

**AN ANALYSIS OF RETENTION STRATEGIES AND
TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING
IN BEGINNERS' LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH
(LOTE) AT AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES**



THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF THE HUMANITIES

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A REPORT PREPARED BY
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SEPTEMBER 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project by the Australian Academy of the Humanities was conducted with funding from the Australian Research Council under the Linkages – Learned Academies Special Projects scheme, and was undertaken by a project team based at the University of Melbourne. It followed directly the earlier (2006-7) LASP study, *Beginners’ LOTE (Languages Other than English) in Australian Universities: an Audit Survey and Analysis*¹ (LASP 1), and in particular the first and fourth recommendations of the report of that study:

Creation of a National Languages Task-Force/ Network for the ongoing analysis and support of beginners’ LOTE courses in Australian Universities;

and

A large-scale national study of retention and attrition should be undertaken immediately, and its findings widely diffused; and likewise, a more detailed study is needed of the uses of technology.

The present study was underpinned by a belief in the importance of tertiary beginners’ languages provision, and the sense of urgency springing from the knowledge that the sector has for some time been under unsustainable stress.

The report is structured in three sections:

1. The retention and attrition study
2. The technology study
3. The *Beyond the Crisis* colloquium

1. Retention and Attrition

We sought to determine the factors shaping the major patterns of retention and attrition across the range of languages taught by participating institutions, including student motivation, intention, and previous language experience, on the one hand; and institutional practice and policy on the other. It combined the use of (a) student questionnaires with (b) in-depth discussions between the first Leading Chief Investigator and interlocutors representing participating institutions. While there needs to be a more widely agreed definition of what constitutes “attrition”, the major factors contributing to student non-continuation with language studies emerge as being:

- Late enrolment
- Mixed proficiency classes
- Perceived workload issues
- Possible mismatch of student motivations and course design

¹ The report of this study can be consulted on the website of the Australian Academy of the Humanities: www.humanities.org.au

It is however also the case that the quality of classroom teaching is highly regarded by students, and that students' intentions suggest that, with appropriate action, significant improvements in retention rates are readily achievable.

The discussions with individual institutions underscored the general (although not universal) fragility of the "languages culture" in Australian universities, and, notwithstanding a keen sense of the ongoing importance of institutional individuality and autonomy, stressed the need for greater ongoing coherence and communication across the sector.

2. The Technology Study

The technology section of the study sought to collect and collate information about uses of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) in three universities identified in LASP 1 as being particularly active in the field. The participants in the study comprised 22 language teachers across the three universities. The study examined different uses of TELL, and perceived impediments to its use. Its most important conclusions are that while almost all the language teacher participants in this study are involved in the development of TELL materials, they mostly work alone. If the benefits of this creative potential are to have wider application, more accessible, flexible and effective ways need to be developed for collaboration and exchange.

3. The *Beyond the Crisis* Colloquium

Organised under the auspices of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and held at the University of Melbourne (16-18 February 2009) the colloquium hosted more than 140 delegates, from 30 different institutions, and representing 14 languages. The delegates included teachers, researchers, and planners. The colloquium was comprised of workshops as well as presentations of current research and innovative initiatives. It was agreed that, while different languages face distinctive needs, all languages and the nation will benefit from a more strongly articulated language teaching and learning culture in higher education. Furthermore, the assembly agreed to create a "National Tertiary Languages Network".

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That universities, at the policy level, give explicit and urgent recognition to the strategic importance of the study of languages and cultures; and that they develop appropriate strategies and provide adequate resources for the promotion and effective maintenance of these studies. This would include attention and resources be given to providing appropriate identification procedures (such as placement tests), and sufficient course levels and pathways to allow learners with diverse language backgrounds to be grouped according to their proficiency and learning needs, so that their full learning potential can be realised.

Recommendation 2: That the university sector (perhaps through DASSH) work towards a uniform and nuanced definition of what constitutes attrition, and that the relevant faculties generate and make readily available comparative statistics about attrition in languages and other humanities and social sciences areas.

Recommendation 3: That individual languages programmes across Australia consider the practice of a motivation/intention/background questionnaire on the model of the one used in LASP 2, to be administered to all students early in the first semester of their language study. The questionnaire takes only a few minutes of class time and, although the recording and analysis of data is time-consuming, this should be budgeted for by the relevant schools in order to provide a clearer picture of the student cohort and their motivations and intentions, to better predict class sizes, to facilitate staff planning, and to provide a basis for ongoing curriculum review. The information gathered could be shared through the National Tertiary Languages Network.

Recommendation 4: That the National Tertiary Languages Network undertake, as a matter of priority, to engage with the issues raised in relation to TELL, particularly with a view to enabling increased collaboration and exchange across the sector.

PREAMBLE

This project by the Australian Academy of the Humanities was conducted with funding from the Australian Research Council under the Learned Academies Special Projects scheme, and was undertaken by a project team based at the University of Melbourne.² It followed directly the earlier (2006-7) LASP study, *Beginners' LOTE (Languages Other than English) in Australian Universities: an Audit Survey and Analysis*³, and in particular the first and fourth recommendations of the report of that study (hereafter referred to as LASP 1):

- ***Creation of a National Languages Task-Force/ Network for the ongoing analysis and support of beginners' LOTE courses in Australian Universities***

and

- ***A large-scale national study of retention and attrition should be undertaken immediately, and its findings widely diffused; and likewise, a more detailed study is needed of the uses of technology***

The first recommendation was addressed by the colloquium *Beyond the Crisis: Revitalising Languages in Australian Universities*, held at the University of Melbourne 16-18 February 2009, for which a summary is provided in our third section.

Following the obtaining of ethics approval, the retention and attrition study, together with the analysis of uses of technology, was conducted from early April 2008, when the success of the application was finally announced. It was completed in February 2009.

All universities involved in the 2006-7 LASP Project opted to continue their participation: Australian National University, Griffith University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, the University of Melbourne, the University of New England, the University of Queensland, the University of South Australia, the University of Sydney and the University of Western Australia. In addition, the University of Technology, Sydney agreed to join the study. This group covered all

² The overall investigative team consisted of Prof. Colin Nettelbeck (First Chief Investigator), Dr John Byron (Australian Academy of the Humanities), Prof. Michael Clyne, A/Prof. Cathie Elder, Prof. John Hajek, Prof. Mike Levy, A/Prof. Anne McLaren, Prof. Martina Möllering and Prof. Gillian Wigglesworth. The technology team was led by Prof. Mike Levy, and included Profs. Kerry Dunne and Martina Möllering. The teams were assisted by a Project Officer, Dr Mary Stevens, and benefited from administrative assistance provided by Dr Doris Schupbach, Elisabetta Ferrari and Tamsin Moran.

³ The report of this study can be consulted on the website of the Australian Academy of the Humanities: www.humanities.org.au

mainland capitals and one regional centre, with representation from Go8, ATN, IRUA and ungrouped institutions.

The study was underpinned by both a belief in the importance of tertiary languages provision, and a sense of urgency. Language study is a key mechanism in maintaining and expanding Australia's language capacity and is, therefore, critical to achieving national objectives with respect to improvements in trade, career pathways, international mobility, research capacity, technological developments and community as well as individual engagement. A major responsibility for enhancing the nation's language ability falls on the university sector. In Australia, universities are uniquely positioned to tie in successful language learning with desired national outcomes, such as those listed above. This activity is also a major priority for Australian universities in a context of increasing internationalisation of higher education. The Australian universities need to offer the widest possible range of languages and the best possible means of learning them. For many students, university provides the first experience of new and/or different languages. In this context, the issue of whether Australian universities are doing as well as they can in terms of beginners languages provision is clearly a critical one.

The sense of urgency derived from the wide recognition that the tertiary languages sector is in crisis. Acknowledged in 2002 by the Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH), this critical situation was further documented in the various reports emanating from the Collaborative and Structural Reform Fund (CASR) project, and particularly the findings of White and Baldauf (2006) pointing to continuing erosion of the number of languages being taught and of continuing teaching staff, as well as in the 2007 Group of Eight report *Languages in Crisis: a Rescue Plan for Australia*, and in the LASP 1 report.

The present report is structured in three sections:

- 1. The retention and attrition study**
- 2. The technology study**
- 3. The *Beyond the Crisis* colloquium**

1. RETENTION AND ATTRITION

This part of the study had as its starting point the major patterns of retention and attrition across the range of languages taught by participating institutions – as established in LASP 1. It sought to determine the factors shaping those patterns, including student motivation, intention, and previous language experience, on the one hand; and institutional practice and policy on the other. Sharing of information occurred with a detailed in-house pilot study into attrition and retention conducted at the Australian National University (one of the participating universities), as well as with a study designed to improve student satisfaction in Advanced Language Units, conducted by the University of Western Australia (another participating institution). It is expected that the outcomes of those studies will be made more widely available across the sector in due course.

Methodologically, this part of the study combined the use of (a) student questionnaires with (b) in-depth discussions between the first Leading Chief Investigator and interlocutors representing participating institutions. The investigative team is extremely grateful for the level of cooperation provided across the sector, and wishes to thank most warmly all who gave so generously of their time.

1.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Two questionnaires were administered, one towards the middle of each semester. The results of each are presented in turn in what follows. Although part of the original intention had been to use the second questionnaire in the same classes as the first, thereby offering a clear snapshot of retention / attrition trends, in practice this proved to be impossible for a number of reasons. While there is overlap between the two samples, they are not identical. Despite this disappointment, the second questionnaire has provided important additional information, both insofar as it enriches the first semester sample (through the inclusion of different languages in different institutions) and, above all, through responses to the question about why students changed their minds about intentions expressed during first semester (see below, section 1.1.4).

There were 2968 responses received for the first questionnaire. The questionnaire sought to identify a number of factors, and to relate these to questions of retention or attrition. In what follows, these factors will be dealt with in turn.

1.1.1 Student profiles

Questions 1 to 4 looked to establish the student profiles.

Q1. Which beginners' language courses?

The sample showed six languages with relatively healthy enrolments: Spanish (735), French (635), Japanese (402), Chinese (368), Italian (316) and German (261). These figures are of course not actual enrolments, but they can be considered as reasonably representative (and they are convergent with the findings of LASP 1). More worrying were the results for Indonesian (53), Russian (45), Korean (44) and Arabic (29).

Q2. Year of student enrolment

50% of the sample are in their first year of university. A further 20% are in second year and a little over 10% are in third year. The final 20% were either non-responses or irregular enrolments. It is obvious that these figures are relevant to the retention / attrition issue. They suggest that many students are taking up a language too late in their studies to be able to complete a major or even a minor sequence in the language. The arguments for the value of even short-term language learning are strong (see LASP 1 report), and nothing should be done to discourage such study, which does contribute positively to the languages culture of any institution. These patterns do however have implications for planning and for course design, which merit further attention. At the same time, there is no doubt that 'later year' enrolments can have significant impact on retention / attrition rates in particular instances. In one case observed, in an already very small first year beginners Indonesian class, all but two students were in their final year of university study.

Q3. What course of study? (e.g. Bachelor of Science)

A strong majority of students are enrolled in Arts or Arts combined (1703 or 57.4%); the second largest group is from Economics / Commerce (486 or 16.4%), followed by Science (322 or 10.8%), then Engineering (101 or 3.4%) and a smattering from other faculties. While perhaps unsurprising, these figures demonstrate how little the notion of the overall importance of languages has penetrated the university sector. This is despite the efforts of some institutions to 'mainstream' languages, and to facilitate this through the introduction of such mechanisms as a Diploma of Languages allowing concurrent study of a language with the student's main course. It is not unlikely that limits or impediments placed by various faculties upon students wishing to take languages will have an impact on retention and attrition as well as on initial enrolments. This question will be revisited below. As concerns initial enrolments, the experience at the University of Melbourne, where the introduction of the Melbourne Model actually requires students to undertake work outside their home undergraduate faculty, was that of a dramatic increase in enrolments in all languages, especially beginners' streams. This strongly suggests the existence of an interest and demand that are being masked or blocked by existing course structures in many institutions.

Q4. Part-time / full-time status?

The sample shows that almost all languages students (93%) are full-time enrolments. Further study would be required to determine if the needs of part-time students are being met by existing languages programmes, especially in terms of timetabling.

1.1.2 Language background

The purpose of questions 5 to 9 was to determine the students' language background: language(s) spoken at home, previous formal study, and whether they were concurrently enrolled in another language at university. One intention was to see if there were any apparent correlations between language background and the intentions and motivations involved in the present course of study. A number of striking patterns emerged from these questions.

Q5. Home language(s)

63% of the sample reported that they spoke only English at home. 23% reported that they spoke only a LOTE at home and 15% a LOTE and English. Perhaps the first thing to note in relation to the 38% for whom a LOTE was a home language is the extraordinarily rich linguistic tapestry that exists in the Australian community. No fewer than 77 different LOTEs were reported altogether: Chinese varieties were by far the largest group, followed by Indonesian, Korean, Japanese, German, Vietnamese, French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Greek, Tagalog, Malay, Croatian, Thai and then a multitude of others.

Q6 and Q7. Prior formal study

62% of respondents had studied a language before, usually in secondary school, and most often to Year 10. Just under 25% had studied a language to Year 12. The most common previously studied languages are French, Japanese, German, Italian, English (presumably ESL), Chinese, Indonesian and Spanish. Interestingly, and somewhat alarmingly, a not insignificant number of students confessed to being enrolled in the beginners stream of a language in which they had successfully completed Year 12 studies! It is easy to imagine that this could cause significant morale issues for true beginners, and would be highly likely to affect retention rates. Somewhat analogously, the data reveal that just under 50% of the Beginners Japanese cohort, and just over 50% of the Korean Beginners cohort are students who state that they speak a Chinese language at home. While a Chinese-speaking background does not offer any particular advantage in relation to Korean, in Japanese, if the Chinese speakers also possess a level of Chinese character literacy, one can imagine that students of English-speaking background may feel disadvantaged. A similar issue about perceptions of disadvantage may arise – and this merits closer research – in relation to the considerable proportion (around 30%) of students in beginners' Spanish who have previously studied French.

