

Keith Kelly

English Language Education Specialist

The British Council

7 Krakra Street

Sofia 1504, Bulgaria

tel: ++359 2 9 42 42 25 (Direct line)

++359 2 9 42 43 44 (Reception)

fax ++359 2 9 42 42 22

email: keith.kelly@britishcouncil.bg

http://www.britishcouncil.org/bulgaria

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational and cultural relations. Registered in England as a Charity

EAC Project in Bulgaria

Three main areas were developed in the English Across the Curriculum Project in Bulgaria during the year 2001-2002: English Across the Curriculum for Young Learners; LAC materials and course design; Building the network across the region.

English Across the Curriculum for Young Learners

English Across the Curriculum for Young Learners began in the Antim I school, Sofia in October 2001 with 2B class. In collaboration with the class's English teacher and a Science colleague we worked on and piloted supplementary materials over the course of the first term. This resulted in the writing and publication of the Children's storybook 'The Blackbird and the Fox' accompanied by teacher's notes. This was the first initiative which brought the English Across the Curriculum project into the YLS classroom. With the book launch in March 2002 and subsequent workshop for 30 teachers of young learners from around the country the approach and materials received a wide audience.

LAC materials and course design

In 2001-2002 The Ministry of Education and Science invited the FACT Group and the British Council to collaborate in the writing of materials in inservice training courses for teachers of Language Across the Curriculum. With a small group of colleagues from the FACT network language and content materials were designed, produced and piloted in classrooms around the country.

The first impact of this initiative was the presentation the FACT Group made at the Biology Conference at the Faculty of Biology at Sofia University in December, 2001. Here, myself, Stefka Kitanova and Elka Goranova presented ideas for looking at the Bulgarian language in the Biology classroom. I also presented three Science Across the World (www.scienceacross.org)

materials packages which have been translated into Bulgarian. The teachers were very interested in developing language support materials for the Bulgarian Biology classroom and this led to an agreement to run two seminars for student teachers of Biology focusing on language in the Biology classroom at the University faculty of Biology. Mother tongue language support in the content classroom is an area which has great potential for whole curricular development as well as propagating good practice from the sphere of ELT.

Meetings were held with the director of the Teacher Training Institute, Sofia and the rector of the South Eastern University, Blagoevgrad in May. These meetings laid the foundations for Language Across the Curriculum courses to begin at these institutions in the Spring term of 2003. Both institutions will be partners in piloting and developing the courses over the next year.

Building the network across the region

The FACT Group received invitations to carry out workshops and present at conferences throughout the year.

A two-day seminar on content and language integrated instruction took place in the beautiful wintry medieval city of Tallinn from March 8-9. The event was hosted by Tallinn Technical University and was organized by colleagues at the department of English Language, managed by Monika Sepp. Lida Schoen represented the Science Across the World Project and I gave a Bulgarian perspective on the project and presented the FACT Network (Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching).

It was an intensive two days which aimed at introducing the 100 participants to the Science Across the World Project (www.scienceacross.org) as well as presenting classroom ideas for developing cross-curricular instruction.

In April the FACT Group drove up to Croatia to carry out LAC workshops in Osijek and to present at the HUPE conference in Pula. This is part of the Ministry of Education initiative to begin LAC classes in the school year 2002-2003 in schools across the country.

One of the most significant events of the FACT year was the second conference of the "Bi-lingual Forum - FACT II" which met in Bratislava, Slovakia, 9-13 June 2002. It gathered 30 participants from 6 countries, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia and was a follow-up to the Science Across the Balkans workshop in Plovdiv, Bulgaria the previous year. As a result of this event the organization of FACT III has already begun, a host country identified and sponsors approached to secure the near future of the FACT network.

Finally, the English Across the Curriculum Summer School, Varna July 1-13, 2002 had as its aim to write a supplementary book for English, Ecology and Health - Ethical English. This involved participants from 5 countries (Romania, Bulgaria, the UK, Holland and Croatia) and tutors from a variety of disciplines across the curriculum. The book is due off the printing press any day now!

All of these initiatives were most valuable for bringing people together. Wonderful materials were written, but the growth of the network and its long term development relies on people linking up with each other. This networking can best be seen in the 'factworld' email list at Yahoogroups (factworld@yahogroups.com). We now have 300 teachers in the list from 35 countries around the world and the list keeps on going and doing such important work because these people know each other and feel they belong in the group.

It's their group.

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