**SOAS-UCL Centre of Excellence in the Teaching and Learning of
Languages of the Wider World (www.lww-cetl.ac.uk)
INTERIM SELF-EVALUATION 31st July 2007**

Contents

1 Executive Summary

The Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning of 'Languages of the Wider World' (LWW CETL) is a collaboration between SOAS and UCL. This report gives an interim, formative evaluation of the LWW CETL, following its first two years of existence.

Specific goals for the first two years were outlined in five main areas: (i) establishing or enhancing LWW CETL facilities at SOAS and UCL; (ii) development, evaluation, integration of materials for the delivery of LWW; (iii) reflection and research in the pedagogy of LWW; (iv) training and development of teachers of LWW; and (v) dissemination of activities of LWW CETL. Section 5 of this report outlines information about findings and outcomes under each of these headings.

The report outlines an evaluation strategy based on four levels: factual information on the development stage attained; project leader(s) information; comments from the CETL team; and reports from end-users. Comments from other stakeholders are a fifth level where they are available.

At this interim stage the evaluation reveals that the work of the LWW CETL has attained almost all of its initial goals and has added a significant number of projects. The facilities at SOAS and UCL have been installed (with the exception of the Languages Resources Room at SOAS – see 5.1.2). A system of bidding has enabled more projects covering more languages than initially envisaged to be set up for the development, evaluation and integration of materials. Seminars and conferences have been held on language pedagogy. Formal and informal mechanisms for the training and development of students and teachers have been created. The activities have been widely disseminated.

Many projects, however, are currently at the piloting or experimental stage. Therefore, end-user and other evaluations are not yet available as these projects are in progress. Formal end-user evaluations will be conducted once they have been fully implemented. Each activity is in the process of documenting its achievements against the different evaluation.
The projects raise a number of issues, which will be addressed in the on-going work of the LWW CETL. New materials, as they are developed, need to be fully integrated into the curriculum through training of both students and teachers. The use of new technology in blended learning requires new techniques of self and external evaluation. Applications in different contexts require different approaches to both teaching and assessment. Some of these issues require consideration beyond the framework of the LWW CETL and these are indicated in Section 6.

2 Introduction

2.1 Structure and audience

This interim formative evaluation report is primarily ***internal-facing***, intended for the members of the LWW World CETL core team, other staff at SOAS and UCL, members of the evaluation teams at Lancaster (and within HEFCE), relevant members of the HE Academy team and the LLAS Subject Centre. The report will also be published on the LWW CETL website to disseminate work of the CETL and share information, www.lww-cetl.ac.uk

2.2 Connection with other reports

This interim report will feed into the final summative evaluation report by, a) providing the relevant evidence base relating to activities completed so far, and b) setting out the method for ensuring that the appropriate evaluative data gathering procedures are in place for years 2007-10.

2.3 Purpose of interim self-evaluation

The purpose of this interim, formative evaluation of the first two years is to learn from the experience thus far.   Specifically, it aims to: a) measure the stage of attainment against the original bid; b) provide feedback concerning the level of success of each area as seen by the activity leader, the members of staff of the LWW CETL and end users; (c) indicate areas that would benefit from greater attention in later years along with any indications of profitable shifts of emphasis; and d) indicate for other evaluators those areas of the work of this LWW CETL that may exemplify wider issues.

2.4 Overview of the evidential base

Four (or five where available) kinds of evidence were/will be collected for each activity: evidence of attainment; self-evaluation by the leader of the project/activity; evaluation by the LWW CETL team; and end-user evaluation. Where other evaluative comments are available (e.g. from external examiners) these were/will be included. At this stage of development not all categories of evidence are available. More details for each activity can be provided if required.

3   Brief description of the aims and scope of the CETL

3.1   Purposes

The LWW CETL is a collaboration between SOAS and UCL. It has been established for a five year period (September 2005 – September 2010) in order to stimulate specific aspects of the teaching and learning of those languages that do not have a large presence in UK Higher Education: i.e. the languages of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia. These languages are referred to as 'Languages of the Wider World' (LWW) and the activities of the LWW CETL are expected to improve the teaching and learning of LWW, and to significantly raise the national and international profile of LWW.

3.2   Specific goals

For the first two years, specific goals were outlined in five main areas:

- Establish the LWW CETL infrastructure (including personnel) and enhance language teaching and learning facilities at SOAS and UCL through major capital investment.

- Student learning: development, evaluation and integration of materials (including VLEs) for the delivery of LWW.

- Reflection and research in the pedagogy of LWW.

- Training and development of teachers of LWW.

- Dissemination of activities and findings of LWW CETL.

These specific goals form the basis for the Findings section of this report (section 5).

3.3 Activities

For the first two years the LWW CETL planned a variety of activities to achieve the specific goals above.