In any case, the levels of previous experience of language learning, both in terms of the numbers of students and the period of previous learning are such that any image of a beginners' cohort composed of students unaware of the exigencies of language learning needs to be abandoned. This does not mean that there are not such learners in beginners' courses. Our sample showed 38% of respondents as being true beginning language learners. Rather, the diversity of backgrounds (including home language) needs to be more closely monitored and analysed in order to devise the most effective and congenial pedagogical approaches. Most classroom teachers are highly aware of the difficulties posed by mixed proficiency backgrounds in languages courses, and of their impact on student motivation. It is clear enough that this is one of the factors of the retention / attrition problem that needs more extensive study.

Q8 and 9. Concurrent language study

84% of students in the sample were enrolled in a single language. Of the remaining 16%, only a small minority were studying a second beginners' language, the rest continuing a language studied prior to university entry. Among these 350+ students, some interesting patterns can be seen. For instance, students studying Arabic, Russian or Korean are significantly more likely to be studying another language as well.

Students studying a European language are likely to be studying a second European language (this tendency is strongly marked for Italian, slightly less so for German and French), whereas students studying Asian languages are more open to European languages (particularly students of Japanese or Chinese, less so those of Korean). Just how these trends mark shifts in perception or understanding on the part of Australian students could be a fruitful topic of further investigation.

1.1.3 Intentions and Motivations

Q10. Intentions

This was a key question for the retention / attrition issue, the answers providing for the first time in Australia clear statistics about how long beginning students intended to pursue their language studies. It has been a common belief in languages programmes that retention rates in beginners' languages are low because significant numbers of students have no intention of remaining beyond a semester or a year. In our sample, this belief was not borne out. On average, only 13% said that they intended to remain for only one semester and a further 12% for one year. 35% said they intended to complete a three-year major and a further 14% a two-year minor. Fully 25% were undecided. These figures require comment. Firstly, there is a significant discrepancy between the intentions to major and the actual percentages of majors as established in LASP 1 (<25%). Secondly, at all significant phases (end of semester 1, end of semester 2, end of semester 3, end of semester 4) actual attrition is higher than the intentions stated at the outset. When one factors in the numbers of undecided, the discrepancy is even greater.

The situation becomes even more complicated when one looks at the quite significant variations among the universities surveyed. Intentions to major vary from a low of 28% to a high of >60%, and as can be seen from Figure 1 below, the disparities in the other categories are just as marked. The problem is that, for the most part, the numbers do not correlate with the figures established in LASP 1. In fact, the institution with the highest number of intended majors in the 2009 survey was the one with the lowest actual retention rates into the major; conversely, the institution with the highest actual retention rates is the one with the most students declaring themselves undecided. While some of these overall numbers are skewed by the existence of explicit language requirements in certain courses (which underlines the need to address the issue at the individual institution level), it is also clear that significant numbers of students do change their minds – in both directions. (There is some further light cast on this phenomenon in the LASP 2 second questionnaire – see below.) But it would also seem to be of critical importance that the examples of successful practice, and the strategies that have led to them, should be more widely disseminated across the sector. The newly formed National Tertiary Languages Network could be a useful forum for such sharing. At the same time, it can be expected that the results of the in-depth qualitative study being carried out at ANU will also provide increased understanding of this complex area.

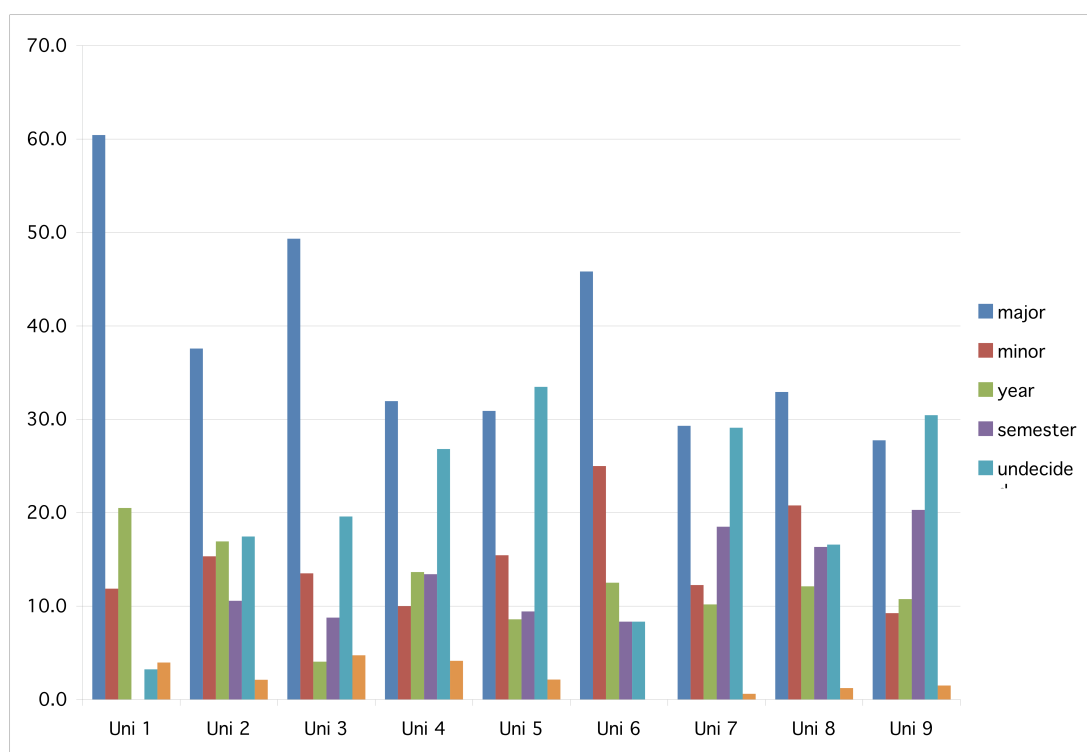


Figure 1

Another important factor in relation to intentions is that students with previous language experience (both formal study and home language) declare themselves significantly more likely to carry through to a major, and markedly less likely to end their study after a semester or a year. It seems reasonable to posit that previous experience brings a better understanding of the demands and processes of language learning.

Q11. Motivations

The questionnaire offered students the opportunity to rank, on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important), ten possible motivational factors determining their enrolment in this particular language course. They also had the possibility of including other motivations.

Overall, there was very little variation across the universities surveyed. The four main motivating factors, in descending order of importance, are:

- a. the desire to travel to the country (or countries) where the language is spoken (4.2 on the scale of 5)
- b. enjoyment of language learning (4.0)
- c. the belief that a language will be useful for future employment (3.6)
- d. interest in the history and culture accessed through the language (3.5)

It is interesting that, from a student perspective, the practical or instrumental value of language learning is subordinate to the perceived benefits of personal mobility and enjoyment. Taken as a group, however, this cluster of motivations can be seen as relatively well balanced, and a sound starting point for the design of university

courses that will lead towards the outcome that Professor Anne Freadman, at the *Beyond the Crisis* conference, defined as most appropriate for tertiary language study: namely “intercultural participation”. This term implies an active engagement beyond “understanding of” or “knowledge about” other cultures, and points to aspirations of true global citizenship (which cannot be monolingual or monocultural); and while the cohort of students surveyed for this study cannot be said to have articulated this goal, it seems perfectly plausible that, given their expressed motivations, they could be guided in that direction, particularly in the context of the often very explicit goals of universities to form global students and citizens.

