“NEWS & NOTES OF THE PROFESSION” WEL-
comes reader contributions. We are particularly
interested in (but not limited to) the following
kinds of information:

- **Calendar of Events** (e.g., upcoming confer-
ences). Please ask your organization’s pub-
lis to send us information at least one
year before the event.
- **Professional Announcements** (e.g., calls for pa-
papers, requests for proposals, special sum-
mer programs, new degree programs,
grants received).
- **Professional Initiatives and Concerns** (e.g., ma-
ajor funded research projects from around
the world, legislative developments, inter-
national projects or programs).

Submission deadlines and procedures: There is a 6-
month lead time for the appearance of an item in
the **Calendar** and the **Professional Announcements**.
Please observe the following submission schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Announcements that reach us by . . .</th>
<th>Will appear in the issue of . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2002</td>
<td>Fall (September) 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 June 2002</td>
<td>Winter (December) 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 September 2002</td>
<td>Spring (March) 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 2002</td>
<td>Summer (June) 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items may be submitted directly to the editor of
this column by mail, fax, or electronic mail; see
listings in the masthead at the front of this issue.

**2001 EVENTS**

**Modern Language Association of America**, 27–30
December, New Orleans. Contact: MLA, 10 Astor
Place, New York, NY 10003-6981; Fax (212) 477-
9863, Email: convention@mla.org

**North American Association of Teachers of
Czech**, 27–30 December, New Orleans. Contact:
George Cummins III, German and Russian, Tu-
lane University, New Orleans, LA 70118; (504)
899-7915, Fax (504)865-5276, Email: cummins@

**American Association for Applied Linguistics**, 6–9 April, Salt Lake City. Contact: AAAL, P. O.
Box 21686, Eagan, MN 55121-0686; (612) 953-0805, Fax (612) 431-8404, Email: aaaloffice@aaal.org Web: www.aaal.org

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 9–13 April, Salt Lake City. Contact: TESOL, 700 South Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864, Email: conv@tesol.edu, Web: www.tesol.org

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 18–21 April, New York. Contact: Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, P. O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; (717) 245-1977, Fax (717) 245-1976, Email: nectfl@dickinson.edu Web: www.dickinson.edu/nectfl

American Association of Teachers of French, 11–14 July, Boston. Contact: Jayne Abrate, AATF, Mailcode 4510, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901-4510; (618) 453-5731, Fax (618) 453-5733, Email: abrate@siu.edu Web: aatf.utsa.edu/

American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, July 29–August 2, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Contact: 423 Exton Commons, Exton, PA 19341-2451, (610) 363-7005, Fax (610) 363-7116, Web: www.aatsp.org

National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages, 20–21 November, Salt Lake City. Contact: Loretta Williams, Plano ISD, 150 Sunset, Plano, TX 75075; (972) 519-8196, Fax (972) 519-8031, Email: lwillia@pisd.edu

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 22–24 November, Salt Lake City. Contact: ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; (914) 963-8830, Fax (914) 963-1275, Email: actflhq@aol.com Web: www.actfl.org

American Association of Teachers of German, 22–24 November, Salt Lake City. Contact: AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; (856) 795-5553, Fax (856) 795-9398, Email: headquarters@aatg.org Web: www.aatg.org

American Association of Teachers of Italian, 22–24 November, Salt Lake City. Contact: AATI, Chris Kleinhenz, Department of French and Italian, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1220 Linden Drive, 618 Van Hise Hall, Madison, WI 53706; (608) 262-3941, Fax (608) 265-3892, Email: ckleinhe@facstaff.wisc.edu Web: www.italianstudies.org/aati/

Chinese Language Teachers Association, 22–24 November, Salt Lake City. Contact: CLTA, Center for Chinese Studies, Moore Hall #416, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96844; (808) 956-2692, Fax (808) 956-2682, Email: cyndy@hawaii.edu Web: clta.deall.ohio-state.edu

American Association of Teachers of Arabic, 23 November, Washington, DC. Contact: John Eisele, Department of Modern Languages & Literature, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795; (757) 221-3145, Email: jceise@facstaff.wm.edu

American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages with Middle East Studies Association, 23–26 November, Washington, DC. Contact: AATT, 110 Jones Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544-1008; (609) 258-1435, Fax (609) 258-1242, Email: ehgilson@princeton.edu Web: www.princeton.edu/~ehgilson/aatt.html

