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LANGUAGE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

Star Awards 2006

They came, they saw and they conquered – well, some did. The inaugural LTM Star Awards were attended by some 370 industry delegates in London, UK, and the 2006 winners were revealed in an atmosphere of excitement and glamour.

The awards were a wonderful event, I was extremely impressed and this really brings so much excitement to the industry," says May Arthur of AAIEP and the Olin Centre in Boston, MA in the USA. Agent, Magdalena Jugovic of Kub Travel in Serbia agrees with these assertions. "The highlight [of Alphe UK workshop] was the Star Awards, which really kept us in suspense until the last minute," she says. "It was very elegant and well organised. Everyone had fun."

"The LTM Star Awards have given us all a way to recognise our partners and their achievements. The first awards night was a fitting climax, full of glitz and glamour"

A glittering evening, which saw fantastic dresses, smart suits and one kilt dusted down for the occasion, was organised in August in London, to announce the winners of the LTM Star Awards 2006. The evening was

appreciated by all attendees, with many assuring that they would certainly be present for the 2007 awards ceremony.

Voting had taken place over a three-month period earlier this year, with agencies voting for educators and vice versa, and those companies with the most votes in each category had been shortlisted and announced to the industry at large. Most shortlisted nominees were in attendance on the night and the identity of the winners was kept a secret until the very last moment.

Editor of *Language Travel Magazine*, Amy Baker, announced the winners' identities when she opened a gold envelope and invited company representatives on stage. The winners – listed on page 34

– were all genuinely delighted with their stylish awards and the accolade that this award means for their businesses: that a number of their worldwide partners felt they deserved to be named the LTM Star School/Agency/Association/Insurance Provider in their respective category.

"The LTM awards have given us all a way to recognise our partners and their achievements, and the first awards night was a fitting climax – superbly organised by Hothouse Media, full of glitz and glamour and huge fun!" says Jan Capper, Executive Director of the International Association of Language Centres (Ialc). Giorgia Bicelli, one of

the two Italian winners, from Linguaviva, enthuses, "Talking to friends who are not acquainted with our industry, I compared the LTM awards night to the Oscar awards night of the film industry and I believe that the awards will have that allure and prestige in our industry."

Here, we profile all our winners from the first ever industry-specific awards voted for by professionals for professionals. The evening kicked off with Hothouse Media Director, Scott Wade, welcoming the guests, and inviting on stage our lucky winner of the prize offered to all those who voted in our awards – a return flight to London for two, four nights' accommodation, a champagne flight on the London Eye and two tickets to



Winner's Profile: NRCSA

LTM Star Agency, the Americas

Date company established: 1968

Selected comments from voters:

"A quality company."

"They are a real partner for us."

Stephen Wittig, Vice President of the company, writes, "NRCSA probably won the award due to our long and mutually beneficial relationship that we have with our schools. We attempt to be more than just an agency, we attempt to engage and work with them as partners. I was a little surprised that we won this year. We made some rather large changes in our management and as a result some of our communications were a little slower than usual. Fortunately our relationship is strong enough that our partners were able to see

past that, and understand our greater goals for the future.

I would obviously like to once again thank everyone who voted for us, and I hope that we will be able to strengthen our relationship with our partners in the coming year."



the awards gala dinner and ceremony. Shaun Wellbourne-Wood from the Centre for English Language Teaching at the University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth scooped the prize – based in the furthest possible location from London, UK!

Then, it was on with the ceremony, and the first award to be announced was the LTM Star Agency in the Americas. With two Brazilian agencies and two American agencies in contention, the winner was one surprised Stephen Wittig of NRCSA, beating STB in Brazil, CI Central de Intercambio in Brazil and Spanish Abroad in the USA. He had the unenviable job of being the first one up on stage to make his acceptance speech, listened to intently by all other nominees!

The second category was LTM Star School Innovation, which aimed to reward any school, no matter what its size or status in the industry, for an innovative new idea or programme that had been launched that would benefit agencies or appeal to their clients and enhance their learning experience.

The wide range of votes received for this category was truly staggering, and examples of those innovations were: a surfing for juniors course; a soccer camp; easy online enrolment for agencies; SMS messaging to students; and a range of new work experience programmes, notably the shortlisted Australian College of English (ACE) in Australia for the Workit programme, combining English language training and paid work experience.

The other short-listed innovations were an English on the Bus programme from Academy of English Studies in Folkestone, UK, and

Winner's Profile: St Giles, USA – California Experience programme

LTM Star School Innovation

Date programme established: 2005

Profile of programme: Two weeks' General English in the mornings and activities and excursions around San Francisco in the afternoons. An optional third week, whirlwind tour of the state of California.

Lucy Heron, Marketing Manager, writes, "There seems to be a growing trend towards students looking for more than simply a good language course. This programme responds to that trend. Not only are students getting an established and dynamic language learning programme, they are also combining this with a wider experience, both educational and exhilarating. The learning process is enriched by interaction with international students in a fun setting that really brings the language to life.

It is great to be recognised by those that work with us on a daily basis. We measure our success through the satisfaction of our customers, so this is the most important feedback we could possibly receive. We always try to offer what we think our customers need, but these awards confirm to us that we are getting it right. This is, of course, our ultimate goal!"



online English training from Wisconsin English as a Second Language Institute (Wesli) in the USA. The winner, however, was the US branch of St Giles in San Francisco for its new California Experience study programme. A pregnant Lucy Heron, Marketing Manager for the school, was next up on stage.

The next winner to be revealed was the association that scooped the LTM Star School Association Award, and the shortlisted nominees in this category were English UK, IALC (international), MEI-Relsa in Ireland and Quality English (also international). The winning association was IALC, news that was greeted with loud cheers, as many IALC schools were present and seven members had in fact been shortlisted nominees. Jan Capper, the asso



The collection of LTM Star Awards Winners 2006, joined by Amy Baker and Bethan Norris of Language Travel Magazine and Scott Wade and Stephen Roberts, Directors of Hothouse Media

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROGER HARRIS



JAN CAPPER

Winner's Profile: Ialc
LTM Star School Association
Date association established: 1983
Selected comments from voters:



"Informal and relaxed conference at which so much business can be done."
"We work almost exclusively with IALC members and none have ever let us down."

Jan Capper, Executive Director, writes, "We're thrilled to have won. We think and hope it's because IALC fulfils a genuine need, by gathering together an international group of independent language schools teaching different languages on whose quality agents can rely. We know from our feedback that agents also love the IALC workshop for its changing loca-

tion, quality schools and unique family spirit.

We thank all the agencies who voted for us. It's a great honour to be recognised by the partners of our member schools. It inspires us to keep doing what we do and to aim higher!"

Winner's Profile: Saskatoon Catholic Schools

LTM Star High School

Offering international intake since: 1996

Jim Murdock, International Coordinator, writes, "We are extremely pleased to have been recognised by the partner agents that we work with around the world. The nomination is a completely unexpected honour and is thus doubly valued. Much of our success is due to the efforts and diligence of the professionals who choose to send their students to Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

As every agent knows, there is a tremendous amount of detail and pressure to be managed in this industry. We appreciate the time you took from your busy lives to think of us. We recognise the excellence of the other nominees and thank you for including us as an LTM Star High School candidate. It certainly has brought a ray of sunshine to our day."



ciation's Executive Director, collected the award, which she dedicated to IALC's Founder, Alberto Sampere.

The LTM Star High School was the next category and unfortunately the winner – Saskatoon Catholic Schools in Saskatoon, SK in Canada – couldn't send a representative to be present for the ceremony. However, Jim Murdock, the school's International Coordinator, did send a message to be read out to attendees on the night.



TATIANA MENDES



KEITH SEGAL

Winner's Profile: Student Guard
LTM Star Insurance Provider
Date company established: 1994
Selected comments from voters:



"Prompt and reliable."
"Very organised, excellent service and great deals for our students."

Keith Segal, President of Student Guard, writes, "I am still overwhelmed and honoured on winning the LTM Star Award for Insurance Provider 2006. This award recognises the tremendous effort and commitment made by the entire staff of Student Guard Health Insurance in servicing our clients and the best is yet to come.

Student Guard will continue to strive to deliver the best possible products and the highest quality service to the field of international education by maintaining our high ethical standards without compromising our integrity. We would like to thank all of our clients for their support and acknowledgement of our commitment to excellence. We greatly appreciate this honour."



Winner's Profile: Belta
LTM Star Agency Association
Date association established: 1992
Selected comments from voters:



"I love their well-organised fairs."
"Mariglan has taken Belta to fresher pastures. Helpful and a great executive."

