

# LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

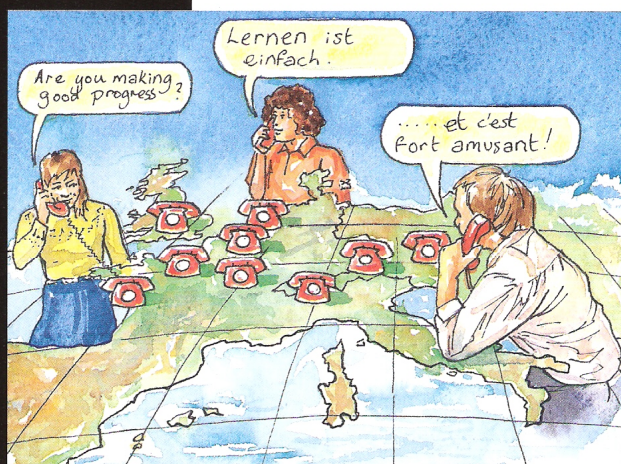
*Technology Supports Cross Cultural Education*

## LEARNING

### CURRICULUM AND INTEGRATION

This case study incorporates a conference report presented by

Michel Morin, tutor in languages at the Lycée Charles de Gaulle, Caen, to the 1991 ELNET Würzburg conference. It highlights one particular learning partnership between a French and a UK college and focuses on the effect of ELNET on their curriculum and learning methods.



#### The Educational Challenge

One of the problems identified at the start of ELNET was the integration of curricula. Before the initiative began, educational links between European schools had been forged on the basis of equivalent age groups and

curriculum areas. There had been no real attempt to create active and coordinated learning groups.

ELNET encouraged institutions to examine both their curriculum and their teaching methods by requiring them to identify and form effective cross-institutional learning groups.

The parameters to the partnership imposed by ELNET were:

- Business/Economics AND languages to be studied
- group learning across institutions.



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### **The Learning Partners**

#### **The Lycée Charles de Gaulle, Caen**

Lycée Charles de Gaulle is a college with 650 students ranging in age from 12 to 16. All follow the same programme. A class of 33 "Première B" students (Upper Sixth equivalent) was chosen to work on ELNET. All the students studied the same subjects at the same time and were taught by the same teachers.

#### **A Multi-Ddisciplinary Approach**

The flexibility of Lycée Charles de Gaulle tutors was limited but all students were able to work with ELNET in a multi-disciplinary way. Business Studies are not taught at the Lycée, but it was felt that the range of subjects studied in Première B would encompass the requirements of the ELNET project. These were:

- Economics
- Geography
- Information Technology
- English.

#### **Organisational Structure**

The IT and the English tutors were responsible for the communications side of the ELNET work and the Geography and Economics tutors were responsible for the choice of themes to be covered by the students with their partners.

The IT tutor also taught Physics and was involved in this capacity in the choice of one of the themes discussed on ELNET.

### **Choice of Themes**

In France, subjects are taught on the basis of the National Curriculum, often in isolation. However, at Lycée Charles de Gaulle, the tutors involved in the project took a close look at their respective curricula in order to identify some common themes.

The aim of the school's IT curriculum was to master IT as a tool. English language teaching was not restricted by the choice of themes. Consequently, themes were chosen from the Economics and Geography curricula and in the case of the nuclear energy theme from the Physics curriculum. IT was therefore treated as the central integrating tool in curriculum terms and in terms of learning methodology.

### **Methodology**

Due to the rigidity of French school timetables, it was not possible for the four tutors to work together with their pupils at the same time. On some occasions, however, two tutors were able to work with the class.

The same theme was often covered by more than one department. For example, nuclear energy was covered by the Physics teacher, the Geography teacher, the Economics teacher and the English teacher, each time from a different angle.

### **Computer Access**

Students had access to the designated ELNET computer at any time. They also had free access to word processing facilities in the IT room and library to prepare text before going on line.



### **Peter Symonds College, Winchester, UK**

Peter Symonds is a Sixth Form College currently funded by Hampshire County Council. The college has 1100 students between the ages of 16 and 19. The curriculum is centred around 'A' Levels from a number of Examining Boards and is broadly based, covering both academic and vocational subjects. It has sufficient flexibility to allow optional subjects to be built into it. About 30 per cent of pupils were studying one or more modern languages and/or Economics/Business Studies at 'A' Level.

#### **Choice of Students**

The initial group of students consisted of volunteers. These were drawn from the Business Studies and languages groups and chose ELNET as an 'option' to extend their existing studies.

#### **The Approach**

In curriculum terms, this meant that Business Studies and languages tutors needed to liaise to structure the topics selected and to agree on learning methods. This required intensive discussions both face-to-face and via ELNET to co-ordinate the construction of a curriculum/topic framework.

#### **Access**

Students at the college had personal IDs and free access to two ELNET stations. In addition, tutors also had access to ELNET from one staffroom.

#### **The Curriculum**

The curriculum area (Business/Economics and languages) was externally imposed by ELNET. Student groups were chosen to match these requirements. Tutors at Peter Symonds sixth Form College were

approached and three themes were suggested and agreed to:

- Common Agricultural Policy
- Nuclear energy
- Tourism.

#### **Exploitation of Themes**

##### **The Common Agricultural Policy**

The CAP theme was started in November 1990, but a change of host computer for the French partners from London to Paris brought all communications between Lycée Charles de Gaulle and Peter Symonds College to a sudden halt. By the time communication lines were re-established, the CAP theme was no longer applicable to either Peter Symonds or Lycée Charles de Gaulle curricula.

##### **Nuclear Energy**

The nuclear energy theme was well exploited by both sides and culminated in a visit and face-to-face debate with Peter Symonds students, hosted by the Lycée Charles de Gaulle.

##### **Tourism**

The theme of tourism was equally popular and a group of Lycée Charles de Gaulle students went to Peter Symonds to work together and round off discussions on the theme.

##### **Conclusion**

The ELNET report led to the successful agreement of negotiated curricula areas and learning topics.

Both Lycée Charles de Gaulle and Peter Symonds College experienced some technical and organisational problems and would have preferred the ELNET project to last longer. Both colleges also agreed that it was vital to formalise exactly what was required of students at an early stage.

However, the overall consensus of opinion was that the ELNET experience had enabled tutors and pupils to get to know each other better than a normal classroom scenario and that the foundations of sound and continuing inter-college relationships had been laid.