

Across Borders - Understanding and Communicating. Tasks for language teaching and learning in a wider and multicultural Europe¹

I find it a great honour to speak to you all at this LEND conference because I remember well last year's German convention at Rome and similar events in other European cities over the last 30 years and we have kept dreaming of bringing together and networking crowds in the Europe-wide community of professionals like you.

This is an intercultural situation, simply because I am German and you can see it, can't you? You'll find out soon enough. And to be honest, I like to be a German or shall we say, my way of being a German. I speak English to you which is a foreign language: actually it may sound somewhat "British", but it is a definite variety because I'm only using a very limited number of words plus a few jargon pieces, yet it will have to be good enough to make myself understood. In some cases, however, I'll revert to my own native German because it's the language I like best, you see...

I have an intercultural problem with myself on occasion because my thinking obviously is in the German language. You know the famous saying that thoughts are made while we speak. Sometimes the English language comes into it. What is first, the thought, the concept, the language? I have to negotiate with my own self actually.

1. Languages to Connect

Working against an ancient myth: Languages to divide - Crossing borders and building bridges.

My first point is that it all started when a group of people were on their way somewhere in Mesopotamia and they stopped at a place and they said: This is a good place, let us build a city and a tower and so they did. It was a time, believe it or not, when "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech" as the bible (in Genesis) says, "and it

¹This talk is based on my Key Note Speech, NELLE, Innsbruck, 23rd Sept. 1994, and takes it a step further, from the tasks of the nineties into the new century.

came to pass as they journeyed from the east they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there". And the old story goes on to say that they started to build the tower and that the Lord, their god, didn't actually like that. "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded and the Lord said, behold the people is one and they have all one language and this is what they begin to do and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do".

So what would you have done if you had been in the position of the Lord?

Well, I would have sent them an earthquake to be honest. Because that seems to be normal in that part of the world. But interestingly enough the Lord decided in a different way: "Let us go down and confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech". And this is what happened sure enough. They had all different languages. They did not understand and they could not work together any longer. The tower remained unfinished. The Tower of Babel, symbol of the confusion of tongues.

Language, and this is a very serious message from this old story, is there to divide. People make small groups to identify, communicate and feel at home with each other. "You do not speak our language, you don't belong, I'm afraid! You are from Bavaria. You don't speak my Hamburg dialect. You are a young person. You don't speak a professorial English. You're from Croatia, the way you speak ... you are not one of us!" Language, and this is a very sad story, is used to divide people.

But it should be used to connect.

This is the message of the communicative curriculum and of intercultural learning. Because, you see, languages are used to connect people and to make them understand each other, and this is why, in a later point, I'm talking about understanding as a key issue of all intercultural learning.

Languages are there to connect people so that they can understand each other, make themselves understood and, indeed, cooperate. Not necessarily building towers but perhaps building on interesting international humane issues.

If languages are there to connect the task is to cross borders rather than to stop or be stopped at borders. It is to build bridges rather than disunite people by iron curtains. In our generation, we are very aware of this. I grew up in a country which was divided, and many colleagues here in this room have in fact personally experienced division of all kind.

2. Clarification of Terms:

Intercultural, cross-cultural, international, transnational, multi-ethnic, multi-racial.

Going across borders: Languages for Understanding in Europe and in the One world

Let me explain a few of the terms. In the field we find various expressions which are all similar but have their distinct meanings.

The one used in a German speaking context and sometimes internationally, I find, is *intercultural*.

In the English speaking world I have come across *cross-cultural* more often. *Cross* of course meaning *across*: there is movement in that. You have got to go somewhere. You have got to cross bridges, you have got to go through borders.

For a long time, especially since the second world war, the term *international learning*, has been used. *Inter* meaning *between* and relational is linked with *national* alluding to the fact that most of us if not all are organized in nations. Nations that are dividing and shutting themselves off rather than uniting. Nations that say: you're a German and you're not. Thus people coming to Europe, say from India or Pakistan wouldn't be allowed to stay but expelled from a country in *Fortress Europe*. *International* seems to be a very modern term.

In the Franco-German relations the term *transnational* has been used quite often in order to express both the national boundaries and the movement. You have got to go across, *trans-national*. You have even got to reach across your own history and get across to the other nation.

In an English speaking context *multi-ethnic* and *multi-racial* have been used a lot, too. As a German, in the German language, I abstain from the equivalent terms of *ethnisch* and *rassisch* because they were Nazi language.

How would you react if I told you I was *an ethnic Westphalian* (from

around Münster in North Germany)? Something very special, believe me. Yet in fact I am only a left-over of the Thirty Years War (and earlier and later migrations), when peoples and armies were crossing my birthplace from the north to the south and from the east to the west. This is why I have a Polish great-great-great-grandmother and a Croatian soldier as an ancestor. There is French Huguenot blood in my veins and my nose perhaps was an aboriginal from the Ruhr. My eyes (blue) and my hair (fair) point to Scandinavian extraction...

We are all mixtures and this is why Europe has become so rich: a multi-cultural continent.

All the terms go to explain that we are not dealing with scientific terminology here but a pedagogical one trying to explain the task of crossing borders.

There is a second terminology problem. What is *culture* ?

I can tell you what it is not. It is not capital **C** culture, *matinée* Sunday morning, German small town at 11 o'clock, with a Beethoven/Vivaldi performance at the local town hall. I love Culture: Brecht, Bach, Beethoven. Yet, what I mean, is small letter **c** culture, *everyday culture*: the values, beliefs, traditions, the history and social environment, the esthetics of real people in real circumstances.

At present, there is a fine example on the Internet to examine and compare what hundreds of children from many countries write about the streets they live in.

