

Lingowalk: Creating virtual tours for vocational and cultural studies in language learning – a constructivist approach

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Abstract

For the Celebrate-project (Context eLearning with broadband technologies) of the European Schoolnet Lingonet created the concept of Lingowalk – a virtual language learning oriented tour you take via your multimedia computer screen.

Lingowalk learning objects developed so far show how to create a challenging learning environment for describing cultural issues and explaining sites and routes in London, Vancouver, Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen.

It was soon noticed that the Lingowalk tool could be further developed and put into the hands of students. They can enhance their language skills by creating their own virtual tours in a foreign language and guiding visitors through virtual sceneries of their hometown or by reporting on their holiday or school trips abroad. This has been done within several school projects by students aged between 10 and 18 years.

Another possible application for vocational schools, polytechnics and universities is to create virtual tours of their field of profession, e.g. of an industrial site or a production line.

At the moment Lingonet is developing tours in Brussels (cultural focus), in the European Parliament (political focus), in companies of the Metal Industry (vocational focus) and in an oil terminal (maritime focus).

During the oral presentation Lingowalks created by young students in their hometowns and vocational tours developed by Lingonet will be demonstrated.

Theoretical and practical background of the Lingowalk development:

The presentation and poster both demonstrate how modern digital technology can be used in task-based learning of modern languages. Our starting point is the fact that the best single predictor of second language learning is the time spent working purposefully with the target language. However, it is a challenging task for the language teaching community to create engaging tasks which capture learners' attention and help them in intentional and unintentional learning.

Lingowalk learning objects have been developed as a response to this challenge. They have proved to attract learners' interest in field trials and to lure them to use the target language in natural communication. Using the proper tools, learners can adopt an active role in developing virtual tours in many different environments and move from being consumers to being producers of learning materials.