

# (RE)CREATING MODERN LANGUAGES:

## Conversations about the Curriculum in UK Higher Education

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# FOREWORD

**Rachel Beaney, Claire Gorrara, Katrin Kohl and Liz Wren-Owens**

This is an exciting time to be working in Modern Languages, as our concept of the subject is evolving in new ways. Cultural horizons have become more global, and simultaneously the UK has become more culturally and linguistically diverse. This has opened up new perspectives on how a degree in Modern Languages can equip students with intercultural skills and the ability to mediate between cultures and communities. In practical terms, these are challenging times, as we recruit from diminishing numbers of languages pupils and face many pressures from within institutions.

This toolkit is designed to support colleagues who are planning to review the teaching in their institution. It offers frameworks for thinking through and planning comprehensive curriculum change, drawing on the experience of colleagues who have recently undertaken these changes or are working through them at the time of writing. It showcases examples of excellent and innovative practice at module level, providing ideas for (re)thinking how language departments can work with external partners to enhance student experience. Colleagues share not only their ideas and examples of what works well, but also some thoughts on what can be trickier in bringing these modules to life. The toolkit provides a range of models for thinking about how language degrees are structured. It also looks at three-language degrees and at ways in which undergraduate language programmes can work with Institution-Wide Language Programmes (IWLPP) to mutual advantage.

The project is a joint venture between Cardiff University and the University of Oxford. It was developed with funding provided by Creative Multilingualism, one of four research programmes funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC-UKRI) in the context of the Open World Research Initiative. We are grateful to colleagues from institutions across the UK who have generously shared their ideas and expertise. The project was intended to include a conference in Oxford, which had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In lieu of exchanging views and experiences in a live setting, colleagues developed ideas and conversations asynchronously via the EDMODO platform.<sup>1</sup>

The stimulating interaction through electronic means and extensive input from a wide range of colleagues is an unexpected bonus which has emerged from the challenges of the pandemic. The project team had to quickly learn new ways of working, and the experience of using the online environment for sharing best practice will help us shape the way we approach our teaching. We hope that this toolkit is a useful contribution to our community, part of an ongoing conversation about how we showcase the best of our discipline and promote a more widely shared understanding of the many benefits offered by a degree in Modern Languages.

1. If you would like to access the EDMODO classroom, please email [wren-owensEA@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wren-owensEA@cardiff.ac.uk).

# MODERN LANGUAGES AND QUESTIONS OF CURRICULAR REFORM

**Charles Burdett**

## **Introduction**

As is well known to anyone working in the sector, the disciplinary identity of Modern Languages (MLs) has attracted a great deal of attention in the UK over what is, by now, a considerable length of time. The decline in recruitment in MLs programmes at school and university level, with the potential societal consequences of this trend, has led to a number of influential policy reports and statements: 'Towards a National Languages Strategy: Education and Skills', for example, was presented at an event hosted by the British Academy on 20 July 2020.<sup>1</sup> That decline and its anticipated consequences have also led to the launch of ambitious funding initiatives by Research Councils, such as the £16 million, 'Open World Research Initiative' (OWRI), tasked – among other things – with providing exciting new ways of engaging with languages and language education. The situation and how to address it are also central to the work of the BA, the UCML, the IMLR and the initiatives that they have vigorously pursued over recent years.

The current situation is, of course, multi-faceted but we can isolate two elements that it is possible to see as essential to its characterization. On the one hand, there is widespread concern over the small number of secondary school students applying to MLs courses at university. On the other hand, there is a great deal of excitement surrounding the work that is occurring around nationally sponsored initiatives such as the four OWRI projects – 'Creative Multilingualism', 'Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies', 'Cross-Language Dynamics: Reshaping Community', 'Language Acts and Worldmaking' – which, in turn, arise from the many projects relating broadly speaking to MLs that were supported by the AHRC's 'Translating Cultures' theme.<sup>2</sup> At the very least, the situation encourages reflection on the ways in which the sector might develop in future years.

In what follows, I will present a few reflections – originally intended as part of a roundtable discussion – on considerations that affect curricular reform. My reflections spring from my engagement with large teams of researchers in two projects that were part of the 'Translating Cultures' Theme, 'Transnationalizing Modern Languages' (TML) and, with colleagues from the University of Namibia, 'TML: Global Challenges' – both of which were intended to act, together with the two other large grants, 'Researching Multilingually' and 'Translation and Translanguaging', as 'beacon' projects for the theme.<sup>3</sup>

1. For the Policy Report, see: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/towards-national-languages-strategy-education-and-skills/> (accessed 10 July 2020).