AILA 2002, 13th World Congress, 16–21 December, Singapore. Contact: AILA 2002 Singapore, c/o Conference & Travel Management Assoc. Pte Ltd, 425A Race Course Road, Singapore 218671; (65) 299 8999, Fax (65) 299 8983, Email: ctmapl@singnet.com.sg Web: www.aila2002.org

Modern Language Association of America, 27–30 December, New Orleans. Contact: MLA, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981; Fax (212) 477-9863, Email: convention@mla.org Web: www.mla.org

North American Association of Teachers of Czech, 27–30 December, New Orleans. Contact: George Cummins III, German and Russian, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118; (504) 899-7915, Fax (504) 865-5276, Email: gcummins@mailhost.tcs.tulane.edu Web: www.language.brown.edu/NAATC/index.html

American Association of Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages and American Council of Teachers of Russian, 27–30 December, New Orleans. Contact: AATSEEL, 1933 N. Fountain Park Dr., Tucson, AZ 85715; Fax (520) 885-2663, Email: aatseel@compuserve.com Web: clover.slavic.pitt.edu/~aatseel/

2003 EVENTS

Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 6–8 March, Minneapolis. Contact: Diane Ging, P. O. Box 21531, Columbus, OH 43221-0531; (614) 529-0109, Fax (614) 529-0321, Email: dging@iwaynet.net Web: centralstates.cc/
Language Instruction for Diverse Learners, 9–11 March, Arlington, VA. Contact: Web: www.langinnovate.msu.edu/conference03.htm

American Association for Applied Linguistics, 22–25 March, Baltimore. Contact: AAAL, P. O. Box 21686, Eagan, MN 55121-0686; (612) 953-0805, Fax (612) 431-8404, Email: aaaloffice@aaal.org Web: www.aaal.org

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 25–29 March, Baltimore. Contact: TESOL, 700 South Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864, Email: conv@tesol.edu Web: www.tesol.edu

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 10–13 April, Washington, DC. Contact: Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, P. O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; (717) 245-1977, Fax (717) 245-1976, Email: nectfl@dickinson.edu Web: www.dickinson.edu/nectfl

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 20–23 November, Philadelphia. Contact: ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; (914) 963-8830, Fax (914) 963-1275, Email: actflhq@aol.com Web: www.actfl.org

American Association of Teachers of German, 20–23 November, Philadelphia. Contact: AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; (856) 795-5553, Fax (856) 795-9398, Email: headquarters@aatg.org Web: www.aatg.org

Chinese Language Teachers Association, 20–23 November, Philadelphia. Contact: CLTA, Center for Chinese Studies, Moore Hall #416, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96844; (808) 956-2692, Fax (808) 956-2682, Email: cyndy@hawaii.edu Web: clta.deall.ohio-state.edu

**PROFESSIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

New M.A. Program in Second Language Acquisition and Application at the University of Maryland–College Park. The foreign language departments at the University of Maryland at College Park are pleased to announce a new interdisciplinary M.A. degree in Second Language Acquisition and Application. This 2-year M.A. program has been designed for researchers, language teachers, translators and interpreters, government service professionals, social service employees, and all those interested in the acquisition and application of languages other than English. Students apply to a specific language department (French, German, Russian, and Spanish currently; Japanese and Chinese forthcoming) and take advanced courses in that language as well as interdepartmental courses in SLA. For more information, see the Web site at www.umd.edu/sla.

New Ph.D. Degree Options in German Applied Linguistics and Spanish Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Penn State University. As part of a series of curricular changes and collaborations between departments and programs at the Pennsylvania State University, the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures and the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese in conjunction with the Program in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies offer two new degree options for graduate students pursuing an interest in applied linguistics studies with a focus on German and Spanish respectively. Detailed descriptions of the degrees can be found electronically at http://lals.psu.edu. Specific information on the German degree option may be obtained from: Daniel Purdy, Graduate Advisor, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 16802; Email: dlp14@psu.edu. Specific information on the Spanish degree option may be obtained from: A. Jacqueline Toribio, Graduate Advisor, Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 16802; Email: ajt2@psu.edu.

National Linguistic Assets Database. Recognizing that the changing demographics in the United States and the resulting diversity in U.S. classrooms have contributed to increased need for resources and practitioners from a variety of language groups, the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) is developing a fully searchable database to identify resource individuals and organizations. For the database, the NCBE is seeking to register individuals who are fluent in English and at least one other language and who can serve as resources for schools and local education agencies. Also sought are organizations offering translation/interpretation services, referrals, and other language related resources. Online registration is available through the NCBE homepage at www.ncbe.gwu.edu.

