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Language Teaching and Research

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Cross sector collaborative activities to promote modern languages in Scotland

A report to the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics
and Area Studies

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Executive Summary

Aims and Objectives

The study was commissioned by The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS). It replicates the study by Davis (2006) on cross-sector activities to promote the study of modern languages in England and Wales, within the Scottish context. The overall aim of the current investigation was to identify and encourage sharing of good practice in cross-sector collaboration in Scottish schools, universities and FE colleges.

Research Methodology

Like Davis (2006) we drew on three main sources of information:

- analysis of a questionnaire study with 33 respondents from schools (4), colleges (12) and universities (17)
- interviews with representatives from colleges and universities
- background research (mainly web-based) into cross-sector collaborative activities in other subject areas

Key Findings

NB: Due to the smaller respondent sample in the Scottish study, the statistical data obtained from the questionnaires must be treated with some caution. We give further details in the main report. Where findings reflect those by Davis (2006) we have indicated this with an asterisk (*).

Range of activities

Like Davis, we found that schools, colleges and universities were engaged in a varied range of activities to promote modern languages. However, since our respondents were mostly from FE and HE as opposed to schools, there are naturally differences in responses regarding the highest citation for 'most frequent' and 'most useful' activities. There are also differences between respondents from HE and FE, but due to the low number of respondents, these would need further investigation.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Most common aim (HE/FE)* | – Promoting languages |
| • Most frequent (HE)* | – Presentations to school pupils |
| • Most frequent (FE) | – Informal exchange of information |
| • Perceived as most useful (HE) | – Language / cultural festival |
| • Perceived as most useful (FE) | – Other collaborative activities |
| • Most common barrier (HE)* | – Lack of time |
| • Most common barrier (FE) | – Lack of interest in languages |

Coordination

- Many outreach activities are informal and dependent upon enthusiastic staff.*
- There is insufficient time built into the academic timetable for outreach activities.*
- There is a role for a dedicated member of staff in colleges and higher education institutions to coordinate language outreach activities.*

Awareness

- Information about activities carried out by individual colleges and higher education institutions is not always easy to find on institutional websites.*
- There was evidence to suggest that some staff were not making effective use of the central support systems available to them.*
- College prospectuses usually highlight quite clearly to students any general or guaranteed progression or articulation agreements.
- Staff in colleges see a need for schools to become more aware of language provision in the FE sector.

Fitness for purpose

- Good practice occurs where there is a team of enthusiastic staff providing fun, relevant, educational activities for pupils or teachers from the school sector.*
- Further investigation is needed to establish what kind of outreach activities are valued by schools.

Evaluation

- Lecturers are finding it difficult to conduct formal evaluations of the impact of outreach activities.*
- Staff did not feel able to measure impact on uptake of language provision but some were attempting to develop methods to do so.*

Sharing good practice

- Respondents indicated that they would welcome events encouraging the sharing of ideas and good practice in collaborative activities.*
- Whilst we did not investigate cross-sector provision in other subjects to the same extent as Davis did we agree that languages shares common issues with other subjects and staff could benefit from adopting successful strategies employed by other subject staff to counteract downturn in demand.*

Suggestions for future activities

- Some issues that have not been addressed and could be explored in greater detail:
 - investigating outreach activities involving business and local authorities *
 - investigating schools' outreach needs and views on collaborative projects;
 - examining the costs and benefits of outreach activities in greater detail;
- In considering what kinds of cross-sector collaboration are most effective and practical, it is important to take account of the national policy context and the local circumstances of the institution.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In November 2007, The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) commissioned the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (Scottish CILT) to conduct a survey of cross-sector collaboration between schools, colleges and universities with the aim of promoting the study of modern languages. The study should be read in conjunction with an earlier investigation for the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) into collaborative outreach activities in England and Wales (Davis, 2006). Davis's investigation in turn was commissioned by DfES to implement Recommendation 10 of the report by Footitt (2005) *The National Languages Strategy in Higher Education*. However, since Scotland's education is administered separately the report did not apply in Scotland. It is hoped that the present report will show that cross-sector collaboration has a role to play in helping to promote language study in all sectors, and that appropriate funding mechanisms could ensure the sustainability of effective initiatives.

1.2 Aims and Methods of the Study

The overall aim of the study was to identify and encourage sharing of good practice in cross-sector collaboration and outreach activities to promote modern languages in Scotland by:

- surveying the current range of modern language outreach activities in Scotland
- mapping current outreach provision in Scotland
- assessing the factors which may help in identifying the long-term impact of outreach activities

1.3 Scottish Educational Context

It is important to take account of the fact that Scotland's education system comes under the auspices of the Scottish government and its organisation in some aspects very distinct from its neighbouring countries. In addition, the report is published during a time of various significant educational changes in progress. For the benefit of readers not familiar with the Scottish educational context, and in light of recent educational reforms, we give a brief outline below:

Compulsory schooling is the remit of the Minister for Schools and Skills. Pupils start their formal education aged between four-five years old. They attend primary school for seven years (P1-P7), followed by a minimum of four and a maximum of six years in secondary school (S1-S6). Typically a S1 pupil would be 11-12 years old. Under the current system pupils are able to leave at the end of S4 (equivalent of Key Stage 4 in England and Wales). Most pupils sit Standard Grades Examinations, which are the culmination of subject-specific courses taken over a period of two years. Entry to university from school is normally via three to five subjects assessed by Higher Grade examinations taken over a period of one to two years. A small number of students also take one or two subjects at Advanced Higher level, although this is not a formal university entrance requirement. However, because Advanced Higher courses require more time of self-study they are generally thought to be a better preparation for university. In 2005, changes to the delivery and content of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools were introduced under 'Curriculum for Excellence' (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005). The reforms envisage a curriculum that will help pupils to develop four core capacities: to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Although the reforms are primarily aimed at pupils in schools, there are also implications for colleges as these are entitled to deliver some of the more vocationally based units to learners aged 15 upwards. Universities, too, will need to take account of the curricular changes in their admission policies. The most recent policy document 'Building the Core Curriculum 3' (Scottish Government, 2008) indicates that the government envisages collaboration between different sectors to play a major part in delivering curriculum goals:

Meeting the ambitions for this curriculum involves pre-school centres and schools working in learning partnerships with colleges, universities, employers, partner agencies, youth work and the voluntary sector to provide a coherent package of learning and support based around the individual learner and in the context of local needs and circumstances. (ibid: 3)

A significant feature of this policy document is the inclusion of a Languages and a Science Baccalaureate, targeting pupils in the last two years of school (S5 and S6). Exact details of the two new qualifications are currently in development. Whilst it is not yet clear how these qualifications will be viewed by the different stakeholders, they represent a new opportunity to make cross-sector links: they could be offered by schools and FE colleges in collaboration, and it will be important for HE to take this new qualification into account in entry requirements and in terms of first year course design.

Languages in Scottish Further and Higher Education

Since the amalgamation of the two Scottish Funding Councils for Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) respectively in 2006, the newly established Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has direct responsibility for both sectors. Collaboration between schools and FE on the one hand, and between FE and HE on the other is encouraged, and like elsewhere in the UK the overarching aim is to widen participation in post-compulsory education. With regard to funding, key documents include the recent letter of guidance to the SFC by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Hyslop, 2008) and the publication of a consultation document regarding significant changes in the funding arrangements for universities as this report was going to press (Scottish Funding Council, 2008b). The final recommendations to emerge from this consultation are likely to be relevant to this report because, as Hall and Bankowska (1994) highlighted, funding methodologies requiring programmes to have a 'European dimension' directly led to the inclusion of (albeit basic) language options as part of many FE qualifications during the early 1990s.

Whilst at national level, cross-sector collaboration is being advocated to encourage study amongst a wider range of learners, it can clearly also be adapted to help combat decline in subject-specific demand. However, when staff request support for these types of activities it is important that they have reliable and valid information about the nature and extent of trends in language uptake. Doughty (2005) found that misconceptions about the significance of language related statistics were a major factor in the continuing decline of language provision in the Scottish FE sector. Further, at the time of writing up this report, a publication by the SFC, investigating the supply and demand of languages in post-compulsory education, has attracted the attention of stakeholders in both compulsory and post-compulsory sectors (Scottish Funding Council, 2008a). At meetings convened by representatives from the various sectors, a number of different concerns have been raised independently, but it may be that on this issue, too, some cross-sector collaboration would be of benefit.

1.3 Research Methodology

The project drew on three main sources of information:

- analysis of a questionnaire study with 33 respondents from schools (4 responses), further education colleges (12 responses) and universities (17 responses)
- interviews with eleven representatives from colleges and universities, four of which have been highlighted as case studies
- background research (mainly web-based) into generic cross-sector collaborative activities

There are some important differences between this report and that of Davis in terms of sources. Firstly, the respondent group in Davis's study was dominated by the school sector, whereas our respondents were mainly from universities and colleges. Secondly, our respondents came from a much smaller survey base. There are only 13 universities (HEIs) and 43 further education colleges (FECs) in Scotland, as opposed to around 150 universities and many more FECs and

sixth form colleges in England and Wales. (There are no sixth form colleges in Scotland.) Whilst we received responses from nearly every HEI in Scotland the total number of respondents is still quite small so all figures need to be treated with some caution. The same advice applies to the FE sector, where the response rate was a disappointing 28%. As stated elsewhere in this report, this low figure may in part be due to the fact that in many FECs, and in particular those outwith the central area, languages are only taught as evening classes. Languages lecturers in these colleges are on temporary or short-term contracts, and are therefore are unlikely to have the time, or indeed the incentive, to engage in cross-sector collaborative activities.

Finally, attention must be drawn to the fact that whilst all 450 or so secondary schools were targeted, only four returned a questionnaire. This is a worrying finding particularly as Scottish CILT school surveys normally achieve a response rate of above 50%. We believe that this apparent lack of interest in the survey is indicative of the fact that past central funding from government, specifically the European Languages Grant (administered by local authorities) has concentrated on the lower end of the sector, with a focus on establishing and developing modern languages provision in the last two years of primary school (Primary 6 and Primary 7). This reflects a belief that in improving and consolidating provision in the earlier stages of schooling enhanced uptake at the later stages would follow naturally.

2 Funding for Cross-Sector Collaboration

2.1 National initiatives and projects

As we have already intimated, the overarching aim of the Scottish Funding Council's support for cross-sector collaboration activities has been the Wider Access initiative, which in turn feeds into the drive at European Union policy level to encourage lifelong learning in all EU member states. These initiatives are not designed to be subject specific, and in any case there are difficulties arising from curriculum design factors which create barriers for language-specific links between colleges and universities.

