

NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS  
SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY  
FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES

# INTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

© PEDYAS PROJECT 2003-2008

The project has received three grants from the European Social Fund, the Greek state and the University of Athens.

## THE PEDYAS PROJECT TEAM

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ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ  
ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ ΕΠΕΑΕΚ  
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΕΝΩΣΗ  
ΣΥΓΧΡΗΜΑΤΟΔΟΤΗΣΗ  
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ  
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΚΗΣ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ



  
Η ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΟΡΥΦΗ  
Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Εκπαίδευσης και Αρχικής  
Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης

## **1. ABOUT THE PEDYAS PROJECT AND ITS CONTEXT**

In 2003, the General Assembly of Faculty of English Studies consented to the submission of a grant proposal for funding from the *Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training II*, Action 2: 'Reform of Undergraduate Programmes of Study at Universities' with a view to 'expanding curricula at undergraduate level'. All projects in this category receive funding, of which 80% comes from the European Social Fund, and 20% from state.

The idea for the project was put forward by a four-member Faculty staff committee who proceeded to write up a detailed proposal outlining the actions to be taken, the expected outcomes and products which would be the result of each action, the cost for each action and the time frame in which each action would be executed.

The project proposal was assessed positively by evaluators appointed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the project entitled PEDYAS (an acronym for what might be roughly translated into English as 'Programme for the Reform, Expansion and Support of English Studies'). For a start, the Project received funding which amounted to 127.400 from the EU Social Fund and 39.000 from the EU Peripheral Development Fund in order to have the necessary human and technical resources and equipment so as to carry out the actions outlined in the initial proposal.

As the implementation of the project was evaluated positively by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, and its Auditors gave their official approval, in 2006 and 2007 the project was given additional funding so that the total grant it has received amounts to 319.630 euros. As the project is to be completed on 31 August 2008, the committee needs to show whether its goals have been achieved and the tasks outlined have been completed.

## **2. THE EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

### **(a) Internal evaluation**

Various aspects of the project have been evaluated internally. That is, outcomes of tasks and subprojects completed were assessed throughout the project implementation stages in a variety of ways, with different evaluation or measurement tools. Internal evaluation results are mentioned below as the various aspects of the project are described.

Interim evaluation was also one of the main responsibilities outlined for the PEDYAS Project Committee as one of its major roles was to supervise the implementation of the subprojects, to evaluate outcomes and to make sure that 'deliverables' were on time; otherwise, funding could be interrupted at any moment or more severe penalties imposed.

### **(b) External evaluation**

Once external evaluators were selected (see criteria of selection below), they were invited to come to the University and:

- 1) they had the project officially presented to them by the committee members

- 2) at least two of them had the opportunity to gain more insights into the project and its outcomes during a formal conference aiming at presenting project results to the members of the English Studies community in Greece<sup>1</sup>
- 3) they were all provided with information about and with opportunities to examine the actual ‘deliverables’ of the project at real and virtual sites of the Faculty
- 4) they had the opportunity to speak with members of staff/students and/or exchange emails with them prior to or as a follow up of their assessment
- 5) they had the opportunity to examine educational and other materials created
- 6) they visited the Faculty portal for additional information
- 7) they could visit the SAL Centre

Upon collecting all the information needed, evaluators had to fill in the Evaluator Form which is presented in Part 2 of this document.

### **(c) External evaluators and selection criteria**

The PEDYAS committee approached the three external project evaluators who graciously accepted the arduous task:

- *Lee Quinby, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at William E. Macaulay Honors College, City University of New York*
- *Emilia Ribeiro Pedro, Professor of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at the Department of English Studies, University of Lisbon, Portugal.*
- *Stephanos Stephanidis, Professor of English and Dean of Humanities, University of Cyprus.*

The evaluators were selected on the basis of the criteria below. We sought:

- a) English Studies scholars who are well respected internationally and who are familiar with the work carried out in other institutions inside and outside Europe so that they might be able to assess our programme with reference to others in Faculties of English Studies of universities abroad.
- b) Academics who are familiar with the reality in Greek universities, the University of Athens in particular.
- c) Evaluators who have English as their common, working language and at least one of those three be able to read Greek so as to access information available exclusively in Greek and to share it with the others.
- d) Scholars who are in some way familiar with the programme of studies and ways of working at the Faculty of English Studies *before* the PEDYAS project so that they might be able to assess the present in terms of the past.
- e) Professors at well respected institutions, with expertise in the different disciplines which are part of our programme of studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Lee Quinby and Prof. Stephanos Stepahnidis took part in the Conference organized by the PEDYAS team in June 2008.

