UCFL Summer Plenary

Friday, 5th July, 2024

Report from the WALES Representative

There have not been many changes since the last report in May, although the following ones are worth noting:

1. Bangor University

The Lifelong Learning Centre from Bangor University has added a new language to their programme: British Sign Language. This will be the tenth language to be taught in Bangor University's Lifelong Learning department.

2. Swansea University

Swansea University held a two-day workshop on Narrating Eco-Social Transitions on 11th – 12th April 2024.

This two-day workshop reflected on some of the challenges posed by the current Climate Crisis, exploring equitable ways to support sustainable, collective, and collaborative ecological transitions that are more resilient and just. It also considered the part the Humanities have to play. Emphasis was given on the role of storytelling in developing and constructing imaginaries capable of channelling positive action and contributing to new forms of well-being. It was organised in partnership with Grenoble Alpes University's ILCEA4.

3. Routes into Languages- Cymru

The Routes into Languages-Cymru team are working to find another organisation to host the project. Failing this, there will be a legacy planning.

Routes is also working now on the International Languages Superheroes Power Learning. School children from South Wales completed a training day at Cardiff University to become International Languages Superheroes.

The course, which was run by Routes into Languages Cymru on 12 and 14 June, saw over 90 primary school children in year 5 engage in various activities throughout the day which aimed to spark a passion for language learning and improve language skills. Throughout the day, various language workshops were held by academic staff at the School of Modern Languages in Cardiff University and Swansea University as well as Routes into Languages Cymru's Student Language Ambassadors.

The workshops were designed to teach children about languages and the cultures of the countries where those languages are spoken. This included learning about Spanish music and the Paris 2024 Olympics during the Spanish and French workshops. The children also received language taster workshops in German, Italian, and Portuguese.

Having spent the day immersed in languages, the children were each given an International Languages Superheroes handbook of challenges to complete with their peers once they returned to their schools. The success of the events has been echoed on a wider University level by the announcement that Routes into Languages Cymru has been nominated for the Excellence in Civic Mission or Public Engagement award 2024 as part of Cardiff University's Celebrating Excellence scheme. The winners of the award will be announced in November.

4. MFL Mentoring´

Year 8/9 Mentoring

During the 2024-25 annual cycle of MFL Mentoring up to 100 secondary schools (55% of secondary schools in Wales) will engage in the Year 8/9 Mentoring or Linking Languages Workshops. The project will aim to offer 200 placements to schools across the two semesters, reaching a minimum of 100 secondary schools in doing so. Based on learnings from the past year, the project will 'front-load' the first semester, working with as many schools as it is able to, and maximising the number of placements it can offer at this critical juncture. For many schools, this is a key semester for GCSE choice making. Further placements will then be offered in semester 2, but the project anticipates that this will be a smaller number to account for the 'front-loading' in semester 1.

During this cycle, resource is being channelled into developing and delivering an external evaluation. This is an exciting opportunity to review again the impact that the project is having. The project has always tracked and measured its impact and is committed to ensuring that maximum impact is achieved for teachers, learners and mentors. The evaluation will look to provide a full evaluation of the project during the 9 years of its delivery (2015-2024) with detailed analysis of project impact 2021-2024 based on large-scale surveying across mentors, learners and teachers in those years. It will also use the wider data relating to school, learner and mentor impacts, attitudes and trajectories, to make recommendations about the future,

needs and impacts of MFL Mentoring on International Languages uptake, resilience and pipeline, and the new Curriculum for Wales.

Teaching and Learning Resources

The project continues to create resources in support of the Curriculum for Wales. The project team continues to finalise an expansive suite of modules that comprise of hundreds of hours of potential teaching materials for Welsh and English medium teachers in both the primary and secondary sector. The modules will provide practical support for implementing the Curriculum for Wales, offering inspiration for how to develop multilingual resources and mindsets and will encourage exploration and curiosity driven learning. A Welsh translator began working with the project in August 2023 and is supporting the translation of this suite of resources. The first batch of resources will be made available on 1st July 2024.

- In the first tranche there will be:
    1. A long and short version of the 'Why Languages?' workshops to support secondary IL teachers in demonstrating the myriad of skills learners develop through language learning
    2. Alebrijes resource, primary and secondary school versions available in both Welsh and English
    3. Biscuits resource, primary and secondary school versions available in both Welsh and English

Communications Campaign

- Our Communications Vision and Mission are being implemented primarily through three social media platforms – 'X' (Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as the project newsletter and project website. The Steering Group Report details the specific strategy for each of the mediums, a brief analysis of outcomes for each platform as well as the priorities for each going forward.
- Find out more by following us on our social media channels or by signing up to our newsletter which will keep you up to date with all things happening at the MFL Mentoring HQ: https://linktr.ee/mfl_mentoring

Other Updates

- Senedd Event: The project has secured sponsorship from Heledd Fychan MS to hold an event in the Senedd to profile projects and International Languages in Wales. The project will aim to hold this event in early December 2024. Further details will be shared when available.
- Cardiff University Showcase Event: The project intends to hold a showcase event in February 2025 in Cardiff University. The aim will be to profile the sector leading work of the projects and to profile the outcomes from the external evaluation. Further details will be circulated when available.
- Article to be published: Claire Gorrara, Lucy Jenkins and Glesni Owen collaborated with a former PhD student of MLANG, Elin Arfon, in co-writing an article on the learner data

collated by the project. The title of the article is: "Why don't learners in Wales choose to study languages at secondary school? An investigation into the factors influencing learner motivation and choice". It has been accepted for publication in the Wales Journal of Education and will be published in early 2025.

- Multilingual Primary Mentoring Project: The project has won a small pot of funding to trial a small-scale mentoring project in primary schools in South Wales. This will be launched in September 2024 in 5/6 primary schools across the Cardiff region.
- International Collaboration: The project has won money from Cardiff University Strategic Funding to collaborate with the University of Waikato in New Zealand. The project will consider how the methodologies of MFL Mentoring could be adapted to support multilingual aspirations in the Hamilton area of New Zealand.