Of some concern is the relatively low importance given to the value of language learning to students’ other studies. While this may reflect a certain realism, because of the obviously limited value to other study areas of the proficiency levels achievable in a first year beginners language course, it also raises the question of whether even the small minority of university students who do undertake language study see it as integral to their course, or simply as a pleasurable ‘add-on’. This concern is accentuated when one considers the responses to Question 12 (See below).

The data show some intriguing variations when one looks at motivations by language (Figure 2, below). With Chinese, for instance, the employment factor outstrips travel as the prime motivation, while with Italian and Spanish, travel is most clearly marked. With Chinese and Italian, having a background in the language is a notably stronger motivation for learning the language (albeit still not a dominant one). Family encouragement is more present for Chinese and Korean, and enrolments in Japanese and Korean are somewhat more likely to be influenced by the presence of friends in the course.

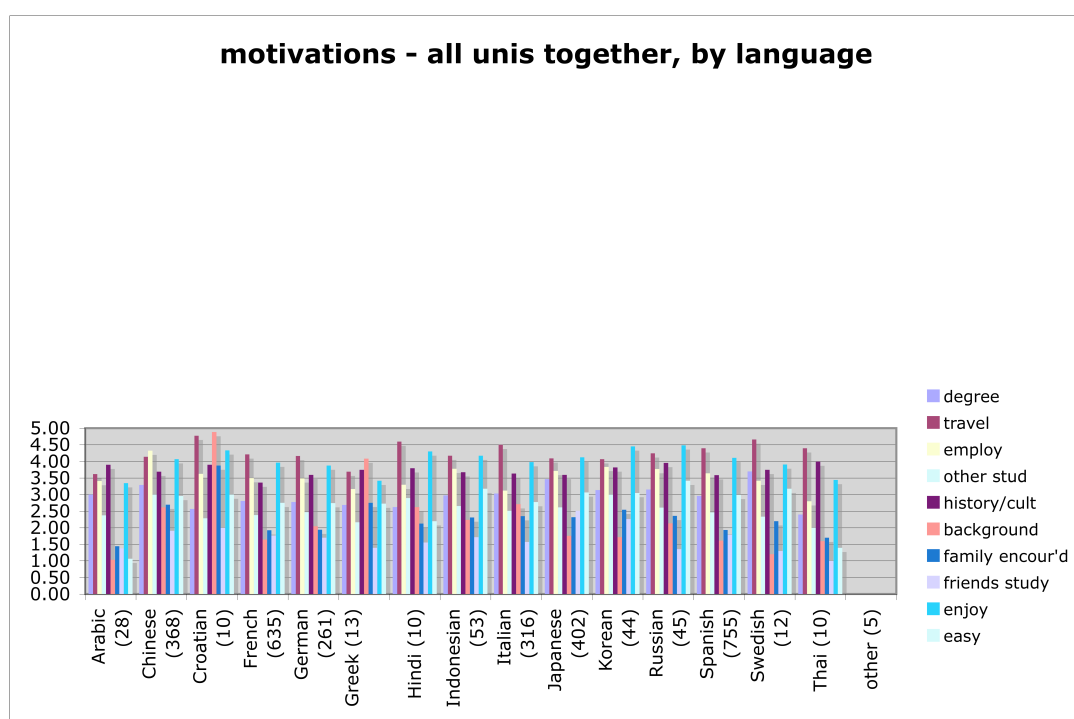


Figure 2

Given that only about 14% of the sample took up the opportunity to add comments about their personal motivation, we can assume that the range of motivations provided by the questionnaires was generally found to be adequate. There are moreover among the comments a large number of overlaps with the ‘useful’ or ‘enjoyable’ criteria already covered, and especially with the desire for ‘communication’. A number of comments are however worth noting. The *sound* of the language is seen as a significant attraction across a whole range of different languages, including Chinese, French (where this value is particularly prominent), Japanese, Korean, German, Italian and Spanish. This fact might serve to produce circumspection among those who might be tempted to press for a limited range of language availability in the sector. The desire to be bilingual or multilingual – sometimes expressed as a desire not to be monolingual – is also present across most of the languages surveyed. Geopolitical strategic reasons were generally not numerous, though they were mentioned in relation to Chinese and Indonesian. Several individuals noted that their interest in Chinese was linked to the nation’s emergence as a superpower. Some students of French and Spanish considered important the widespread global currency of these languages.

What is perhaps most striking is the sheer diversity of motivations. Here are some examples:

Arabic: “The culture and philosophy associated with the language is very interesting.”
“It has a completely different writing system.”

Chinese: “Chinese is more of a challenge.”

French: “Some very important math papers are written in French – not yet translated.”

German: “I reckon the particular literatures are better to be studied in the mother language, and not translated.”

Italian: “To understand music and film composed in this language.”

Japanese: “Important to study a language in which the written component differs from English and offers a greater challenge.”

Spanish: “Two of my favourite poets write in Spanish and I love Almodóvar.”

Q12. Main interest in language

Students were asked to evaluate their main interests in learning the language, on a scale of 1 (least interested) to 4 (most interested). Unsurprisingly, as can be seen from Table 1, speaking skills were most highly valued, across the board; and when this is combined with understanding (placed at 1st or 2nd position), it is evident that direct conversational communication is overwhelmingly important for this group of learners. (We can note in passing that for these early learners self-expression is of significantly greater interest than listening to what others may have to say! However, this state of affairs appears to be modified by second semester: see section 1.1.5 below.) Another notable result is the markedly greater interest in reading and writing for Chinese and Japanese, as compared to the European languages. Unfortunately, time did not permit detailed enough analysis of the data to determine whether or to what degree these results correlate with the greater presence of Asian background speakers in the Chinese and Japanese courses: this could be a valuable follow-up project, for intercultural comparison among beginners’ languages learners.

Language	All 4 = 1	Read = 1	Write = 1	Speak= 1	Understand = 1	S1;U1or2
Chinese	9.5	18.8	16.6	57.5	37.8	40.9
French	6.9	17.3	10.9	66.5	32.8	52.1
German	5.9	15.8	9.9	57.2	33.3	42.3
Indonesian	2.1	6.4	4.3	63.8	31.9	42.6
Italian	4.9	11.1	6.9	78.1	58.0	61.1
Japanese	7.3	20.6	14.1	50.5	41.7	34.6
Korean	13.2	10.5	5.3	60.5	42.1	36.8
Spanish	5.0	16.7	8.8	70.0	28.2	55.8
Average	6.85	14.65	9.6	63.01	38.23	45.8

Table 1

Q13 and 14. Language availability

Respondents were asked whether they would have preferred to be doing a different language than the one that they were enrolled in, and if so which. Only 15% of the cohort gave a “yes” answer to this question, which suggests that in a general way, from a student perspective, the range of choice available is satisfactory. A number of the issues raised, however, pertain to particular institutions and would need to be addressed at the local level. For example, some students who had studied a language at secondary level were not able to continue it at university and took up a different beginners’ language instead; in some institutions, vocal amazement was expressed about the lack of a Spanish programme; in other cases, timetabling issues were crucial, or travel to another campus involved in cross-institutional languages collaborations; there was also complaint about structural impediments to the study of more than one language. The main ‘other’ languages desired by those dissatisfied with their present choice were Spanish (15%), French (10%), Italian (10%), Korean (7%) and Arabic (5%).

