

Minutes of LaNGS Meeting
Held in-person and on Teams, Friday 04/11/22

1. Welcome from Chair:

Gwen McCrossan, chairing, welcomed everyone.

- Gwen made reference to inclusivity being an unexpected benefit of the pandemic; today there are approximately twenty people here at the Ramshorn; and more online.
- Today, we will be looking at emerging trends, with the help of keynote speakers Louise Glen (ES) and Lisa Hanna (SCILT/CISS).
- As well as these minutes, see also the various slides & presentations available on the SCILT website.

2. *Languages in the senior phase: an examination of recent trends in national qualifications, followed by a discussion on how to support and encourage uptake*

Presentations available on SCILT website, highlights follow:

Lisa Hanna, SCILT/CISS:

- N5 uptake: French and German down; Spanish up; Italian up a lot (20%); Chinese up hugely (34%); Gaelic learners unchanged; Urdu down a bit; overall decline of 5.2%.
- Higher: all (except Chinese & Gaelic learners) down a lot; overall 22.8% down. Would be interesting to know what is the stay-on rate N5 → Higher. SQA would have these figures.
- AH: notable increases in Italian & Chinese, everything else in decline; overall down 7.3%. Known to be an 18-20% stay-on rate.
- N4: trend rather more positive; French & Spanish particularly.
- MLLW: dipped, but picking up again.
- N5 Attainment A-C: overall chance of a pupil getting an A-C in any subject is 80.8%; all languages higher than that; ditto Higher (78.9% -vs- more than that in all but Gaelic learners) and in AH (81.3% ...and all stats better than that).
- Key challenges:
 - Challenges with uptake.
 - School contexts.
 - Impact of pandemic on uptake & attainment (esp speaking).
 - Could we expand available suite of certification levels?
 - How to support innovative colleagues?
 - “If we build it, they will come” vs finding a way to certify/validate what pupils *actually* do.
 - Fhiona Mackay: Are we a broad enough church? Innovation, collectively, needed.
 - [From floor]: this is also the problem facing heritage languages.

Louise Glen, Education Scotland:

- In Feb this year, SQA presentations were half the cohort that had started in S3 (this was German, which may be more extreme, but it's also true for other languages).
- So how do we turn the tide?

- People can end up with multi-level classes, just to try to keep it alive. So: are our qualifications fit for purpose?
- Victories/meta-achievements:
 - Normalisation of (Scotland's Language) Policy in schools.
 - Getting ML training into all ITEs is there, to at least some extent; that was a tanker to turn.
 - Inspectors are reporting on ML provision in schools, albeit mainly where it's not happening, or patchy.
- Reasons for decline:
 - In some schools, pupils are only taking 6 courses, rather than 7 or 8 (a particular problem for ML, given 'default' English & Maths plus STEM).
 - ML, as we know, needs to be little and often. Listening/speaking particularly difficult to do at home. ML quite often ending up with only two periods/wk; often P1 Monday, P7 Friday; with the school admin and holiday absence problems those slots bring.
 - The pandemic reinforced that language teaching is particularly 'schtick-reliant' ie most people can read a history textbook; ML teaching relies more heavily on the language abilities & presentation skills of the ML teacher. Listening, though possible to do at home, relies on listening to a disembodied voice.
- Looking outwards, albeit cold comfort, the picture is much the same in other UK nations. Ireland (Republic) is different (wonderful!), because you have to take a language to get the leaving cert.

Breakout – what can we do to arrest the decline? [Below is a sample of points that emerged from the various groups]

- Largs Academy are managing – four periods/wk; 2x Fr, 2x Sp – so it can be done. But most others offer 2x L2, with periodic 1-period blocks of L3.
- From ITE: students say it's relationships that make the difference.
- Good transitions between years, between sectors.
- Secondary pedagogy, dare we ask if it's as good as it could be?
- Progression.
- The question may not be, 'are they ready for S1?' but 'is S1 ready for them?'
- Where do secondary practitioners go to refresh their pedagogy?
- What's the incentive? Practicality? Qualifications? Citizenship?
- Remember: about a third of the kids in many (but not all) schools are bi-lingual speakers already - and they will already have some language agility.
- [From online...]
 - An 'onboard' HT helps.
 - Practical application is key – so pupils can see the point vs la plume de ma tante.
 - Improve transition. Gap between those who have been successfully taught PLL, and those who haven't. Or who have done something different. [Louise: differentiation...if you do it successfully you can, to coin a phrase, level them up a bit; after all, it's your job]
- Louise's conclusions:
 - Know yourself: what are your strengths? And how do you know? How do you measure? What do you do with feedback?

- Build on prior learning: no 'fresh start' in S1.
- Make sure your material is age appropriate & relevant.
- Keep Calm & Teach Grammar!
- Use target language as much as possible.
- Blend traditional resources with IT.
- Connect to DYW – relevance.
- Share practice, resources.
- Consider this: what if all the things we do to appeal to 'young people' (in secondary) – games, activities, actions, rhymes, chanting etc...are the things that make them think language learning isn't serious and is irrelevant to their future...?