Here are some voices from Glasgow in Scotland:

Glasgow

Balcaress Avenue Clare 11 years

The street that I live in is called Balcaress Avenue. It is quite exceptional, because there is an old railway track running under the road. In my street there is a family who go canoeing and mountain climbing. I enjoy living in my street. If I had the chance to change the name of the street I would call it "H.S.H. Street" (which means Home Sweet Home). I don't think I could ask for a better street. My street is very welcoming.

Baronald Drive Ava 11 years

The name of my street is Baronald Drive. We have many people from other countries on our street.. We have people from Egypt, England, India and Wales. In my street I live in is curvy. It is good to ride your bike on. I love my street and will not change it for any other street. It is fantastic.

Baronald Drive Grant 11 years

I live in Baronald Drive. My street is quite big. My street used to have a lot of farms on it that had cows. I love living where I am because all my friends are there. I would never want to leave my street. I would name my street after my

family which is Stevenson. In the field down the road there was a big fire (I was 10 at this time). Somebody phoned the fire brigade. It took them 45 minutes to put out the fire.

Bradan Avenue Nicola 11 years

My street is called Bradan Avenue. It is a big street. It has nice houses. My house is yellow and white pebble-base). There are lots of really nice gardens in my street. In some gardens there are nice trees and pretty flowers. Most of the people are really nice. Lots of people live in my street because it is quite big. I like the name of my street. So I probably wouldn't change it. I like living on my street.

Bradfield Avenue Amy 11 years

My street is called Bradfield Avenue. My house is white with a slated roof and I have got a black door. My street has got a large Puppet Theatre on it. I would rename my street "Williams Street" because I love Robbie Williams. I sort of like living there.

Everyday reports from Scotland, like the many others from Germany, e.g. this one

Tannenstraße Shari 4. Klasse

Hallo, ich heiße Shari und wohne in der Tannenstraße. Unsere Straße verläuft krumm. Die Straße ist groß, aber man kann dort nicht spielen, lieber spiele ich im Garten. Ich mag meine Straße ein bisschen. In der Straße wohnen unsere Nachbarn. Jeden Tag rasen die Autos vorbei und die Traktors. Aber der Kindergarten ist auch in der Straße.

And from Poland, The Tchech Republic and countries in South America. (In the German workshop this afternoon we shall look at some more from Nuremberg).

All the terms have one thing in common. They express movement, to get across. Using languages, English as a European and a world language in our case, it serves to bridge gaps, go across borders, get closer and overcome distances in the various levels and domains. It is language for understanding and humane purposes, not for money, neo-colonial and military purposes. If we go for this in Europe we must always be aware that we are only part of the One Wider World.

3. Closeness and Distance as Parameters for Language Learning:

Geographically, linguistically, ideologically, socially, in culture, in politics, in history, in everyday life (food, clothing, accommodation, tastes, lifestyles et al.) - in one's own society and in foreign societies.

As we are defining what intercultural learning means it's always been helpful to use the parameters of *closeness* and *distance*.

You can be close or far away geographically, this in fact for language learning was the normal 70/80 years ago. People were not travelling. It was only the upper classes on the Grand Tour, the *élites* who were actually multi-lingual. They were travelling from the court in Dresden to the court in Weimar back into France and then to Holland and, of course, to Italy. They were moving about. They were close to foreign things and ways if you like, this is why they intermarried so often.

But the vast majority of people then as nowadays were far away from each other, geographically distant. If somebody with a dark face in my little town in the north of Hesse appears on the street everybody would look in astonishment. He's not from here, is he? If he opens his mouth in the local pub people might say, "He must be from the South or somewhere very far away, maybe even from Italy". But if you live on the Dutch border near Münster in Westphalia people are very close linguistically and they speak the two languages frequently and they intermarry. Linguistically they have both codes, Dutch and German, and there is a *Plattdeutsch* (low German) version which is very similar, and my grandfather used to speak it. When my parents lived and worked in Holland before the war they didn't feel too distant or alien linguistically. To a Westphalian like myself Saxon German, the language of Bach and Luther, at Leipzig and Dresden, some of the finest places in German culture, sounds awkward, even worse than the neighbouring *Kölsch* at Cologne (Heinrich Böll, the German Nobel Prize winner, happened to speak like that). You can be near, close and, at the same time, very far away.

In North Germany teaching English is easier because the phonology and some of the vocabulary, too, are much closer to the British Isles than in the south of Germany. At Tübingen University where I studied we had three to four Swabian colleagues who could not produce proper p's, b's or d's and t's. So you had to teach them High German

before you did English phonetics.

However, divisions are disappearing. Nowadays we can travel and the younger generation are on the move every summer on inter-rail and they go places and boy meets girl from Italy at Helsinki railway station and they talk together in the English language. There is movement.

Geographically distance is overcome by travelling; linguistically closeness is gained through language learning. Yet there are more, and perhaps even more powerful markers of division, I mean the role of *ideology*, value systems and things we believe in firmly. "Never talk about (party) politics. Never talk about religion. Don't approach me too closely", is what we find amongst nations all over Europe.

Very often, too, people are divided *socially* and we belong, all of us, to a certain kind of class. We are middle class most of us, more or less well-to-do teachers even if we don't have that much money. We teach kids and young people from all walks of life: there is a distance between them and us. In fact culturally speaking *inter-culture* begins in our own classroom. There are lots of different cultures there.

Then of course, there is closeness and distance in *culture*. In the Nordic countries, they share a lot of their culture even though they are distinctly different in their national values and beliefs. But *Sankt Hans aften*, or St John's day or evening, is a real festival from the border at Flensburg up to Tromsø in Norway, with fires burning on the beaches and so on.

Where are we, close or distant in *policy* ?

When we went to see our relatives in Leipzig before 1989 we were not far away, really, about 250 kilometres; the *language* (even though I prefer other German dialects to Saxon) was very much the same.