For example, when a student studies tourism or international marketing up to Higher National Diploma, this qualification may offer him or her entry into second or third year at university, depending on the articulation arrangements in place. However, the articulation agreement will be with the principal subject area (i.e. tourism or marketing), not with languages. Nationally, only one FEC (Stevenson College in Edinburgh) advertises an 'Access to Languages' course, i.e. one that is specifically designed to enable students successfully completing the programme to gain entry to language study at university. According to the information gleaned from the college website, the course is both popular and successful, but this may be due to the fact that the college itself is known for its diverse language provision, and is situated in an urban location. It is interesting to note that there does not appear to be a similar initiative in any of the Glasgow-based colleges.

Davis (2006: 8-10) outlines a range of schemes in HE that were initially set up to address decline in uptake of the subjects in question, many of which involved students going into schools to promote their subject. A survey of Scottish university websites revealed similar types of activities, most commonly referred to as 'Student Ambassador' schemes. The Student Ambassador scheme was mentioned by a small number of the interview participants, although the web research suggests that it is more commonly used in some other subjects, and in particular the sciences. Certainly, the Higher Education Academy, which relates to all universities within the UK, continues to highlight Student Ambassador Schemes on its website.

The Scottish Funding Council also has generic funding schemes for school/college partnerships. A literature review of collaborative activities between colleges and schools was published by the Scottish Executive (Galloway, 2004), although this included examples from outwith Scotland. More recently, there have been incentives to develop horizontal collaboration between colleges such as the Scottish Colleges Biotechnology Consortium (SCBC), involving five different colleges, and the Scotland's Rural Colleges Benchmarking Group, consisting of 14 colleges in rural locations (HM Inspectors of Education, 2006). Although none of the reports focus on languages there appears to be more scope for language-specific collaboration here. From our interview data we know of several colleges that offer Higher or Advanced Higher qualifications to school pupils, either jointly with staff in schools, or distinctly – for example, where the school is unable (or unwilling) to provide teachers for what usually involve very small cohorts of senior pupils. In one instance, the FE lecturer was teaching Higher and Advanced Higher Spanish at the school, in others pupils were attending college or accessing open learning materials.

2.2 Language Specific Outreach Initiatives

The report by Davis lists a number of language-specific initiatives, many of which are linked to the HE sector but are limited geographically to students living in England and/or Wales. Below are listed some of the cross-sector projects and activities involving languages within Scotland.

Government schemes: European Languages Grant, Gaelic and Chinese

The European Languages Grant was established by the Scottish government in response to a recommendation by the ministerial action group on modern languages (2000). As already indicated, this fund concentrated on the primary-secondary school interface, and particularly on the latter stages of primary education. However, we know from the interviews that some local authorities used the fund to sponsor week-long summer schools for senior school pupils at local universities. Others have sponsored language fairs involving schools, colleges and universities.

The European Languages Grant was absorbed into the central funding arrangements of the Concordat between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities, taking effect from April 2008. It is no longer ring-fenced and there is therefore no guarantee that schools will continue to have access to money to promote modern languages in any specific context. However, there is still ring-fenced funding for the development of Gaelic. Whilst this fund does not specifically target collaborative projects there is clearly potential here to develop partnerships. For example, with the planned establishment for a TV channel broadcasting exclusively in Gaelic there will be increased demand for competence in the language in media-related professions. This, in turn, requires more school teachers able to teach Gaelic. It remains to be seen, of course, whether mechanisms will be put in place to enable cross-sector collaboration.

With regard to promotion of Chinese language and culture, there has been a flurry of activity recently, with the establishment of four Confucius classrooms across Scotland with a further four planned to be in place by March 2009, funded by the Chinese government, and administered jointly with Learning and Teaching Scotland. Whilst the stated target audience are school pupils, there is clearly potential to involve both FE and HE sectors, too.

French for first year students

Aberdeen University offers all its first year students the possibility of studying French to Advanced Higher level, even if languages are not part of their degree. (NB: There may be other universities that have similar arrangements in place but there was insufficient time to check this).

Target Export

(See Case Study 1) This project operated from 1994 until 2006 at Glenrothes College, now part of Adam Smith College, offering exporting companies in Fife the services of a graduate linguist for a period of 12 months, in exchange for a small fee. Graduates also attended college where they studied for a professional award from the Institute of Export and were trained in e-business skills such as website management and marketing. This scheme obtained an International Business Award in 2004.

Languages Work!

http://www.cilt.org.uk/eal/2004/winners04/winner_languageswork.htm

A collaborative project (2004-2005) between the Gordon Schools in Aberdeenshire and language staff at the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen aimed at highlighting the vocational relevance of language skills by engaging pupils in a range of fun activities, and inviting famous personalities who had used language skills professionally (such as Big Brother winner Cameroun Stout and former Scotland football manager Berti Vogts). The initiative won a European Language Award in 2004.

Multilingual Debate

<http://www.cilt.org.uk/eal/2006/winners/debate.htm>

(See Case Study 3) This is an annual event hosted by Heriot-Watt University, which provides its final year students on the Translation and Interpreting course with realistic 'work experience' but also serves to highlight the vocational relevance of language skills to senior pupils across Scotland, who may apply to take part through their individual schools. The project obtained the European Languages Award in 2006.

