Blind and Partially Sighted
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_n/netherlands.htm#netherlands

Turkey-- Resources for the Blind and Partially Sighted
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_t/turkey.htm#turkey

United Kingdom-- Royal National Institute of the Blind
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/code/InternetHome.hcsp

United Kingdom-- National Association for the Education, Training and Support of Blind and Partially Sighted People (Opsis)
http://www.opsis.org.uk/

United Kingdom--Royal London Society for the Blind (RLSB)
http://www.rlsb.org.uk/

DEAF

European Union of the Deaf
http://www.eudnet.org/

IDCS--International Deaf Children's Society
http://www.idcs.info/

Austria-- Österreichischer Gehörlosen-bund
http://www.oeglb.at/

Austria-- Österreichischer Bund für Schwerhörige Spätertaubte, Tinnitus-Betroffene und Sprachbehinderte
http://www.schwerhoerigen-netz.at/

Belgium—Fevlado
http://www.fevlado.be/

Belgium-- Fédération Francophone des Sourds de Belgique
http://www.ffsb.be/

Czech Republic-- Èeská komora tlumoèníkù znakového jazyka
http://www.cktzj.com/

Denmark-- Deaf Association
http://www.deaf.dk/

Denmark--Landsforeningen for Bedre Hørelse
http://www.lbh.dk/

Finland--Kuurojen Liitto ry
http://www.kl-deaf.fi

France--Fédération Nationale des Sourds de France
http://www.fnsf.org/

Germany--Deutscher Gehörlosen-Bund e.V.
http://www.gehoerlosen-bund.de/

Greece--GREEK NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR D&E
http://www.stakes.fi/include/diswebgr.html

Hungary-- Magyar Hallássérült Zsidók Egyesülete
http://www.jcc.hu/communit/Mhzse.html

Hungary-- Siketek és Nagyothallók Országos Szövetsége – Ifúsági Bizottság
http://www.c3.hu/~sinoszib/

Iceland-- Association of the Deaf
http://www.deaf.is/

Iceland-- Félag heyrnarlausra
http://www.obi.is/Adildarfelog/Felag_heyrnarlausra.htm

Ireland-- National Association for Deaf People
http://ireland.iol.ie/~nad/nad-homepage.html

Ireland--Irish Deaf Society
http://www.irishdeafsociety.ie/

Italy--Italian Deaf Association (ENS)
http://www.kore.it/Associazioni/ens.htm

Italy-- Ente Nazionale dei Sordomuti
http://www.ens.it/

Luxembourg-- Vereinigung der Gehörlosen und Schwerhörigen
http://www.socialnet.lu/org/vgsl/

Malta-Gozo Association for the Deaf
http://www.gozodirect.com/
ngo/gad/index.shtml

Malta- the Maltese National Association
for the Young Deaf's Home Page
http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/6972/

Malta--Deaf People Association of Malta
http://www.ngo-caring.global.
net.mt/items.asp?item=698

Norway--Norges Døveforbund
http://www.deafnet.no/

Poland--Polski Zwi¹zek G³uchych PZG
http://www.lodzpzg.republika.pl/index2.html

Portugal-- Federação Portuguesa
das Associacãoes de Surdos
http://www.fpasurdos.org/

Romania--The Senzor Foundation for
the Needs of Deaf Children and Youth
http://www.workersforjesus.com/senzor.htm

Spain-- Confederación Estatal de
Personas Sordas (CNSE)
http://www.cnse.es/

Sweden--Sveriges Dövas Riksforbund
http://www.sdrf.se/

Sweden-- Hörselskadades
Riksförbund (HRF)
http://www.hrf.se/

Switzerland Organisation für
Menschen mit Hörproblemen
http://www.bssv.ch/

The Netherlands--Dovenschap
http://www.dovenschap.nl/

The Netherlands-- Welkom
bij Stichting Plotsdoven
http://www.stichtingplotsdoven.nl/

Turkey-- TID – Türk Isaret Dili
http://home.ku.edu.tr/~isaretdili/

United Kingdom-- The British
Association of Teachers of the Deaf
http://www.batod.org.uk/

United Kingdom--National Deaf
Children Society, (NDCS)
http://www.ndcs.org.uk/

United Kingdom--Royal National
Institute for Deaf People, (RNID)
http://www.rnid.org.uk/

DEAF/BLIND

Deafblind International (DbI)
http://www.deafblindinternational.org/

European Deafblind Network
http://www.edbn.org/

Austria- European Deafblind
Network (Austria)
http://www.apascide.org/Members.htm

Belgium-- European Deafblind
Network (Belgium)
http://www.apascide.org/Members.htm

Bulgaria-- National Association of
Deafblind People in Bulgaria
http://www.deafblindresourcecentre.
org/pages/country/bg/bulgaria.html

Czech Republic-- LORM-
Society for the DeafBlind
http://www.lorm.cz/cs/lorm/aktuality.php