Ideologically my family came from the same background, we could talk easily; we didn't talk party politics but we talked about other things. *Socially*, however: big divisions. Yet the same *culture* because we were preparing the afternoon coffee table in the same way. (If you go to Germany you must be prepared for a German coffee table afternoon. There are huge pieces of cake, "*aber bitte mit Sahne*" - please, with whipped cream on top of it, and there is coffee. Incidentally the way people make coffee is a uniting or disuniting cultural phenomenon. I

don't like English coffee but I love the Italian coffee menu ... which has been conquering German coffee shops and bistros in recent years.)

Our *history* was obviously the same but different from 1949 onwards.

What I'm saying is that the parameters of closeness and distance in the various sectors have got to be re-valued again and again. Where are we, where are we now with regard to things foreign outside and beyond our daily reach?

Where is this learning group? Where am I in my life, at this stage in my biography? Where are we, close or distant, in everyday life with regard to our own and foreign societies? Where are my friends in other countries with the standards of living going up and down.

We have got to make special efforts to both learn interculturally, ourselves, and make others - kids, young people, adults - learn inter-culturally. The aim is to overcome distance and gain closeness, become familiar with ..., as the English language has it.

4. Comprehension and Understanding:

Understanding as an intercultural activity (e.g. decoding foreign texts). Understanding as the making of sense and negotiating meaning: Going from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

Intercultural learning is understanding. Understanding also in the very basic sense of comprehension. A little experiment: Please, sit back and relax. You are going to hear an extract from an audio tape in a language you are not familiar with ... Do not worry, you will understand more than you think you do.

The audience is exposed to a couple of minutes of a Swedish radio sermon. After a few seconds of puzzled irritation the listeners recognize the sound situation as familiar: The extract must have been recorded in a church; the language, though alien, sounds familiar, too, there are even individual items which can easily be decoded (names, international words etc.); the way the person speaks reminds the audience of similar occasions in their own environments and cultures. They begin to understand by unlocking the situational factors, by associating and by activating their (cultural) knowledge.

What was it? A political speech in a vaulted cellar somewhere in Munich? No? - Why not? What made you understand it?

Yes, the tone of voice, the worthy language of pulpits, the way the

speaker uses rhetoric.

Well, it was recorded on a Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, somewhere near the south of Sweden.

We all know it's a sermon, we can even see the man with a huge white collar around his neck and a black gown. Even if we've never been to Sweden before in our lives we can actually hear and understand him preach.

I have seen smiles on your faces because you were recognising something; it was a process of associating knowledge, cultural knowledge, because all of you (even if you are agnostics and have nothing to do with the Church), suddenly knew that this was a sermon. And when preacher said "Jesus" (in a Swedish way of pronouncing it) you seemed to be happy because you were understanding backwards, as it were, you were validating an hypothesis. This is what understanding is all about. It is a cultural/intercultural affair. We are dealing with ourselves all the time. We are activating our own knowledge and our own values, our own beliefs and our own upbringing. We are even physically activating our memories and memory systems. When something like this happens, even if we are blind, we know it must be this.

This is what happens all the time when we hear foreign people speak. Understanding first of all is to make sure what we know, not what we don't know.

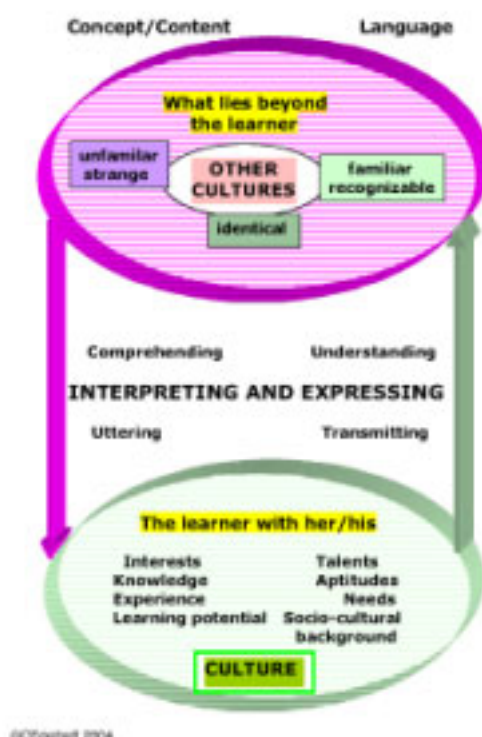
5. Own and Other People's Experiences:

Intercultural learning as connecting *Landeskunde* activities:

Looking for things: same (or similar), different and relations.

Models of intercultural communication and an agenda for *Landeskunde*

Please, have a look at the following diagram (overhead transparency):



We are always starting off from the learner: there is interest, knowledge, experience, learning potential, talents, aptitudes, needs. We all have our socio-cultural backgrounds, indeed, we are tinged with cultures, values and beliefs.

I happen to play in a church brass band. Am I sharing this particular piece of culture with anyone in this room?

Beyond our own world there are other people, other cultures and other traditions. What lies beyond the learner may be familiar and recognisable - or unfamiliar and strange. Things may even be identical in a global culture. Coca-Cola Lite seems to taste the same in Rome, I guess.

The problem is that things unfamiliar and strange are posing fewer problems or questions because they are beyond our reach. Yet, the things that seem similar and familiar may be false friends.

When we take young people to England we always give them a warning to watch their hands and not "shoot" at people when they greet them (shaking hands). Or we tell them never to speak loudly on a London bus in order to avoid Teutonic associations on the part of the English. If they are a bigger group we advise them to split up. This is because the German language is a guttural language. It has got

glottal stops. The English language does not and is much softer, more melodical and not so loud.

