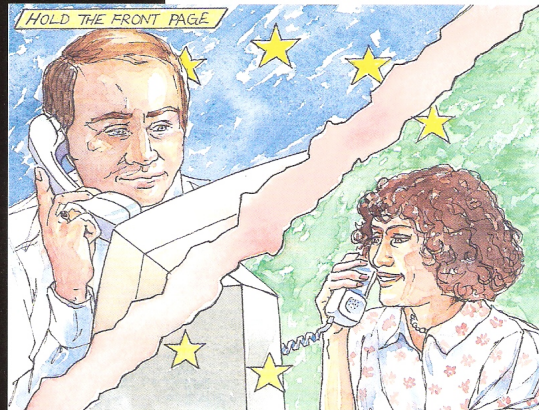


LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Technology Supports Cross Cultural Education

ORGANISATION

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



The success of the ELNET initiative depended to a large extent on the response of the participating colleges in the UK and Europe.

Integrating advanced learning technologies into existing educational institutions is a complex operation. The following describes the adoption of ELNET by three Further Education establishments in the UK, France and Germany and the results of their cross-cultural learning initiative.

The ELNET Challenge

The adoption of ELNET within a college involves:

- allocation of resources in terms of tutors and technology
- identification of multilingual student groups
- negotiation of topics and learning/teaching methods with partners
- allocation of time to learn to use technology.

The UK – France link

South Downs College, Havant

South Downs College, a Further Education College near Havant, has a mixed vocational and academic curriculum and a mixture of full- and part-time students. The ELNET Project was based in the Business Studies Department.

The College chose a target group of students who would use ELNET. This consisted of 'A' Level languages and BTEC Business students. An initial problem in implementing the programme was that 'A' Levels were externally assessed, while BTEC is a continually assessed course. The solution was to offer ELNET as an option to students taking 'A' Level languages with Business Studies and to those on the BTEC Business Studies course with GCSE languages. 16 volunteers were chosen.



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**Lycée Jeanne d'Arc,
Rouen**

This is a Tertiary College offering vocational Baccalauréat (BAC) courses in a range of areas, including Business Studies. It was decided that the most effective approach to implementing ELNET would be to establish small groups which would work with tutorial back-up. The initial target groups were:

- Première IT Option in BAC
- BAC G2 Première (Accounting)
- BAC G3 (Marketing/Business).

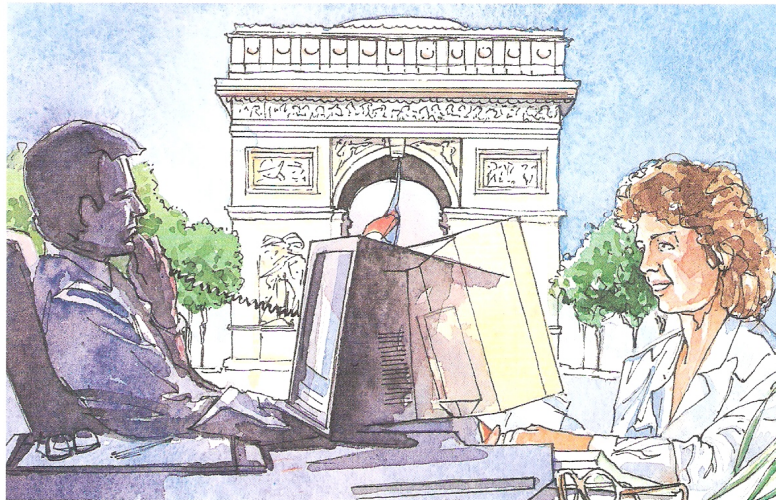
Access to the ELNET PC was strictly controlled and students were allocated 15 minute sessions once or twice each week. Individual students acted as representatives for sub-groups of their class.

A timetable was established for the creation of the UK – France link:

- January** ELNET Project begins.
- February** UK Colleges recruited and training starts.
- March** French partner colleges recruited.
- April** Training at French colleges (tutors and students).
- June** Agreement on work areas and first tutor exchanges via ELNET.
- September** Initial student work.
- October** ELNET group work.
- November** ELNET conference at Caen. Three-way links and curriculum/topics agreed.

**Negotiation and
Organisation**

Existing links with Jeanne d'Arc were to be developed into formal learning links. Final agreement was reached at an international ELNET conference held in Caen and it was



decided that a priority would be the extension of the programme to include not only language but also business tutors.

Learning Activities

The project was based around the creation of a 'conference' facility which could be accessed by all participating students. After some initial technical problems, South Downs College chose a group of 22 students from the European Business Studies module of BTEC. A dialogue was established with the Lycée Jeanne d'Arc which initially took the form of questions requesting information about specific business practices. This initial dialogue was a short term project and was superseded by EURODESK, a centrally managed newswire simulation, which was piloted by eight students. These were later assessed on the quantity and quality of their contribution.

The UK – Germany link

The third element of the three-way learning programme was the involvement of Luther-Schule in Hanover. This is a post-16 Tertiary College with around 500 pupils, specialising in the teaching of science and modern languages. The college was already experienced in telecommunications as it had been involved in a similar project within Germany.

Negotiation and Organisation

At the Caen conference, it was decided that the UK-Germany link would initially be a general conference facility. Agreement was reached on curricular areas to be covered, as well as specific topics. A timetable for the project was drawn up and German

colleges were soon linked up with the London host. Two months later, active communication between the schools was underway.

Although there was no attempt to achieve a curriculum match, the initial activities were highly successful. The conference covered a wide range of topics of interest to pupils, including domestic and international politics, religious festivals and holiday plans.

Findings

The experiences of the three Further Education colleges in the ELNET programme underline the steps that are essential to successful implementation.

The establishment of a workable timetable and implementation plan is vital, particularly when the college needs to allocate resources to setting up the project. The commitment of the institution's management is also essential as any new IT initiative will have a long gestation period. Finally, it is desirable to establish a written agreement between parties covering areas such as curriculum, study topics etc.

Participating colleges should also ensure:

- **Careful identification of the target groups of learners.**

It is essential that the chosen courses are sufficiently flexible, both in terms of the time needed for cross-cultural learning and the curricular content.

- **Tutor involvement throughout the implementation phase.**

The flexible nature of such learning links means that tutors must have real input

L E A R N I N G T E C H N O L O G I E S

into the creation of procedures and agreements.

- **Flexibility.**

Success depends on total flexibility in the choice of topic to be studied, learning methods and time-scale.

Conclusions

The successful implementation of the ELNET project depends on a range of factors. An initial planning document should be prepared, outlining how resources will be committed, curricular areas to be addressed, a training schedule for tutors and students, access arrangements and time-scale.

A curriculum agreement with partners will ensure integration of learning activities within the curriculum and that topics and associated learning methods are appropriate. The acquisition of language skills should always be a priority in the agreement.

Each participating college should endeavour to establish regular and unrestricted access for students, a phasing of learning groups and continuity in the learning programme, taking into account vacations, placements and examinations. These will maximise the benefits for both students and tutors.