The Rosetta Project. Given the possibility that handwritten linguistic material in and about the less commonly documented languages may decay
or may not be easily accessible, the Rosetta Project aims to preserve linguistic data by creating a broad corpus of language descriptions, vernacular texts, analytic materials, and audio files for 1,000 languages in an online archive and in various extreme term storage media. The project is seeking the help of linguists, anthropologists, translators, and users of the 1,000 languages who can contribute texts or review comments in their languages of expertise. To promote the collaboration, an online working environment has been created, offering access to all the texts currently in the database and providing various tools for text review, annotation, and discussion. For more information visit the newly established Web site at www.longnow.org or consult Jim Mason, Director, The Rosetta Project, Long Now Foundation, Email: jimmason@longnow.org.

Two National Conferences: Distance Learning of the Less Commonly Taught Languages and Language Instruction for Diverse Learners

The first conference (February 4–6, 2002, Doubletree Inn, Pentagon City, Arlington, VA) is being organized by the Title VI Centers at Michigan State University in collaboration with NCO-LCTL, NFLC, CARLA, and NFLRC Hawaii and is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. It aims to disseminate information on the state-of-the-art in distance learning for LCTLs. Commissioned papers will be presented on the national climate for LCTL instruction, features of high quality distance learning courses, cutting-edge developments in language learning technology, learner assessment, and program evaluation. Distance learning programs across the United States will also be outlined and discussed, and Title VI centers will have the opportunity to initiate and coordinate systematic development of distance learning for the LCTLs.

The second conference (March 9–11, 2003, Doubletree Inn, Pentagon City, Arlington, VA) aims to identify innovative teaching methods for a variety of learner groups, such as heritage learners, study abroad students, undergraduates, government and professional learners, and graduate students conducting research in archives or in the field. More information will become available at http://langinnovate.msu.edu.

GOLDEN (German On-Line Distance Education Network) is an interactive online teacher development project, sponsored by AATG, the Goethe Institute, and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. It offers teachers of German innovative distance learning courses on Instructional Planning, Technologically Enriched Language Instruction (TELI), Writing Pedagogy, Reading Pedagogy, Listening Pedagogy, and Speaking Pedagogy, via the Web. Participants can earn three graduate credits from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. This interactive asynchronous learning environment allows participants to work individually, in small groups, and with course instructors. Five learning activities (online journals, professional teaching portfolio, online discussion groups, electronic blackboards, and small group problem-solving environments) allow the participants to interact with both instructors and peers. Courses are limited to 15 participants. Information is available at http://golden.unl.edu. For questions about registration, please contact Joan Campbell, Email: goldenfrau@mediaone.net.

New Visions Web Site. The project “New Visions,” on which we reported in our last issue, has activated its own Website at http://www.educ.iastate.edu/newvisions. Readers will find updated information on the progress and development of the project.

European Year of Languages Web Site. Although the European Year to celebrate languages is officially over, readers are still encouraged to take a look at some of the year’s worthwhile activities which continue to be posted on the official Web site available at: www.eurolang2001.org/eyl/indexFull.htm. Aside from event-related news, readers will also find a wide array of tidbits (e.g., games, language statistics, links) in the official languages of the European Union.

PROFESSIONAL INITIATIVES AND CONCERNS

Advisory Committee: Kees de Bot (University of Nijmegen), Lioba Moshi (University of Georgia), Richard Young (University of Wisconsin–Madison). Unless otherwise noted, items have been written by the Associate Editor, News & Notes.

Two New Initiatives for Future German Teachers and Students—TraiNDaf and WISP

Behind the catchy acronyms, we find two innovative programs recently launched by the AATG in collaboration with the Goethe Institute, the German government, and other organizations. TraiNDaf (partially a German acronym, where TraiNDaf stands for “Training in Deutsch als Fremdsprache” [German as a Foreign Language]) is a program directed toward preparing future leaders in the field of German language teaching in the United States. WISP (Work Immersion
Study Program) aims to promote German programs in community colleges.