The arrows are there to indicate that there is movement from own to other. There is interpreting and expressing, we have got to negotiate the meaning. It is in fact a model of communication which, in foreign language teaching, must deal with two problems: Things may seem foreign, alien or simply different in two ways. The concept may be different and the way it is expressed. In getting familiar with items beyond our normal reach we must come to grips with the form of the foreign language and the concept (the meaning and the content) at the same time. Comprehending and understanding, interpreting and expressing, negotiating meaning requires us to negotiate between cultures all the time; that is why we are talking of intercultural learning.

Taking you from this model of intercultural communication a step further let me introduce you to two more models. First the "Me-You" model.

Model 2 of Intercultural Communication : ME - YOU

Characteristics are:

Encounter - Dialogue - Identification and Identity - Symbiosis (meeting of minds - Trust

People meeting, people talking: dialogue is the basic principle with this model. People identifying with each other's problems. The target is symbiosis, the meeting of minds. Trust is needed for such an encounter. The "Me-You" model is a nice way of looking at human communication but it is highly idealistic because the world is different. There is a lot of distrust in the world, there is power, there is struggle, envy, social inequality and misunderstanding. This is why I would like you to look at the second model, too.

Model 3 of Intercultural Communication:

"YOU-ARE-NOT-ME" plus "YOU-ARE-NOT-ME" = "TWO YOU'S"

Characteristics are:

Strangeness of the partners
Trust arising through solidarity developed
by negotiation and joint actions
recognising the social dimension
(the power and authority structures)

This model seems a little strange or difficult, because it is a translation from my vernacular, the German language. For those who are

speakers of German here is the German: "Nicht – ich + Nicht – ich = Zwei Du".

"You are not me, and since you are not me I've got to learn about you, I've got to see myself through your eyes." This seems highly difficult, of course, but it is the only way to arrive at two independent personalities who will remain independent and at the same time be connected.

This model reminds us that people are strange and different. It builds on the strangeness, the otherness, of partners which is more real in this world. The trust which is always needed for cooperation and communication arises through the solidarity developed by negotiation and joint actions, always acknowledging the social dimensions, i.e. the power and authority structures. Consequently we should regard and respect the other as different and accept him or her as being different. Yet we can become one and work together if we develop solidarity through joint actions.

This has direct implications for all *Landeskunde* teaching, yet another term of my native language. At a level of literal meaning it is a rather inappropriate term referring only to the systematic knowledge of a country. What we mean, however, is cultural studies and experiential learning developing the foreign learner's attitudes, knowledge and skills with regard to the target culture and language. Learners and teachers should be able to relate their own experiences and worlds to those of others, as Chris Candlin puts it, and through processes of critical reflexivity come to a sharper awareness of their own circumstances, beliefs and values. Central to this process is the place of language not merely as a means by which the process can be interpreted and explained but crucially as the instrument through which the relativities of culture are maintained and reproduced.

If this is so then we can describe *Landeskunde* as relational; it deals with inter-cultural issues and processes like class, gender, race, generation etc. and not only with thatched roofs, gothic cathedrals, the Bank of England, the Royal Family and the climate of the British Isles. It is dynamic because cultures are constantly changing. Germany after her formal unification is a good example of such changes. The changes must be perceived subjectively and will have to be negotiated.

Landeskunde is critical and looks at what determines our negotiation of

meaning. Let us examine our own prejudices.

Landeskunde is reflexive: it is a process of collecting, linking, collageing, interpreting, explaining, creating and being involved. It is a pedagogical process.

Finally *Landeskunde* in this sense is educational; it is problem-posing encounter both intellectually and emotionally.

Reducing language teaching to the teaching of words and grammar is fundamentally missing the point. Language and content cannot be divorced at any time.

With this agenda for *Landeskunde*, I find, we shall have a full teaching programme for the next 50 years.

Yet there are a lot of problems.

6. Obstacles and Dangers

Using foreign and unfamiliar things to disassociate or enrich oneself. Clichés, prejudices and stereotypes (in the media, in advertising, in FLT textbooks and their "factual-static" information data).

A constructive way out: Interculturalism as an educational concept (L. Porcher, Council of Europe).

One of the problems I will try to illustrate with another German quotation and since there are so many speakers of the German language in this room let me give you the citation in the original to begin with.

Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Fremden fördert die Fähigkeit, die Lebensfragen des eigenen Volkes und Staates zu begreifen, da auf diesem Wege der Abstand des Sehens gewonnen wird, der für ein solches Verständnis unerlässlich ist. Andererseits kann eine erkennende Auseinandersetzung nur fruchtbar werden an Gegenständen, die uns unmittelbar zugänglich sind; d.h. gegenüber Völkern, mit denen wir uns durch unsere Art oder unsere Geschichte berühren.

German speakers will recognise the language and tone of some 70 years ago.

"To deal with the foreign promotes the ability to understand the vital questions of one's own people and national state because it is in this way that one gains a certain distance of perception which is absolutely imperative for the understanding of such matters.

On the other hand an intelligent interpretation can only be fruitful in dealing with objects which are directly accessible, i.e. to say in dealings with nations with whom we are related by virtue of our nature and race or our history. ..."

This is an excerpt from the syllabus of Nazi Germany for the *Gymnasium* (the grammar school) in 1936. It is a dangerous text because we can agree quite some way. But then you find we must only deal with people who are like ourselves, who are of the same origin and "race" and are who are directly accessible. We can communicate with nations with whom we are related. We are not related with African tribes, are we? Not with people who look different, think different, eat garlic and do not believe in what we believe. The message of the intercultural curriculum is totally different. We are not the only ones to say "they are different". They are different in their own right.

Have a look at Cailey's Internet message a good number of years ago.

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Nachricht Nummer      : 47
Autor der Nachricht   : GOR-CAILEY@HRS.WCAPE.SCHOOL.ZA500S
Betreff der Nachricht : Hi I am new to this.
Erstellungsdatum      : 15 M
                        rz 1996 00:00
Nachrichtempfaenger   : K120CHAT0ELEMENTARY
Uebertragungsdauer    : 00:00:01

Message-ID: <3149b110.1452ghhs.wcape.school.za>
Realname: Cailey Gordon
Date: Fri, 15 Mar 1996 13:04:00 GMT+0200
Organization: Herschel School, Cape Town
X-Gateway: OS csgo.KS.HE.Schule.de ÅUranus-Soft Rfc2Art v1.40

Hi my name is Cailey and I am new to this.

I just want to say hi to every-one out there and if you are interested
in writing to me, please do!!!

I am 13 I love cats and modeling.

please write back.
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She just wants to say hi to everyone out there. Where is she? Herschel School, Cape town, South Africa, we learn from the electronic address. But then, surely, SHE is "out there", not us. She wants to be in touch if we are interested. Who is she? Black or white? All we know she is 13 and loves cat and wants to be a model. Lots of girls of her age in my country (and yours) would be pretty much the same, wouldn't they? Same and different. One would have to find out. Be in touch.

It is the two you's: not only me who determines what is accessible and acceptable and what is not.

So, you see, it is not enough just to spend your holiday in Denmark when you live in the north of Germany. That's just neighbourhood. The real issue is to experience people, ideas and ways of life that are alien to your own ways and beliefs. That is the task. *Intercultural* means exactly what it says: we have got to negotiate between cultures. We are not going for the one and only world culture and the English language at that. What we are aiming at is preparing people to accept each other in their own cultures and still be united and work together in peace.

Here is another obstacle. Have a look at this picture.



Do you recognise him? He seems to be the image of the German abroad. Yes: We do drink a lot of beer, especially in some parts of Germany... . We are good at football, aren't we? Our military isn't perhaps all that conspicuously brave right now but there is a potential. And Volkswagen, BMW, Porsche, Audi and Mercedes are impressing the world, aren't they? The big cigar of Ludwig Erhardt, former business minister and chancellor of Federal Germany, is what you will find all over the place.

It is an image, it is a cliché of the Germans.

Clichés and stereotypes are there and there is always some truth in them. I may not be as big as this one but you may regard me as similar, and of course there are bigger ones.. I don't wear leather

sausages for breakfast", the caption explains. A show window of a breakfast.

The problem is, I have not known a family in England that looks like that around the breakfast table on a weekday. If you want a cooked breakfast nowadays you will have to pay extra. Socially speaking it must be a very awkward kind of family. The time is about 7.30 to 7.45 a.m. Father is still there. Does he work in the house? Perhaps he's a writer (Or is he a free-lance ELT person?). A little over-dressed, it would seem. Mother certainly doesn't go out to work.

We are dealing with a *Landeskunde* lie. We expect it and we get it.

This is what we find in our materials all over the place. Look for the image of women, the image children, the image of foreigners and people of coloured skin, the image of the majority of the people. What is there about single-parent families, money (not just pocket money), traffic, the environment, peace, times and occasions where people are happy and unhappy etc. ? - There is terrible stuff around. The real issue of textbook making is language - or is it? You have got to put three to five adverbs into one paragraph, modals verbs (not models), ing-forms and if-clauses. And if you do not, a non-native teacher would really miss them. Our textbooks, especially the ones we make ourselves are full of our own expectations and our own clichés of the other country. *Landeskunde*-wise, in ELT, we are obsessed with the United Kingdom and the British Isles as if there weren't millions of people speaking English outside this remoter part of Europe.

Intercultural education offers a solution to these problems if we are prepared to look at the issue in a more educational than purely linguistic way. To quote Louis Porcher, our good colleague from France working with us on the Council of Europe projects for many years:

"This is why in our view the only positive and constructive option really open is interculturalism" (not one inter-culture), "which is based on the idea that every cultural reality is a double one. A culture is always individual, different from others" (my brass band), "hence reflects the specific identity of its members" (playing on Sunday mornings and at golden weddings), "at the same time though it also involves sharing. An ability to communicate and relating to another person as another person. The inter-cultural approach implies taking both these aspects into account simultaneously because they are essentially together. The

way forward is to take the other person for what he is. That is both identical to one's self and different from oneself, in other words similar to oneself. Clearly the country of origin and the host country are both involved."

I find this a good motto.

And now for some more practical questions.

7. Practical Work:

Creating and Supporting Links Across Borders

In recent years intercultural work and intercultural curricula have been designed in many European countries and I would only draw your attention to one or two examples of good practice.

One of the most powerful practices is what we have come to call *contacts avec ou sans voyages* (contacts with and without travelling).

Travelling is fine but we can't ship all the boys and girls of all the European countries to England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland. There are lots of projects to be in touch: pen-friends, school partnerships, twinnings and, very powerful, E-mail contacts.

Here is a survey of activities:

Creating and Supporting Links Across Borders *avec ou sans voyages* Using Old and New Media

The three L's: Living language links

materials and cross-cultural activities, methods for cross-cultural teaching and learning in classrooms and beyond:

<i>sans voyages:</i>	<i>avec voyages:</i>
Reviewing textbooks critically (to begin with)	
Using authentic texts, audio, print and video	
Direct encounter in the local environment; <i>Their life in our country</i>	Exchanges
Exploration tasks: e.g. the Frankfurt Airport Project, English Round the Corner, <i>Sag es mit Blumen</i>	
Correspondences, pen pals, swap shops Tape-slide shows Video-letters	Twinnings
Electronic mail and fax	
Creating international newspapers	Bi-lateral and
The global classroom	multi-lateral projects

Here is a letter from a girl of 11.