Czech Republic--VIA -
Association of the Deafblind
http://www.deafblindresourcecentre.
org/pages/country/cz/czech.html

Denmark-- Foreningen af Danske DøvBlinde
http://www.fddb.dk

Denmark-- Døvblindecentret
http://www.idb.dk/

Estonia-- Estonian Support
Union of the Deafblind
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/
countries_e/estonia.htm#estonia

Finland- Deaf/Blind Association
http://www.kuurosokeat.fi/

France-- European Deafblind
Network (France)
http://www.apascide.org/Members.htm

Germany-- Fördergemeinschaft
für Taubblinde e. V.
Bundeselternvertretung Deutschland
http://taubblind.selbsthilfe-online.de/

Greece-- Πληροφορίες για
κουφός και τυφλός
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/
countries_g/greece.htm

Iceland--Félag heyrnarlausra
http://www.deaf.is/

Ireland- The Anne Sullivan Centre
http://www.deafblind.com/europe.html#Anne%20Sullivan%20Centre

Italy-- Lega del Filo d'Oro
http://www.legadelfilodoro.it

Italy--Associazione Nazionale Italiana Fra Genitori di Sordociechi Pluriminorati
http://www.tiresias.org/agencies/countries_i/italy.htm#italy

Norway-- Foreningen Norges døvblinde
http://home.online.no/~fndbred/

Norway--Stiftelsen Signo
http://www.signo.no/

Romania--SENSE INTERNATIONAL
http://www.deafblindresourcecentre.org/pages/country/ro/romania.html

Slovakia-- Cervenica Deafblind School
http://www.deafblindresourcecentre.org/pages/country/sk/slovakia.html

Slovakia--Association of Parents and Friends of deafblind Children
http://www.deafblindresourcecentre.org/pages/country/sk/parents.html

Spain—APASCIDE/ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE PADRES DE SORDOCIEGOS DE ESPAÑA
http://www.apascide.org

Sweden-- Foreningen Sveriges Døvblinda
http://www.fsdb.org/

Sweden-- Handikapporganisationers Internationella Biståndsförening
http://www.shia.se

The Netherlands-- Landelijk Expertisecentrum Doofblindheid
http://www.doofblind.nl/

United Kingdom-- Deafblind UK
http://www.deafblinduk.org.uk/

United Kingdom--A Deafblindness Web Resource site
http://www.deafblind.co.uk/

United Kingdom--Deafblind Scotland
http://www.deafblindscotland.org.uk/

DOWN SYNDROME

The Down Syndrome WWW Page
http://www.nas.com/downsyn/

The European Down Syndrome Association (EDSA)
http://www.edsa.down-syndrome.org/

Austria--Down-Syndrom Trisomie 21
http://www-ang.kfunigraz.ac.at/~emberg/down/downindex.html

Belgium-- Downsyndroom Vlaanderen
http://www.downsyndroom.be/

Cyprus--Ίδρυμα Portage Κύπρου/ Cyprus Portage Foundation
http://cyprusportage.tripod.com/

Czech Republic--Downùv syndrom (DS)
http://www.volny.cz/downsyndrom/

Denmark--Landsforeningen Downs Syndrom
http://www.downssyndrom.dk/

Finland--Kehitysvammaisten Tukiliiton down-linkkejä
http://www.kvtl.fi/down.htm

France-- FAIT 21 (Fédération des Associations pour l'Insertion sociale des personnes porteuse d'une Trisomie 21)
http://perso.wanadoo.fr/.fait21/

Germany--Arbeitskreis DOWN-Syndrom e. V.
http://www.down-syndrom.de/down1.html

Germany--Deutsches Down-Syndrom Infocenter
http://www.ds-infocenter.de/

Greece--ΑΝΑΠΗΡΙΑ ΤΩΡΑ
http://www.disabled.gr/index.htm

Iceland--Félags áhugafólks um Downs-heilkenni
http://www.downs.is/

Ireland --Down Syndrome
http://www.downsyndrome.ie/

Italy--Associazone Italiana Persone Down
http://www.aipd.it/

Luxembourg--Trisomie 21 Lëtzebuerg
http://www.trisomie21.lu/

Malta--Down Syndrome Association Malta
http://www.dsa.org.mt/

Malta--DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION (MALTA)
http://sites.waldonet.net.mt/dsam/

Norway--Downsnett Norge
http://downsnett.komsa.no/

Portugal--Associações Portuguesas de Apoio à Criança com Doença Crónica
http://www.apa-cdc.pt/outrasassoc.htm

Romania-- Associatia Langdon Down Oltenia
http://www.edsa.down-syndrome.org/contacts/members/

Slovakia SPOLOÈNOS DOWNOVHO SYNDRÓMU
http://web.stonline.sk/sds/

Spain--Fundació Catalana Síndrome de Down
http://www.fcsd.org/indexd.htm

Swedish--Downs Syndrom - inte bara en extra kromosom
http://medlem.spray.se/sixtendown/