1.1.4 The Second Semester Questionnaire

There were 1810 responses to the Semester 2 questionnaire. As has already been remarked, because of the number of variables involved, this number cannot be used to evaluate retention or attrition. The questionnaire however provided valuable information in three areas: motivational patterns, changes of intention, and changes of attitudes towards language learning.

Motivational patterns

Responses to the motivation questions were in all respects virtually identical to those of the first questionnaire. The first four main motivations were given as travel, enjoyment, employment, and learning the history and culture, in that order. That each of these was slightly more highly ranked than in first semester confirms the validity of the data. (Travel=4.36, up from 4.2; Enjoyment=4.1, up from 4.0; Employment=3.7, up from 3.6; Culture=3.6, up from 3.5). As in semester 1, there was little variation among languages, with the exception of Chinese, where employment ranked highest.

Intentions

Given the smaller cohort and the undeniable (if unquantifiable) attrition between first and second semester, it was to be expected that the percentages of those intending to major or minor should rise somewhat, and this indeed was the case. It is notable that the percentage of those who were undecided remained constant, at around 25%. More interesting is the fact that almost 400 students (i.e. 22% of the cohort) declared that they had changed their intentions since first semester. Of these almost twice as many had decided to extend their course rather than to shorten it. Asked for their reasons (they were able to choose any or all of “more interesting than expected”, “less work than expected”, and “better teaching than expected”): overwhelmingly, the first and third factors dominated the responses, **a result which bears powerful testimony to the quality of the courses offered.** Conversely, for those who had decided to shorten their language study, the dominant factor was the unexpectedly high workload, while “worse than expected teaching” accounted for barely 10% of responses. In LASP 1, tribute was paid to the dynamism, commitment and creativity of an overworked and highly stressed group of languages teachers across the nation. That tribute can be repeated here: it is absolutely clear that in the retention/attrition question, the quality of teaching, far from being a cause of attrition, is in fact a significant contributor to retention (which is not to say that it does not feature negatively in particular instances.)

Maturing of Attitudes

We saw in 1.1.4 that in first semester, students were strongly motivated by the desire to speak the language they were studying. In the second questionnaire, they were asked which of the skills they would most like to improve. The responses, as shown in Table 4, suggest a more nuanced and more mature understanding. Although the trend is still very much in the direction of communicative activity, the balance between speaking and understanding is much greater. Furthermore, although there is an apparent decrease in interest in writing and reading skills, the almost three-fold increase in the percentage of students declaring as top priority the desire to improve all four macro-skills can be interpreted as reflecting a more integrated understanding of and approach to the language learning process.

Language	All 4 = 1	Read = 1	Write = 1	Speak= 1	Understand = 1	Other or nil
Chinese	20.3	3.6	5.2	28.1	19.8	23
French	17.7	1.6	2.9	24.3	24.9	28.6
German	16.8	1.3	5.2	25.8	22.6	28.3
Indonesian	23.8	0.0	4.8	19.0	28.6	23.8
Italian	17.9	0.9	2.4	36.8	15.6	27.3
Japanese	20.1	3.1	2.8	26.4	14.5	33.1
Korean	17.1	0.0	2.9	37.1	11.4	31.5
Spanish	16.3	0.3	2.5	29.3	26.5	25.1
Average	19.65	1.35	3.59	28.35	20.49	27.58

Table 2

1.1.5 Conclusions about attrition and retention

The questionnaire responses allow a number of conclusions to be drawn about the underlying factors in the comparatively high rates of attrition in beginners' languages courses.

- Late enrolment: only 50% of students in first year beginners' courses are in their first year of university study. While figures would need to be compared with other subjects, especially in the humanities and social sciences, it would appear to be low.
- Mixed proficiency cohorts: only 38% of students in first year beginners' courses are 'true' beginners; while some range of previous experience might be expected and accommodated, there are also seriously problematic issues, such as successful completion of year 12 in the language, or clear advantage derived from other previous experience, as in the case of the large percentage of Chinese background speakers enrolling in beginners' Japanese and Korean.
- Workload perceptions: many students find the workload involved in language learning higher than expected.
- Student motivations: the dominant motivations could hardly be clearer; the degree to which they are taken into account in course planning and design is less evident.
- Student intentions: significantly more students initially intend to study their language for longer than turns out to be the case in reality; further, a large percentage is undecided; there is therefore an apparent opportunity, with appropriate action, to increase retention considerably.
- High attrition does not appear to be caused (and may in fact be mitigated) by perceived quality of teaching or course interest.

The question of late enrolment needs to be approached through clearly enunciated policies, at government and institutional levels, that stress the fundamental value of languages as a core part of the Australian education process. As long as this is not the view of the relevant authorities, most students cannot be expected to see languages as other than a desirable but optional 'add-on', or something they might try as the spirit, or fashion, moves them.

The difficulties of mixed proficiency cohorts are well known. They are usually the result of inadequate resourcing. However, in some cases, at the local level, more careful selection processes may be in order.

In relation to workload perceptions, it needs to be pointed out that the universities where the retention rates are strongest have in place strategies that provide students, from the very start of their programmes, with detailed – i.e. week by week, lesson by lesson – work plans. This is good practice that needs to be more widely shared and applied.

1.2 INSTITUTIONAL DISCUSSIONS

Discussions were conducted over a number of weeks in mid-2008, following the analysis of the first round of questionnaires, with eight of the eleven participating

institutions. (Logistical and timetabling difficulties made it impossible to schedule the other intended meetings.) In some instances, the first LCI was able to meet with a broad cross-section of language teachers from the target institution; in others, discussions were held with Deans (or equivalent), Heads of Schools/Programmes, and/or with the project's interlocutors.

The discussions had several goals:

- To elaborate on each institution's questionnaire results in comparison to overall trends
- To explore what strategies individual institutions may have developed in relation to attrition/retention
- To seek more detailed understanding of how individual institutions saw their 'languages culture'
- To explore what level of support might exist for a national colloquium, and what might be most valuable as a focus for such a colloquium

1.2.1 Interest in the analysis of the questionnaires was unanimous and intense. Individual universities were particularly interested in the data relating to their students' intentions and motivations, as well as in the fact that up to 25% of first semester students were undecided about how long they would continue their studies. It was clear that this sort of information was felt to be of value in terms both of planning approaches to teaching, and of more accurate prediction of resources likely to be needed in future semesters.

1.2.2 Discussions revealed no consistent approach to the problems associated with attrition and retention, although the matter was of universal concern. The major study being undertaken at the ANU offered the most comprehensive methodology. Now that the pilot project has been completed and the second phase approved and funded, we can be confident that some ideas and recommendations of more general applicability will be forthcoming. This will be very welcome, because at present there is a great deal of unproductive variability in the attitudes and approaches of institutions across Australia, with even the definition of 'attrition' differing from place to place. In some places, for instance, 'attrition' is defined to include students who enrol, but discontinue before the census cut-off date, with concomitant budgetary implications. This produces unnecessary increased uncertainty and stress in programmes that are already hard-pressed. Moreover, it would seem, at least anecdotally, that languages programmes have little possibility of comparing their retention performances with other areas of study within their university.

