

Australia to launch agent training

Australian Education International (AEI), a division of the Australian government, is rolling out a certificated training course aimed at education agents around the world. The initiative is a sophisticated effort to ensure education agents overseas and in Australia keep their skills up-to-date in terms of knowledge about the country's education system, quality assurance and immigration regulations. A re-assessment option for agents every two years is also being introduced.

The training course is currently being piloted internationally, with trials in Australia having already been undertaken. Feedback on the online training course to date – which will be delivered via self-assessment tasks and self-paced tutorial exercises – has so far been encouraging. Elaine McCauley at AEI reported in the latest information bulletin that, "95 per cent of the participants surveyed rated the pilot good to excellent and 90 per cent felt they had learnt a new skill".

A novel aspect to the training – the British Council in the UK also provides agent training via its website – is that the assessment units aimed at education agents are part of a wider certificate recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Agents can access the training course itself for free, pay AUS\$400 (US\$295) to go through the assessment process and gain a statement of at-

tainment, and complete a further 10 units to gain a Certificate III in International Education Services, recognised by AQF.

It is expected that the website offering the training, www.pieronline.org/eatc, will become a valuable resource for agencies. McCauley reported that 86 per cent of the initial focus group said they would use the Statement of Attainment to notify institutions that they had completed the training and all would encourage staff within their organisations to also complete the course. Moreover, one-third reported that the session conducted on ethics was most relevant to them.

At English Australia (EA), Executive Director, Sue Blundell, said, "EA views this project as a very positive initiative that will provide education agencies with the opportunity to not only develop the skills of their staff, but to be able to demonstrate these skills to students and their families." Blundell is a member of the consultative group that has been established to provide input to the project.

The training course has been developed by a company called International Education Services (IES), in consultation with AEI. IES provides other qualifications related to university preparation and workplace training. Its Professional International Education Resources (Pier) team expects to launch the training course in April, with assessment available from June. ●

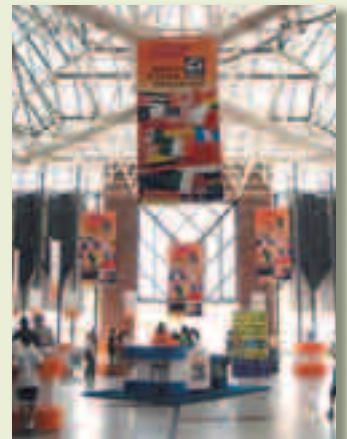
CI in Brazil organises expo again

BRAZILIAN AGENCY, Central de Intercambio (CI), is organising a second series of study abroad fairs after its successful debut into the exhibition arena last year (see *Language Travel Magazine*, April 2005, page 11).

Taking place from March 24 to April 9, the fairs will present students with language schools, airlines, tourism specialists, tertiary education institutions and consulates keen to attract their business.

Celso Garcia, Director of CI, said, "We and our partners experienced a great number of enrolments last year from contacts established during the fairs. We are going to repeat the same success [this year]." Garcia added that a new focus this year would be Work & Study, "making the fair a unique event in Brazil".

The CI International Education Fair is visiting Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Ribeirão Preto, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Brasília, Campinas, Goiânia, Porto Alegre and Sorocaba, taking place in shopping centres. Previous exhibitors at the event commended the choice of location for the passing trade it engendered. Johanna Harris at St Giles International in the UK said, "There was a constant flow of genuinely interested people at our stand."



PHOTOGRAPH: CENTRAL DE INTERCAMBIO

● The CI International Education Fair last year

Agency of the month



This month, **Cape Studies** in South Africa nominates **JST** agency in Japan.

In a series appearing each month in *Language Travel Magazine*, we ask a different language teaching institution to nominate one of their preferred agencies or agent partners, and to explain why this person/company is worthy of their nomination.



Jens von Wichtingen at the school explains this decision:

"Cape Studies Language School has worked in close association with JST Japan for two years. We met via our membership in Pacific Gateway Study Group and due to a few visits over there in Tokyo, have even become good friends. Our as-

sociation has been pleasing and successful due to their professionalism and prompt attention, despite the time difference. We sometimes think they never sleep ...emails are answered almost immediately.

We trust that JST appreciates our speedy and complete responses to all their queries. Our 'Cape Studies client satisfaction guarantee' and the availability of a Japanese counsellor at our school are of big importance to JST, it gives them peace of mind and a safe feeling about their clients with us.

JST has a personal approach with their clients, and their attention to detail makes doing business uncomplicated and proficient on every level. We look forward to many years of successful cooperation."