TraiNDaf has just completed its first year of operation and will continue for 2 more years. As Helene Zimmer-Loew of AATG relates, the major goal of TraiNDaf is to develop a strong cadre of younger professionals who, after a period of professional development through the program, will be able to inform and mentor colleagues in their regions of the United States. AATG initiated TraiNDaf after a recent survey of the organization’s members revealed that a future shortage of German teachers was inevitable. Specifically, the survey showed that 45% of the current teachers are 50 years of age or older, 27% are between the ages of 41 and 50, and only 28% are under the age of 40.

Given this need to professionalize young teachers into their future roles, the specific objectives of the program are: (a) to develop leadership skills and help participants rethink their roles, practices, and beliefs about leadership; (b) to present networking opportunities within and beyond the field of German and foreign languages; (c) to familiarize participants with the breadth of activities of the AATG and with the broader field of world languages at all levels of instruction; (d) to develop strategies for advocating German at all levels of instruction; and (e) to develop opportunities and strategies for meaningful communication among faculty at all levels of instruction. Participants in this year’s program took part in several sessions on advocacy and leadership, learned about German- and American-based organizations that support teachers of German at all levels of instruction, and attended professional development seminars in Germany during the summer.

The program concluded with an extended meeting at the annual AATG conference. Interested individuals may find further information at the AATG Web site: www.aatg.org. The deadline for applying for the 2002 program is January 17, 2002.

WISP is a cooperative effort among community college leaders, AATG, the CDS International, and the Goethe Institute. The program, which received a generous contribution from the Max Kade Foundation, Inc., provides students in community colleges with the opportunity to study the German language and work in Germany during the summer. With 1,132 community colleges currently operating in the United States and an enrollment of 5.5 million students and steadily rising numbers, community colleges play an important role in workforce preparation. Of these colleges, more than a third offer foreign languages. However, instructors of German in some community colleges have noted that the number of students who want to study the language is declining. Many students focus only on career-oriented subjects and do not see the value of including a foreign language in their courses of study despite the fact that the global economy has opened international borders and that a constant flow of specialists will be needed to serve the growing market. WISP is trying to address and improve this situation by providing stipends to individual students for work and study in Germany and by helping community college instructors increase the visibility of the German programs on their campuses and in their communities. The program is open to students who are pursuing studies in technical fields, such as engineering and computing, or international business and marketing, who have demonstrated excellence in their respective professional subject areas, and who have successfully completed at least 1 semester of language instruction. They must be willing to communicate in German in everyday situations and able to live and work in another culture. The first group of 10 students (from California, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, and Washington) worked as paid interns for 2 months in a range of companies in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg. Their internships were preceded by a 4-week language course offered by the Goethe Institute. WISP deadlines are in January of each calendar year. Specific details may be obtained from CDS International at www.cdsintl.org/wispappl.html or from the AATG at www.aatg.org.

Sources: AATG Web site, AATG Newsletter, AATG Executive Director Helene Zimmer-Loew

The European Language Portfolio®—An Update

In our June issue (MLJ 85, 2), we reported on several new language policies issued by the European Union over the past few years. One of these policies involved establishing the European Language Portfolio® (ELP), an instrument designed to document and record the language learning histories and national qualifications of individual language users. The ELP is an effort to facilitate the comparison of the language competence of users, who not only belong to different learner groups (children, adolescents, adults) but also come from different countries and from widely divergent educational contexts (rural elementary schools, middle-schools and high-schools, universities, adult education courses, etc.). This “News
The Council's report also singled out positive are perceived by learners as important objectives. Portfolio assessment generally claims to develop, that learner autonomy and responsibility, which thought that it "puts more responsibility on the in-
them "to see progress in learning," and 68% language," 69% felt that the portfolio helped
helped them "to show what they can do in a foreign learners indicated that they felt that the ELP al-
Toward the end of the pilot phase, 79% of all
Material section of their portfolios. Responses from both learners and teachers.
certain amount of insecurity leading to negative responses from both learners and teachers.

The European Commission also gathered feedback related to other principles, such as “all learning and all competence is valued.” Among the teachers, 75% found the ELP useful in helping them clarify learning objectives with learners and generally thought that the construction of a portfolio helped to involve learners in the learning process. Most learners valued the self-reflection on their learning goals and objectives and responded positively to the opportunity to describe their out-of-school learning experiences in the Language Biography section of their portfolios. Toward the end of the pilot phase, 79% of all learners indicated that they felt that the ELP allowed them "to show what they can do in a foreign language," 69% felt that the portfolio helped them "to see progress in learning," and 68% thought that it "puts more responsibility on the individual as learner." All four percentages indicate that learner autonomy and responsibility, which portfolio assessment generally claims to develop, are perceived by learners as important objectives. The Council’s report also singled out positive comments by students from migrant families, who enjoyed working with portfolios because they were able to demonstrate language competence in several languages and saw that their family languages were being recognized and valued.