The LWW CETL has gone beyond the activities originally envisaged. Specifically, for the academic years 2005-6 and 2006-7, the LWW CETL invited competitive calls for project proposals for funding amongst SOAS and UCL staff to undertake other activities that fulfilled LWW CETL aims and objectives. The intention was to broaden the range of activities and languages, and to provide opportunities for reward and recognition.

4 Evaluation framework and approach

4.1 The overall evaluation approach

We engaged an external evaluation consultant, Professor Richard Towell, to help develop an appropriate framework for our evaluation that would yield a range of benefits including monitoring, planning, managing, learning, developing and accountability.

The evaluation of the LWW CETL will be divided along two dimensions – formative and summative – with evidence having both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The focus of this interim stage self-evaluation is purely formative.

4.1.1 Quantitative aspects

Quantitative aspects include: the specific languages involved in each area; the numbers of students involved; the number of schemes (materials, methodologies, techniques) developed; the number of sessions held; the number of attendees at in-house sessions, seminars, etc; any basic quantifiable information from feedback questionnaires distributed at sessions; and the number of colleagues participating in national and international conferences, and the numbers of presentations and publications resulting from this.

4.1.2 Qualitative aspects

Qualitative aspects, measured using a variety of methods (questionnaires, interviews, and so on), are concerned mainly with the impact of the various developments in terms of how they are perceived by the project leader(s), the LWW CETL team and, most importantly, the end-users (teachers and more often students). Data from other sources, such as researchers, examiners, senior management and various external agencies, awards, and so on are also relevant.

4.2 Reflections on the evaluation process.

The approach to evaluation needs to be fully integrated with the activities and not an additional or subsequent burden. Activity plans should have an inbuilt evaluation component. An integrated approach to evaluation will act as a useful feedback mechanism for those who are leading the projects at various levels – the person directly responsible for carrying out the project, the person responsible within the LWW CETL for that area, or, indeed, the Director of the LWW CETL. The feedback obtained during the first iteration of a new development needs to be used to make modifications before the next iteration. Within the five-year funding period of the LWW CETL it is to be hoped that the positive effect of formative evaluation can be made visible and that evaluation is seen by the participants as a valuable mechanism.

5.0 Findings

The work of the LWW CETL has progressed considerably in the first two years of its existence. Findings and issues concerning the progress and evaluation in each of the five areas of activity (as defined in 3.2 above) are described below.

Overall, in the first two years, the LWW CETL has supported over 60 projects covering 37 languages, compared to the 10 languages planned in the original bid. This support has laid the foundations for an expected improvement in the teaching and learning of LWW. The activities thus far have helped to significantly raise the national and international profile of LWW: by involving various national and international colleagues in the work; through publications; by presentations at seminars, workshops and conferences; and by attracting further funds (see 6.6.3 for more details). UCL SSEES led a national consortium that bid successfully for a HEFCE/ESRC/AHRC funded 'Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies' (CEELBAS), focusing on language training for research postgraduates. In the arena of international linkages, SOAS, via the activities of the LWW CETL, has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Michigan State University (MSU) in the USA, which hosts four National Resource Centres (equivalent to UK CETLs) relevant to the LWW CETL: African Studies Centre; Asian Studies Centre; Centre for Advanced Study of International Development; and the Centre for Language Education and Research. The LWW CETL will build on this model in the future with international agreements centred on the LWW CETL and signed by both SOAS and UCL.

5.1 Establishing the infrastructure

5.1.1 Personnel

There were initial delays in the appointment of key LWW CETL staff due to administrative and logistical difficulties at SOAS and UCL. The Director, Administrator and Researcher were appointed in the third and fourth quarters of 2005: in the original plans this was due to happen in the first quarter of 2005.

Since then, appointments of other staff (IT and support staff, Learning Advisors, Teacher Trainers) have been in step-wise fashion. This is due to strategic deliberations and considerations by the LWW CETL Policy and Planning Board.

One of the important early decisions was to create reward and recognition opportunities for staff at SOAS and UCL by inviting them to bid for projects (materials development, research, dissemination, etc) related to LWW CETL aims and objectives. It was anticipated that LWW CETL support in this manner would allow staff to focus on their own developmental, research and dissemination needs and interests; add extra value to their work and provide specific bought-out time, space and other necessary resources. This also

had the added benefit of providing support for a greater range of languages and levels than originally envisaged, and provided a greater sense of ownership and commitment amongst the staff. Following the first invitation for bids, there have also been frequent demands for future rounds. This interim evaluation will assist the LWW CETL Policy and Planning Board in arriving at decisions about the value of further invitations for bids.