### 3. MAJOR TASKS OF THE PEDYAS PROJECT

Work for the project began as soon as funding was approved, in 2003. During this time the major subprojects that were carried out, under the direction of Professor Bessie Dendrinou, were the following:

- 1) A new programme of studies was developed, discussed at Faculty meetings, approved by the General Assembly of the Faculty, adopted and implemented for the first time in 2004. Assoc. Professors Maro Germanou and Eleni Haviara-Kechaidou coordinated this whole subproject and followed through its implementation. Each year, a *Student Guide to the Undergraduate Programme of Studies* is published in Greek.<sup>2</sup> The Programme of Studies in English is available through the Faculty's website.
- 2) A professionally built and designed webpage replaced an old one which had been developed by a member on staff. Responsible for the information in this new website is a committee approved by the Faculty General Assembly. Its leader and the person who has undertaken the difficult and time consuming task of working with the web developer and web designer is Asst. Professor Bessie Mitsikopoulou, who has been assisted by other members of the committee –Prof. Mary Sifianou and Dr Christina Dokou. By 2005, different types of information in Greek became easily accessible to students and members of the community. By 2006, more information was made available in Greek. Moreover, as the translation process had been completed, an English version of the webpage was progressively being made available. Work continued through 2007 and beyond, as the website has been turned into a portal (visit [www.enl.uoa.gr](http://www.enl.uoa.gr)), with various microsites to serve students, staff and alumni, to promote the work of the Faculty in Greece and abroad.
- 3) A Self-Access Learning (SAL) Centre for our undergraduate students was created with University funds (a total of 70.000 euro) which the Project leader was successful in obtaining. In 2006, the SAL became fully equipped through the PEDYAS funding. Up to 2006-07, it operated with the help of the Project secretary. During the academic year 2007-08, it has been fully operational from 9.00-18.00, as it is staffed with three computer specialists who, however, are covered financially through another programme that the Project Director is responsible for. The organization of the SAL was undertaken by Asst. Professor Bessie Mitsikopoulou. The Self-Access Learning Centre is still developing and will continue in collaboration with the Multimedia Centre of the Faculty<sup>3</sup> and the RCEL (Research Centre for English Language Teaching and Testing)<sup>4</sup> to offer students and staff support to their work and research. The SAL has a microsite to be visited through the Faculty website.

The various actions included in the project proposal were complementary to the three aforementioned subprojects. In successfully carrying out these actions, which are briefly described below, the following aims were achieved from 2003 to present.

- Introduced teaching and learning approaches with the support of Information and Communication Technologies (henceforth ICT) and supported students and staff to use it in their work. To this end, staff seminars and student workshops were held each academic year.

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<sup>2</sup> It is available at the Faculty, in the PEDYAS Materials and Resources Area, at the SAL Centre.

<sup>3</sup> Information concerning the Multimedia Centre is provided in the Faculty website.

<sup>4</sup> For detailed information, please visit the webpage of the RCEL ([www.uoa.gr/english/rcel](http://www.uoa.gr/english/rcel))

- Funded the reproduction and publication of educational materials developed by course instructors to support teaching and learning, as well as the publication of students' creative work (i.e., the A-FORMES creative writing periodical and MORFES A<sup>5</sup>) in printed form and soon also in electronic form.
- Planned and created the two electronic journals –one for Anglophone literature and Culture, entitled *Synthesis* and the other for English language teaching and testing, entitled *Directions*.
- Worked towards minimizing the practice of relying exclusively on student assessment through formal, final examinations. Multiple means of student assessment was promoted. Given that this has not been possible in the past, due to exceedingly large classes, human support and resources were provided to the course instructors to assist them by having teaching assistants offer tutorials and help with the evaluation of assignments and project work.