Postgraduate courses for language teachers and lecturers

<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/languagestudies/teachers/index.htm>

(See Case Study 5) The University of Dundee offers three courses to enable qualified language teachers/lecturers to obtain further qualifications: Diploma in Spanish or German for teachers (with the first having a healthy uptake from Scottish secondary teachers) and a Masters Degree in Modern Language Teaching (MLitt in MLT).

University language provision delivered by college staff

http://www.ccol.ac.uk/cont/news/news_container.php?page=news_view_2007&id=7

Glasgow Caledonian University has signed a five-year collaborative agreement with Central College of Commerce to deliver language programmes to their students. According to the college, the provision has been very successful with 25% increase in student numbers taking up language options, and the inclusion of additional language, Italian, to the existing range of French, German and Spanish.

The role of professional associations

The Scottish Association for Language Teaching (SALT) has representatives from primary, secondary, further and higher education, and may wish to consider in what ways they might help take recommendations arising from this report forward. The Association was instrumental, for example, in helping to bring the parliamentary petition by Dr Murray Hill regarding support for languages in Scotland to the attention of MSPs in September 2007. Other relevant professional organisations are the Scottish FE Network (Modern Languages) and the University Council for Modern Languages Scotland (UCMLS).

It is also worth noting that in response to a number of negative references about the state of modern languages in Scotland the Royal Society of Edinburgh organised an event which brought together representatives from all education sectors, as well as from business and government (Royal Society of Edinburgh, 2006). A record of the proceedings can be accessed at:

http://www.rse.org.uk/events/reports/2005-2006/languages_in_scotland.pdf

3 Questionnaire Analysis

Responses were received from twelve of the thirteen universities in Scotland, including the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), a consortium of colleges offering opportunities for higher education study across the north of Scotland, and two initial teacher education departments, representing a response ratio of 1.3 per institution. This compares well with Davis, who received 171 responses from 154 different institutions, which equals a response rate of 1.1 per institution. However, because of the relatively small number of responses overall, the figures must be treated with some caution. Of the 43 Scottish FE colleges, twelve responded from ten institutions, all of them located in what is commonly referred to as the 'central belt' area of Scotland (roughly a 30 mile swathe between Dundee in the east and Glasgow in the west). This represents a response rate of 28% overall so the FE responses, too, should be treated with caution. The low response rate may be due in large part to the fact that in many colleges outwith the central area languages are only taught in evening classes by staff on temporary contract, who may not have the time – or indeed any incentives – to develop cross-sector collaborative projects.

3.1 Range of language cross-sector collaboration activities

Davis reported that the three most common cross-sector collaboration activities were initial teacher training, informal exchange of information and taster days. Within our sample, the two most common activities were 'presentations to school pupils' (24 responses), 'informal exchange of information' (23 responses). 'Taster days' and 'collaborative staff development' were each cited by 15 respondents. Davis points out that initial teacher training only featured highly in the responses from the school sector, whereas in the HE sector the most frequent activities were presentations, and this is reflected in our responses. FEC staff, on the other hand, most frequently cited informal exchange of information, and the interview data suggest that this may be because school teachers tend not to be very familiar with the range of language provision available in colleges.

The other collaborative activities listed may be categorised as:

- Special events/days
- Attendance at international events
- Provision of qualifications not available at school
- Professional development in additional languages
- Developing links with/teaching in primary schools
- Materials development (including online materials)

3.2 Usefulness of language cross-sector collaboration activities

Davis records an average a usefulness rating of between 3.5 and 4.2 on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the most useful). In our sample, respondents were slightly more positive, with a usefulness rating ranging between 3.6 and 4.7.

However, when broken down by sector, FEC staff were less satisfied overall than HE staff, with some activities (such as presentations to school pupils and taster days) only gaining a satisfaction rating of 2.8 and 2.5 respectively. The most frequently cited activity by FE staff, informal exchange of information, also received the highest usefulness rating (4).

The most frequently cited activity by HE staff, giving presentations to school pupils was also seen as being very useful (4.1). Taster days received a fairly high overall score (3.8) but also some low ratings.

By contrast, although language or cultural festivals were infrequently cited as collaborative activities in both sectors, satisfaction rating of these was very high (4 for FE respondents, and 4.7 for HE respondents). The infrequency could be due to the fact that these activities require a lot of

time in preparation, and may also require additional resources and costs. Whilst these findings differ somewhat from those by Davis, they are not considered significant.

3.3 Which activities work best with which year groups?

Twenty-one different activities were listed, and the majority of these (nearly 70%) were targeted at the upper year groups, i.e. from S3-4 onwards, and just over half of them were directed primarily at S5-6. These included taster classes, advice on university applications, presentations, language festivals and competitions. The majority of activities aimed at the lower age groups were organised by either FE or school respondents. Very few activities were aimed at the early stages of primary school, such as lunchtime classes and story-telling. Some activities, such as guided reading of authentic texts and curriculum development, were cited as working well with the latter stages of primary school. However, like Davis, we suspect that some respondents misinterpreted this question.

