



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



LANG₂TECH



**Using a blended learning and on-line
approach to competence-based
language learning**

Lorenzo Fiorito

Edinburgh, 30 August, 2013



In the beginning there was the CEFR

• The Council of Europe's **Common European Framework of Reference** provides the structure for most other assessment methods for language competences.

• The language portfolio based on the CEFR, establishes a transparent certification system, and is adopted in the majority of the EU countries.

• It is part of the assessment process adopted by many awarding bodies.

In recent years, it has been evolving in **e-portfolio**, a system and process that enables secure, computer-based verification and assessment of evidence.



And for the workplace language skills?

Employers may require **certificates as a proof of language competence**, which is why the testing of language competences for professional purposes and accreditation methods should be developed.

However, as concerns accreditation through e-portfolios, no European standard or harmonised approach has been adopted yet for specialised languages.

Some initiatives targeting language for the workplace, though, developed e-portfolios, building on cooperation between partners in different Member States, in the framework of programmes funded by the EU Commission.



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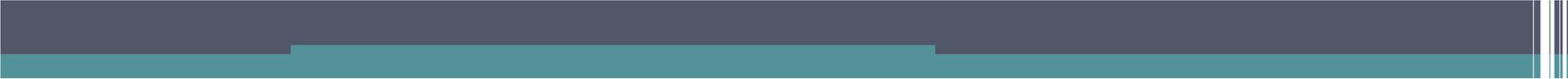


EU funded programmes

EU education programmes are excellent tools for partnerships at different levels:

- to research and produce innovation in tools and methodologies
- to secure provision of language skills for the labour market.

Some initiatives to create innovative tools and methods in blended and online Language learning and assessment can be found in the database of European multilateral projects. They were developed under Leonardo da Vinci and other centralised programmes (Grundtvig, Comenius, Lingua or KeyActivity Languages).



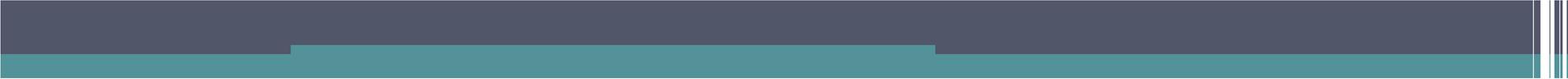
Some (good) practices from previous projects

Since 2005, we as Europe-Aries (formerly Aries Formazione) have participated in innovative language projects funded by EU programmes Leonardo and Comenius. Some of them are:

LaBooM (Languages for the BOOk and Media sector)
(2005-2007)

SPSELL Specific Sector language Learning
(2005-2007)

icEurope (Intercultural communication in Europe through web collaboration (2008-2010))



LaBooM (Languages for the BOOk and Media sector)
(2005-2007) Leonardo Language competence project.

12 partners from six countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, Poland and UK) coordinated by **Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (ibw) , Wien.**

La Boom produced:

A two-level language course geared towards **the book and media sector.**

- Online and CD-ROM materials for distance learning, hard-copy teaching materials for the open learning.
- A sector-targeted multilingual word-list in all project languages (Czech, English, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish), displayed on the LaBooM website.

•<http://laboom.fhstp.ac.at/course/index.html#>

LaBooM -The course

- The course consists of ten modules, five of which at Level 1 (Beginners) and five at Level 2 (Advanced).
- Every module has two units, on topics of relevance for the book and media sector.
- It is a blended-learning language course, to be completed partly online or on CD-ROMs, and partly in attendance phases.
- **LaBooM** builds on the Common European Framework of Reference, with Level 1 corresponding to Level A2 (Waystage Level) and Level 2 to Level B2 (Vantage Level).

A certificate is awarded at the end of the course.

icEurope

Intercultural communication in Europe through web collaboration Comenius multilateral project (2008-2010)

Project consortium:

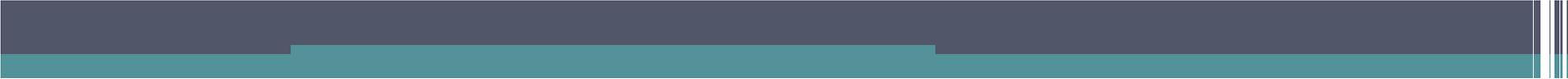
- University of Tübingen, DE
- Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, HU
- Europe ARIES, Naples, IT
- European Centre for Education and Training, Sofia, BG
- Elazig City Department of Education, Elazig, TR
- Language Learning Media, Konstanz, DE

Web collaboration in Moodle between 4 classes on intercultural topics
→ a **combined approach** to language and culture learning

Aims:

Supporting the learners to use their English as a lingua franca in order to negotiate cultural concepts in authentic, intercultural contact situations

Making students aware of the dynamic relations between language and culture and to give them linguistic means to communicate and act in intercultural situations



icEurope- Web Collaboration

Its focus is on intercultural foreign language learning of English as a foreign language (EFL)

The core feature of icEurope pilot phase was the web collaboration between 4 European secondary school classes.