Dear N.N.,

How are you? I am fine. Is your arm OK again? I have never broken my arm or my leg and so on in my life. Yesterday I played with two of my friends on a very nice tree. It was wonderful. There was a loving couple nearby. We had to laugh all the time. I am looking forward to your visit after the summer holidays. I hope you are looking forward that too. Thank you for the rabbit cake and the milk treats. Fritz liked the rabbit cake very much but she don't like the milk treats. Sorry I'm writing so late. Today we are going to have dinner with friends. I am looking forward that. In the last week before the summer holidays my class will do a project. Probably about sandwiches for school. Perhaps you are thinking we can't do much about that but for example you can pick up what the children have thrown away and so on. Please write soon.

Yours

PS. I wrote this letter with the typewriter because I wanted to try it.

And another one of the same year.

Dear N.N.,

I am very happy that you want to be my pen friend. Its a pity that the way of one letter to you takes so much time. Now I'll tell you something about me. I think it's the best to tell you what I like. I like ice-cream, young children, flowers, beaches, the sea, lakes, trees, fruit, my skate-board, wind, sunshine, meadows, eating, playing table tennis, playing an instrument, singing, listening to music from the Beatles, Chris de Burgh, Simon and Garfunkel, Mozart and a lot of others. I don't like a lot of things, too, of course, for example power stations, war, most of my teachers, school, *Modern Talking* (that's a pop group) handball, football, thawing weather, prejudices, boring afternoons, mushrooms and a lot of things. What do you not like? When is your birthday? My birthday is How many sisters and brothers have you got? I've got one sister her name is ... So that was it for the start. In the next letter I'll tell you more about my life. Now I say goodbye.

This is how it can start with young children and of course we should build on that.

A more recent method is using E-mail where people from two different places in the world are communicating via a modem and a PC.

Here are a few examples taken from my bulletin board on the Internet.

(1) @From: lcps0730@tmn.com (Emerick Elementary School)

1. What is your favorite food?
2. What is your favorite sport?
3. What is your favorite school subject?
4. Who is your favorite author?
5. What do you do in the afternoon when school is over?
6. What does your house or school look like?
7. Do you have a piece of the Berlin wall?
8. What school subjects do you study?
9. Are you foods spicy or mild?
10. Do you mind going to school on Saturday?

We come from Emerick Elementary School in Purcellville, VA USA.

We are in a class with a mixture of ages - first, second, and third graders (PALS). We are studying Germany, can you answer our questions?

Good bye and thank you for your information -
Mrs. Burke's class.

(2)

We are students in an American High School learning German and would like to have German speaking pen-friends. There are 33 students who are in their third year of German study and 10 students in their fourth year. The students are 16-17 years old. We would want to communicate in German. About half of these students will be visiting Germany in the summer of 1995. We are located in the state of Minnesota in the Midwest USA.

An here is an answer (uncorrected, as it comes on to my computer screen):

(3)

Hello!

I'm working on a school in germany near Dortmund. In the next days I connect our school to the Internet. With this connection I start a projekt with my 29 students in the age between 16 and 22 to make their experience with this net. I will try to start a communication with students from other countries. That you are learning German is very good, because I think my students are not so good in speaking english. Is is possible to send me a few e-mail adresses were we can post our first messages to the students, because this will be the first thing working on our School-net.
Thanks R.

It is the tip of an iceberg. There are lots of letters and correspondences; very short ones normally going to and fro between continents, Australia, America and Europe. It is fascinating to see new text types evolve, too. The English very often needs working on but these people are using the foreign language spontaneously as if they were on-line, they are not hampered by school grammar and all that. They are using it and doing it. They are movers and shakers.

Do you know Kelly? I love her. Here is what she writes:

(4)

My name is Kelly. I am 9 years old and new on the internet. I would like to be able to have a pen pal who lives in a different

country. My dad says he would like to insure that I don't have to see adult topics/communication to use the internet. I would also like to have a group that is closer to my age. 14 is kind of old for me.

A letter from Russia impressed me greatly.

(5)

04 November 1993

Letter from Moscow * Letter 18
From our Russian Email Co-ordinator
Diana B.

Dear friends!

First of all I would like to thank those who sent messages of concern and support during those frightful October events and those who sent replies to my October message. Very big thanks to all of you! I got very many messages. First I tried to answer every message personally. At first I could catch up with the number of messages I got. But it so happened that besides first replies to the message I began to get replies to my replies. So I gave up. I'm writing this mutual reply and I hope you'll simultaneously accept it as my apology for not answering everybody personally.

The situation seems to be quiet now. I don't think it's really so, it's on the surface. And we don't know what's happening...

...

You can come across other languages as well, e.g. Latin...

(6)

Mihi nomen est Andrea Zanotti, habito in Bologna, in foro G. da Verrazzano 1. Quattuordecim annos natus sum et duco classem tertiam in schola media S. d'Acquisto. Comae meae sunt nigrae atque oculi mei sunt caesi. Altus sum m.1,65. Amo machinas atque "scooter". Scribe mihi quam primum.

Ave atque vale.

ANDREA ZANOTTI

Mihi nomen est Rino Trabace.

Habito in Bologna in via Agucchi 249.

Quattuordecim annos natus sum et duco classem tertiam in schola media S. d'Acquisto. Comae meae sunt nigrae atque oculi mei sunt fusci atque virides. Altus sum m 1,65. Amo ludere soccer, volley-ball, basket.

Cantores magis dilecti mihi sunt Madonna, Prince, R.E.M., Snap, ecc. Scribe mihi quam primum.

Ave atque vale

Rino

Finally, a great variety of themes for internet cooperation between schools in Europe and in the USA can be found from E-Mail project proposals on the European Schools Projects scheme. Here is a selection of some ten years ago. It would be interesting to find out what has come of them:

(7)

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Sharing our feelings, knowledge and culture

Name of your school: Newton H.S.