5.1.2 Facilities

The capital investment programme has been completed (see pictures on www.lww-cetl.ac.uk), except for the expansion of the SOAS Language Resources Room (LRR). Details are provided in Appendix A. The LRR has been delayed because SOAS acquired new buildings in Russell Square in 2006 with the intention of moving the SOAS Language Centre into them. The buildings are being renovated and refurbished, and the transfer and redevelopment of the Language Resources Room is part of this. It is expected to be completed by December 2007.

Following various technical refinements and testing, the other facilities became operational effectively in 2006-7. Early levels of bookings and use for these recently opened facilities have been modest (averaging 30%), probably because they were opened in mid academic year. Early end-user feedback appears to show that users are positive about them. For instance, "...*the new facility, Sanako Lab in G57, was very useful in teaching listening comprehension, and that … listening ability progressed impressively.*" Visitors to the UCL Language Space have also provided positive and enthusiastic comments including: *"Very well set up and it encourages participation";* and *"This is a fantastic new technology. As a slow learner myself it would take some time to use/operate the [interactive] whiteboard and we would need to explore the way to make this available for classes".*

The LWW CETL believes that to enable these facilities to be effectively embedded and used, teachers and students must also be given pedagogical and technical training and advice. The LWW CETL has instituted an ongoing programme of training and awareness raising (see section 5.4.), which will be followed by the collection of systematic data for evaluation of the facilities, (beginning Autumn 2007). The use of these facilities will clearly enhance the student experience. Section 5.2 below lists some of the opportunities that SOAS and UCL teachers have taken, through the invitations for bids, to experiment with new methods and approaches to teaching specific areas of the curriculum using these facilities.

5.1.3 Other considerations

The original aims and activities of the LWW CETL were to gather together the many complementary strands of existing excellence and innovation at SOAS and UCL, and build them into a coherent whole to ensure the sustainability and spread of excellence. As a consequence, LWW CETL groups were recently set up across the two institutions including a Multimedia Group and a Business Group. Whereas the former is engaged in developing and exploiting multimedia technology for language teaching and learning, the latter is aimed at exploring the commercial potential of the LWW CETL. In partnership with UCL Business, the LWW CETL has appointed a business consultant, who is due to report on long-term sustainability and income generation in August, 2007.

Another avenue discussed in the original bid for deepening coherence and aiding long-term sustainability, was the establishment of the SOAS School of Languages, SoL, in 2005-6. This was to serve as a home for all SOAS language teachers and a focussed point of contact for UCL language teachers. The School has not yet been established and negotiations are ongoing with a date of September 2008 set for its formal creation. The reasons for the

delay lay in a combination of the laboured processes associated with national job evaluation (ongoing, due to be completed in August 2007), made difficult in a climate of tense industrial relations at SOAS (2005-6), and complicated further by statutory contractual negotiations over pay and conditions (ongoing, and also due to be completed in August 2007). Together, these events created a challenging and complex environment for progress on the SOAS School of Languages.

The School of Languages is intended to create a home for a critical mass of professional language teachers at SOAS and a node of contact for UCL language teachers. Some progress has been made in so far as more SOAS teachers are now engaged with the process and many are now teaching across areas of language learning in both SOAS Language and Culture Departments and the SOAS Language Centre. Crucial issues currently being examined are: the nature of a career as a professional language teacher in UK Higher Education, focussing on issues such as promotion; the potential role of language stages in conceptualising language learning; the internal organisation of language 'sections'; the role of research in language pedagogy; and the boundaries between research, development and reflection on practice. The School of Languages could play an important role in the diffusion of initiatives developed within the LWW CETL. Equally, the activities of the LWW CETL are expected to provide important support and synergies in establishing the SOAS School of Languages.

5.2 Student learning: development, evaluation, integration of materials (including VLEs) for the delivery of LWW.

The largest number of projects are underway in this area. The projects do not lend themselves to an easy summary and are at various stages of development, implementation and evaluation. Many deal with very specific areas of specific languages, such as listening in Indonesian or in Czech and Polish. Most are progressing and the outcomes will be measured at the appropriate time using the levels of evaluation specified above. Each of these projects will have a direct effect on student learning and will be fully integrated into the curricula of the institutions.

Because of the 'invitations for bids' approach that was adopted, this is an area where many teachers have been able to experiment with new approaches, including new approaches based on the new facilities. Three specific areas are worth mentioning here: the use of different scripts, the role of the VLE platforms, and the use of blended learning.

5.2.1 Non-Roman scripts

Non-Roman scripts, which read either right to left or vertically, can present considerable problems for IT systems. However, most main complex non-Roman scripts can now be used in Blackboard and Moodle. Vertical alignment still presents specific problems.