1.2.3 Discussions about a 'languages culture' revealed the extreme fragility and volatility that exists across the sector. Whether languages flourish or struggle clearly depends very significantly on the levels of explicit institutional support, in both policy and resources. As reported in LASP 1, a languages culture can only develop strongly if it is articulated as part of the university's vision statement; that is, there needs to be, at the highest levels, not just a positive attitude, but a serious commitment. The LASP 2 discussions revealed that, across Australia, this is rarely, and only sporadically, the case. Top-level support for languages rarely goes past lip service, and, what is even more disheartening, in cases where such support has existed for a time, it is subject to change of leadership and strategy. The role of deans in this area is crucial: in some of

the institutions visited, positive support by deans was producing extremely beneficial results in terms of teaching and research performance, student enthusiasm and staff morale. There were, however, a couple of instances where previously high levels of support had been replaced by indifference or worse, leading to dramatic collapses in performance and morale.

1.2.4 Discussions demonstrated widespread, indeed almost unanimous, support for a national colloquium of university languages teachers and researchers. The need for greater coherence and communication across the sector was acknowledged by almost all interlocutors, notwithstanding a keen sense of the ongoing importance of institutional individuality and autonomy. Some colleagues rightly drew attention to the importance of the colloquium being focused on issues that were both practical and specific, but most agreed that one such issue could be the establishment of some sort of ongoing association or network of university languages teachers and researchers – not surprising, given that this was one of the clear outcomes of LASP 1. Accordingly, the Council of the Academy of the Humanities charged its Language Study Committee, under the leadership of Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, with the organisation of the colloquium, ‘Beyond the Crisis: Revitalising languages in Australian universities’, a brief account of which follows in section 3.

Recommendation 1: That universities, at the policy level, give explicit and urgent recognition to the strategic importance of the study of languages and cultures; and that they develop appropriate strategies and provide adequate resources for the promotion and effective maintenance of these studies. This would include attention and resources be given to providing appropriate identification procedures (such as placement tests), and sufficient course levels and pathways to allow learners with diverse language backgrounds to be grouped according to their proficiency and learning needs, so that their full learning potential can be realised.

Recommendation 2: That the university sector (perhaps through DASSH) work towards a uniform and nuanced definition of what constitutes attrition, and that the relevant faculties generate and make readily available comparative statistics about attrition in languages and other humanities and social sciences areas.

Recommendation 3: That individual languages programmes across Australia consider the practice of a motivation/intention/background questionnaire on the model of the one used in LASP 2, to be administered to all students early in the first semester of their language study. The questionnaire takes only a few minutes of class time and, although the recording and analysis of data is time-consuming, this should be budgeted for by the relevant schools in order to provide a clearer picture of the student cohort and their motivations and intentions, to better predict class sizes, to facilitate staff planning, and to provide a basis for ongoing curriculum review. The information gathered could be shared through the National Tertiary Languages Network.

2. THE TECHNOLOGY STUDY

An analysis of technology use in first year language teaching at three Australian universities, conducted by Professors Mike Levy (Griffith University – team leader), Martina Möllering (Macquarie University), and Kerry Dunne (The University of New England – now at The University of Wollongong).

Introduction

In phase 1 of the LASP project, it had become clear that new technologies were being employed in a wide range of applications for *ab initio* language teaching. However, it was also apparent that there was considerable variation in the extent of the use from university to university, and also from language to language within the same university. Also in phase 1, only very preliminary data was collected in the area of technology enhanced language learning (TELL). The goal in phase 2 was to limit the field of view while collecting more detailed information.

In the LASP 1 data, we could identify three universities that were highly active in the TELL domain across the languages. These universities also approached TELL in rather different ways and the investigators believed an analysis of all three would provide a valuable overview of contemporary TELL practice in first year Australian university language teaching. While these data and analyses could not be said to be representative of activity in the area across Australian universities, they do give insight into current practice at three of the most active. It was decided to formulate the second phase around a short survey, which would be used to collect data from first-year language teachers at the three universities. Insufficient funding precluded a more detailed round of data collection.

In phase 2, therefore, we aimed to map current use in the three universities, namely Macquarie University, Griffith University and the University of New England. Broadly speaking, our objective was to detail the technologies in use in relation to the language skills and areas in focus, e.g., MP3 used for listening tasks. A particular focus was directed toward the learning management system (LMS) chosen by the university to structure its teaching and learning resources. We also wished to investigate the degree to which each university language engaged in blended and/or online learning and the relationship between the materials developed and the course textbook. Other key issues to be explored were the approach to TELL materials development, the support systems to enable this work, significant blocks and success stories. Assessment and testing was also included. Results, analysis and conclusions are detailed in what follows.

Results and discussion

The participants

The participants in the study comprised 22 language teachers across the three universities. The years teaching the language ranged from less than one to 30 plus with an average of 17 years – quite a high average. Given the focus in this survey, the participants were also asked to self assess their competence and confidence with new technologies (1 low, 5 high). The average across the group was high at 3.8 illustrating

perhaps the generally high level of staff expertise at the three universities chosen specifically for their innovative work in the TELL area.

Table 1: The language distribution among the three universities
(N=22)

	Macquarie	Griffith	UNE
Chinese	X	X	X
Japanese	X	X	X
Italian	X	X	X
Spanish	X	X	
French	X		X
German	X		X
Indonesian		X	X
Korean		X	
Greek	X		
Russian	X		
Polish	X		
Croatian	X		

Table 1 above shows the distribution of languages across the three universities beginning with the languages taught in all three universities, then moving to those only taught in one.

The technologies and their application

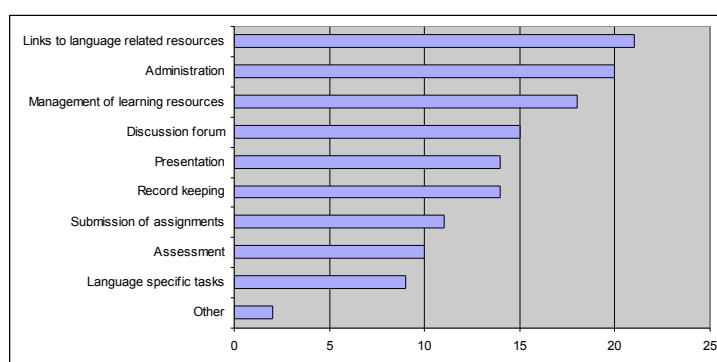


Figure 1: Uses of the Learning Management System

The learning management system, *BlackBoard*, dominated the technologies in use with 20 out of 22 respondents indicating it was used in a variety of ways. Figure 1 details the specific uses of the LMS. Here the administrative, managerial and record-keeping functions are notable in their frequency as is the relatively infrequent use of language specific tasks delivered through the system. Arguably, this general pattern of use would be very similar and have close parallels to other subject areas and disciplines within the university. In studies in the future, it would be advantageous to make a detailed listing, language by language, of the link addresses to language related resources. This information can then be shared among language teachers in first year. The relatively high use of the discussion forum for language learning in the LMS is also notable in this data set.

The ways in which language-learning materials were conceptualised and delivered were examined in terms of their relationship with face-to-face teaching and the

course textbook. In the majority of cases (18/22), the TELL materials were designed to be used in tandem with face-to-face, on-campus teaching, i.e. blended learning. However, online only learning was also evident (7/22) and some of the longer responses suggested this mode of learning was increasing. Similarly, most TELL materials were developed solely for use with the course textbook (15/22), with a smaller proportion designed for use only partly with the textbook (6/22); only one respondent described materials that were not for use with the course text.