2. See Translating Cultures Theme: Final Report, Leila Kamali, Charles Forsdick, Hannah Dutton, September, 2019.

3. See <http://translatingcultures.org.uk/> (accessed 10 July 2020) for the description of the theme and the three large projects.

## 1. The disciplinary field of MLs

The first point is that MLs needs a better narrative: one that is easily understood and one that encourages greater public understanding of the subject area. This is a point that is made in the Worton 'Review of Modern Foreign Languages Provision in Higher Education in England' as far back as 2009.<sup>4</sup> It is not enough to say that MLs is simply a loose configuration that means different things to different people. Unless you have quite a strong sense of the subject as a disciplinary field (with its objects of study, its methodologies and its areas of application) then it becomes difficult to argue for the place that it should occupy within education and within society more generally.

This is not, of course, to say that a disciplinary field should be anything other than highly capacious, porous and in constant flux as – through one kind of research or another and through one kind of pedagogic practice or another – it comes into contact with other disciplinary configurations whether of a proximate or more distant character. It is, however, to say that the articulation of the intellectual rationale of Modern Languages, in terms that allow for the depth of its complexity while being robust and relatively easily understood, is necessary.

In the not so distant past, it would have been possible to speak about a strong disciplinary framework operating within MLs in that many courses were predicated on the study of the language and literature, for the most part, of a nation state. Such a model persists to an extent at a number of universities but the development of cultural studies over at least the last twenty years, the broadening of the range of disciplinary inquiry, the explosion of courses on film studies, history and cultural geography (among others) means that such a model, so far as it continues, has been under pressure for a lengthy period of time.

It would be very difficult to argue that this development within MLs is anything other than highly positive. Students derive enormous benefit from the range of courses that are now on offer and from the diversity of approach to which they are exposed. Yet, the range of individual courses does pose some questions. Though, without doubt, an extended range opens windows onto many areas of human experience, there is a risk that – unless it is strongly coordinated – it can prove confusing.

## 2. Problems of 'methodological nationalism'

The issue of making explicit the underlying structure that links apparently disparate modules belonging to the same degree course and that shows how a diversity of approach contributes to an integrated system of critical operations is no doubt one challenge that faces MLs. But a far greater challenge is how the study of the national – present at the core of many MLs subdisciplines – can be combined with the study of the transnational and how the framework of the disciplinary field as a whole can be more attuned to practices of human mobility and cultural exchange. If we draw too close a link between territory and culture, we imply that cultures are self-contained entities and, perhaps unwittingly, subscribe to rather than critique a number of nationalistic narratives.

4. For the Worton report in full, see: <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/329251/2/hereview-worton.pdf>



Further, if we are to address the urgent challenges of decolonising the curriculum, then it is imperative that we address the issues surround what Nina Glick Schiller and Andreas Wimmer have defined as methodological nationalism. Further, any model that insists on centre-periphery divide needs to be replaced with transnational models of teaching that focus on mobility.

Indeed, there are those who argue that Schools of Modern Languages should dispense altogether with the notion of national boundaries and offer courses that examine the development of culture in global terms, concentrating on the movement across time of people, practices and ideas as they have shaped the humanly constructed world and, crucially, as they have perpetuated inequalities that continue to haunt the present and – perhaps irreparably – to compromise the future. The argument is powerful and persuasive and it is beyond doubt that all courses within MLs should be able to address the interdependence of global pasts and futures.

One of the obstacles that MLs faces in constructing courses that follow an entirely de-territorialized model is that they are based on developing a linguistic and cultural competence in a given area, however carefully one attempts to demonstrate the historical, social and economic contingency of that area. A potential solution to the problem is not to sacrifice one of the features that distinguish MLs courses but to insist on the fact that inquiry into the tightness with which linguistic and cultural practices are woven together in determined spaces at specific moments in time is, primarily, a means of gaining an enhanced knowledge of the multiplicity of practices that obtain within a given area and how they are all indicative of forces that transcend any narrowly conceived notion of border. The global cannot be understood without a notion of the local or without an understanding of the tension between the national and the transnational.