3.4 Aims of cross-sector collaboration

Overall, the promotion of languages and increasing take-up of languages were most frequently cited by respondents from both FE and HE as the main aims of cross-sector collaboration (69% and 63% overall). However, the respondents from the HE sector tended to cite the promotion of languages more frequently than respondents from the FE sector (76% and 58% respectively). In fact, for FE respondents increasing the take-up of languages and raising the profile of their institution were just as important (i.e. cited by 58%). Again, this may be due to the low status accorded to languages in FE provision, and the perception that the FE sector in general and language provision within it is misunderstood by language teachers in schools.

Our findings correspond roughly with those by Davis. We also found that 'improving attitudes to languages' and 'increasing students' competence' was less of a concern for respondents from HE than for those from FE (each cited by 24% and 33% of respondents respectively).

3.5 Barriers to cross-sector collaboration

Time was cited by 78% of respondents as a significant barrier to cross-collaboration overall. However, HE respondents were more likely to cite this factor than FE staff (88% and 58% respectively). By contrast, FE respondents were more concerned about the general lack of interest in language learning (67%) whereas only 16% of HE respondents considered this to be a barrier. This may be due to the fact that those who take up language study in HE are more likely to be intrinsically motivated in the subject, whereas this may not be the case in the FE sector.

4 Conclusions

The questionnaire and interview responses from this study indicate some similarities with the conclusions found by Davis, particularly in terms of coordination and evaluation of activities. There were also differences, which were related to the range of activities and more specifically to responses from the FE and the HE sectors. The latter can be explained in part by the lesser status accorded to languages as a subject in the FE curriculum framework. For example, since languages cannot be studied as a main subject at FE colleges, language festivals would not hold the same relevance in FE as they would in HE. However, since the responses from the FE sector are relatively low further investigation would be required to increase the validity of the data.

4.1 Range of activities

Like Davis (2006) we found evidence of varied and successful collaborative activities. Differences, such as those cited by respondents as 'most frequent' and 'most useful' are due in part to the nature of our sample (predominantly FE and HE rather than school-based as in the case of Davis). It must also be pointed out that since the activities perceived as most useful were employed less frequently they may not have the same degree of replicability.

- Most frequent
 - Presentations to school pupils (HEIs)
 - Informal exchange of information (FECs)
- Perceived as most useful
 - Language / cultural festival (HEIs)
 - Other collaborative activities (FECs)
- Most frequently targeted pupil group
 - Senior year groups (HEIs and FECs)
- Most common aim
 - Promoting languages (HEIs and FECs)
- Most common barrier
 - Time (HEIs)
 - Lack of interest in languages (FECs)

4.2 Coordination

As indicated by Davis, many outreach and collaborative activities are dependent on the good will of staff because there is insufficient (if any) time built into the academic timetable to allow for the development and/or organisation of these. Some institutions appear to have in place better organised links between their widening participation and schools liaison teams. There clearly would be a role for a dedicated member of staff to coordinate language-specific outreach activities, and there is a need for staff from the more popular language programmes to be sympathetic to the needs of their colleagues teaching less popular languages.

4.3 Awareness

Whilst there is general awareness about progression routes for language study from school into university, staff in FECs have found it much harder to convey the message to schools that language study can also continue in the FE sector. However, because much language provision is now delivered by part-time staff, time for outreach activities is difficult to find. Not all staff made use of the central support system. Whilst articulation agreements between college and university courses tend to clearly highlighted to students in college prospectuses, languages hardly feature there because there is very little full-time language provision happening at FE level.

4.4 Fitness for purpose

Like Davis we found that good practice occurs where staff members have identified activities that are fun, relevant, and educational for school pupils and have the commitment and enthusiasm to see projects through from idea to realisation. However, we also found instances where successful initiatives have had to fold due in part to lack of funding, or a perceived decline in demand.

4.5 Evaluation

Like Davis we found that there was little formal evaluation of the impact of outreach activities, due in part to the perceived difficulties in establishing such methods. Davis proposes nevertheless that systems need to be developed for measuring impact/long-term tracking of students. Some of our respondents were in the process of setting up such systems and it would be useful to revisit these institutions in future to find out how successful these measures have been.

4.6 Sharing good practice

Davis concluded that Languages shares common issues with other subjects, such as the Physical Sciences, and that we may be able to learn lessons from other subject areas as well as other sectors. We would concur with this conclusion, and respondents seemed genuinely interested in opportunities for networking.

4.7 Suggestion for future activities

Due to time constraints, a number of issues have not been addressed in this study, and there is scope for further projects in this area, including:

- mapping outreach activities regionally
- investigating schools' outreach needs
- looking in detail at set-up, costs, age groups, aims, benefits and shortcomings of various outreach initiatives
- investigating in detail outreach activities involving other sectors, e.g. business, Local Authorities

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Appendix 1: Case Studies

(1) Adam Smith College: Links with Business and the Community

Interview with Barbara Beedham, ESOL manager

Through her work on the provision of business language services both in Scotland and in England, Barbara had become aware of the lack of appropriate language skills prevalent in most exporting companies. Even where companies were undertaking language training, the level of competence achieved was frequently rather low and inadequate for most business needs. This led Barbara to set up *Target Export*, a placement programme for languages graduates, inspired by a similar venture based in South Wales. Through this scheme language graduates were trained in exporting skills for long-term placements with local exporting companies with a view to improving the companies' communications with non-English speaking markets. Barbara had also started to integrate the government's Export Communications Review scheme, which is managed by the British Chambers of Commerce on behalf of UK Trade & Investment, into the programme. This scheme is, coupled with development of export skills. Unfortunately, despite winning the International Business Awards in 2004, the programme is no longer running due in part to lack of funding. Whilst Barbara's activities formed part of the commercial arm of the college, the main language department of the college has also been active in outreach. For example, college lecturers offer language classes that school teachers are not able to provide for their pupils, such as Advanced Higher Spanish. This is perceived to be very effective with past pupils having achieved excellent grades. There are also good links with the local community, and outreach provision has included Polish, very popular both with children of Polish origin but also some native Scots.