Function. Feedback on the function of the portfolio related to its use for self-assessment, training, and for assigning grades and to its need to be both varied by institution and learner and stable in basic format across Europe. Of the learners, 70% thought that the ELP helped them assess their own competence and found it valuable in comparing the teacher’s assessment with their own; 62% of the teachers thought their learners were capable of assessing their own learning, but the remaining 38% were skeptical. To facilitate and standardize learner self-assessment, the Council developed a self-assessment scale. It divides language users into three main groups—basic, independent, and proficient—each of which is differentiated into two sublevels. A narrative scale describes ability in “Understanding” (divided into listening and reading), “Speaking” (divided into spoken interaction and spoken production) and “Writing.” For example, the descriptions for reading across the different groups are as follows:

1. For basic users at level 1: “I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.”

2. For basic users at level 2: “I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.”

3. For independent users at level 1: “I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings, and wishes in personal letters.”

4. For independent users at level 2: “I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.”

5. And for proficient users at level 2: “I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialized articles and literary works.”

With regard to questions about validity or reliability as compared to teacher formative or summative evaluation and to results on traditional fi-
nal exams or standardized tests, the Council explains that there are no easy or generally acceptable answers. When it came to assigning grades, some teachers in the pilot project called for further clarification of the status of the ELP. Some teachers expressed concern over the generality of the descriptors on the evaluation scale and suggested more detailed level descriptions, descriptors, and checklists. Other teachers addressed the relationship between portfolio assessment and traditional exams and questioned whether employers would accept self-assessment as a valid form of assessment in nonschool contexts. Both teachers and learners asked for calibrated and professionally validated evaluation tools and for examinations and transparent links to national exams and diplomas. All of the participants, teachers and students, saw the need for more training in effective portfolio use. Despite these occasional concerns, the Council advocates implementation of portfolio assessment. It recognizes that as an innovative and new approach for both learners and teachers, portfolio assessment is likely to conflict with traditions and may seem to challenge some of the established ways of measuring and reporting progress and achievement in language learning.

Variation and stability were also addressed in the pilot study. As is generally the case in portfolio assessment, a seeming contradiction exists between variation and stability. That is, although the essence of portfolio assessment is to allow for individualization (variation), some features need to be the same for all users, so that the portfolio can be used comparatively (stability). In order to aid teachers in implementing portfolios, the coordination group of the ELP pilot project developed three different ELP models—a Junior ELP (intended for ages 6 to 11), a School ELP (for ages 11 to 16), and an Adult ELP (for ages 15 plus). For each model, core features were defined. The Common Core of a ELP consists of the common principles and guidelines, the Common European Framework, a recognizable design, and the overall European aims. Eight European aims are listed: (a) to deepen mutual understanding among citizens in Europe, (b) to respect diversity of cultures and ways of life, (c) to protect and promote linguistic and cultural diversity, (d) to develop plurilingualism as a life-long process, (e) to develop language learners, (f) to develop the capacity for independent language learning, (g) to make language programs transparent and to enhance their coherence, and (h) to provide a clear description of language competence and language qualifications in order to facilitate the mobility of citizens.

The recognizable design mandates that the ELP consist of three parts.

1. A Passport section provides an overview of an individual’s proficiency in different languages at a given point in time. This overview is defined in terms of skills and uses the reference levels in the Common European Framework. In this part, formal qualifications are listed, and language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences are described. Information on partial and specific competencies may be included (for instance, being able to read in a third or fourth language would be considered as partial competence). The Passport also includes learner self-assessment, teacher assessment, and assessment by educational institutions and examination boards.

2. A Language Biography facilitates the learners’ involvement in planning and encourages them to reflect upon their learning process and progress. In the Biography, learners state what they can do in each language and present information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in formal or informal educational contexts.