Industry issues - agents speak out

January February March April May June July August September October November December

Q Is it hard to convince your clients to pay more than the minimum possible for a better quality language-training programme?



Zeta Efthymiou,
Skylines Study
Travel – Athens,
Greece

"It could be hard sometimes to direct a client/student towards a more expensive but better quality language programme, especially when you know that your client's budget is limited. At Skylines Study Travel we strongly feel that we should always respect the budget and the views of our clients although we often see that our clients need some kind of motivation to take a wiser and more effective decision. My experience has taught me so far that you should listen to your client/student rather than try to convince him/her about what you might wish to promote at a certain moment. No doubt better quality programmes are cost-effective with regard to their outcome and definitely worth investing in. The majority of our clients go for middle of the range programmes."



Santuza Paolucci
Nogueira Bicalho,
STB, Brazil

"The answer to this question depends on the client's profile. From a Brazilian point of view, we can separate clients as corporate; students; and travellers. For the first group, what really matters is to develop language skills in the minimum time possible, therefore, quality language training and services offered by the school are important factors for enrolment. The combination of time, instruction and services guides this group. For the second group, price becomes a factor. Normally, in Brazil, students do not have their own funds, therefore their parents cover their costs. What competes here with the school price is the other activities that the person might be considering. That includes tours, excursions, shows, travel cost, etc, everything related to the experience, not to learning. The third group that I named as 'travellers', they can also be

students in their own country, however, their main objective is experience. They don't mind where they will be studying, as they understand that learning comes from experience, not from the classroom. In my view, there has been a shift from the second group to the third one."



Lyudmila
Ponomareva,
Contour-LAMN,
Belarus

"In most cases, it depends on the client. Students (undergraduates) are more willing to pay more for a programme, like Study & Work, if they know the programme costs will be paid back in full [through earnings gained]. This age-group seems to be the one which is price-sensitive: they usually choose the cheapest language courses. Graduate students/adult learners are more "choosy" and can afford to spend more for more quality. In most cases, we offer them "special" programmes

that we do not offer to everybody. Finally, very well-to-do families tend to choose only the best, which sometimes means the most expensive programmes, equalling price with quality."



May Yu Hlaing, May
Int. Education and
Training Centre,
Myanmar

"Here, there are two types of clients seeking opportunities to study abroad: those who sincerely want to enrich their knowledge and those wishing to exploit the student status. We avoid dealing with the latter. The former would look out for quality education and there have never been problems in persuading them to spend more on quality teaching programmes. As for the latter, they seek lesser quality at lower prices. However, there are a few among them who are willing to pay to get into sound institutions for fear that they might be refused an entry visa."

Q&A



Italian in Italy wants to work with other institutions in the field of education and training to promote the Italian language as a pathway into the Italian way of life. GIUSEPPINA FOTI, President of the group, answers our questions.

Fact box

Full name: Italian in Italy - National Association of Italian Language and Cultural Schools
Year established: 1997
Number of members: 24
Type of members: Private Italian language schools and also schools of design, fashion, art, jewellery, music, cooking
Association's main role: To promote Italian private language schools internationally and Italy as a leading educational destination; to defend Italian language prestige and lobby for the interests of industry
Membership criteria: Members must have operated for a minimum of three years and must pass an inspection by an external Uniter assessor
Government recognition: Yes
Code of practice: Yes
Complaints procedure: Yes, contained in Code of Practice
Agent workshops/fam trips: Yes
Contact details: Italian in Italy, Via Tibullo n° 10, Rome, 00193, Italy.
 Tel: +39 0668307796
 Fax: +39 066869758
 Email: info@italianinitaly.it
 Web: www.italianinitaly.it

What has Italian in Italy been up to in the last year?

The most important achievement for Italian in Italy was the annual national conference, held to promote the importance of the Italian language industry within the wide Iteaching! system of the Italian culture. In October, during a World Week for the Italian Language, Italian in Italy was also invited to organise a teacher training course in Caracas, Venezuela, in cooperation with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the Simon Bolivar University.

Why do members choose to belong to Italian in Italy?

New members join the association for two different reasons. First of all, to be a member, the schools must adhere to an Italian in Italy code of practice, which is a guarantee of quality. Secondly, we are constantly working to improve visa processing procedures, teaching standards, marketing techniques and government awareness of the industry.

What are the benefits to agents of working with members?

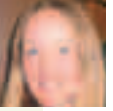
Our association stands for quality in terms of teacher training, up-to-date didactic methodologies and complaints management. Being spread all over Italy, the schools offer their clients the opportunity to really experience Italy by attending a language course starting in Rome for instance, and then moving on to another city such as Turin or Milan, or to a smaller town like Ascoli Piceno, without losing track of their language programme and their level.

What are your plans for the coming year?

In order to increase standards of quality, Italian in Italy is completing the certification ISO 9001:2000 next year. Italian in Italy's most important goal in 2006 is to create "Federitaliano", a kind of confederation, where the association itself, and other parties like universities, public and private institutions, work together to promote Italian language abroad as a vehicle of the Italian culture and Italian lifestyle.

On the move

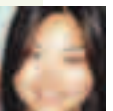
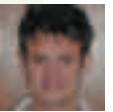
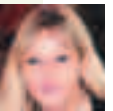
Anglo-Continental in Bournemouth, UK, has employed two new Assistant Business Development Coordinators. Marc El-Hawa (top) is looking forward to promoting Anglo-Continental's English language programmes to the school's representatives in the Middle East and Turkey, while Joanne Barnes will be focusing on the Spanish and Latin American markets.



Following the departure of Clare Montgomery at the end of 2005, Lucy Heron has been appointed Group Marketing Manager at St Giles International Head Office in London, UK. Many of you will already know Ms Heron, who has been working in the Marketing Department at St Giles since 2001, most recently as Sales & Marketing Executive. She will be responsible for developing and promoting English language courses at the St Giles Colleges in the UK and USA.



The Wels Group of International House schools is pleased to announce three new appointments to its sales and marketing team. Amanda Henry (top) has joined International House-Sydney (Manly) in Australia as Director of Sales and Marketing. Ms Henry has a graduate diploma in marketing management and speaks Japanese. In the UK, James Samuel (centre) has joined the team based in Torquay, responsible for sales at the Bath and Torquay centres and the junior centres in the UK and Malta. Nicola Lemon has also joined the team as Operations Manager for the residential and homestay summer programmes.



After six years as Educational and Operations Manager, Matthew Lewis has taken over as Director of International Quest in Southampton, UK. Before joining the company, Mr Lewis spent 10 years in a variety of senior educational positions with EF Education, working on a number of challenging projects in the UK, Western Europe, Russia, Asia and South America. He takes over from Martin von Schuppler.



Nadine Zerbelle returned to the International Language Schools of Canada (ILSC) last year and is again in charge of the Western and Eastern European markets, based in Munich, Germany. Previously, Ms Zerbelle worked for the LAL group in Munich as Marketing and Sales Manager. ILSC is truly happy to have Ms Zerbelle back on board, based right in the heart of Europe.



Grapevine

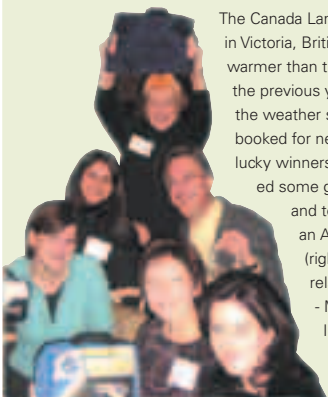


Cultural and linguistic interest in other countries continued to draw the crowds at Expolangues in Paris, says Camille Rabehanta at L'Etudiant in France, which organises the annual event. Open to both professionals and the general public, Expolangues took place in January and among the many stands, circus artists, poetry rap and football shooting sessions to highlight the World Cup in Germany were organised. Left, a more serene bookstand at the exhibition.



This beautiful building is the setting for Ceran UK's junior programme, which has recently received accreditation from Accreditation UK (previously EiBA). The junior course runs for four weeks from July to August for students aged from 12 to 18.

The building in the picture is Sherborne School for Girls, in the supremely lovely West Country, originally home to one biased member of editorial staff.



The Canada Language Council (CLC) held its annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia, this year and the weather was far warmer than the -30° temperatures of Halifax, Nova Scotia the previous year. In fact, the environs were so charming and the weather so warm that the same venue has already been booked for next year's conference! Pictured here (left), some lucky winners in the CLC prize draw - donated prizes included some gardening gloves, adventurer's medical kit and top prize (surely) of a free table at an Alpe workshop. Also seen here (right) are two delegates snapped relaxing after a hard day's work - Marijke de Looze of Ingle International Inc. and Stuart Boag of Education New Zealand.



If you have any lighthearted news, photos, or stories of industry interest, please contact amy@hothousemedia.com and ask to appear in the Grapevine section!

Next issue - May 2006: **Special Report** looks at courses for older learners • **Market Report** charts business trends in South Africa • **Direction** investigates starting up a language school • **Agency Survey** canvasses French agencies • **City Focus** visits Toronto in Canada • **Spotlight** profiles executive courses in Malta