Address of your school: 48-01 90th street

Elmhurst, NY 11373, USA

Telephone number: (718) 493-5200

E-mail: M08cc@cunyvm.cuny.edu

Fax:

Name(s) of teacher(s): Elisabeth Kennedy

Age group of class: 16 years

Language of communication: English

Countries of priority: United Kingdom, Germany

Period of project: aug. 94 - open

Project description: students will write introductory letters and haiku poetry to other students who will respond and dialogue continued through shared feelings, knowledge and culture.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: French correspondence

Name of your school: Mundella Community College

Address of your school: Wycombe Road, Leicester

LE5 0PR United Kingdom

Telephone number: + 0533 762 761

E-mail: dm4@sukc.ac.uk (for the moment)

Fax:

Name(s) of teacher(s) : Jean Revell

Age group of class: 13 - 14 years

Language of communication: French

Countries of priority:

Period of project:

Project description: correspondence

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: What should we do with all this snow?

Name of your school: C.S. 92

Address of your school: 700E 179th Street

Bx, N.Y. 10469, USA

Telephone number: (718) 713-7900

E-mail: m15cc@cunyvm.cuny.edu

Fax:

Name(s) of teacher(s): Mrs. Nilsa Schrader

Age group of class: 8-9 years

Language of communication: English, Spanish

Countries of priority: Alaska

Period of project: august '94

Project description: Compare and discuss lifestyle, what they do during the winter?

Measure snowfall compared to our snowfall at '93/'94

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: International newsletter

Name of your school: Community School 211

Address of your school: 560 E, 179th Street,
Bronx, N.Y. 10457, USA
Telephone number: (718) 294 9365 66
E-mail: S62CC@cunyvm.cuny.edu
Fax: (718) 583 2391
Name(s) of teacher(s): Mrs. Carla Diaz-Vazquez, Mr. Jaquez,
Mrs. Ida Kivelevick, Mrs. Michael
Age group of class: 11-14 years
Language of communication: English, Spanish
Countries of priority: South Africa, Australia, Santo Domingo
Period of project: April '94 - May/June 94
Project description: Students will develop a newsletter containing
articles pertaining to their school, neighborhood, city and current
events in the United States.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Justice and Rights Alliance
Name of your school: FT.Hamilton H.S.
Address of your school: 8301 Shore Road
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209, USA
Telephone number: (718) SH 5-1537
E-mail: C44CC@cunyvm.cuny.edu
Fax:
Name(s) of teacher(s): Frank Brockway
Age group of class: 15-19 years
Language of communication: English, Spanish
Countries of priority: Brasil, Nicaragua, Mexico
Period of project: April '94 -June '94
Project description: Link up with groups that are active in human
rights on A.P.C. Develop a project of interest to Latino students.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Simultaneous Education Development
Name of your school: Kottenpark College
Address of your school: Lyceumlaan 30, 7522 GK Enschede
The Netherlands
Telephone number: +31 53356925
E-mail: risc@esp.educ.uva.nl
Fax: +31 53-336645
Name(s) of teacher(s): Gerrit van der Glas, Bert Hek
Age group of class: 12-15 years
Countries of priority: Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Spain,
Belgium and France
Period of project: 3 years
Project description:
Exchanging and comparing information about:
how are children in the age of 12-15 years in a grammar school
(comprehensive) prepared to make their choices to a further vocational
education. (This is considered to be a general European problem)
E-mail will be used as a necessary part of the preparation for
a pupilsexchange.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Life Style
Name of your school: Vejby Skole
Address of your school: Femgardsvej
DK-3210 Vejby, Denmark
Telephone number: + 45 48706324
E-mail: dkibms33@ibmmail.com
Fax:
Name(s) of teacher(s): Dorte Larsen
Age group of class: 13 -14 years
Language of communication: French

Countries of priority: no preference
 Period of project: this schoolyear or next
 Project description: a small project; exchanging information about
 ways of life in the two countries. For students who have studies
 French for 1 - 2 years.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: United Nations Junior Peace Initiative
 Name of your school: A.E. Stevenson H.S.
 Address of your school: 7980 Lafayette Avenue, Bronx NY, USA
 Telephone number: (718) 918-2700
 E-mail: S62cc@cunym.cuny.edu
 Fax: 726-4268
 Name(s) of teacher(s): Gloria McChesney, Amelia Rozenbaum,
 Christine Williams
 Age group of class: 16 - 17 years
 Language of communication: English, Spanish
 Countries of priority: Spanish speaking countries
 Period of project:
 Project description: Letter writing between students in relation to
 ideas of how peace could be achieved in the world not only as
 territorial but as a global project.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Junior peacekeeping/Global problems
 Name of your school: H.S. for Tel. , Arts and Technology
 Address of your school: 350 67th street
 Brooklyn, NY 11220, USA
 Telephone number: (718) 745-4800
 E-mail: M15CC@cunym.cuny.edu
 Fax:
 Name(s) of teacher(s): Donna Avino
 Language of communication: English or Spanish
 Countries of priority: Russia, Eastern Europe
 Period of project: May '94
 Project description: Global studies
 1. Introduction
 2. Comparing problems such as acid rain, AIDS, hunger, over- population,
 healthcare, pollution, trash collection, birth control. How does your
 country deal with these issues?
 3. How can international communication help to solve these problems and
 maintain positive relationships between countries.
 4. students propose solutions.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Grandparents' Sparetime in the 90'es
 Name of your school: Skolen ved Kloeften
 Address of your school: Christiansfeldsvej 8A
 6100 Haderslev, Denmark
 Telephone number: +45 7453 1093
 E-mail: dkibmi39@ibmmail.com
 Fax: +45 7453 1239
 Name(s) of teacher(s) : Grethe Primdal-Mogensen
 Lejf Pedersen
 Age group of class: 16 - 17 years
 Language of communication: English
 Countries of priority: It doesn't matter
 Period of project: autumn 1994
 Project description:
 Grandparents' sparetime in the 90es (age 60-70). Introduction: a film or an
 actual letter from the daily paper. A letter is written to the pupil's
 grandparents to tell about our project. Contacts to different places in
 town e. g. clubs, day and nightnursing, the Red Cross where the pupils

can be trainees for 1 or 2 days in order to help, listen, and discuss how their every day life is. All our materials we will use for an exhibition in school and of course we will invite all the grandparents to a nice cup of coffee with cakes and lots of entertainment. If it's possible we would like to send our greetings to our co-operating school this special evening.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Racism/Auslaenderfeindlichkeit