The aim was to engage the teenage learners in authentic and challenging learning contexts to provide opportunities to be more self-directing, self-assessing, and in control of their learning.

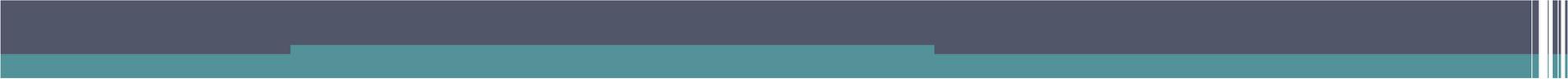
icEurope- Web Collaboration

The activities were **multimedial** and **interactive**.

The tasks aim at real interaction in a truly intercultural communication setting, i.e. web collaboration between teenagers and teachers from different countries and different language backgrounds.

The tasks were built around both new and pre-existing materials adapted to the needs and particularities of web collaboration and Moodle.

<http://projects.ael.uni-tuebingen.de/iceurope/moodle/course/view.php?id=79>



***SPSELL Specific Sector language Learning
Leonardo Language competencies (2005-2007)***

Coordinator : Ryde High School Language College, Isle of Wight

Partners:

Stucom Training centre, Barcelona Spain

Lid Editorial, Publishing Company focused on
Multilingual specialised dictionaries

Aries Formazione (noe Europe-Aries)

IDEC, Training Centre, Greece

WBS, German training company

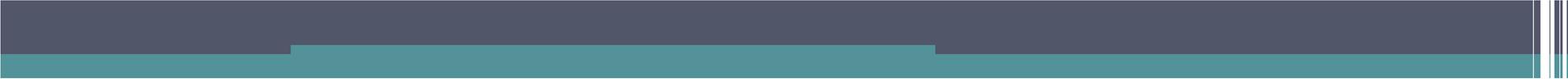


SPSELL - The project

The rationale for this project developed from the apparent lack of materials available specific to the logistics, production, sales and customer service sections of the composites industry.

The promoter found there was a need for these and further materials to be available electronically, to enable independent learning.

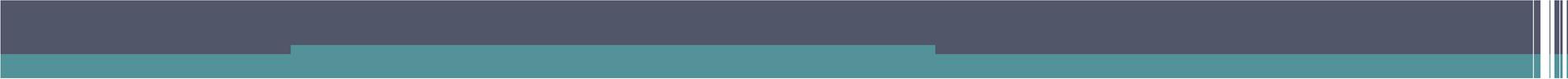
They also established a lack of relevant foreign language skills among the local labour market, and in particular young people in vocational education.



Spsell – The partners and the end-users

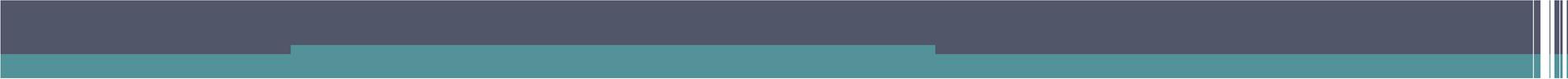
Spain, Germany, Greece and Italy were identified as key partners as they have a long tradition in this industry, and have strong links to the industry in the UK.

The end users are employees within these sectors of the composite industry, as well as young and unemployed people in initial vocational training relevant to employment in the industry.



Spsell – The activities

- λ We carried out research into the foreign language needs for employees in the logistics, production, sales and customer service sections of the composites industry.
- λ Learning materials in the partners' languages (included Catalan) were developed, to be delivered using both e-learning and traditional methodologies.
- λ These materials were assessed as to their relevance to existing vocational qualifications and the European Language Portfolio and to ensure their transparency.
- λ They were be piloted in each country both within the industry and at vocational training institutions.



EU Projects: Is there Life after Life?

