

## Training Teachers for IT - Joint Event - IATEFL Computer & Teacher Trainers & Educators SIGs

16 - 18 NOVEMBER 2001 - BELL SCHOOL, SAFFRON WALDEN

### Description

TT for IT spanned Friday evening 16th November, all day Saturday and the morning of Sunday 18th November. The focus of the Friday evening was Diane Slaouti's fascinating plenary in which she discussed the importance of teachers owning innovations in teaching practice which occur as a result of developments in technology. She supported this with reference to a range of case-studies.

Saturday was taken up with four hands-on workshops. Clive Newton presented ideas on how to loop the use of the word processor and PowerPoint for language practice and feedback for both teacher training sessions and activities for students. Paul Hullock explored how authentic websites can be exploited methodologically for the promotion of integrated skills. Kenny Graham introduced participants to the basics of html and its advantages in terms of flexibility. Paul Seddon discussed organisational considerations in teacher-led authoring of interactive language tasks, presented alternative authoring packages and then provided opportunities for participants to practise authoring a Hot Potatoes task.

The first part of Sunday comprised Rosemary Wilson's stimulating and amusing plenary in which she considered the speed at which technology is changing and the implications of this for teacher education. The second part of Sunday was an open forum which focused firstly on issues arising from all the input, and then on a discussion of the direction such events should take in the future.

### Participants

46 participants enrolled, however, one or two did not turn up and one or two arrived late on the Saturday. Some had only booked for the Saturday. The majority were UK-based but some had travelled from Europe.

### Evaluation

Twenty six evaluation forms were returned, out of a maximum of forty three participants attending on the Saturday. Comments on all the sessions, including the two plenaries, ranged from good to excellent, with the vast majority towards the 'excellent' end.

Comments included:

#### *Positive*

Excellent and very relevant

Triggered new possibilities and applications

All workshops highly informative

Excellent. Lost of ideas for me.

All talks were of a very high standard, interesting and well presented

#### *Negative (a small minority)*

Not sure if this fitted in the title of the workshop

#### *Other comments (also a small minority)*

Good as a starting point, would like to have been more deep

Very rich but possibly too much sampling

### Overall

Participants seemed to fall into two camps: those with experience of some classroom application who may have benefited from more advanced work and those for whom the balance was just right. However, it was not really clarified what was meant by 'advanced' and whether this related to methodological implications and procedures or technological implications and procedures, though comments on the evaluation form do suggest that more consideration of the former would have been beneficial. This is something which would need to be clarified for future events. In addition, the number of participants who were regularly engaged in teacher training seemed relatively small, so issues such as how IT is integrated into formal INSET and PRESET were only briefly touched on in reflection periods. On the other hand, it seemed that many of the participants did have the brief to run training sessions on the use of IT in ELT, based on this conference, once back in their contexts. It will be interesting to find out how these go.

During the final open forum, which was a very valuable opportunity for the raising of issues and reflection, all agreed that more similar events should be run, but need more time devoted to them, particularly possibly considering implementation, integration taking into account institutional and syllabus constraints, and support for colleagues. One suggestion for an online event was made and the logistics and timing of this are already being considered.

### Venue

Bell International, Saffron Walden did a first-rate job in all aspects of the organisation and the event ran like clockwork. This was backed up with comfortable accommodation and excellent food in relaxing surroundings.

### Special thanks go to:

Bell International, and especially all the service staff at Saffron Walden; Rosemary Wilson; Jenny Johnson; Paul Seddon

Clive Newton: November 2001