Name of your school: Fredensborg skole

Address of your school: Benediktevej 7

3480 Fredensborg, Denmark

Telephone number: +45 4228 0042

E-mail: dkibml64@ibmmail.com

or: dkibms18@ibmmail.com

Fax: +45 4228 2406

Name(s) of teacher(s) : Nina Lund

Age group of class: 15 - 16 years

Language of communication: English/German

Countries of priority: As many as possible

Period of project: January - February 1995 or September October 1994

Project description:

As the number of refugees and immigrants increase, and we get more and more unemployed people, the hostility towards other ethnic groups is getting worse. Fascist Political Parties are made everywhere. This project might be a way to better understanding and acceptance of each other. Find out about how many refugees/immigrants you have at your school in your community - how do people treat

these people? Write about episodes you have seen or experienced on your own body? (You might be a refugee/immigrant yourself). Tell about your own and other witnesses reaction to this.

Give suggestions of what could be done about this situation.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Myths and legends from here and there.

Name of your school: Faculdade de Ciencias e Tecnologia da Universidade

Nova de Lisboa

Address of your school: Quinta da Torre, 2825 Monte da Caparica

Portugal

Telephone number: + 351 1 2957692

E-mail: ro@educom.fct.unl.pt

or tb@educom.fct.unl.pt

Fax: + 351 1 2941005

Name(s) of teacher(s): Rosario Oliveira, Teresa Barros

Age group of class: 12-18 years

Language of communication: English, French, German, Portuguese

(all as second languages)

Countries of priority: any

Period of project: one year

Project description: The project 'Myths: present and past' is a cultural interchange project. Its main objective is to introduce students to knowledge about other cultures and simultaneously to an understanding to their own cultural identities. We intend to establish links with other cultural experiences using inter-school communication based on telematics. Each Portuguese school will develop an interchange concerning myths and legends with a school of another country to establish a bi-lateral partnership. The final products may take different forms: written, audio or audio/visual. We assume that they will use I.T. and recommend an interdisciplinary approach

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Project: Holidays, Festivals and Customs

Name of school: Gymnazium Krupina

Address of school: Stefanikova 8, 963 01 Krupina, Slovakia

Telephone number: +42-856-21367

E-mail: krajnakšuvt.tuzvo.sk

Fax:

Name of teacher(s) : Elena Oremova - English

Tichomir Tomus - German

Age group of class: From 15 to 18 years

Language of communication: English, German

Countries of priority: all countries

Period of project: From September 94 to May 95

Project description: Students will exchange letters with the description of holidays, festivals and customs in every month or period of a year. We want them to recognize different festivals, their origins, different customs if the festivals are the same, e.g. Christmas, in all the countries which will take part in this project. They can write also about different folk costumes and customs, musical instruments, etc. If there is interest, we can exchange video recordings, audiorecordings or postcards.

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Name of project: Festivals

Name of your school: Walderslade school for boys

Address of your school: Bradfield Ave, Chatham, Kent

ME50LE United Kingdom

Telephone number: 0634 687677

E-mail: esp2šukc.ac.uk

Fax:

Name(s) of teacher(s): Chris Johnson

Age group of class: 11 - 13 years

Language of communication: English (German?)

Countries of priority: any

Period of project:

1. now to July - planning

2. Sep. - Dec. - Exchange of winter festival work

3. Jan. - April - Exchange of other festival work

Project description: A group of schools to get a group of children to write about how they celebrate different festivals. Exchange of work takes place, is discussed in groups, the pupils to contact other pupils with questions and comments.

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PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Project: What's typical for the people in your country?

Name of school: Secondary Grammar School of L. Stur

Address of school: Hronska 3, 960 49 Zvolen, Slovakia

Telephone number: +42-855-23920

E-mail: kudelovašuvt.tuzvo.sk

Fax: +42-855-23397

Name of teacher(s): PhDr.Zita Kudelova

Age group of class: 17 years

Language of communication: English

Countries of priority: U.S.A., Great Britain, Canada

Period of project: Two Months (from October '94 to May '95)

Project description: How would you characterize the people in your country-manners, customs, traditions)

=====

PROJECT PROPOSAL 1994/95

Project: What do the young people do in their leisure time in your country?

Name of school: Secondary Grammar School of L. Stur

Address of school: Hronska 3, 960 49 Zvolen, Slovakia

Telephone number: +42-855-23920

E-mail: kudelovašuvt.tuzvo.sk

Fax: +42-855-23397

Name of teacher(s): PhDr.Zita Kudelova

Age group of class: 17 years

Language of communication: English
 Countries of priority: U.S.A., Great Britain, Canada
 Period of project: Two Months (from October '94 to May '95)
 Project description: How do they spend their spare time-youth activities, interests, hobbies, out-of-school activities

I believe that contacts with and without journeys is what we should work for at home and internationally. There is not time now to deal with other practical implications like exploration tasks in one's own country (e.g. the Frankfurt *Airport Project*, *English Round the Corner*, *Their Life in our Country*). Projects such as these have been dealt with in depth by Michael Legutke and Howard Thomas (1991).

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The speaker

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Nota bene:

The slides used with this talk are assembled in a Power Point presentation which can be downloaded from the Rome 2005 conference site:
 LEND05_Edelhoff_slides.ppt