

LANGS: working together to develop Scotland's languages landscape

Language education in Scotland and in Europe: divergences, synergies and why shared understandings matter

LANGS JUN 08, 2021 10:49AM

1. Three take-aways from the presentation

Real opportunity to use CLIL as in Italy to make a big difference to applying language learning. Great opportunity to make languages more integrated across curriculum in schools - evidence base great for making the case in schools to SMTs - Finland - and the link to social justice and democracy is so important Eoghan BnaG
— GÀIDHLIG GU LEÒR

Great resources - so much available. Exciting app for European Day of Languages. We're all facing the same challenges - Scotland's not alone! — ANONYMOUS

Necessity to have a vision to drive Language Learning forward. Resources from ECML need to be shared at authority level. Languages across the curriculum. — VIRGINIE BRADBURY

BLACK GROUP - LE GRUPA NOIR - Much greater collaboration between EAL and 1+2, learning a lot on more effective pedagogy of language through seeing how they work in that sphere, the Italian model seems to be very effective - how can we implement this from a management perspective? The Value of languages is so important, young teachers value it, but curriculum designers at the top are sometimes a block, but the use of bilingual learners through EAL can help us make these people understand how these work. We need to use EAL, and CLIL to help us make ML education in Scotland much more immersive, focused on oracy, use IDL and PSE etc as other opportunities for L2L3 to be used and to make languages much more engaging. Engagement and continuity through the resilience of young people and teachers It really makes you think how little focus we give to oracy in schools in French etc. So much focus on grammar as well instead of communication. Staff confidence is an issue comparing EAL and ML approaches - staff often lack the confidence to branch out into less planned learning and this can limit the range of approaches taken. The ESOL courses are very good to look at for all languages.
— GÀIDHLIG GU LEÒR

6. Several ECML resources were presented. Which, if any, would you consider exploring further? State your reasons for this.

BLACK GROUP We are a bit intimidated by CLIL due to the planning involved but the evidence shows that it works. We could look at how oracy and communication could be prioritised, instead of a massive focus on grammar. What was presented in terms of European Day of Languages was excellent. There were some juicy bits that Sarah shared. The Finnish example was a focused approach on transferable skills, how can we look outwards in this way? Use how we work with rights and class charters, global citizenship to develop language in that context. "We're all Jock Tamson's Bairns but in English only" The evidence base here will really help make the case for making these changes with SMT
— GÀIDHLIG GU LEÒR

2. Has this changed the way you feel about language education in Scotland? If so, what adjectives spring to mind?

Made me even more passionate and intense about it :D
— GÀIDHLIG GU LEÒR

Reassured, enthusiastic that we're ahead of the game in some areas ie. formative assessment instead of national exams, we need to be even more aspirational about what we can do with languages when we see what's possible in European countries (but need to be mindful that's it not just about what we/other countries do but how well we /other countries do it). — ANONYMOUS

BLACK GROUP - Passionate, Inspired, Engaged, Inclusive, Achievable, Possible — GÀIDHLIG GU LEÒR

We need the resilience and to keep the enthusiasm going! We have to be practical and overcome obstacles as they come. It made us feel even more positive and just now there is a feeling that schools are planning for language learning again. — VIRGINIE BRADBURY

3. Consider the list of identified European challenges in language education (pre- and post-Covid). Different countries are at different stages in relation to developments in these areas. How does Scotland fare? Which ones present the greatest/the least challenges?

We need greater involvement in vocational qualifications eg. Modern Languages for Life and Work Award / experiences.
— ANONYMOUS

More opportunities for students in more FE colleges to learn a language alongside other courses. Edinburgh College is doing a great job - could other colleges do the same? Language skills should be like basic IT skills - enhance whatever other courses students are doing. - ANONYMOUS

Liked the Norway example - could we do something like this?
- ANONYMOUS

There is still an issue with compartmentalisation of subjects / curriculum. We need a broader vision of the curriculum and how languages fit in with this. Need to think about what is on offer to learners in BGE and how options are made and what is on offer.

Issues with full entitlement of L2/L3 in secondary with choice before S3, and watering down of L2 at times to enable the L3 to take place. - ANONYMOUS

We need HMIE to talk loud and clear about entitlement. There has been huge progress by a lot of schools. There are still issues for some secondary schools with things like problems with budget, staff availability, timetabling, teacher qualifications etc, particularly in small schools with single person departments. There are creative solutions that need to be worked through.
- ANONYMOUS

There are issues with languages competing with one another - ie. which is the L2 language? Need to focus on the experiences for the young people. - ANONYMOUS

Primary schools have really come on board and made huge progress with L2 and L3 - very diverse and lots of good practice. Need to make sure that secondary schools follow on!
- ANONYMOUS

4. A vision for quality language education was presented. Do you sign up to this? Why? Why not? Is this the right vision for Scotland?

Yes of course! - SHONAHUGH

Still need to normalise language learning as a core part of the curriculum for all learners - SHONAHUGH

5. Seven examples of innovation from different European countries were presented. Did any of them inspire you? Why? Could any of them be considered in a Scottish context?

CLIL Italian idea. CLIL resources and how to embed exist, here are some resources and supports <https://lfee.net/elpase> it can be tricky but so worthwhile. - NICKY HOCKNULL

Finnish model teaching lots of other areas through languages, could be more achievable in Scotland as it is led by language teachers. - NICKY HOCKNULL

Do we have secondary teachers that speak languages but are not language teachers?? Could that help us? - NICKY HOCKNULL

Opportunities to show that languages can be used in other contexts etc, we need to build the skills. - NICKY HOCKNULL

ITE needs to ensure they include more than just a bit on language as a discrete subject. Languages are an integral and important part of the curriculum and need to be recognised in this way. Important for all teachers not just those who elect languages.
- NICKY HOCKNULL

7. The UK has left the EU but it has not left the Council of Europe, meaning there are still opportunities to take part in centralised language education activities. Moreover, it could choose to return to the ECML at any point. Do you think this matters? How might Scotland's involvement be strengthened?

Inter-culturalism and languages still has a place on the Scottish education's agenda. Difficulty in employing Modern Language Assistants will be more difficult. It is important to keep the momentum going. Are people aware of the support available? Partnerships with schools, institutions, students abroad will have to continue even though Scotland is no longer part of the EU. What would need to be done in term of lobbying? What would it mean for Scotland being part of the Centre? - VIRGINIE BRADBURY