3. Key updates

Shona Hugh, Education Scotland

- Thematic inspection/overview of 1+2 implementation on horizon.
- Reform of HMI, ES & SQA in 2023 and what they're going to look like.
- Fachtag for German teachers January 2023, looking at promotion of German.
- Offer of support for RICs, LAs, individual schools and clusters – can get ES in to talk to you.
- 15 new primary French videos on West OS – number of topics. Download West OS tile on to launchpad.
- Modern Languages Weekly Planner: particularly for new practitioners.
- There will be another Scottish Government survey in February.

Fhiona MacKay, SCILT:

- Online Ukrainian classes for teachers – 100 registered interest. "Whoever would have thought we'd need to learn Ukrainian?" – which is the rationale for all language learning.
- English classes for Ukrainian adults at Ramshorn on Wednesdays.
- Languages Week Scotland 2023 – first week in Feb and a plenary event on 24 Feb. Theme: Languages for a Peaceful World. Counterparts in Northern Ireland NICILT running corresponding event.

Lisa Hanna, CISS:

- A number of Confucius 10-year anniversary events running.
- Discovering China: CISS offering all levels of qualifications in Mandarin; CISS will build it round any individual school requirements.
- Eco Learning partners: co-designing lessons between schools here and in China.
- Professional Learning both for Chinese Exchange Teachers and for our own practitioners.
- CISS will happily come and visit local hubs.

4. Gwen McCrossan, widening the membership of LANGS:

- Representation from every authority: try for a trio of reps from each authority – primary, secondary, and authority-wide remit.
- LA session is now a separate event from main LANGS meeting.

- Looking also to widen membership of focus group from LA reps. Get in touch with Gwen or Alice Lister at SCILT, if interested.

5. Just a minute updates:

- Caroline Cordier, Edinburgh College:
 - Support for pupils: thanks to funding from Franco-Scottish Society, Edinburgh College is running H & AH online workshops: 65 pupils, across 20 schools across Scotland. Still some spaces available. Very good feedback.
 - There are new online courses French, German, Spanish, Italian at most levels.
 - Uptake: over 110 pupils from 50 schools across Scotland: a 20% increase this year. 68% are from schools outwith Edinburgh.
 - Languages: French (38%); Spanish (28%); German (20%); Italian (14%). Levels: AH: 41%; Higher: 42%; N5: 17%.
 - Also of note: growing proportion of Higher pupils (vs AH). NB: Areas with little or no uptake may just not know about availability.
 - But, overall, an inverted mirror image of uptake at national level.
- Manuela Vogelgesang, Goethe Institut:
 - Institut welcomes school visits.
 - Young Goethe Scheme (ambassadors).
 - Professional development, teaching materials, workshops, competitions etc offered.
 - Careers Roadshow, with businesses associated with Germany.
 - Offer of scholarships for German language courses.
 - <https://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/sta/gla.html>
- James Innes, French with Mr Innes:
 - James used to work with Glasgow City Council.
 - About 100 free videos on YouTube channel:
 - Topics include Armistice Day, Xmas, World Cup...
 - <https://www.youtube.com/c/FrenchwithMrInnes>
- Jane Halstead, SEET:
 - Euroquiz (aimed at P6) - 31 authorities signed up. CLPL session coming next week, for anyone who wants to know more.
 - Our World (Secondary) film making competition.
 - <https://seet.org.uk/>
- Leanne Jefferson, Headstart Languages:
 - Camembear is now digital. 300 schools across Scotland participating. Can share across nursery and primary in one digital licence.
 - enquiries@headstartlanguages.co.uk
- Gerry McIntosh, British Council:
 - Language Assistant Programme
 - In collaboration with Louise Glen, survey has been disseminated around Scotland about whether you use language assistants, or why not? Deadline 14/11.
 - Williamwood Secondary: delivering presentation. In principle, British Council would come to speak to schools/clusters, but staffing stretched a bit thin.

- Javier Ramos Linares, Consejería de Educación:
 - Online training: Jan-March 2023; immersion days: Glasgow 18/03, Edinburgh 17/06.
 - One week immersion courses in Spain during summer.
 - Tips for Spanish on their website:
<https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/reinounido/portada.html>
- Philippe Milloux, Institut français d'Écosse :
 - New in post.
 - Courses, resources, materials available via the Institut.
 - <http://www.ifecosse.org.uk/>
- Richard Tallaron, LFEE:
 - Turning the tide: coping with loss of Erasmus+.
 - Attended Developing International Partnerships (DIPS) conference, important to show Scotland still open for business.
 - Turing: LFEE made one of the few successful applications in Scotland this year:
 - Project 1 with Joanna Patterson, East Renfrewshire: 110 places for S2 & S3 pupils going to France & Spain, big efforts to make it inclusive.
 - Project 2 with Caroline Gordon, Moray House: pilot project PGDE, promoting being a language aware teacher. Embedding target language in daily routine; creating resources (French & Spanish), and doing all of these things *through* Maths, HWB etc.
- Sylvia Davidson, French Film Festival:
 - 31/10-16/12: free for any school to participate, can access films and use them in classrooms.
 - Each of the 4 films comes with a learning pack.
 - Register; you can then download film and use it for a month. Film review competition for pupils.
 - www.frenchfilmfestival.org.uk.

6. Gwen McCrossan concluded the meeting

- Thanks to all who had participated, in person or online.
- Next meeting will be on Thursday, 16/03/2023, on Teams only.