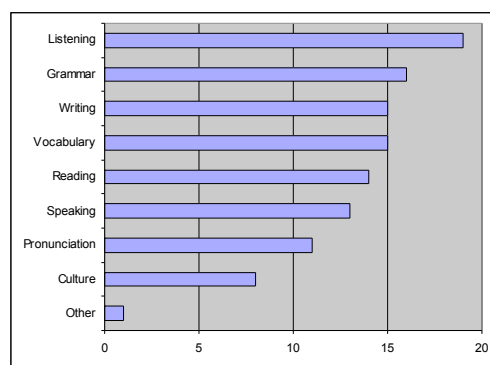


Figure 2: Language skills and areas where TELL materials have been developed

Figure 2 shows the distribution of technology use in relation to the language skills and areas. Compared to previous analyses along similar lines, the result here is significant in that listening is the most frequent skill referred to. Many of the technologies described in the responses related primarily to the development of the listening skill such as *Wimba* and MP3 files, and then to a lesser extent podcasting, mobile phones and audio/video conferencing (see figure 3). The remaining results follow a similar pattern to the conclusions drawn from earlier studies (see Levy & Stockwell, 2006).

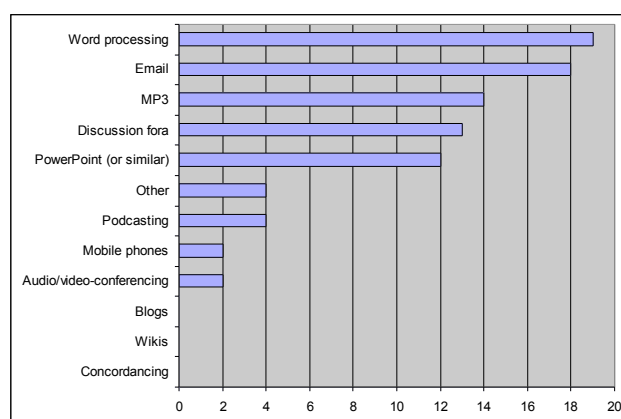


Figure 3: Technologies in use

It is perhaps not surprising that word processing and e-mail still provide the backbone of technology use for language learning, as they do across the disciplines. Of greater note is perhaps the prevalence of the MP3 technology as a medium for delivering listening material, a result that also confirms listening as a key focus for technology applications. Discussion fora which provide for interaction via text are also well in evidence: typically this functionality is provided by the learning management system, e.g. *BlackBoard*.

Development and use in practice

It was clear from the results that TELL materials development was a frequently adopted role for the language teacher participants in the study (95%). Further, the vast majority of respondents developed TELL materials alone, with little or no help from others (68%). Occasionally, advice was sought from colleagues or a School Multimedia Officer but this was the exception. Five participants in all mentioned the value of advice and support from a resident specialist developer, although they also noted the fragility of this position within the School. In a more detailed response to the question of support, respondents noted the lack of specific, targeted support within their universities and the problem of generic, low level, university wide training programmes that were of little help in solving language-specific development problems.

When viewed as a whole, the respondents described a very wide range of TELL materials that they believed had been successful with first-year language learners. Examples highlighted certain valued functions within the LMS such as the discussion forum, plus audio podcasts of recordings of lectures and classes, *YouTube* links, text-based chat, and third-party products such as DVDs in Chinese from China. They also mentioned language-specific products such as *Deutsch E-rklaert*, used in order to provide clear explanations of grammar; *Wimba*, to provide short conversations and drills on grammar and pronunciation; and *iVocalize* for external students to practise speaking and listening skills through real-time interactions with classmates and instructors.

Of the materials developed, just over half the participants said that they created materials for assessment/testing purposes in first year (54%). This included self-assessment tests, quizzes in *BlackBoard*, auto-corrected short exercises, and tests specifically designed around language skills and areas. Online submission of test items was a feature in 4 responses. Also a number of respondents mentioned using participation rates in the discussion forum as an assessable component for external students.

Participants were also asked to describe what they considered to be the most significant blocks to TELL development. Insufficient time was easily the most frequent block (50%). Technical difficulties, especially with the LMS, funding, and the requisite skills were also considered to be impediments. Further, participants emphasised that such development work was not officially recognised and that “Pressures to publish get in the way of allocating time to develop learning materials”. These issues, in a very similar order of priority have been recognised for many years (see Levy and Stockwell, 2006).

Finally, participants described their primary reasons for using TELL materials with first-year language learners. In broad terms they mentioned their general value in improving teaching and learning, organising and managing teaching (especially in large first-year classes), and for keeping in regular contact with students. More specifically, participants described its value in terms of additional language practice out of class, motivation, and in its complementary function to supplement face-to-face teaching and the materials covered in the textbook. TELL was also seen as necessary

in the modern world and as a way to connect with younger students. For external students, respondents particularly emphasised the value of TELL to enhance the distance learners' experience, learner autonomy and to create a virtual learning community.

Conclusion

There are valuable conclusions to be drawn on the basis of these results even in a preliminary, small-scale study such as this one. Most importantly, over 95% of the language teacher participants in this study are involved in the development of TELL materials. Historically, this role is not sufficiently supported or rewarded, especially given the considerable amounts of time involved (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). In addition, by and large, participants work alone, even when specialist expertise is available. These issues need to be examined further. A more fine-grained study is needed to examine work practices more closely and to determine more precisely exactly what support is needed and when. This may involve focused, languages-specific teacher training for TELL materials development.

Finally, given the large amounts of time involved in TELL materials development across the universities, we need to consider creatively how we can best share resources, support networks and products. As one respondent explained, we lack a "comprehensive & systematic database, corpus, providing access to the existing material, platform (shared) where additions & modifications can be made to the existing material". The technology has the potential to enable the sharing, adaptation and distribution of TELL materials. If we are to reap the benefits of this potential we must engineer accessible, flexible and effective ways to provide a venue for collaboration and exchange.

Reference

Levy, M. & Stockwell, G. (2006). *CALL Dimensions: options and issues in computer-assisted language learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Recommendation 4: That the National Tertiary Languages Network undertake, as a matter of priority, to engage with the issues raised in relation to TELL, particularly with a view to enabling increased collaboration and exchange across the sector.

3. THE *BEYOND THE CRISIS* COLLOQUIUM⁴

The Colloquium, *Beyond the Crisis: Revitalising Languages in Australian Universities*, organised under the auspices of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, was held at the University of Melbourne over three days, 16-18 February 2009. More than 140 delegates, from 30 different institutions, and representing 14 languages, attended the colloquium. The delegates included teachers, researchers, and planners from the tertiary languages sector. There was a strong balance of representatives from Asian and non-Asian languages. Funding for the colloquium came from a combination of Academy support and the generosity of a number of participating universities: attendance for delegates was free and their travel and accommodation were subsidised. After introductory remarks by the AAH President, Emeritus Professor Ian Donaldson, in which he affirmed the Academy's belief that 'languages are indispensable to a humanistic education', the colloquium was officially opened by Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP, Federal Member for Calwell, representing the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education.

The work of the three days was organised under three headings: Innovation, Issues and Action. Throughout, in line with discussions held during the LASP 2 university visits, the emphasis was on practical matters. On the first day, there was a panel presentation of innovative initiatives on four different languages (Indonesian, Italian, Chinese and Japanese), and a plenary panel on Technology Enhanced Language Learning. The second day presented three current research projects relating to languages teaching in Australian universities (the LASP 2 study, the ANU Retention Project, the UWA Student Satisfaction Project); this was followed by a series of workshops on issues including programme design, student pathways, staff career pathways, and the place of literature, culture and research in languages programmes; finally, and most controversially, there was a panel discussion of the question of national convergence for proficiency levels. The third day involved the reports of the workshops and general discussion of the issues raised. While there were no ready solutions to many of the problems identified, there was universal acknowledgement of the on-going value of the discussions. It was agreed that different languages face distinctive needs, but that all languages and the nation will benefit from a more strongly articulated language teaching and learning culture in higher education. Furthermore, the assembly agreed to create a "National Tertiary Languages Network", and voted to establish a broadly representative steering group⁵ to oversee the establishment of the network and to organise a second colloquium in 2010.

⁴ A complete dossier on the colloquium, including a full report, is available on the website of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

⁵ The steering group consists of Prof. Joseph Lo Bianco (University of Melbourne) – Chair, Prof. Kent Anderson (ANU), Prof. Kerry Dunne (UNE, now Wollongong), Prof. Anne Freadman (University of Melbourne), Dr Nijmeh Hajjar (University of Sydney), Prof. David Hill (Murdoch University), Assoc. Prof. Anne McLaren (University of Melbourne) and Assoc. Prof. Marko Pavlyshyn (Monash University).

CONCLUSIONS

It is to be hoped that this report will be of direct and practical value to languages teachers, researchers and administrators across the nation. Certainly it should be made widely available to them, as well as to other relevant university and political authorities. We believe that it constitutes a helpful contribution to the understanding of the crisis in which languages find themselves in Australian universities, and that it offers a number of useful pathways to improvement.

The question of retention and attrition has long been of great concern to languages programmes, and this report offers documented analysis that leads to greater understanding and provides the basis for considerable improvement of retention rates within languages programmes. The current detailed ANU study, when its results become available, will be of additional benefit to the sector in this area.

Although necessarily modest in scope, the review of the uses of technology in enhancing languages learning and teaching also offers much new information, as well as sound suggestions about how greater collaboration might occur across the sector, to the benefit of all.

Finally, the formal decision, taken at the *Beyond the Crisis* colloquium in February 2009 to create a National Languages Network, not only fulfils one of the key recommendations of this study's predecessor (LASP 1), it provides the most practical and viable mechanism for carrying out the continuing work identified in LASP 2, and for the sharing of best practice that the sector so much needs.

Appendices

I. The First-Semester Questionnaire

University

Beginner Language

General

1. What beginners' language courses are you enrolled in this semester?
2. In 2008, are you
 - a. ☐ a first-year university student
 - b. ☐ a second-year student
 - c. ☐ a third-year student
 - d. ☐ other (please specify)
3. What course of study are you enrolled in? (e.g. Bachelor of Science)
4. Are you
 - a. ☐ a full-time student
 - b. ☐ a part-time student
 - c. ☐ taking this beginners' course as a single course of study

Language background

5. What language(s) do you speak with your immediate family?
6. Prior to enrolling in the beginners' course(s) in Question 1, had you done any formal study of another language?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
7. If yes,
 - a. Which language?
 - b. For how many years, and to what level? (e.g. 6 years, to year 12)
 - c. In what setting? (e.g. school, Saturday school)
8. In addition to the beginners' course in Question 1, are you currently studying another language?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
9. If yes,

- a. Which language(s)?
- b. What level? (e.g. 'Intermediate', 'Stream C', 'Level 5', etc...)

Intentions

10. For how long are you intending to study this language?
- a. ☐ to complete a "major" sequence (i.e. 3 years)
 - b. ☐ to complete a "minor" sequence (i.e. 2 years)
 - c. ☐ for one year
 - d. ☐ for one semester
 - e. ☐ don't know

Motivations

11. We are interested in your motivations for choosing this language. Please circle one number on the scale from 1 = not important to 5 = very important; n/a = not applicable)

To complete my degree	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
To travel to where this language is spoken	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
It will be helpful in future employment	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
It will help me in my other studies	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I'm interested in the history and culture	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I have a family background in this language	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
My family encouraged me to study it	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
My friends are studying this language	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I enjoy language learning	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I find language learning easy	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Other reason_____	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

12. My main interest in this language is (please number the boxes from 1 = most interested to 4 = least interested)

- ☐ to learn to read it
- ☐ to learn to understand other speakers
- ☐ to learn to speak it
- ☐ to learn to write it

13. In 2008 would you have preferred to study a different language, had it been available?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

14. If yes, which language?

II. The Second-Semester Questionnaire

University

Beginner Language

General

15. In semester 2, 2008

- a. ☐ a first-year university student ☐ a third-year student
- b. ☐ a second-year student ☐ other (please specify)

16. What course of study are you enrolled in? (e.g. Bachelor of Science)

17. Are you

- a. ☐ a full-time student
- b. ☐ a part-time student
- c. ☐ taking this beginners' course as a single course of study

18. For which language class are you completing this questionnaire?

Language Level Course name/code

5. Had you completed semester 1, 2008 in that language?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No (go to question 10)

6. Are you enrolled in any other language course(s) this semester?

Language Level Course name/code

Language background

19. What language(s) do you speak with your immediate family?

20. Prior to enrolling in the beginners' course(s) in Question 1, had you done any formal study of another language?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

21. If yes,

- a. Which language?
- b. For how many years, and to what level? (e.g. 6 years, to year 12)
- c. In what setting? (e.g. school, Saturday school)

22. In addition to the beginners' course in Question 1, are you currently studying another language?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No

23. If yes,

a. Which language(s)?

b. What level? (e.g. 'Intermediate', 'Stream C', 'Level 5', etc...)

Intentions

10. For how long are you intending to study this language?

☐ to complete a 'major' sequence (i.e. 3

☐ for one year

years)

☐ for one semester

☐ to complete a 'minor' sequence (i.e. 2

years)

☐ don't know

11. Has your intention changed since semester 1?

☐ No (Go to Question 12)

☐ Yes 

In which way?

☐ To continue

longer

☐ More work than expected

☐ Less work than expected

☐ Other (please specify) _____

☐ To cease

sooner

Why?

☐ More interesting than expected

☐ Less interesting than expected

☐ Quality of teaching better than expected

☐ Quality of teaching worse than expected

Motivations

12. We are interested in your motivations for choosing this language. Please circle one number on the scale from 1 = not important to 5 = very important; n/a = not applicable)

To complete my degree	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
To travel to where this language is spoken	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
It will be helpful in future employment	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
It will help me in my other studies	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I'm interested in the history and culture	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I have a family background in this language	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
My family encouraged me to study it	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
My friends are studying this language	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I enjoy language learning	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
I find language learning easy	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Other reason_____	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

13. Where would you most like to improve in the language?

- ☐ my ability to read it
- ☐ my ability to understand other speakers
- ☐ my ability to speak it
- ☐ my ability to write it