5.2.2 Use and evaluation of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platforms

VLE platforms have been popular with students, and SOAS and UCL have offered a variety up to now. An overall evaluation of the VLE platforms at SOAS and UCL began with a UCL-wide working group undertaking a review of VLEs and other e-learning requirements. This reported internally at the end of June 2007, and the LWW CETL Multimedia Group is due to examine the implications, specifically for language teaching, in Autumn 2007.

In tandem with the above, the use and development of existing VLE platforms for language teaching has been gathering pace and receiving positive evaluations. For instance, with support from LWW CETL (multimedia expertise and funding), a comprehensive VLE (Blackboard) for the entire first-year Chinese course was developed by a team of Chinese

teachers at SOAS. This team has just been awarded the 2006-7 SOAS Director's Teaching Prize in recognition of their innovative and high quality work.

5.2.3 Blended learning

Blended learning for LWW is essential as group sizes are generally small, so learning has to be intense, and teachers are often hourly paid (see discussion in 6.1.2 and 6.2). It was therefore important for the LWW CETL to identify teaching and learning needs in relation to blended learning. This was done in two main ways: (i) by LWW CETL staff following discussions and meetings; and (ii) by the invitations for bids. Training needs (see 5.4) in the use of the new technologies for language learning were identified following discussions with staff, and a programme of training set up. In some cases (ii) followed on from (i). For instance, the LWW CETL Learning Advisor, following discussions with teachers and learners, identified that one of the most pressing needs was for the development of virtual self-learning resources ("Flexi-Packs") to support classroom learning. An invitation for bids for 'Flexi-Packs' went out in May 2007, and decisions concerning what to fund are currently being made, following appraisal by a committee set up to consider applications.

5.3   Reflection and research in the pedagogy of LWW.

A variety of activities were conducted concerning reflection and research in the LWW CETL. These activities overlap to some extent with those concerning Dissemination (see 5.5. below), and also aspects of section 6. Four specific areas are worth mentioning here: the research seminar series; teaching and learning events; heritage language events; and the identification of innovation.

5.3.1 LWW CETL research seminar series

The nine seminars held so far have attracted 160 attendees from a range of institutions (internal and external), thus creating a significant language pedagogy community and creating a forum for discussing issues. Seminar presentations are available on the website (www.lww-cetl.ac.uk).

5.3.2 UCL and SOAS teaching and learning events

LWW CETL staff have contributed to internal events either in terms of presentations or in terms of audience participation. The LWW CETL has also participated in the first UCL SSEES-led CEELBAS Language Workshop in May 2007 to plan the scope for complementary projects (CEELBAS activities are a standing item on LWW CETL Policy and Planning Board agendas).

5.3.3 Heritage languages

Research into the area of Heritage languages has taken several forms. The LWW CETL held a successful Community Language Education in Practice Workshop and Seminar (November 2006). The project leader's evaluation suggested that this event had very positive outcomes in terms of engaging a wide variety of stakeholders (a total of 90 people including: researchers; school teachers and students; members of the communities; local authority representatives; specialist organisations, such as CILT; and examiners and parents), establishing networks, and increasing the status and profile of community languages and the LWW CETL, especially amongst community members themselves.

A questionnaire on needs, innovation and practices in teaching LWW (the 'NIPIT' questionnaire) was conducted across UCL and SOAS, and included several questions on Heritage language Learner needs. Responses have been analysed and included in a

preliminary report (June 2007). Its findings are being integrated with the findings of a qualitative study (amongst four groups) due to report at the end of July 2007. An evaluation of this will be conducted in Autumn 2007.

A team from SOAS, including members of the CETL, and partners from Scottish CILT, University of Stirling, was awarded research funding into community language provision in Higher Education by the HEFCE funded 'Routes into Languages' programme. A survey of HE heritage language provision is currently being carried out, and a final report will be available at the end of November, 2007.

5.3.4 Identification of pedagogical innovation within and outside of SOAS/UCL

The final report based on the NIPIT questionnaire (see 5.3.3) is expected in September 2007. The results of this survey will be discussed and evaluated in an internal workshop for language teachers in November 2007. Identification of pedagogical innovation outside of SOAS and UCL has thus far mainly been in terms of conference participation and gathering recent literature. A systematic empirical survey based on the NIPIT will be carried out in the next phase of the research.

5.4 Training

Training for both staff and students is an essential companion to the development of materials. These will only be successful if they are fully integrated within the teaching programmes and if the learners can use them independently. The use of the web portal and of specific courses is outlined in the rest of this section.

5.4.1 Web portal

A web portal site (see www.lww-cetl.ac.uk) for language teaching staff went 'live' in September 2006. This training resource is undergoing constant development. Whereas LWW CETL staff feedback is incorporated in an evolutionary and ongoing manner, it has been too early to get end-user feedback, but this will be obtained systematically from Autumn 2007.