(NB: *Target Export* operated at Glenrothes College, which merged with Fife College in 2005 to form Adam Smith College.)

(2) Forth Valley College: Links with Schools

Interview with Lorna Grant, Lecturer

Over the years, Lorna and her staff have developed good informal links with the local secondary schools. They regularly participate in College Open Days and highlight the opportunities for language study to new entrants into FE. They also regularly give presentations to local high schools, which they believe is essential to keep raising awareness of languages in FE. Lorna believes that the timing of school visits is crucial because it is usually during the month of February when S4 students make subject choices for their senior year(s). The language team regularly contribute to the Council sponsored Language Fair held annually in June but it is generally felt that the timing of this event is unfavourable as the decisions for subject choices have already been made by this time. Lorna has also maintained links to language teachers in schools by way of her membership of the National Qualifications Assessment Panel, which meets twice yearly to discuss issues relating to assessment format and the attainment of those taking the examinations. The discussions at these meetings have given Lorna an insight into the concerns of language teachers at school, and she has shared some of the issues with members of the FE Network for Languages during their annual meeting in June. Lorna is also one of two FE representatives on the Assessment Panel for (Scottish) National Qualifications, which was established by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Scotland's national awarding body. Here, too, there are opportunities to raise awareness of FE matters, and there may be further potential to develop links under the 'Curriculum for Excellence' educational reforms.

Because of her vocational background, she was involved in the development of a range of 'Languages for Work' units that were to be delivered either in schools or colleges. However, the examinations originally associated with these units are set to disappear and it is not clear whether the units may be adapted to fit in with *Curriculum for Excellence*. Currently, Lorna is engaged in

the evaluation of SCHOLAR materials (open learning resources using virtual learning environments) for Advanced Higher French which could be used both by schools and colleges.

(NB: Forth Valley College was established in 2005 as a result of a merger between Falkirk College and Clackmannan College)

(3) Heriot-Watt University: Multilingual Debate:

Interview with Maggie Sargeant, Lecturer in German

Roughly one third of Margaret's timetable allows for the organisation of outreach and collaborative activities. Whilst the university staff have a range of such projects, it is felt that events are the most effective of these. The 'star' initiative is undoubtedly the annual 'Multilingual Debate' which serves a double purpose: the promotion of languages to schools is one aim, but the debate is also a 'real-life' experience for the final year graduates, i.e. it gives them a professional outing. Of all the initiatives listed this one looks set to be the most sustainable, as well as one that is attracting a large number of pupils from across Scotland. There are 430 places available, and this year, a waiting list of over 250 that could not be accommodated. Initially only S5-6 pupils were invited but for the past two events it has also been offered to S4 in order to encourage take up of languages in the senior years. Interestingly, different schools from the public sector apply to attend each year, but schools from independent sector tend to be the same.

The event is regularly oversubscribed by over 200 places. For this reason, and also to allow participation of a greater number of schools, it has now been decided to limit the maximum number that can participate from each school. A likely consequence of this decision is that attendance will be restricted to the most motivated of pupils. However, it is hoped that the holding of the event itself will serve as a reminder of the need and importance of the translation and interpreting industries. There is of course a cost associated with the setting up of such an event, but the benefits are considered to outweigh this. Certainly, the intake to Heriot-Watt has increased in the last couple of years, although staff have not been able to identify to what degree the recent increase in take up is due to this event or to other factors. However, there are no plans to curtail this activity and winning the prestigious European Language Award in 2006 has further enhanced the department's reputation.

Other outreach activities include a five-day summer school for pupils from three neighbouring local education councils in French, and some weekend courses in the run-up to the Higher examinations. This is funded by a consortium group made up of local education authority representatives. Currently the summer school is only offered in French, as there are staffing supply issues for German. There are discussions about offering Spanish and Polish in the future. The staff are fairly frequently asked to give presentations to school pupils in S4 (roughly every two to three months), and they usually try to accommodate these requests, even if it is outwith their local area. However, here too the issue of time constraints was raised. Only one member of staff has part of her timetable designated for outreach activities, none of the other staff do. There have been discussions about using Student Ambassadors, but currently this is done on an ad hoc basis.

(4) UHI Orkney: Promoting indigenous languages and providing customised continuous professional development

Interview with Dr. Donna Heddle, Head of Dept of Cultural Studies and Director of the Centre for Nordic Studies

When Donna moved to Orkney College in 1999, there was no provision available for the indigenous languages of Scotland so over the next four years she set about developing courses, and recruiting suitably qualified staff. Today, there is a thriving range of programmes including Old Norse and Gaelic. Because of its more isolated location, considerable use has been made of information technologies, such as video conferencing, and this has worked well (much to Donna's

surprise). There has been collaboration with other UHI and HE institutions such as Sabhal Mor Ostaig (the specialist college for Gaelic language and culture) and the University of Aberdeen.