Switzerland-- EDSA- Schweiz
http://www.edsa.ch/

The Netherlands-- Stichting Down's Syndroom
http://www.downsyndroom.nl/

The Netherlands-- Meer algemene informatie over Downsyndroom
http://downsyndroom.pagina.nl

Turkey--Down Sendromu
http://www.tip2000.com/aktualite/down.html

Turkey--DOWN SENDROMU DAYANIªMA GRUBU
http://dayanisma.ilkturk.org/down.htm

United Kingdom—Down's Syndrome Association
http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

United Kingdom--The Down Syndrome Educational Trust
http://www.downsed.org/

United Kingdom--Down Syndrome Information Network
http://www.down-syndrome.info/

DYSLEXIA/ DYSGRAPHIA

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)
http://www.interdys.org/index.jsp

The EUROPEAN DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION (EDA)
http://www.bedford.ac.uk/eda/

Austria-- Österreichischer Bundesverband Legasthenie
http://www.legasthenieverband.at/

Belgium-- Association Belge de Parents d'Enfants en Difficulté d'Apprentissage (APEDA)
http://www.apeda.be/Home.htm

Cyprus-- New Hope σχολείο/αρχική σελίδα-
http://www.newhope.com.cy/indexgr.htm

Czech Republic-- The Czech Dyslexia Association
http://www.interdys.org/servlet/compose?section_id=9&page_id=187

Denmark-- Dysleksiforeningen i Danmark
http://www.ordblind.com/

Finland--OPPIMISVAIKEUSKESKUS
http://www.ovk.fi/nmi/ovk.nsf

Finland--Helsingin seudun erilaiset oppijat ry
http://www.lukihero.fi/

Finland--Luki-Tuki keskus
http://www.tk-opisto.fi/lukituki/lukituki.html

Finland--Dysfasialasten Tuki ry
http://www.kaapeli.fi/dysfasia/

France-- Association Française de Parents d' Enfants en Difficulté d'Apprentissage du Langage Écrit et Oral (APEDA France)
http://www.ifrance.com/apeda/

France--souffrant de dysfonctionnements neuropsychologiques)
http://www.coridys.asso.fr/

Germany-- Bundesverband Legasthenie und Dyskalkulie e. V. (BVL)
http://www.legasthenie.net/start.php

Greece-- ΚΕντρα ΔυσλεξΙας, Ευφυΐας, Μαθησιακων Δυσκολιων, Διασπασησ Προσοχησ & ΟφθαλμοκΙνησης
http://www.dyslexiacenters.gr/

Greece-- Κέντρου Ψυχολογικών Μελετών – Δυσλεξία
http://systech.gr/cpsr/index.htm

Ireland Dyslexia Association
http://www.dyslexia.ie/

Italy-- Associazione Italiana Dislessia
http://www.dislessia.it/

Luxembourg-- Dyspel asbl (Dyslexia and Special Needs in Luxembourg)
http://www.dyspel.org/

Norway Dyslexia Association
http://www.dysleksiforbundet.no/

Romania--Fundatia "Pentru Voi"
http://www.pentruvoi.ro

Romania-- ASOCIATIA RENINCO ROMANIA
http://www.reninco.ro/

Spain—DISFAM/Associació Dislexia i Familia
http://www.disfam.com/

Swedish Association for Persons with Difficulties in Reading and Writing/Dyslexia (FMLS)
http://www.fmls.nu/index.html

Switzerland--Verband Dyslexie Schweiz
http://www.verband-dyslexie.ch/

United Kingdom-- Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (CreSTeD)
http://www.crested.org.uk/

United Kingdom -"Dyslexia in Scotland"
http://www.dyslexia-in-scotland.org/info.htm

United Kingdom -British Dyslexia Association
http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk/

United Kingdom -Dyslexia Institute
http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk/

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

International Federation of Persons with Physical Disability (FIMITIC)
http://www.fimitic.org/

European Disability Forum--Forum européen des personnes handicapées
http://www.edf-feph.org/

Handiplus.com :: Handicaps - Mobilité - Accessibilité - Disability Plus - Discaplus Mobilidad - Mobility
http://www.handiplus.com/index.php

Muscular Dystrophy Association
http://www.mdausa.org/

Society for Muscular Dystrophy Information International
http://users.auracom.com/smdi/

The Multiple Sclerosis International Federation
http://www.msif.org/language_choice.html

The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation
http://www.msfacts.org/

All About Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
http://www.mult-sclerosis.org/

IMSSF: International MS Support Foundation
http://www.imssf.org/ms/

The International Cerebral Palsy Society
http://www.icps.org.uk/

Cerebral Palsy – CP
http://ibis-birthdefects.org/start/cp.htm