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Developing excellence in 1 + 2 languages in Scottish schools: working together for success



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Working together for success

- Research team

- UofE: Thomas Chaurin, Fiona O'Hanlon, Do Coyle
- South East Improvement Collaborative: Tamsin Frost (Fife), Bethan Owen (Edinburgh), Ann Robertson (East Lothian)
- Staff and pupils from six primary schools and six secondary schools within the three local authority areas in the SEIC.

Partnership working helps us to answer our research questions:

- What is successful language learning at the primary and early secondary school stages?
- What factors facilitate successful language learning?
- What are the barriers to successful language learning?

AIM: Develop excellence in 1+2 language learning



Methodology

Part 1

- Literature review on the factors associated with successful modern language learning (in comparable contexts to Scotland)

Part 2

- Policy analysis of curricular policy in Scotland

Part 3

- Empirical research with 6 primary-secondary school pairs
 - observing language teaching and learning in P1, P4, P7 and S1
 - interviews with learners, teachers and curriculum leaders

Part 4

Consultation with 1+2 development officers

Comparison of the datasets to identify areas of strength and areas for future focus and development

Today's session

- How would you define successful language learning in the BGE? What are you looking to achieve?
- What factors facilitate successful language learning?
- What are the barriers?

Literature review, selection of articles

- Inclusion:
 - Modern/Foreign languages teaching/learning
 - At school, with a focus on primary schools
 - Limited input/exposure: low on time and intensity
- Exclusion:
 - intensive or bilingual programmes, CLIL etc.
 - language learning for migrant children

Defining successful Language Learning: an early start to language learning?

- [Myles \(2017\)](#)

Is younger better? What is the research evidence?

- Young learners are **enthusiastic**
- YL are **slower** at L2 learning than older learners

So, is younger really better when learning L2 in the classroom?

- If 'better' means faster linguistic progress, [research] tells us that **older children outperform younger children**; their greater cognitive maturity helps them make the best of the limited input and of explicit instruction
- If on the other hand, 'better' means developing an **enthusiasm for learning languages**, as well as **changing cultural perceptions** about the centrality of languages to education by embedding them in the curriculum from the start, then much of the evidence suggests that younger is better

What are we looking to/likely to achieve?

- [Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek \(2006:147\)](#)

The main gains in early languages learning lie in the development of **positive attitudes and motivation**.

- [Szpotowicz & Lindgren \(2011: 126\)](#)

However scarce the research results are, it is noted that, if **continuity** (Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek 2006) and **growing challenge of input** are ensured, progress in language development can be registered and limited communicative skills in the target language appear (Cameron 2001; Muñoz 2006).

Ingredients for success

- Learners
 - Attitude
 - Motivation
 - Self efficacy, strategies
- Teachers
 - Linguistic competence
 - Methodology skills
 - Attitude
- School/Cluster
 - Status of languages
 - Progression
 - Continuity, Transition
- Curriculum
 - Relevance, meaningfulness
 - Holisticness

resources

- [Languages Education Network Scotland \(LENS\)](#)
- [Research in Primary Languages](#)

Next steps

- Analysis
- Report
- Toolkit for schools
- Larger research project?

Tapadh leibh! Merci !

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