There is also a thriving outreach programme of evening classes for the local community which includes Norwegian, Cantonese, Italian and Polish. There is a strong tradition of German, and Latin and Spanish have recently seen an increase in demand. To some degree the provision is supply-led, as well as by the reputation of individual teachers.

In addition, Donna has developed a number of modules for professional development, which she delivers to language teachers (of French and German) living in the North of Scotland, sometimes on site, i.e. Orkney, and other times on outreach provision. For this she received special funding from the TRAIL project through ESF funds.

She believes the key to success is developing good rapport with teachers who come to the events, and providing charismatic and well informed teachers to deliver the in-service sessions. She always sends out information packs beforehand and ensures that teachers complete an evaluation form at the end of the in-service day. From this feedback she has learnt, that individual sessions should not last longer than 45 minutes and be sufficiently different from one another to hold participants' interest. Teachers also appreciate having the opportunity to try out things for themselves, and to discuss the merits of a new initiative. Finally, there should be plenty of breaks to allow for networking between participants and good food to make everyone feel valued. In order to continue to build relationships Donna feels there should be funding to be able to run a kind of 'travelling road show' of in-service activities for school teachers and she has in fact developed this for the Highlands and Islands with the first iteration in September.

(5) University of Dundee: Additional Teaching Qualification in Spanish

Telephone interview with Marion Spöring and email communication with Linda Hartley, both Senior Lecturers in Applied Language Studies at the University of Dundee, Communication and Language Studies (CALs) in the School of Humanities

This is the only institution in Scotland offering an additional teaching qualification (ATQ) in Spanish (accredited by the General Teaching Council of Scotland and supported by the Spanish Ministry of Education in the UK). The ATQ is a 2 year part-time distance-learning Graduate Diploma in Spanish, which usually recruits 20 teachers per annum. The majority of the participants are practising modern language teachers in secondary schools from Scotland.

The department also offers a MLitt in English Language Teaching and MLitt in Modern Language Teaching (MLT) qualification via online distance learning. An agreement has just been reached with the School of Education and Social Work, who teach the MEd and Chartered teacher programmes, that from January 2009 these qualifications will offer some of the modules of the MLitt (MLT).

There is also provision offered to adults in the community. It is difficult to assess the link to uptake but the adult programme is useful for generating awareness in the local community. These classes, mostly offered in the evening, are very popular (some teachers start learning an additional language through this route), and some students are able to use their ILA (individual learning account) to help with the fees.

The university has many articulation agreements with FE colleges, although none directly with CALs. However, the University's Access course scheme includes French as one of the subjects.

Students also have the opportunity to take part in peer tutoring programmes in local schools (offered by the University Careers' Service to all students in their second year to teach/support in schools). This is usually taken up by a number of language students, (e.g. going into language classes in schools).

(6) University of St Andrews: Annual German Competition of Poetry, Prose and Role-Play for schools in Scotland

Information provided by email, Annette Zimmermann, Senior Language Tutor

This event takes place annually in June. Between 10 and 16 schools tend to enter the competition involving between 90-140 pupils, in three age groups: up to and including S4 (Junior Level) and S5 (Intermediate Level) and S6 (Senior Level). All three groups have a choice of activities: they can read out a poem, a piece of prose or perform a role-play on the basis of a picture story; they can also choose two or even three of those activities. All materials are provided by the Department. Role-play at 'Junior Level' works particularly well because it gives students a chance to have their own input; also, at 'Junior Level', students tend to be less inhibited than at 'Senior Level'. Annette feels that it is very rewarding to see the excellent standard of language pupils have achieved; the competition also helps teachers to motivate their students - it sets them a goal to work towards. University staff have been pleasantly surprised by the pupils' command of the language and their general conduct on the day. The competition provides a platform for staff and students from both the Higher Education and the school sector to meet and exchange views and it gives the schools some insight into university life.

Annette organises this event in her spare time, and also has to negotiate funding on an annual basis. This tends to be a combination of funds from the School of Languages, the Goethe-Institute in Glasgow and the Swiss Consulate General in Edinburgh. Prizes range from cash prizes of up to £100 to books sponsored by a number of publishers, to autographs or signed photographs from German or Swiss celebrities from the worlds of sport and fashion. The university's Admissions Office helps with the printing costs for the certificates.

Whilst it is has not been possible to assess the impact of the event formally, Annette feels encouraged by the positive feedback from teachers and participating pupils, which she feels has resulted in a tangible improvement in the relationship with the local schools. She also believes that for some pupils the event was the impetus to come to study at St. Andrews.

Another regular outreach activity is the annual German play, produced by the students of the Department, which always includes one extra performance for schools. The success of this venture can be 'measured' visibly since the majority of invited schools tend to take up this offer.

Appendix II: Breakdown of Questionnaire Responses

1. In which educational sector do you work?

	Principal	Subsidiary
Primary		2
Secondary	4	
Further Education	12	
University	17	2
Total	33	

2. Please indicate which of the following outreach/cross-sector collaboration activities you have been involved in, and if so, how useful you found them on a scale of 1(not at all useful) – 5 (very useful)?