### **3. Integration of language and culture**

It is important to stress that the integration of the study of language and culture gains in relevance the more one attempts to ensure that MLs courses are explicitly responsive to issues of global concern. It is immediately clear that if one studies cultural phenomena without due attention to the language in which they are encoded one risks embedding a form of language indifference at the very heart of one's inquiry. In this context, it is worth citing some of the points that were made in the policy report, 'TML: Reframing Language Education for a Global Future' presented at the British Academy in November 2018 and which accord very much with the work in which the four OWRI projects are engaged:

The perception that 'everyone speaks English' creates the notion of English as a 'neutral' lingua franca. This, in turn, promotes a view of the world in which linguistic and cultural differences are erased and everyone speaks the same language and shares the same culture.



Language learning is often seen as the acquisition of a set of skills and this suggests that languages can be learnt with little reference to the cultures of which they are part. Language learning needs instead to be seen as an intrinsic part of the development of cultural literacy – the understanding of the interaction of the cultural processes that surround us and which create the environments in which we live and work.

In order to counter ‘language indifference’ we need to make the work of language and of translation visible. And we need to stress that languages are not neutral but deeply connected to the cultural, political and economic dimensions of social life. We should pay attention to languages across our educational systems and in our everyday practices.

Creating a sustainable linguistic ecology entails an effort to make the rich diversity of linguistic and cultural capabilities already present in our societies visible and audible. It also means documenting the value of those capabilities as a resource for individuals and communities.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4. Providing the infrastructure for new models: the TML book series**

The magnitude of the issues affecting the need for curricular reform is such that the work of the bodies that are responsible for representing and leading MLs in promoting sustained engagement with all levels of education and in promoting initiatives that bring school and university teachers continually into dialogue is clearly more important than ever. It is also highly important to ensure that the work that has been accomplished through large publicly-funded initiatives is disseminated as effectively as possible within the sector. The resources that are currently being produced by the four OWRI projects are already proving essential in demonstrating, to take just one example, the centrality of multilingualism within contemporary societies.<sup>7</sup>

The types of resource that are currently being produced are, of course, extremely wide-ranging but the essential point is that they feed off one another, they lead to joint initiatives and they create extended possibilities for dialogue. By so doing, they provide support to enable the kind of far-reaching curriculum reform that it would be very difficult for a single institute to pursue on its own.

In this context, I would like to say one or two things about the book series with Liverpool University Press, ‘Transnational Modern Languages’. Though emerging from the AHRC’s ‘Translating Cultures’ theme, the series is a large joint enterprise that has been supported in a variety of ways by the BA, the IMLR, OWRI and the UCML. As a whole, it is intended to reflect on the intellectual rationale of MLs as a disciplinary field and to act as a point of reference and as a resource. The series is intended to respond to the questions raised above: how one can move beyond any reliance of the nation state as an organizing principle within MLs; how the study of the transnational incorporates the study of the national; how the study of language and culture needs always to be seen as inseparable; and how MLs study can foreground the coming together of methodological approaches in the study of languages & cultures in all their mobility and dynamism.

6. For the policy report in full, see: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/transnationalizing-modern-languages/> (accessed 30 June 2020).

7. For the resources made available through the four OWRI projects, see: <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/themes/owri/owri-resources/> (accessed 30 June 2020). On this point, see also the Salzburg Statement for a Multilingual World.

The blog posts on the series that have recently appeared on the LUP site are intended to give a good idea of the individual volumes and how they are anchored by the text *Transnational Modern Languages: A Handbook*.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, the series is intended to expand well beyond the publication of the initial batch of volumes, to encompass widening geographical areas and to include texts that demonstrate the relevance of MLs, as a mode of linguistic and cultural analysis, to current debates from inclusivity and diversity to decolonization or to environmental humanities.

By way of conclusion, it is worth saying that the series aims to pick up on the direction of travel within MLs and aims to show how that direction can be advanced while affirming all the while that there are, of course, many different approaches to a subject area that is, by its very nature, a vast field of inquiry. What the series does, however, very strongly suggest is that, at a time when MLs is not receiving the level of applications to its programmes that is commensurate with its importance, research and educational initiatives should be very closely associated and that there should be a proliferation of pedagogically oriented resources.



