

Report of the Scotland Representative

Scotland's Languages Explorer Programme

In March 2023, we successfully completed the pilot of our new languages mentoring scheme, Scotland's Languages Explorer Programme (SLEP) in collaboration with Scottish CILT (SCILT), the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Consortium, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. We were delighted to have Antonella Sorace from Bilingualism Matters as a member of the programme's Short Life Working Group.

Five Modern Languages students from the University of Aberdeen worked with S2 students from five schools in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (c. ten students/school) over a six-week period. Sessions explored aspects of multilingualism, multiculturalism, intercultural competency and translation with the aim of encouraging students to continue with language study as they progress through secondary education. A celebration event to mark the completion of the pilot took place at the University of Aberdeen on Wednesday 31 May.

Colleagues at SCILT and the participating local authorities are undertaking a programme evaluation via feedback and interviews with mentees, mentors and teachers. Initial indications are that the scheme has been successful in encouraging a majority of participants to continue with language study once they enter S4. We are now working on extending the programme in a 'phase two' pilot to run next year through collaboration with HEIs and partner schools from across Scotland with the aim of having nationwide coverage by AY 24/25 or AY 25/26. The team at SCILT has been instrumental in providing training and organisational support for the scheme, and rolling it out without them would have been very challenging if not impossible.

Senior Phase Modern Languages Workshops

Following the success of this year's workshops for Senior Phase students (Higher/Advanced Higher) from across Scotland, SCILT is leading on the development of a new round of workshops to take place in the autumn. Sessions on different skills (translation, cultural and critical analysis, grammar and language) are being offered by six HEIs (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde), with the aim of giving a taste of language study at university as well as tips and guidance to support students with their current studies. Sessions will take place online to enable wide participation and uptake.

Language Linking, Global Thinking

Due to budgetary constraints, SCILT has had to pause the Language Linking, Global Thinking (LLGT) scheme which pairs students on their year abroad with schools in Scotland. UCML Scotland is working with SCILT to identify how the scheme can be maintained for next year through collaboration with participating HEIs.

Networking activities

During the year I have represented UCMLS at regular meetings of the Languages Network Group Scotland (LANGS) and the Education Scotland Strategic Interest Group on Languages. I have also joined the Advisory Council of the Institute for Languages, Cultures and Societies in my capacity as UCMLS convenor.

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