- Some EU-funded projects run out of steam at the end of their life cycle.
- There is not much point to implementing a project if its results stay hidden from potential users.
- Policy makers and education providers should rely on such projects to improve their decision-making and to be informed on new approaches.
- Good projects provide valuable outcomes, but also aim to transmit their findings to their target audience and to a wider community.



EU Projects: Is there Life after Life?

„This involves distributing their results to the various end-users and stakeholders, and ensuring that others can exploit the project’s output.

„A crucial objective of EU funded projects is the mainstreaming of their results.

„As a matter of fact, in recent years, **e-portfolios for** language competence assessment have been adopted by many educational bodies, as well as awarding bodies and accepted by the qualifications regulators.

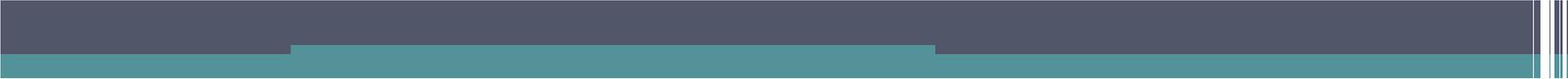


Some (good) practices from University

The Blended Learning course and
certification at the

Language Centre of
Pegaso Telematic University

www.unipegaso.it



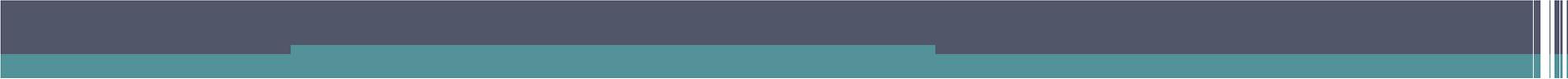
The English Lion Certification at the Pegaso Language Centre

The aim of the Lion Certification is to help the students acquire language skills, according to the requests of the Faculties, with the help of technology.

The concept and the learning materials were developed by the Director of the Centre, prof. Colomba La Ragione and her staff.

The students practise listening, reading and writing skills during online sessions, while speaking skills are practised during the face to face lesson.

Students are assessed partly on line and partly in presence.



English Lion Certification Online assessment

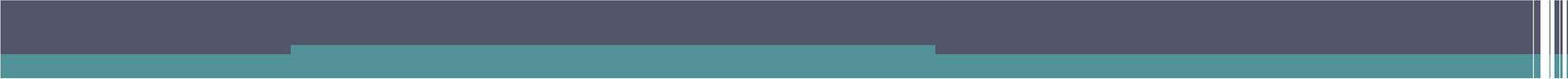
The online assessment at Pegaso is the result of research into education, foreign language learning/teaching and information technologies.

A large number of students from different backgrounds and fields of studies are tested, with or without providing them with a full teacher-led curricular course.

Our main concern is to implement a computer-based test which is perceived as valid, reliable and focused on language skills as requested by the Faculties.

The ultimate goal isto produce a completely new test, satisfying precisely those criteria set by the Faculties. The test schedule is as follows:

1	Reading Comprehension	40 minutes
2	Social Interaction and Use of English	40 minutes
3	Writing	60 minutes
4	Listening	35 minutes
5	Speaking (production and Interaction)	20 minutes



Lessons Learned

- The use of web oriented technologies is efficient and cost effective in a learning/teaching process.
- Learning is flexible and offers students autonomy and self-pacing according to their interests and needs.
- However, the role of the teacher remains prominent both in teaching and in assessment
- (which is recognized in the concept of “Blended” learning combining some software-for-learning component with some form of human intervention).



Lessons Learned

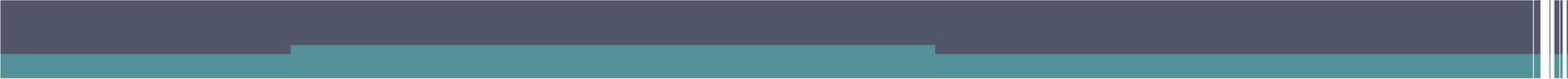
Online language testing certainly has its advantages, however there are certain constraints and requirements to be complied with.

Accessibility: The system needs to be easily accessible by appropriate staff, learners, assessors and verifiers.

Cross-moderation: Certifications require that evidence be cross-moderated. Evidenced-based assessment remains the core part of e-portfolio

Acceptability: It is crucial that the certification process is approved by the awarding body/bodies, better if at an European level.

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Lessons Learned

Assessment of learners' performance should be a reliable, and user-friendly process.

Accurate, auditable records of assessment must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years for each student.



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Thanks for your attention!

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