With additional human resources it was also possible:

- To decrease the number of lecture classes and increase the number of classes in the form of seminar and/or workshop so as to allow the exchange of ideas and discussion.
- To offer support for the development of students' language skills and remedial English language training particularly for students who enter the Faculty with English below the level of expected performance.
- To offer the technical support to those course instructors who wanted to do so to develop their e-class and to use it as a support mechanism for their regular contact classes.
- To develop further the Initial Teacher Education Programme, which all students of the Faculty are required to attend, and to offer extra training opportunities for those particularly interested in ELT.
- To offer new elective courses in gender studies, encouraging students to become aware of and investigate gender related issues through an interdisciplinary perspective.

Moreover, through PEDYAS funding, but also through the funding of the complementary project in gender studies, it has been possible in the last five years:

- To bring important scholars and writers to our Faculty for lectures, many of which have been recorded and added to the developing DVD library of the Self-Access Learning Centre.
- To create a framework which makes it increasingly possible for our Faculty of to collaborate with other academic and research units to develop innovative projects, such as a virtual curricula.

Finally, due to PEDYAS funding, it has been possible:

- To enrich the library with many new titles
- To equip the Faculty with hardware
- To buy a wide variety of software computer programmes (e.g., corpora such as the ICAME collection and the British National Corpus) and educational materials in electronic form (such as Courses in Philosophy and Culture entitled 'Teaching that engages the mind'). To provide secretarial and technical support to the teaching and library staff of the Faculty.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at the Faculty, in the PEDYAS Materials and Resources Area, at the SAL Centre.

## 4. CURRICULUM REFORM

Curriculum reform has aimed to provide students with new knowledge, critical awareness and skills which will be useful to them as future professionals and active citizens. Towards this aim, the curriculum has been re-organized on the basis of a new concept concerning levels of study and specialization.

The main innovative interventions are the following:

- Developed a curriculum which includes courses to be offered in the form of ‘disciplinary clusters’ giving opportunities to students to choose areas of concentration in their major
- Increased the number of elective courses and seminars offered
- Introduced courses that open up new professional prospects for students
- Introduced the use of ICT for teaching and autonomous learning purposes
- Facilitated innovative methods of teaching and student assessment.

### 4.1 Developing the new programme of studies

The new programme has been organized in two levels:

- ➔ Basic Studies
- ➔ Specialized Studies

Each level contains courses which fall into disciplinary ‘clusters’. The idea of clusters has been introduced following E.U. recommendations for the innovation of undergraduate programmes of study.

In our programme, disciplinary clusters provide students with opportunities to develop specialized knowledge in areas of English Studies they are majoring in: either Language and Linguistics or Literature and Culture. The purpose of organizing courses into clusters is to provide students with a certain amount of specialized knowledge in their field. This is made possible because the disciplinary clusters are to a considerable extent interrelated. There are however other considerations for arranging the clusters –one is that each cluster meet the conditions of the interdisciplinary nature of studies at the Faculty and respond to the degree offered; that is, a B.A. degree in Greek and English Language and Literature.

The new elements described above are not the only innovative features of the curriculum. There are a number of totally new courses and programmes introduced into the undergraduate curriculum and these will be presented below. New areas of study and programmes were introduced progressively, as they were based on internal evaluation of our whole programme of studies.

Interim evaluation was carried out every academic year by each Department of the Faculty (the Department of Language and Linguistics and the Department of Literature and Culture) during their official assemblies, in which student representatives also participate. Evaluation was done based on the staff’s own experiences with the programme and on views expressed by their students (either orally or on course evaluation sheets). It was also based on student representatives’ input. Minor changes were proposed each year.

#### 4.1.1 Basic Studies

Basic Studies at the Faculty introduce students to the mainstream areas of English Studies, and offer them basic insights into Greek Language and Literature Studies. Moreover, it provides them with introductory knowledge and skills required for the Specialized Studies programme, which offers more advanced courses and makes greater demands on them to think for themselves and work on their own.

A significant innovation in the curriculum is that the eight (8) courses which are necessarily offered in Greek from other Faculties of the School of Philosophy are now offered only at the Basic Studies level, during the first two years of studies, whereas before students had to take courses in Greek throughout their four years of study. As a result of this change, in the remaining two years of study students can exclusively focus in English Studies and major either in linguistics or literature

Therefore, during their Basic Studies, students have to take 20 course organized in the following ‘disciplinary clusters’:

1. English Language Studies
2. Introduction to Linguistics
3. Introduction to Anglophone Literature and Culture
4. Introduction to Greek Literature and European Culture
5. Education and Pedagogy
6. Psychology and Education

The most essential difference between the old and the new curriculum is that the contact hours for course were reduced and more demands made regarding self-study and project work. The other major differences are the following:

##### ➤ Department of Language and Linguistics

Assessment of our students’ performance in English indicated that:

- 60% of the student population seemed to be in need of vigorous language instruction, and especially writing instruction
- 20-30% seemed to need remedial teaching in English
- 95% seemed to need to develop their academic comprehension and production skills.

It is noted that English plays a special role for the students. It is both the language through which they access knowledge and the object of knowledge for them. In addition, it is the primary tool they will need as professionals in English. It is essential that they have high language proficiency and acute awareness of how the English language operates and how it is used.

Therefore, it was considered necessary to design a new language studies curriculum and to implement it. This goal was achieved and language courses replaced courses of linguistics. Whereas before there was an introductory course for every level of language analysis, now there are only two introductory linguistics courses, introducing students to all levels of language analysis and four language courses with a different emphasis and methodology than the two courses offered before.

➤ Department of Literature and Culture

The Literature and Culture Department decided, with regard to courses offered at the Basic Studies level, to shift emphasis from the traditional survey courses to those which introduce the three genres of literature, and to include at this basic level an introductory course in Theory of Culture, replacing courses focusing on the American or British culture. Another important change is the inclusion of a compulsory course on Literary Theory and Criticism at the Basic Studies level, whereas before it was offered only at the advanced level. The aforementioned introductory courses are offered during the first four (4) semesters of study.

#### 4.1.2 Specialized Studies

Specialized Studies at the Faculty include core and elective courses which provide students with specialized knowledge in the field they are majoring in. Moreover, it offers them the opportunity for initial teacher education since the largest percent of our graduates either follow the teaching profession or teach English to supplement their salary.

The most essential difference between the old and the new curriculum is that the courses are offered as disciplinary clusters. There are ten (10) of them that the curriculum is organized by at this level and five (5) of them are offered by the Department of Language and Linguistics, and four (4) by the Department of Literature and Culture. Finally, one cluster, entitled 'Gender and discourse', is linked to an Interdepartmental programme of the University, and courses are offered by both Departments, aiming to encourage students to become aware of gender related issues through an interdisciplinary perspective. The major differences introduced are the following:

➤ Department of Language and Linguistics

The Department curriculum now offers the following course *clusters*:

1. Translation: Theory and Practical Applications
2. Linguistic Theory: Levels of Language Analysis
3. Interdisciplinary Study of Language
4. Theories of Language and Language Study
5. Foreign Language Teaching and Learning with emphasis on TEFL

Furthermore, it includes the following innovative features:

- A *Pre-service EFL Teacher Education and Training Programme* has been introduced. Students take relevant core course in their third year of study and other relevant elective courses in their third and fourth years.
- A programme meant to prepare students on how to compose a research paper in English has been introduced.
- New courses have been included in the curriculum preparing students for our new postgraduate programmes (e.g. Introduction to Lexicography, Intercultural Communication, European Perspectives in Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment).

➤ Department of Literature and Culture

The Department curriculum now offers the following course *clusters*:

1. Literary Theory and Criticism
2. English Literature from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century
3. Literary Movements
4. The Study of Culture

Moreover, at this specialized level, the new programme includes the following innovative features:

- Aiming at disconnecting the courses from their exclusive concern with American and British literature and culture. The new curriculum includes courses on Anglophone literature and culture and some focus on Irish, Canadian, and Australian literature or on literature of the Caribbean.
- Elective courses on Literary Theory and Culture have also been introduced
- Courses focusing on film and literature offered
- Current theoretical approaches to literature and culture are used for textual analysis
- A new course on research methodology and writing of academic papers in literature and culture.
- A new Creative Writing course aims at acquainting students with the various aspects of creative writing. This programme developed from a creative writing seminar of the previous Undergraduate Programme of Studies, which focused primarily upon the involvement of students in practical work helping them to develop their writing skills. In its enriched form students are involved in additional activities. They are brought in contact with esteemed Greek and foreign writers, with whom they discuss issues related to the art of writing, as well as with publishers, critics and other representatives of the professional fields so that they can better understand the social process of the development and support of creative writing. PEDYAS has supported and sponsored an important aspect of this programme which is the publication of *A-FORMES*, a journal in which the students' best work is published. PEDYAS has also funded the publication of a book entitled *MORFES A* which includes the best writing from *A-FORMES*. The activities in which students are involved in the context of this module include the organization and production of public performances by the students presenting their creative work.

➤ Interdepartmentally

For over a decade the Department of Literature and Culture has been offering courses related to gender and women's studies, but the number of course offered depends on the research interests of the staff. However, within the framework of the PEDYAS project, the interdepartmental cluster, Discourse and Gender, was organized to motivate students to think critically about gender related issues through an interdisciplinary perspective. This development was due to that the Faculty has joined the undergraduate interdepartmental, interdisciplinary Gender Studies Programme of the UOA.<sup>6</sup> The four elective courses added to the group

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<sup>6</sup> For further information about the programme, visit [www.isotita.uoa.gr](http://www.isotita.uoa.gr).

of gender related courses that had been taught in the past, all of which constitute the new cluster are:

- Gender and Language
- Gender and Critical Discourse Analysis
- Literature and Gender
- Feminist Literary Theory

In the context of this area of concern, lectures by eminent Greek and foreign scholars have regularly been offered, exposing students to current theoretical and political debates on the issue of gender in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **4.2 Methods of teaching, learning and student assessment**

The aims of the Undergraduate Programme of Studies have been generally served by innovative methods of teaching, learning and student assessment described in the Student Guide. As concerns teaching and learning, following EU recommendations, students and staff have been introduced to ICT and encouraged to use it for the purposes of the courses by taking advantage of the Centre for Self-Access Learning and Materials Development, the Multimedia Centre, and the Faculty Library.

Students are also assisted by e-classes developed in the context of an asynchronous e-learning platform developed by the University of Athens to support traditional educational processes of teaching and learning with multi-media content and educational software.

Students are further assisted by a number of activities, complementary to certain core and elective courses. Such activities related to language courses include language seminars, individualized language study, self-study activities, production of portfolios with project work. Courses in Translation, English Phonetics and Oral production are complemented by tutorial sessions held in small groups. Complementary activities related to literature and culture courses include the use of audio-visual material, training in research methodology and academic writing.

In the framework of both core and elective courses, students are provided with printed and electronic educational material, prepared by their instructors, to generally facilitate the teaching and learning processes. Specifically:

- Worksheets for practical class-work.
- Study questions to assist reading and writing tasks.
- Electronic material for self-study and English language development.
- Data bases for self-study and self-learning.
- Readers compiled to resolve the problem created by the limited literature in English available in Greek academic libraries.

As regards student evaluation, the project has encouraged alternative ways of assessing students. While in the past a student's grade for a course was based on one final written exam, new ways of assessment include:

- Mid-term exams or multiple tests which encourage them to study regularly throughout the semester.
- Open-book exams to disengage them from the habit of memorizing information.
- Oral presentations of their work to help them develop public speaking skills
- Research projects and writing of academic papers to help them develop research skills, critical thinking, and techniques of academic writing.

All the above has been possible because the PEDYAS project has financed non-tenure track teaching staff to help break up large groups of students into smaller classes, where it is possible to carry out discussion, provide support, individual attention and assign project work.

Moreover, the project team requested that instructors make systematic use of the Course Evaluation Forms designed by project members.

## 5. THE WEBSITE OF THE FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES

The University of Athens has no standard layout and structure so that each Faculty or Department can build its website in a uniform way. In need of a virtual presentation of the Faculty to its students, our Faculty prepared its own webpage, thanks to PEDYAS funding. Prior to this, the Faculty webpage was the result of an amateur attempt. The little information that it contained was in English only and presented in an unattractive way.

The new website (<http://www.enl.uoa.gr/>) was not a re-design but a complete new build-up assigned to professionals who collaborated closely with the website committee appointed by the Faculty, directed by Asst. Prof. Bessie Mitsikopoulou.

The initial phase of the project dealt with the content, which was a time consuming task. Information had to be selected from a variety of different sources and adapted for the website which was to be created as a:

- well-designed and easy to use bilingual site that would provide a detailed and accurate presentation of the Faculty, its functions and activities
- friendly hub of information and services for students, staff, alumni, and all other interested parties

Following the selection of graphic design and decision on the overall aesthetics of the site, the Greek part of the website was designed and prepared. As reported by committee members, many background issues had to be addressed in order to digitize the proper channels of information. Therefore, its preparation took 11 months and it was first put in operation in November 2006. During this time, the old 'English site' was still functioning and was kept updated.

The English part of the new webpage started operating in February 2007. It is not a duplicate of the Greek website but it does include the same categories of information as in Greek. It also contains in English information which is useful exclusively for foreign students and visitors.

From November 2007 to May 2008 a number of new applications and website services were put into operation:

- Connection to e-Secretariat; that is, a service provided by the University of Athens (<http://my-studies.uoa.gr>) through which faculty and students connect to view their grades and to register for classes.
- An online archive with conferences, lectures and events organized by the Faculty of English Studies was created and it appears in both Greek and English.
- A first year student guide was prepared with useful information for the newcomers to the Faculty. This webpage has its own structure with five buttons on the left and five on the right and its design follows closely the design of the main website. The texts include several useful links to maps, routes of various bus lines, application forms, information for extracurricular activities.
- A software application was created to handle all Faculty announcements through

the website. This rather user-friendly application is handled by secretarial staff and faculty. Most importantly, through this software application students of the Faculty are also given the opportunity to receive announcements, as soon as these are uploaded (by registering to an RSS feed).

- A list of books published by faculty was added to the Publication category in Greek and English.

In May 2006 a major attempt to turn the Faculty website into a portal entered its implementation phase. It primarily involves the creation of specialized websites for a number of Faculty activities. Among them are the micro-sites for the Centre of Self-Access Learning and Materials Development, the new e-journals of the Faculty (*Synthesis*, *Directions*, and *A-formes*).

The website committee plans to enrich the content of the portal with new applications and services. It has been estimated that it is fairly useful and popular, since its operation, the new website has been visited very frequently. This is illustrated by the statistics provided in this document.

## 6. CENTRE FOR SELF-ACCESS LEARNING (SAL)

The full name of the unit is *Centre for Self-Access Learning and Materials Development*. While for the time being it functioned primarily as a place where students could use computers, now the Centre is a space which allows them to be involved in self-directed learning. Located in Hall 905, on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the School of Philosophy (Tel. (+30) 210 7277908), its hours are Monday-Friday, 9:00-18:00. The URL is <http://www.enl.uoa.gr/centre> and the e-mail address is [centre@enl.uoa.gr](mailto:centre@enl.uoa.gr),

The SAL Centre has two general aims: to enable students to improve their overall language proficiency in English through self-study work and to enhance their ICT skills for academic study.

Its development serves the Faculty in many ways, given the adverse conditions faced, due to lack of state funding to universities in general, which obliged us to have to cope with:

- an increasing number of incoming students per year
- a poor teacher-student ratio and therefore inability to provide language instruction and practice to small groups of students
- the intense need to support the language programme offered during Basic Studies –a need identified by systematic research conducted by faculty
- the large number of students' unfulfilled individual learning needs
- the identified need to enhance students' ICT skills for academic study and research.

Before developing the Centre, an initial study was conducted to explore the different types of Self-Access Language Learning Centres which exist today in various European universities and to suggest the most appropriate model for the Centre. In line with recent literature which suggests that it is more effective to support the development of subject specific academic language skills and related ICT skills in a Language Center equipped with independent study tools, the director of the subproject for the SAL Centre proceeded to adopt an integrative model. Taking into account the findings of the study and the above identified needs, the Centre has aimed:

- to develop multimedia on-line and off-line materials for academic English in order to provide individualized instruction of the English language at an advanced level
- to develop multimedia educational materials for various courses in the curriculum
- to encourage autonomous work and to prepare students to become independent learners, a prerequisite for continuous, life-long education in today's learning society
- to promote continuous self-evaluation by enhancing students' critical abilities and reflective skills
- to provide opportunities for all students to develop digital academic research skills
- to provide a physical space in which students will have access to a computer and the Internet
- to encourage the use of existing e-learning opportunities, such as e-class, the platform of asynchronous e-learning of the UOA
- to offer ICT seminars
- to collaborate with other Centres and research labs with similar aims.

A diary of work for the Centre is reported below:

- 05-2003: The place for the Centre is secured for the Faculty
- 07-2003: Building construction takes place
- 10-2003: Layout studies for optimization of the workflow and equipment settings are prepared, while furniture for the Centre is selected and ordered
- 01-2004: The Network Centre of the University of Athens installs cables and connectors for the setting up of the Centre network
- 05-2004: The Centre unofficially starts its operation with some computers available from another programme of the Faculty; The Centre secretary undertakes to organize the work in the Centre and relevant documentation is prepared (rules and regulations, lists with available materials, different fill-in forms for visitors etc)
- 11-2004: The first ICT seminars are offered in the Centre to first semester students. The seminars include an Introduction to the Internet for Self study Purposes module and a practical module in which students visit selected websites for Academic English. The seminar was repeated in Fall 2005, 2006, 2007).
- 04-2005: ICT seminars are offered to fourth semester students (repeated in Spring 2006 and 2007); Seminar for Faculty members concerning the use of e-class (eclass.uoa.gr)
- 12-2005: The Centre is officially presented to the Faculty in the Welcoming Event organized for new Faculty Students
- 07-2007: The Centre computers arrive and the Centre is now fully equipped
- 05-2008: The Centre website is ready with language materials, detailed presentation of the Centre off-line and on-line educational materials (CD-ROMs with lectures, etc).

## 6.1 Facilities

Today, the facilities of the Centre for students include:

- 25 networked multimedia computers with fast internet connection
- 40 headsets with microphones
- CD and cassette player
- a 29inch TV (soon with satellite connection).

The Centre is also is equipped with:

- 1 laser printer (for network use)
- 1 coloured inject printer
- 1 scanner
- 1 external CD-writer
- 1 photocopier
- 1 video player
- 1 video projector
- 1 multi-machine (coloured printer, scanner, photocopier and fax machine)

## 6.2 Materials

In the Centre, students have access to the Internet and to on- and off-line study materials for language development, academic literacy skills and reading materials for various courses. Students may visit the Centre in order to:

- work on self-study worksheets for academic English
- work on self-study worksheets on a variety of literature and linguistics courses
- use multimedia programmes to enhance their English language proficiency
- watch multimedia programmes on translation
- watch DVDs with academic lectures (choose from the collection of over 200 lectures)
- work online on language activities and worksheets from the microsite of the Centre
- explore the list of websites available in the webpage of the Centre.

They may use the available computers in order to:

- prepare research papers and assignments for the various courses
- search for bibliographical references through the Internet
- access on-line services of the University of Athens (e.g. e-class, e-library, etc.)
- attend Web tutorials and other ICT seminars offered by the Centre throughout the academic year.

## 6.3 Future plans

The Centre plans to:

- engage senior undergraduate students (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> semester students) in the preparation of self-study educational materials
- participate in funded projects for the development of materials for academic self-study and remedial self-directed learning.

## 6.4 Internal evaluation

It is clear that the Centre has been created in order to address students' needs for advanced language study and the development of basic ICT skills for academic research. Consequently, as claimed by Mitsikopoulou (2006), the Centre is similar to and different from on-line Writing Centers and other Self-Access Language Centres operating in European and US universities.

The Centre differs from on-line writing centres in that it does not only provide a website with on-line materials but it is also a place in which students may use a variety of language materials (self study worksheets, satellite TV, videos and DVDs, CD ROMs, among others). The Centre also has a computer lab function since it allows students to use its computers for their own work, e.g., type their coursework, research topics on the Internet, use on-line language materials prepared for them, etc. A further difference refers to educational materials. Instead of focusing only on writing development, as is the case with on-line writing centres, the Self-Access Learning Centre adopts a broader perspective of academic discourse.

The Centre differs from other self-access language centres operating in various European universities in that it is clearly oriented on the study of English only, not on the study of many languages as is the case with other language centres. Its focus on

advanced language study addresses the needs of a specific student population and aims to provide subject specific knowledge, as a support for courses included in the curriculum. However, as other self-access centres, this Centre provides a variety of on-line and on-site materials for language development as well as an ICT component to promote academic research.

The equipment in the Centre is new: multimedia computers with DVD players operating with fast internet connection enable students to do a variety of tasks efficiently and quickly. There are lists of available materials in different parts of the Centre. There is at least one member of the Centre staff available from morning to evening so as to help students with technical problems and to ensure that the machines are well used. Centre staff also lends educational materials to students and checks that they are returned in good shape. On the walls there are posters of conferences and events organized by the Faculty which provide glimpses of the Faculty's activities and stress the academic nature of the Centre.

The function of the Centre is further enhanced by its newly established microsite available at [www.enl.uoa.gr/centre/](http://www.enl.uoa.gr/centre/). This is a user-friendly virtual space, with easy to use navigation, well designed graphics and a menu on the left. Its graphics and colours remind the visitor of the Faculty's website, although here there is a menu only on the left, perhaps to allow enough space for content.

Its menu consists of the following categories:

- **About us** with information on the aims of the Centre, location, working days and hours, rules and regulations, facilities and materials
- **Lectures** with short descriptions of over 200 available academic lectures on DVDs
- **Online Resources** an annotated list of 200 websites organized in clear categories
- **Worksheets** with a number of activities on a specific theme (e.g. how to use dictionaries and thesauri)
- **Language Activities** on vocabulary, reading, grammar and quizzes
- **Meta-Fraseis Project** connection to a multimedia educational programme on translation developed by a Faculty member
- **News**
- **Contact us**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**

## 7. PROJECT PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

In order disseminate information regarding the huge amount of work that has been done to achieve the goals set for the PEDYAS project, the project team organized an international conference entitled 'ENGLISH STUDIES IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: Glocal perspectives and demands for a new type of citizenry', which took place on Saturday, 7 June 2008, 9:30 – 17.30, at the University Faculty Club.



The Faculty Chair, Prof. Mara Yanni, officially opened the event and Prof. Eleni Haviara-Kechaidou, member of Pedyas project team, gave the welcome address and introduced Prof.



Maro Germanou and Prof. Bessie Dendrinou, who presented the 'Outcomes of the project and future prospects'.

A talk by the fourth member of the project team followed, Dr Bessie Mitsikopoulou spoke on 'Language awareness and new literacies: A



language programme for future professionals of English', discussing the theoretical basis upon which the Faculty's new language



programme is based. The Faculty's interest in pursuing ways of constructively and creatively linking ICT to academic study was the reason that

Prof. Jürgen Handke, Director of the Virtual Linguistics Campus in Germany had been invited and spoke about 'The virtual future of linguistics'.

Prof. Stephanos Stephanidis, Dean of Humanities at the University of Cyprus, was the next invited speaker, and he spoke about English and critical cosmopolitanism,



discussing the new orientations of the Faculty's programme of Studies with the developments in the area of English Studies. His lecture was followed by a talk entitled 'Critique as crisis: the praxis of ontological critique and the politics of



the example' delivered by Dr. Mina Karavanda.

Given the conference's concerns with citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the project team had invited Prof. Lee Quinby, from the City University of New York, to give a lecture on the subject. Her talk, 'Eccentric citizens' was well received and provided an interesting follow up to Stephanidis talk.

It was also in line with the lecture by another invited speaker, Prof. emeritus, Ekaterini Douka-Kabitoglou, who spoke about ‘The Politics of English Studies in Europe: A Survey of the European English Messenger’.



After the lunch break, Dr Kia Karava delivered a talk entitled ‘Educating our students as future teachers and teachers for the future’ and presented what has been achieved in recent years in the Pre-service Teacher Education and Training Programme of the Faculty.

Bessie Dendrinou, Pedyas project director, closed the conference and announced that this conference was also meant to celebrate 2008 to the year of languages, but also to honour one of the project team members who retired at the end of the academic year: Eleni Haviara-Kechaidou.