5.4.2 Courses in teaching of LWW

An Arabic Teacher Training Certificate (modelled on the SOAS Chinese Teaching Certificate) has been designed and will be offered in the 2007-8 session. Evaluation of this course will take place at the end of the course. Design and development for a course in another language will begin in the 2007-8 session.

5.4.3 Other teacher training courses

A variety of activities in the original bid concerning technical training were combined and offered as a programme of specialised mini-workshops, and supplemented by various drop-in sessions. The mini-workshops comprised: i) a series of courses per term, covering technical topics (e.g. creation of VLE materials, use of technical resources, etc); and ii) drop-in sessions to train teachers in effective use of technology. A total of 36 teachers covering a wide range of languages (across SOAS and UCL) signed up for the mini-workshops and many took advantage of drop in sessions offered. Project leader evaluations have been positive ("*sessions not only provided training but also a heightened awareness of the expertise and resources available*"). Teachers attending the workshops were equally positive ("*very interesting and positive*"; "*I love to learn from these sessions*"). Evaluative comments concerning the training in the UCL Language Space have also shown that teachers found it useful and of high quality (see 5.1.2 above). Given that

this is the first year of the operation of these workshops, regular formal evaluative data will be collected systematically from Autumn 2007. These training sessions have a direct impact on a variety of learning designs and the use of technology.

5.4.4 Training courses for language learners

Following the appointment of the Learning advisor in September 2006, these were offered as several specific mini-workshops per term (see www.lww-cetl.ac.uk for details). The first year of workshops has just been completed. It attracted 60 undergraduate and postgraduate students from six languages. Initial verbal feedback to the project leader suggested that students welcomed the opportunity to work with learners from other languages, and appreciated the interactive and practical nature of the workshops. More systematic end-user evaluation is planned for future courses.

5.4.5 Other training

A need for training in copyright issues was identified in January 2007, so a workshop with external consultants for all key staff involved in the production of materials was arranged for May 2007.   This workshop also attracted staff from other parts of SOAS and UCL (e.g. library staff). Initial qualitative feedback from attendees reinforced the value of holding this workshop.

5.5 Dissemination

LWW CETL staff, and those who received specific project funding from the LWW CETL, have been actively involved in disseminating their work in a variety of modes, ranging from participation and presentations at workshops, seminars and conferences, to publications. The LWW CETL has been significantly involved in major national collaborations such as, (i) the successful HEFCE/ESRC/AHRC funded UCL SSEES-led consortium for the Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies (CEELBAS), and (ii) the SOAS co-led consortium with HE Institutions in Greater London on a proposal for the 'Routes Into Languages' widening participation programme. The LWW CETL has also been working with the Subject Centre in Languages, Linguistics & Area Studies (LLAS) and the University of Ulster CETL in Multimedia Language Learning for meetings, conferences, publication and other related activities. On the international stage, apart from presentations and participation at conferences, seminars and workshops, SOAS has just signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with Michigan State University, USA to further our dissemination and development activities in LWW.

5.5.1 Conference attendances and publications

LWW CETL and associated SOAS and UCL staff have been active in attending, presenting at, and/or hosting over 30 national and international conferences, seminars and workshops in its two years.

5.5.2 Internal workshops and conferences

Several events (see Appendix C) have taken place to inform and involve staff at SOAS and UCL about the past and current activities of the LWW CETL, and to engage staff in future projects. The introductory LWW CETL events (the official launch and the SOAS Language Centre "Show & Tell") were successful events in terms of number of attendees. Those offering funds for future projects have been generally well attended, though the first annual internal conference (March 2007) could have been attended better.

5.5.3 CETL coordinating group in modern languages.

In the original bid several meetings of such a group were planned. They were, however, predicated on HEFCE awarding funding to several CETLs in Languages. Since only one CETL attracted HEFCE funding, a CETL Coordinating Group in Modern Languages was never set up. There has, nonetheless, been collaboration with the LLAS Subject Centre and some of the CETL outputs are being disseminated through their outlets, notably through the Good Practice Guide – for example, the article outlining the LWW CETL.

5.5.4 Website as dissemination tool

The LWW CETL website went live in September 2006 and is a key dissemination tool. Its development is ongoing. It has so far attracted over 4000 hits since September 2006, with over 5000 page views. The URL is http://www.lww-cetl.ac.uk.

6. Lessons (being) learned, sector-wide effects, and future adjustments

6.1 An overview of the new knowledge of how to enrich and enhance student learning

6.1.1 The diversity of learners' needs

One of the significant challenges for teachers of LWW is that of recognizing the achievements of learners prior to entry to the institution. Some learners will have acquired a partial knowledge of a given language from their family background. They may, for example, have a command of familiar oral language but no grasp of written or formal aspects of the language. The challenge is to recognize and value what has been achieved and build on it. The heritage languages seminar 'Community Language Education in Practice' was a starting point for the identification of the learning needs of heritage language speakers. A qualitative pilot study is now exploring the needs and motivations amongst teachers and learners of four ethno-linguistic communities in London: the Gujarati, Turkish, Polish and Latvian. This is complemented by data extracted from a web-based questionnaire study amongst teachers at SOAS and UCL, designed to identify innovatory teaching practices. The LWW CETL has also enabled SOAS to attract further research funding (in collaboration with researchers at Scottish CILT, University of Stirling) to conduct a study of community languages under the HEFCE funded 'Routes into Languages' programme. It is too early to speak of new knowledge or lessons learned from this, but the LWW CETL is at least enabling us, with the help of the relevant communities, to formulate the right questions. Answers will be forthcoming once the projects have been completed.

Whilst the linear nature of language learning makes it very obvious when necessary prior knowledge has not been acquired, the phenomenon of partial knowledge acquired often through non-formal means is more difficult to deal with. The need to recognize and value it is true of language learning and likely to be true of many disciplines. Admissions officers in most disciplines are aware of the need to accredit prior learning. A specific issue which will come to the fore in language learning is the level at which students may be admitted to programmes of study: the widely-held assumption that all LWW languages on degree programmes must be learnt *ab initio* will not be sustainable. This has considerable potential resourcing implications as it suggests the need for either more and smaller groups defined by level or more supported self-access learning.

6.1.2 The requirements of different learning contexts

Another challenge within the teaching and learning LWW is adapting to, and providing for, the requirements of different learning contexts. These range from the traditional undergraduate with four concentrated years of language study before them, including a period of residence abroad; to the high-powered lawyer or business person with an urgent need to acquire enough of a given language to begin work in an overseas office or interact with international clients.

As indicated in the original LWW CETL bid a key issue for LWW is the absence of commercially available language teaching materials. Unlike the case of English, many languages, even languages with millions of speakers such as Chinese, do not yet have ready made language teaching materials designed for a foreign audience, let alone materials for specific sub-groups of learners defined by nationality or context of learning. In addition, for a language like English it is always possible to obtain sufficient numbers to establish viable groups. This is not true for LWW where very small groups are the norm, and almost inevitable at any level above beginners. The challenge is to formulate an approach to the creation of language teaching materials that, (i) relates to the central core needed to establish the basis for progression to higher levels; (ii) can be easily adapted to different contexts of learning; and (iii) has an emphasis on self-access learning. This is being tackled within the LWW CETL by funding the development of language teaching materials and the revision and creation of new curricula in these languages (currently over 30 different languages are involved). Some of these projects are focused on the development of materials for self-access (Japanese, Czech, Polish) whereas others provide new materials for use in the language classroom. One key project in this respect was Virtual Dutch, which is currently undergoing further development and, importantly, the methodology and aims are now being expanded and transferred into another language – Zulu.

It is worth reiterating that, whilst the above issues may be especially obvious and acute in the area of the learning of LWW, any subject area in higher education which addresses a small but important group of learners will face the same logistical challenges.

6.1.3 The possibilities for innovation

Two key and inter-related elements of the responses to these challenges are technology and blended or autonomous learning. Technology offers the possibility of enabling learners to work at their own pace. Learning to direct their learning themselves enables learners to make use of the materials in an efficient and effective way. However, lessons learnt here and elsewhere demonstrate that the technology must be available to learners in ways that address their contexts, needs and perceptions, and self directed learning must be structured with both self and external assessment mechanisms built in. This requires the learning materials to be very carefully structured and prepared, and for extensive piloting with feedback from a variety of learners. Within the LWW CETL a variety of methods are being tried (e.g. Flexi-Packs, Virtual Zulu on-line, self-access for reading in Ukrainian, etc). As yet these projects have not been running long-enough for lessons to be learned but information will become available in 2007-2009.

The area of languages is not the only one to be facing these challenges and the lessons learned here should generalize to other disciplines where technology based independent learning is an essential component. A first important aspect of the approach planned here is the combination of infrastructure modifications – language labs, learning spaces, properly equipped rooms – with materials development, both encapsulated within a defined curriculum. Neither the materials alone nor the infrastructure alone will suffice: the two must develop in harmony within a structured curriculum. A second important aspect is learner training and learner advising: learners need assistance in planning and

developing their learning at appropriate times. In-session training workshops for both learners and teachers have a key role to play.

6.1.4 Expectations of employers

Language learning appears not to be a widely understood phenomenon amongst UK employers. Even those who understand the need for, and appreciate the value of, knowledge of foreign languages seem to underestimate the amount of time it takes to acquire high level knowledge of a foreign language. There is an acute need, which goes beyond the role of the LWW CETL, to enable employers to understand the implications of asking employees to acquire knowledge of an LWW within a given amount of time. Clearly, acquiring knowledge of a foreign language during an individual's formative formal education period (i.e. before full employment) is most advantageous given the great difficulties of finding appropriate amounts of time whilst in full employment. More students appear to understand the truth of this statement, but universities are not universally keen to make this available. One set of barriers is often said to be demands of professional organizations which specify the curriculum (e.g. for lawyers) but do not leave enough time for language learning. Another set of barriers arises from devolved budgets within institutions where departments are reluctant to see 'their' resources devoted to language learning. These are issues with sector-wide implications.

6.2 Emerging teaching practices

There are specific issues for LWW to do with the teaching and learning of scripts and writing systems. The LWW CETL is exploring the extent to which technology could assist with these issues.

A key element, still in its infancy, is to teach teachers how to use the materials and the technology being developed in a blended learning environment. As indicated above, the LWW CETL is addressing this issue through in-session training workshops at both SOAS and UCL. Moreover, a more formal approach will be adopted in due course as a Master's degree in language pedagogy is set up at SOAS (following the appointment of a SOAS lecturer in language pedagogy) to enable teachers in HE, secondary and community teaching environments to become appropriately qualified.

In both cases, however, a resource issue arises: the training time will have to be paid for. A specific issue here is the use of hourly paid teachers on whom LWW rely heavily. Training is quite difficult to organize when the majority of the teachers are hourly paid (see comments in 6.1.2. on the logistics of teaching and learning LWW). Innovation requires teacher training but institutions often find it impossible to resource that training. Again this is likely to be a sector-wide issue.

6.3 Implications for university systems and practices

The issues the LWW CETL faces with regard to the setting up of the SoL (see 5.1.3.) are not unique to SOAS. A number of universities demonstrate an ambiguous attitude towards language teaching and learning. On the one hand, they see knowledge of a language as an important element of a languages degree, but then tend to treat it as less important than other aspects of the degree. These institutions value more highly the academic analysis of a variety of cultural products and processes – literature, film, analysis of the structure of the language, and so on. This is often reflected in assessment systems and in the employment contracts offered to language teachers. Research into language pedagogy, for example, may be discouraged by a 'teaching only' contract.

There are similarities here with other skills that have to be acquired in other disciplines – drawing and draftsmanship, programming skills in IT, the manipulation of materials in labs, the learning of legal practices, some aspects of medical training.

It may be time for university systems and practices as a whole to look again at these divisions, which have been created within different kinds of teaching, and to examine their overall effect on learning, in particular on reflection on learning and research into pedagogy. Subject benchmarking statements that value skills and knowledge equally, the work of the HE Academy relating to the professional training of HE teachers, and the Single Framework Agreement are three developments that might have lessened some of these supposed differences. So far this does not appear to be the case. It is unlikely that CETLs alone could cause a re-examination of these issues but they may contribute evidence leading to further reflection.

6.4 Rewarding practice that demonstrates excellence

The major way in which the LWW CETL has rewarded or obtained recognition for its staff is by offering them the opportunity to undertake development work. There is an immediate sense of satisfaction to be derived from seeing new materials developed and in use in one's own classroom, and even more so when the ideas are taken up and used by others – whether in the same language or a different one. In some cases the material has been made available through publication on the internet and this in itself is seen as a form of recognition. In other cases, staff have had the opportunity to meet with colleagues who share their interest by attending conferences that they otherwise would not have been able to attend. There has also been considerable satisfaction amongst staff as a result of reaching out for the first time to communities in London where the relevant languages are spoken, and in enabling children from those communities to see that their languages are valued. For the more research active staff, the possibility has been offered of being able to investigate empirically ideas that may have been thought of for some time but without the opportunity of gathering supporting data. Finally, the presence of new forms of infrastructure in the classrooms is slowly enabling teachers to think of making use of materials (e.g. video) in ways that would previously have not been possible. Overall, invitations for LWW CETL bids has provided one way of rewarding staff either by releasing them from their teaching duties or by complementing their salaries (if on fractional contracts) to allow them to focus on research and development work.

It is also worth reiterating that the 2006-7 SOAS Director's Teaching Prize was awarded to a team involved in teaching first year Chinese language. This team had significant multimedia expertise and funding support from the LWW CETL to develop a comprehensive VLE (Blackboard) for the entire first-year Chinese course at SOAS.

6.5 Adjustments and future plans

As the LWW CETL activities move forward into the 2007 -2008 academic year, much of the focus will be on completion of projects where materials have been developed but not yet extensively used. Information from the end-users will be important in deciding which projects should continue or be developed, and which have achieved as much as can be expected. The full integration of the five level evaluation process described above will be key to obtaining the necessary information.

The appointment of the curriculum specialist/developer is a key stage that has not yet been attained. This appointment will help build on and spread best practice in syllabus design, and ensure that developments and innovation are sustainable, integrated, secure and robust. The curriculum developer will also assist in the evaluation process as one of the LWW CETL's main 'experts'.

The LWW CETL Planning and Policy Board will also consider whether future invitations for project bids are the way forward. Key to that decision will be information about to be obtained about the success of the existing projects. Other new strategic areas for development will also be considered further for prioritization. For instance, LWW CETL's input at the first CEELBAS Language Workshop in May 2007 has identified a need for a collaborative project with CEELBAS that aims to develop a language teaching & learning framework for research students (an area not previously covered in the LWW CETL aims).

Dissemination will gather speed as work with partner institutions and the Subject Centre for LLAS intensifies, and more people become involved in the use of the materials developed. More institutions are now interested in the teaching of LWW than before (especially with Arabic, Chinese, Polish, etc), and exchange of materials should become more possible. Dissemination via the national associations based in the various languages is important: a presence at their annual conferences will become an essential part of the dissemination process. International dissemination will also become an even more important part of LWW CETL activities.

6.6 CETL as a change strategy

6.6.1 Further professionalisation of teaching in HE

The LWW CETL has a significant role to play in raising the profile of language teaching as a highly professional activity (see comments under 6.3.). The LWW CETL Seminar Series provides an academic and professional forum for language pedagogy by focusing on reflection and research. Another example of the facilitation of further professionalisation is the LWW CETL teacher training workshops and certificates (carried out and planned) at SOAS and UCL. It is clearly important for the long term success of the teaching of LWW that professional development of teachers continues vigorously, so that fully trained and certified teachers in the latest pedagogical developments are the norm in the teaching of LWW, and that funding is set aside to enable that training to take place. Outside of the LWW CETL, SOAS has recently made an appointment of a lecturer in language pedagogy. In addition to providing reinforcement for the research and development aspects of the LWW CETL, this person will work with the members of the LWW CETL in setting up an MA programme in language pedagogy. These developments provide the potential for significant change, but it will need the full support of management and appropriate funding if it is to succeed. Similarly, the creation of the School of Languages within SOAS was seen as an element of the further professionalisation of the language teaching: success in this area would provide the LWW CETL with an arena in which to develop many of its initiatives across languages.

6.6.2 A critical mass of language teaching professionals

One aim of the LWW CETL has to be to work with others to create a critical mass of language teaching professionals who can act as a force for positive change. There are three specific areas where the LWW CETL will be able to make a difference. First, as it works across languages and levels, it will, a) enable the conceptualization of language teaching as a professional activity in its own right as opposed to a sub-activity of a language department, and b) look at the whole of language teaching as a single activity, whichever context of learning it is being deployed in. Second, it also intends to assist in accrediting more courses either through making more courses credit-bearing within SOAS and UCL, or by seeking accreditation from other agencies, as appropriate. Third, the LWW CETL will enable teachers in various languages to acquire professional certification. The external accreditation of this will also require the attention of the HE Academy and relevant other agencies.

6.6.3. Leverage of further funding and collaborative work

The LWW CETL has made important gains for the partnership between SOAS and UCL in the building of an expert team shared between the two institutions. This has not only allowed for a frank and constructive confrontation of difficulties, but has also provided a firm base from which colleagues have been able to bid for funds from other sources.   Four projects of different kinds are worthy of mention as exemplars, though it is important to note that activity on this front is proceeding on several dimensions including seeking advice from the business sphere to explore the commercial potential of materials and other products created with funding from the LWW CETL.   First, the HEFCE/AHRC/ESRC assigned a major award to a consortium led by UCL to set up a Centre for East European Language-Based Area Studies (CEELBAS) under the UK's major strategic initiative for investment in language-based area studies. Second, SOAS, in collaboration with researchers at Scottish CILT, University of Stirling, was awarded one of the three research projects from the HEFCE funded 'Routes into Languages' programme to research provision of community languages in Higher Education.   A second application, concerned with widening participation, is currently being prepared with partners in the Greater London area. Third, Professor Hermans (UCL) and his colleagues have also succeeded in bidding for funds for further development of the Virtual Dutch project from Nederlandse Taalunie and from the Centre for Distance Education, University of London. Fourth, SOAS and UCL, underpinned by the LWW CETL investment in language laboratories and self-learning resources (including rooms) is also bidding for a significant contract from the FCO for supplying language learning resources. These, and other fund-raising initiatives, underline the importance of the LWW CETL in providing a springboard for change in the area.