Tatiana Mendes, President of Belta, writes, "The awards night was a great insight from the *Language Travel Magazine* team. It made us feel proud of what we do and of course this will only spur us on further. We were already satisfied to be appointed as finalists. Winning reflects our commitment and hard work to improve and fortify the entire industry.

We want to thank all our friends and partners, we loved the beautiful crystal star. Our association believes in an open-minded development of industry. It is not because we are an agency association that we will not care for all of the providers. We need each other and can develop a stronger market if we work together as a team."

The fifth award went to Student Guard in Canada for its dedicated insurance services provided for the sector. Keith Segal, President of the company, had only confirmed his participation at the awards the week before and he was visibly shocked to have won an award against the strong competition of Isis, Site Insurance and AVI International.

Next up was the LTM Star Agency Association award and vying for this prestigious title were: Belta in Brazil, Kosa in Korea, Salta in Switzerland and Tieca in Thailand. Tatiana Mendes, President of Belta, was on hand to accept the award on behalf of the Brazilian agency which triumphed in the end, and again, there was real surprise on her face as she took to the stage. She also admitted that

she had been trying to find out who won during the gala dinner!

Halfway through our awards ceremony and another unfortunate winner was not in attendance – although Patrick Semidei, Managing Director of did deutsch institut, assures us that he will make it next year – just in case! Did deutsch institut beat off competition from Carl Duisberg Centren, Humboldt Institute and GLS Sprachenzentrum to claim the prize.

LTM Star Spanish Language School was the next and hotly contested award in the evening, with five shortlisted nominees in this category: Don Quijote (international), Enforex (international), Estudio Sam-

“There was a heightened moment of suspense, as each nominee realised they had a 50 per cent chance of winning an award”

pere (international), Escuela de Idiomas Nerja (Malaga) and Malaca Instituto (Malaga). The winner was Enforex, which has 24 schools in Spain and Latin America. Eva Guillen, Marketing Director, was on hand to accept the award.

Next, it was the turn of some of the agencies to feel nervous as some of the awards dedicated to agency service were announced. First, the LTM Star Agency Europe award, sponsored by Study Group, was waiting for its winner, and the four nominees were announced, all of whom were from Switzerland. Of the candidates, BoalLingua, Canada Live, Cosmolingua and STA Travel, the winner was STA Travel, represented on the night by Michael Eck, who revealed in his speech that he had missed a friend’s wedding to attend the Star Awards ceremony – good job that he did!

After the European agency category, it was the turn of Asian agencies to feel the pressure, and two Korean agencies and two Japanese agencies were up for our first award for this region, an award that was sponsored by the University of Essex International Academy in the UK. Gio Club and Ryugaku Journal represented Japan and delegates from IAE Eduhouse and Uhak.com were in attendance from Korea.

Conversely, it was the only agency unable to attend on the night that was in fact the winner: Gio Club in Japan, which has offices in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. Naomi Matsuura sent a message to be read out to her industry compatriots in her name.

Winner’s Profile: did deutsch institut

LTM Star German Language School

Date school established: 1970

Selected comments from voters:

“Perfect location of centres, friendly and responsive personnel, constant support and care of agents.”

“Biggest network of German schools in Germany, with schools in many cities.”

Patrick Semidei, Managing Director, writes, “I feel honored to receive this wonderful award.

All of our team at did deutsch-institut was looking forward excitedly to the decision, and, certainly, we are very proud and very grateful receiving this wonderful prize right at the first presentation of the LTM Star Awards. I would like to thank you very much for that! We feel our work being acknowledged and we will go on giving our best to offer you and your customers the best possible service.

I would like to take the opportunity to dedicate this great award to the founder of our company, Mrs Madeleine Kötter, my mother. With her tireless energy and with the highest personal commitment Madeleine gives everything to support our institute since many years. We owe this award especially to her outstanding work and commitment.”



THE DID TEAM



Winner’s Profile: Enforex LTM

Star Spanish Language School

Date school established: 1989

Selected comments from

voters:

“One-stop shop for many products and locations with an efficient and kind staff.”

“Students can attend multiple centres, communications are quick, care is taken with accommodation placements and the payment system is flexible.”

Antonio Anadon, Managing Director, writes that the company won, “because this is the organisation most specialised in helping and supporting agencies worldwide. Around 95 per cent of our students come through our agents and this is something we want to maintain and improve.

Our mission is to help agencies that really want to develop the Spanish market and enable them to grow their business. Our partners know this, they know that working with us means great service, a friendly approach, fast confirmation and quick replies. We feel extremely proud and happy and we want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our partners. Thanks to them we are here today. We want them to know that we will keep on working hard to improve our product and develop our network in the most effective way.”



EVA GUILLEN


Winner's Profile: STA Travel

LTM Star Agency, Europe

Date agency established: 1985

Selected comments from voters:

"They are dynamic, professional and loyal!"

"A real quality company."

"A perfect 20-year relationship."

Michael Eck writes, "For the last two years, STA Travel has offered a worldwide language travel programme, taking advantage from our broad distribution net and our expertise in student and youth travel. The move from local markets to one global market has helped us and our partners in increasing booking numbers. We have also developed a new, impressive booking tool and a web-based booking engine, which was launched in November 2005. Thanks to this system, we can update all agents worldwide on a daily basis."

We would like to thank everybody who voted for us. We thank all our partners for the fantastic support and the prosperous cooperation in the last few years – we are looking forward for the continuation of our common successful history."

STA TRAVEL

Now was the turn of French language schools to be under the spotlight, and all the nominees were waiting at their tables and rehearsing their speeches in case they triumphed. In the end, it was an excited Jean-Francois Vouilloux from France Langue, which has schools in Paris and Nice, who

bounded on stage and impressed other candidates by having a pre-prepared acceptance speech to hand! He recalls, "The awards ceremony was very professionally organised. I had a great time. Representatives of the language and travel industry from all over the world were at the soirée."

The Italian Language School category was next up and in fact, of the four nominees, there were two joint-winners! When this fact was announced, there was a heightened moment of suspense, as each nominee realised they had a 50 per cent chance of making it on to the stage and winning an LTM Star Award. The nominees included Scuola Leonardo da Vinci, Dilit-International House, Linguaviva and Babilo >>

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NAOMI MATSUURA



Winner's Profile: Gio Club, Japan

LTM Star Agency, Asia

Date agency established: 1986

Selected comments from voters:

"Long-established relationship with a well organised company."

"They have three offices in Japan and an employee in Paris and great student follow-up."

Naomi Matsuura writes: "We are very sorry for not being able to attend although we have been nominated. This is a great honour! Thank you to the educators who voted us! We are proud of our efforts in maintaining our huge information resource, supported with enthusiasm by those who read our Study Abroad Success Book and our website visitors. Thank you again."



Winner's Profile: France Langue

LTM Star French language school

Date school established: 1976

Selected comments from voters:

"Caring and kind personnel, always doing their best to give any help to agents, good combination of quality and prices."

"Knowledgeable staff with a set-up that enables you to contact the school easily."

Bernard Piot, Director and Founder, writes: "France Langue is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and has taught French to thousands of students from over 80 countries at our two locations: Paris and Nice."

A lot of hard work goes into making a language school work. An award like this let's us know we're on the right

track. The best part is knowing that it's language education agencies, people we work with every day, who voted for us. It's the best thing that's happened to me since I asked a student why he'd chosen France Langue and he said: 'My father attended the school.. '"



JEAN-FRANCOIS VOULLIOUX

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Many thanks to all who have believed in Enforex and supported us throughout the past 10 years! We wouldn't be where we are today without your help and dedication.

We want to thank our partners – old and new, big and small – that have made thousands of students' dreams a reality.

Enforex is proud to receive this award and will continue to strive to improve our services. Now more than ever you can count on Enforex's support, and even more in the years to come!

Antonio Anadón
CEO - President

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* LTM Star Spanish language school



nia in Sicily. In the end, it was schools represented by friends, Tiziana di Dedda of Dilit-IH and Georgia Bicelli of Linguaviva in Italy, which scooped a prize each.

There followed possibly the best acceptance speech of the night, in which Di Dedda told of all the great things that had happened to her in 2006, of which winning an LTM Star Award was one of them.

She writes: "The gala evening for us was the example of what a good workshop should always be like: fantastic organisation, wonderful premises, delicious food and drink, the right number of participants in order to be able to meet and really talk to people, very good music, all that we need to spend a good time together. A really exciting and elegant evening!"