3. A Dossier offers learners the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Biography or Passport sections.

The Council of Europe has established a validation committee to evaluate and accredit the different portfolio models created by teachers at various institutions throughout Europe. If the committee finds that the model meets the criteria for a ELP, it is validated and carries an accreditation number. Accredited portfolio models are a step toward facilitating comparisons of competence across learning environments. National and institutional variations are thus reflected in the variant components of the ELP model and show sensitivity to educational policies, curricular priorities, traditions, and experience. Final assessment showed that the greatest benefits of the ELP accrued when the portfolio was appropriately adapted to its particular group of learners and when it was introduced in reasonable harmony with the characteristics of the specific educational setting.

In the conclusion of the report of the pilot study, the Council urges authorities and educational institutions not only to create portfolios but also to reflect upon their use. They emphasize that stakeholders need to recognize learners as the owners of their ELPs, and to ensure learners access to their
portfolios. The Council stresses that the learners should be encouraged to develop competencies in several languages, even at modest levels of proficiency (cf. EuroComRom on third language acquisition below). Training in portfolio construction and use are essential for the ELP to become a successful tool. The Council strongly suggests that institutions assist teachers and learners in the process and disseminate examples of good practice.

Source: Council of Europe, ELP Web site

What about Third, Fourth, and Fifth Languages?—Life beyond L2

Most people today grow up in societies where knowing only one language is the exception rather than the rule. In the majority of today’s international societies, people know and use more than two languages in their daily lives. In fact, in Europe and northern Africa, trade and societal conditions often require competence in at least three languages. Third language acquisition (TLA), or tertiary language learning and multilingualism, rather than second language acquisition (SLA) and bilingualism are real-life norms for many people. As a consequence, we are also beginning to see the emergence of language policies focusing on multilingual education. For example, many countries have established educational policies that encourage children to learn to speak three languages from the start of primary school, and other countries are introducing foreign languages as compulsory subjects earlier in the school curriculum, moving them from fourth or fifth grade to second grade.

Reflective of this value on multiple language knowledge, the number of international conferences about TLA has grown substantially over the past few years. Small meetings of scholars were held at the University of Haifa (Israel) in 1992 and 1995. The First International Conference on Trilingualism and Tertiary Languages was held in Innsbruck (Austria) in 1999, and the Second International Conference on Trilingualism and Tertiary Languages followed in September 2000 in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert (The Netherlands). At the 1999 meeting more than 50 papers were presented, at the 2000 conference the number increased to approximately 90 presentations by scholars from around the world, including Singapore, India, Japan, Hong Kong, South Africa, Israel, North America, and Europe. Interested readers will find abstracts of the conference at the L3 website at www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_L3/. In addition to the two larger conferences, four colloquia have been held over the years: in Norway (1995), in Bulgaria (1997), in Sweden (1998), and in the United Kingdom in April 2001.

International projects on TLA have also been initiated. For instance, the Project EuroComRom (European Intercomprehension), housed at the University of Frankfurt, focuses on foreign language comprehension. When the Council of Europe and the European Commission concentrated their efforts on multilingual education, and delineated its policies, three particular aspects were highlighted: (a) educating language users who can competently understand more than one language, (b) developing language competence in particular skills for use in business/work related environments, and (c) building on the linguistic relatedness of language systems that language learners already know. Following these guidelines, collaborators in EuroComRom are studying specific aspects of language comprehension as L1 users of German acquire reading comprehension in Romance languages and are developing specific teaching and self-learning materials for that learner group. Materials for Romance language comprehension have been published and have inspired research into creating materials for Germanic and Slavic languages. More details about this project are available at www.eurocom-frankfurt.de/forsch.htm. A second project, “Creating Synergy in Learning Subsequent Languages,” focuses on the development of a specific didactic concept for tertiary language teaching and learning. Funded by the European Union in conjunction with the Goethe Institute, it concentrates on German as a second foreign language (after English). As part of this project there have been meetings at Graz (Austria), Munich (Germany), and Riga (Latvia) to discuss the theoretical implications of a comprehensive model of teaching and learning L3. Additional events are planned for next year. More information on Creating Synergy can be found as “Project 1.1.2” at www.ecml.at under “activities” listed by the European Centre for Modern Languages.

Although projects and studies into multilingualism are becoming more widespread, there is still much interesting work to be carried out. Interested readers will find more information on TLA (an extensive bibliography; conference announcements; abstracts of papers, etc.) at the “L3-Projekt” at www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_L3, which is housed at the Language Center at the Technical University of Darmstadt.

Britta Hufeisen and Nicole Marx
Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany