

## 3D and Language Education

Unedited Google translation in English of the white paper (in Dutch) about the potential value of virtual worlds for Language Education and the rationale for the ViTAAL project.

Original document available online at

<http://ton.koenraad.googlepages.com/3d%26mvto>

This research project was facilitated by Kennisnet, the Dutch national Schoolnet.

Refer to as:

Koenraad, A.L.M. (2007) 3D and Language Education. White paper on the rationale for the ViTAAL project.

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The VITAAL project (2007-2008), the possibilities of a virtual version of the Language Village concept tested with the aim of the application orientation of the Modern Foreign Language Education - particularly in the area of fluency - to promote. For a foreign context to simulate this test form, where pupils realistic duties (shopping, ordering food etc), alter many schools once a year the gym, sometimes with decorative pieces.

The central research question in the ViTAAL project to examine whether the deployment of a virtual language village in a more efficient and effective way attractive, realistic and application-oriented language can be given to pupils in secondary education than (only) using a physical language village.

The project is implemented by a partnership of 2 teacher (EHvA, HU), 3 BB schools (PCC, Jan Arentz, SG Westfriesland) and CPS Educational Development and Consultancy, in part facilitated by a grant from the Kennisrotonde fund.

For the implementation of the language village in Active Worlds is a French village built with some specific locations (Baker, OT, kiosk, young space etc) to perform communicative acts. Students of teacher training have prepared teaching materials (training dialogues) have been developed for use in the classroom and act as coaches by e-learners online training sessions in the world to perform. There is also a cross-media Language Quest is developed and experimented with variants of informal learning (eg World Karaoke versions).

There is a copy of the Titanic (a sponsor of object-Europe Active Worlds) adjusted to the setting for the story of Languages Quest 'Panique à bord ": there is a murder committed on board and it is the responsibility of teams superstructure of students to this case to solve. Penetrating interviews with the avatars of the French guests on this cruise there are of course!

The following article is an adaptation of the literature study and the 'white paper on which the project definition was drawn up.

For further information on the project knowledge and future activities in the Netherlands

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see:

[www.cps.nl / language / VITAAL](http://www.cps.nl/language/VITAAL)

## Context

In secondary, vocational and higher education profound renewal operations are taking place. Significantly, it also gives effect to policy set by the Ministry of OC & W is initiated. (Renewal BB & superstructure substructure, VOCATIONAL Competence, Teacher Renewal). Across the breadth of education is a trend towards competency work. Knowledge in the service of able and dedicated. Targets are also contemporary, inspiring education to realize that better fits the perception of children / participants and their ways of learning and communicating outside the school / training. It also is important that the outside world and the timeliness is achieved.

ICT is explicitly mentioned to help third objective: creative, challenging education and differentiation in learning styles and talents.

There is in this context also policies specifically aimed at improving the Modern Foreign Language Education (MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION) and the training and professionalism of language teachers.

In the note, 'English foreign language program (2004-2006)' forms the core priorities of the substantive improvement agenda:

- There is more attention to the skills' talk 'and' listen '
- German and French have more attention and support
- The attractiveness of the language and the professionalism of the teachers could be improved.

Its implementation is not without problems. For MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION is that despite the efforts of organizations implementing projects for the Ministry and the outcome of federal, by OC & W projects such as Workplace Languages [1] have not achieved important objectives in terms of:

- The transformation of learning to competence-oriented language [2].
- Working with language tasks. Paying special attention to the desirability VOCATIONAL with the purposes of orientation training in languages. The professional contexts relate to the students to motivate and show them why they learn the language. Also, the connection between secondary and VOCATIONAL for pupils made more visible.
- Strengthening of MVT-education through ICT (s quest, video)
- Realistic language: internationalization
- Using the European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP)

## The Village as a working language and form key

In line with the ambitions in terms of social cohesion in Europe and the quality of Modern Language Education in this context is the Dutch policy aims at the introduction of application-oriented learning in MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION to encourage continuous learning lines to achieve the final based on Common European Framework of Reference for the Modern Foreign Languages (CEFR) and the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) [3].

The adoption of the already available English versions of these instruments by the educational process, however difficult the teaching of applied work is still in its infancy, is only suitable material available and the limited review of this type of education appears complex since the results of learning 's where the focus is on ability rather than knowledge are not always to know to express. There is a need for concrete examples of the different levels and the educational principles of more application-oriented work need further development in materials and methods.

There is a small group of vanguard schools communicative skills tests from the control to the idea that CEFR is based. Language Village formula also helps the students to make clear that grammar, vocabulary and spelling while indispensable but that it ultimately comes to the use of language in practice. A language is a village on the way to a realistic way to test language skills. In a village language students perform language tasks on certain (reconstructed) locations, where language skills competent partners (ideally native speakers) to speak to them and assess their language skills. With his ability to practice simulation Language Village concept is also very useful in VOCATIONAL schools. In particular, given the changes that the introduction of competence based education and the 'learning model currently pose to the function, design and organization of language in this sector.

This approach is also seen as a good way to get an education period of some size (half a year, usually more) to close. The preparation of this moment is normally specific attention. The current practice is that prior intensive dialogues with practice is often a great similarity with the expected behavior during the language assessment.

Most teaching time in the present period, however, with regular education materials (methods of publishing) and the didactic approach in which they are based. Teachers need to have opportunities for a more direct relationship between the method-related content, activities and learning to interpret and the Language Village assessments and also during the trip "more mission-oriented work. More and more flexible options for application-oriented to practice and test models and to design appropriate tasks to be desired. Again, the organizational efforts in the implementation of schools involved this type of assessment more than once per year to use.

## Why a virtual version of the Language Village?

Text-based Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVEs) or MOOs are already in the MVT-education residency. English publications (Corda, 1999:195-199; Goedemé & Koenraad, 2002) about the possibilities and the use of these environments in MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION show that the majority of the research and practice reports coming from abroad and research in particular in Higher Education is carried out. The added value and Goedemé Koenraad (2002) report, we can summarize as follows:

§ target language in a safe and supportive context to use

§ experience in cooperation with (social) interaction, and act strategically and as social and (intercultural) communicative competence development

Skills on the self-learning a foreign language proficiency, including in-world "tools and resources to learn how to use

Their own digital products (text, audio) to develop web publication or 'in-world' use, thus also binding to the (learning) environment development (ownership)

Familiarization with the use and communication in a virtual world and interact with virtual characters in the form of 'bots' (thereby lowering the threshold to autonomous schools use outside of such international applications and their communities)

Developments such as those currently applicable in eg Second Life (SL) show that virtual worlds in the future increasingly will be an interface to the real world. Thus, a growing number of institutions and companies virtual environments for example, marketing activities, recruitment, and internal corporate communications [4] and also as a facility for virtual shopping. This is also an increase in so-called Avatar Mediated Communication (AMC) visible. Furthermore, globalization and the development of digital telephony also an increase in oral communication in many sectors of society involved. Good command of foreign languages and effective intercultural competencies requirements are defined in 3D-environments to function and may also an important competitive advantage for a wide variety of activities and professions which also means that virtualization will emerge from the Internet.

See, for example, the ad (Fig. 1) Randstad in 2007 published its SL site (<http://www.virtuelebanen.nl/>):

Virtual hostess (ABN Amro location Almere)

If virtual hostess create an important part of the ABN AMRO Second Life team. The Second Life team is based in Amsterdam. The team members are involved in the communication around the project, creating concepts and building within Second Life. The virtual hostess is

the calling card of ABN AMRO in Second Life and fulfills an important role. The employee (star) will focus attention on the Customer Call Center in Almere in the Young Professional Accountteam and also part of the Second Life Team.  
In your first week in Amsterdam you know your new colleagues and work in Real Life.  
Biweekly An evaluation currently being conducted in Almere.

Fig. 1.

Practice Experiences (Svensson, 2003, Peterson, 2006) where virtual worlds are used for the development of language and intercultural communication skills make it likely that the implementation in a virtual version of the Language Village practice in MODERN LANGUAGE EDUCATION may enrich and scaling. Equipped with a basic collection of commands and application situations and educational materials for asynchronous use virtual worlds like Second Life, Active Worlds or Croquet may contribute to the creation of a powerful and flexible learning environment for the realization of task language. The possibilities for voice in combination with the virtual context form the ingredients for the location of practice and realistic assessment of oral communicative skills.

Typology of activities

Here, we type 3 activities based on their context of use and mention a few examples:

A) For synchronous use:

Practice dialogues and simulations using the Language Village concept.  
Information Gap / Problem solving tasks  
Virtual Drama  
Global Simulation

B) for asynchronous Primary use:

Adventure / Treasure Hunt / Virtual Quest

C) A combination of A) and B)

Formats as in B but enlivened with synchronous options, such as scheduled times for group meetings, the presence and intervention by fictional characters live or occupation at regular intervals of a few specific locations, such as a shop, airport or restaurant.

Increased use of (virtual) authentic communicative situations also offers opportunities for the

relevance and functionality of learning such as listening to enlarge them in a storyline to bed. 3D environments also provide opportunities for the learner an active role in the create and publish content or provide activities and services. There is also support for the implementation of the Language Portfolio: thus learners (multimedia) documents which they manufacture their own level estimation can support, including through the creation of digital records of synchronous interaction situations in which they participate.

Partly because there is greater scope 'third' as if native speakers, qualified (old) pupils and parents, senior pupils and other teachers and teachers-in-training in the implementation of Language Villages and / or adventures, the deployment of this type ICT application possibilities for a work-key form as' Language Village "and more flexible to deploy and scale to achieve.

It provides opportunities for them as e-moderator to involve bemensing this online educational activity. Optionally, they can contribute to the expansion of the virtual world through the (to) develop sites which, based on specific interests and / or substantive expertise, to offer activities on specific elements of the culture of the target country, literary works, etc .

In this context there are also advantages in the field of cooperation between schools in respect of training and professionalism of teachers. On a number of MVT-teacher is the commitment of students in the preparation and implementation of Language Villages already a regular part of the curriculum.

The teacher can offer students practical experience with the (co) design task (online) education materials, on-the-job 'support and assess learning in virtual environments, such as adventure and role-playing and acting as a virtual mentor and resident of the virtual world. Thus, their teaching knowledge and behavioral repertoire speaking on education increase.

The teaching of methodology curriculum components can be improved and offers training the ability to carry out practical research and the use of tools such as CEFR and ELP to connect to the experience.

## Conclusions

Partly on the basis of publications and meta-studies on the possibilities and added value of using multi-user environments in Modern Language Education (Cutter, 2006; Shield, 2003, Campbell, 2003; Koenraad & Goedemé, 2002), the contribution to achieving the above, desirable changes in Modern Language Education be described as follows.

## Realization of application-oriented education

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- 3D environments offer opportunities for the use / development of a wide and diversified range of target situations (work) task, computer mediated communication (CMC) activities on the basis of the CEFR to design and perform. It is also expected that this is an important contribution to the motivation of (secondary) students to preparatory learning to perform in the 'real life' educational situation as learning a language to a less abstract activity

- As students without teacher can use the facilities can work independently and responsible people. Students can practice with each other roles or work on projects with individual, asynchronous task components.

- Logging facilities make it possible (trial) versions of duties to register and to discuss and as a functional way to pay attention to proper language use (grammar, vocabulary). With a view to the development or growth capabilities also provides opportunities for reflection and discussion of one's actions. It also provides good opportunities for this functionality to generate appropriate content for use in language portfolios.

#### Realistic language: Internationalization

In addition to cooperation within the school and / or region / country is also cooperation in the international context quite conceivable. Internationalization at Home to a number of reasons worth pursuing. Firstly, because this contributes to the authenticity of the tasks and learning to communicate. But because other issues can be addressed as interculturality and other forms of (autonomous) learning, such as tandem e-learning [5] can be realized.

#### Content and Vocational language

An important additional argument for the use of virtual worlds is that they are well suited for teaching and learning in non-language courses [6] and schools as additional opportunities for content and language integrated approaches and for vocational language development.

Virtual Village for language learners very specifically what knowledge and skills needed to function in situations that the use of the target language require. And it helps to (support) the motivation of learners, a key variable for effectiveness in Modern Language Education. Also supports teachers in aligning learning goals that are relevant in realistic use contexts, including virtual environments.

#### Informal learning

Awareness of such environments can also encourage students to use independently of other virtual communities where the target language is used.

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[1] <http://www.wCEFRplaatstalen.nl/>

[2] For the rationale and the implications for the design of the language among the brochure 'Just do (CPS, 2003)

[3] The CEFR is intended to provide a comparison between the different EU countries. To this end, the CEFR of six levels from A1 to C2 for all skills: listening, reading, interviews, speaking and writing. All countries in Europe have accepted this system. In the Netherlands, at the request of the Ministry of Education since the descriptions of which someone is in the form of so-called 'can-do statements developed.

The European Language Portfolio in the CEFR is based, in view of what skills a student or student has. It is explicitly designed to understand the language and practice focus.

[4] In particular, the availability of 'voice' these worlds also used for business meetings instead of video or web.

[5] For more information on this process see the notes on the Tandem Project pages: <http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/etandem/etindex-nl.html>

[6] For example, communication, catering, design, marketing, ICT, art.