Activities (in order of frequency)	Total	Rating breakdown					Mean Rating
		1	2	3	4	5	
Presentations to school pupils	24	1	1	8	6	8	3.8
Informal exchange of information	23			7	6	10	4.1
Taster days	15	1	2	3	4	5	3.7
Curriculum development	15			3	4	8	4.3
Collaborative staff development	11			2	6	3	4.1
Language / cultural festival	10	1		2	1	6	4.2
Summer schools	7			1	4	2	4.1
Advice on university applications	7		1	2	3	1	3.6
Teacher training	6		1		3	2	4.0
Master classes	3			1	1	1	4.0
Transition courses	3				1	2	4.7
Undergraduates working in school classrooms	3		1		1	1	3.7
Exchange of teaching staff	2				2		4.0
Mentoring	1			1			3.0
Other collaborative activities	14			4	1	9	4.4

Other collaborative activities listed:

- Annual multi-lingual debate
- German poetry competition
- Minority languages conference
- Pilot of SCHOLAR (online) materials for Higher French
- School/Regionally organised language events
- Teaching school pupils at college (face-to-face or by open learning)
- Attendance at Europe Business Conference in Paris, work experience
- Delivering online Graduate Diploma in Spanish for secondary teachers
- Lunchtime French courses offered to a Primary school (by FE college lecturer)

Breakdown of responses by sector:

FE responses (N=12)	Frequency	Rating breakdown (%)					Mean Rating
		1	2	3	4	5	
Informal exchange of information	75%			44	22	33	4.0
Other collaborative activities	42%			20	80		3.8
Curriculum development	42%		40	20	40		3.0
Presentations to school pupils	33%	25		50	25		2.8
Taster days	33%	25	25	25	25		2.5
Language / cultural festival	25%			33	33	33	4.0
Collaborative staff development	25%			67	33		3.3
Advice on university applications	17%			50	50		3.5
Teacher training	17%		50		50		3.0

HE responses (N=17)	Frequency	Rating Breakdown (%)					Mean Rating
		1	2	3	4	5	
Presentations to school pupils	94%		6	19	25	44	4.1
Informal exchange of information	65%			27	36	36	4.1
Taster days	65%		9	9	45	36	3.8
Advice on university applications	59%		10	30	30	30	3.8
Summer schools	41%			14	57	29	4.1
Other collaborative activities	41%			43	14	43	4.0
Language / cultural festival	35%			17		83	4.7
Curriculum development	35%				33	67	4.7
Collaborative staff development	29%			20	60	20	4.0
Undergraduates working in school classrooms	18%		33		33	33	3.7
Transition courses	12%				50	50	4.5
Teacher training	12%				50	50	4.5
Master classes	6%				100		4.0
Exchange of teaching staff	6%				100		4.0
Mentoring	6%			100			3.0

(NB: percentages have been rounded to the nearest integral)

3. In your view, which of the activities above worked well, and with which school sector/age group?

Activity	P1-3	P4-5	P6-7	S1-2	S3-4	S5-6
Taster courses/days in			1	2	4	6
Lunchtime classes to primary	1					
Advice on university applications						3
Informal exchange of information					1	2
German poetry competition				1	1	1
Presentations					2	3
Storytelling	1			1		
Art & craft activities		1		1		
Guided reading of authentic texts			1	1		
Multilingual debate					2	2
Teaching school pupils face-to-face						1
Teaching school pupils open learning						1
Language events/festivals			1	3	3	1
Master classes					1	
Exchange visits					1	1
Curriculum development			1			
Collaborative staff development					1	
Transition courses			1			1
Cluster meetings (primary/secondary)			1			
Summer school					1	
Totals	2	1	6	9	17	22

4. What are the principal aims of your cross-sector collaboration activities involving languages? (Please select a maximum of 3)

Aims	FE (%)	HE (%)
Promoting languages	58	76
Increasing take-up of languages	58	59
Raising the profile of your institution	58	35
Developing relationships/links between sectors	50	41
Boosting college / university recruitment	42	53
Improving attitudes to languages	33	24
Increasing students' competence	33	24
Raising awareness between sector	25	18
Facilitating transition	17	
Other	8	24

NB: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest integral. Due to the very low return rate school responses have not been included.

Other aims listed:

- Survival
- Raising awareness that languages are used in every sector.
- Enabling university to outsource its language work in order to cut costs.
- Increasing cognitive challenge at all levels and helping teachers realise this is not only desirable/essential but also quite feasible with sufficient scaffolding
- Cross-discipline collaboration within the single sector of HE seems also worthy of attention, i.e. convincing HE colleagues that languages can go hand in hand with other disciplines
- Providing more detailed information about the type of activities students will be involved in by studying a language at [our university], and about other modules they might be interested in taking within the same School.

5. In your view, what are the barriers to cross-sector collaboration involving languages? (Please select a maximum of 3)

Barriers	FE (%)	HE (%)
Time	58	88
Money	33	29
Have other priorities	33	41
Staffing difficulties	25	41
Geographical difficulties	17	18
Lack of interest in languages	67	12
Lack of institutional support	50	53
Lack of information	0	12
Other	17	12

NB: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest integral. Due to the very low return rate school responses have not been included.

Other barriers listed:

- Lack of language expertise in primary sector.
- Lack of opportunity for interaction between HE and school teachers
- A lack of will and faith on the part of secondary school colleagues towards FE establishments
- College management have no interest in the promotion of modern languages. This session only one course in the whole college contained a unit in Spanish. No evening classes are currently offered in modern languages. There is a large number of students studying ESOL, however, as it is easy to fill large classes and offer full-time courses in this area.