There were just two awards left at this point, the first of which went to honour those fledgling businesses that had started operating as an agency in the last three years. This category, LTM Star New Agency, also received a diverse range of votes, reflecting the fact that there is real innovation and effort being put into new business ven-

Winner's Profile: Dilit-International House

LTM Star Italian language school

Date school established: 1974

Selected comments from voters:

"Great quality teaching since 1974."

"Large variety of options for students in the field of art."

Tiziana di Dedda, School Director, writes, "I believe that this

award is the result of 32 years of hard work, investment and lots of energy. Being one of the 'historical IH schools' gives us years of experience in teacher training. The quality of our products and services has always been the first objective and that is why we joined Equals nine years ago. Our aim is to be professional, fast and nevertheless make every single student feel at home.



Thank you very much for trusting and choosing us and voting for us. Your work is very precious and not always easy, but it is essential in our industry. We will do our best to be better and better. Thank you for having faith in us."




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tures – and collaborations – in our industry sector. This category also had five nominees: SIOC in Norway; Discover Canada in Mexico; Eduquality.net; Kolombus Sprachreisen in Germany; and World's Best Language Schools.com.

All of these companies, interviewed for a previous article in *Language Travel Magazine*, had real enthusiasm for the business sector in which they were working (see *Language Travel Magazine*, August 2006, pages 30-34). Clearly, they had caught the attention of language teaching institutions around the world. There was only one winner, however, and that was World'sBestLanguageSchools.com – a company run by a brother and sister and dedicated to offering adventure language travel packages. In the words of co-founder, Warwick White, "we have proactively encouraged and developed programmes in conjunction with schools with [themed interests] such as volunteer programmes, travelling classroom, surfing and scuba diving".

Sheila Hayes, representing the company, which is presently moving from Europe to a headquarters in New Zealand, was on hand to collect the award. She says, "There was a great atmosphere on the night and everyone was very supportive and delighted for each other. I



Winner's Profile: Linguaviva
LTM Star Italian language school
Date school established: 1976
Selected comments from voters:



"Close agent relationships."
"Rich programmes of social activities."

Giorgia Bicelli, Head of International Relations, writes, "I believe that Linguaviva's 30 years of hard work with the objective of providing quality language courses and quality services for our students and partners has been acknowledged and rewarded. It is also a very strong indication that this is the right path and that we should continue to pursue it and improve."

We would like to thank all the educational agents that have voted for Linguaviva and we shall do our best

to keep up the good work! In Italian we have a saying: *non dormire sugli allori*, which roughly translated means that you should never sleep on laurel branches. In ancient Rome laurel was the plant that symbolised victory and laurel branches were given to those who accomplished important achievements. So it is important for us to have won this award, but we need to continue to provide quality services to our partners and students. This award is a strong motivation and incentive to continue to do so."

TIZIANA DI DEDDA, LEFT; GIORGIA BICELLI, RIGHT



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was there on behalf of the company and was both surprised and proud when we won!"

The final award of the night was one that everyone was interested in – LTM Star English Language School. There had been some active campaigning behind the scenes and a huge number of votes cast in this category overall. The final shortlist was made up of a diverse range of schools: ILAC in Canada, St

Giles International, Study Group, and Intuition Languages in the UK, which specialises in personal one-to-one learning.

The winner, was... St Giles International... again! A surprised Lucy Heron took to the stage once again to accept the award on behalf of Mark Lindsay, who had been unable to make the event because of a booking mix-up with his holiday. He says, "I know our marketing team are thrilled with the award, and I am only sorry that I was unable to attend in person. However, I shall aim to come next year!"

Stephen Roberts, Director of Hothouse Media, wrapped up the awards ceremony with a closing speech and welcomed a fantastic 70s band on stage.

Next year, there is likely to be some more categories in this prestigious English language school section, so more chances to reward valued school partners in different school regions. Watch the magazine for more news of the awards; voting starts in April. And thanks for voting in the 2006 awards!

And the winners were...

LTM Star English language school:

St Giles International

LTM Star French language school:

France Langue, Paris/Nice

LTM Star Italian language school:

DILIT - International House, Rome
Linguaviva, Milan/Florence

LTM Star Spanish language school:

Enforex, international



Winner's Profile:
World'sBestLanguageSchools.com

LTM Star New Agency

Date agency established: 2005

Selected comments from voters:

"A dynamic company that responds exceedingly well to its clients' needs."

"Extremely prompt at returning emails and keeping in touch with the students and also us. They provide great service!"

Jacqui White, Co-Founder, writes, "We consider our schools to be players on the same team as WBLS, working for the same goals – to give our students the best study and adventure experience ever. Without the hard work, commitment and willingness of our schools to make our partnership work, it just wouldn't, and we wouldn't have been up for the LTM award in the first place! We feel honoured that our

schools showed such faith in us and what we do. To be nominated by such talented and successful group of peers feels incredible and is a real buzz.

We have a commitment to excellence, a determination to provide a quality service and we foster a team player attitude. Warwick White is to be commended because he uses his 20 years' experience as a provider of education and adventure to help schools develop and expand."

SHEILA HAYES




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Winner's Profile: St Giles International

LTM Star English Language School

Date school established: 1955

Selected comments from voters:

"I have nothing but praise for the staff efficiency and politeness."

"Fantastic service and a human attitude."

Mark Lindsay, Managing Director of St Giles International, writes,

"When you run an organisation sometimes it's hard to know what you are doing right but my motto is to ask the customers - they will guide you. Our strength is founded on 51 years of experience, to keep to our traditions of core quality but to combine that with constant progress. The student will always expect more from this industry and our challenge is to keep ahead in the race to improve.



To work successfully with agents; each must be treated as an individual. They know their market, their culture, their students - to achieve success we have to work together and listen to them. We should never generalise about them. I would like to thank all of them who voted for us. I am truly grateful."



LTM Star German language school:

did deutsch-institut, nationwide

LTM Star High school programme:

Saskatoon Catholic Schools, SK, Canada

LTM Star School Innovation:

St Giles, USA - "California Experience"

LTM Star Insurance provider:

Student Guard

LTM Star School association:

Ialc, international

LTM Star Agency association:

Belta, Brazil

LTM Star Agency, Americas:

NRCSA, USA

LTM Star Agency, Europe:

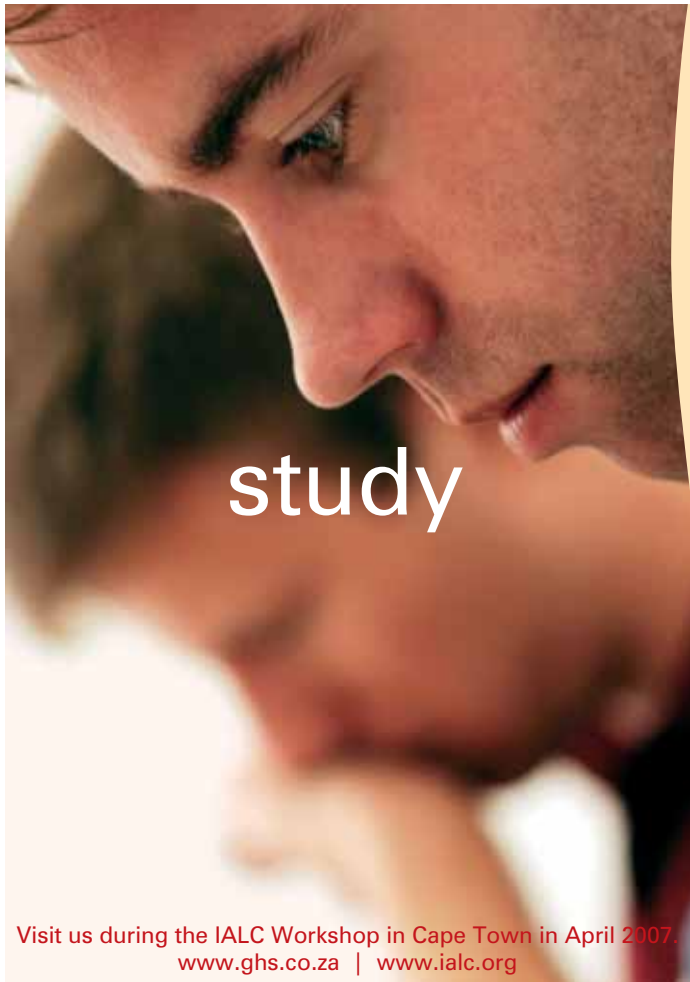
STA Travel, Switzerland

LTM Star Agency, Asia:

Gio Club, Japan

LTM Star New Agency:

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