8. See the Liverpool University Press website: <https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/series/series-13275/>

# WHY DO WE NEED TO REVIEW THE MFL CURRICULUM?

**Marcela Cazzoli**

With the situation facing Modern Languages at national level, it is crucial to focus on a review of the curriculum that ensures an understanding of Modern Languages (MLs) as an integrated disciplinary field, with its own identity and underlying methodological framework. While an understanding of the field's intellectual and pragmatic engagement with global practices is key, any review of current teaching needs to place students' needs and expectations at the core, while safeguarding the opportunities that a degree in MLs can provide in terms of intercultural awareness and adaptability in a global context.

A process of curriculum review can only be transformative if it genuinely challenges existing methodologies. Expressions like 'curriculum review' or 'curriculum reform' are often used to refer to simple revisions to syllabi or assessment, but what we are going to describe in this section is the kind of review that highlights the need for a paradigm shift and ensuing cultural changes within a department. Because cultural changes have an impact on the programme but also on the people teaching on it, it is important to reassure staff that valuable intellectual and pedagogical practice will be preserved. This is a point that it is worth insisting upon though it can readily be anticipated. We have found that discussions that both encourage a combination of existing good practice together with a challenge to contexts and materials, and testing pedagogical justifications are crucial.



It is because of the need to ensure actual change that we felt that a paradigm shift within our School was needed, a process that we started by holding conversations in different fora (national conferences, work-in-progress sessions, departmental meetings, etc.) on the disciplinary identity of MLs and the implications of this understanding of the field for our programme and our students.<sup>1</sup> These conversations have been successful in that they have had a real impact on what we teach and how we do so. We have been able to initiate this change by:

- Signalling a departure from monolingual traditions and redefining the way in which MLs engages with the contemporary world;
- Supporting a MLs' representation of the world as 'trans': transnational, translinguistic, transcultural, and transtemporal, with practices and identities that ought to be expressed (and represented) in a fluid way;
- Challenging the narrow, instrumental view of language learning as the acquisition of functional skills in language-specific silos;
- Creating a coherent narrative that describes what we do at all levels in MLs, from research to teaching.

To ensure that the ongoing process of change does prove successful, we have established a set of principles on which to base our review of the curriculum:

- A coherent understanding of what it means to do MLs at university, its key questions and interests;
- The move from a national to a transnational paradigm, prompting staff and students to transgress a national and monolingual focus;<sup>2</sup>
- A common framework that highlights a unified approach, to be applied to the programme as a whole (both in cultural and language modules);
- A recognition (and celebration) of multilingualism in the curriculum, embedding ecological and ethnographic research across different languages and cultures;<sup>3</sup>
- Materials that are informed by different social and cultural perspectives and which builds on students' educational interests, experiences and aspirations.

1. See the Durham conferences: Our Uncommon Ground: Modern Languages and Cultures for the 21st Century, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/mlac/research/uncommonground/>; Where Are We Now? The Location of Modern Languages and Cultures <https://www.dur.ac.uk/mlac/research/conf2020/>.

2. This has been at the core of the four OWRI research projects: Creative Multilingualism; Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies; Cross-Language Dynamics: Reshaping Community; Language Acts and Worldmaking <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/themes/owri/>

3. Wells, N., Forsdick, C. et al (2019). 'Ethnography and Modern Languages', *Modern Languages Open*, 1, 1-16. <https://www.modernlanguagesopen.org/article/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.242/>

## Questions that are guiding our review of the curriculum:

### 1. What does it mean to do Modern Languages at university level?

*This area covers degrees in individual modern languages (often including the history, literature, culture, and politics), translation and interpreting, and linguistics (the science behind language and communication). <https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects/languages>*

Definitions like the one above are still quite common. It is rather disappointing to see that a degree in MLs is described in terms of 'individual' languages, even though the field has been moving beyond this model for a few years now. One of the reasons for this might be that degree programmes continue to be stuck within an outdated set of boundaries (geographic, linguistic, intellectual, etc.) which quantifies the learning outcomes of a MLs degree in terms of skill-based competencies.

Curriculum review can help encourage change. Our role as teachers and researchers is to show students that doing MLs at university level means engaging with world culture, developing critical and intercultural skills, and achieving the necessary competence to communicate successfully in target languages. Our role is also to ensure that our curriculum offers students opportunities that spring from an understanding of a field of study that does not separate the study of language from the study of culture.

In our particular case at Durham, conversations across language and subject boundaries have taken place in different settings but have been encouraged by the organisation of regular UK-based conferences and by projects that are part of the OWRI and Translating Cultures themes,<sup>4</sup> which have all had a major role in establishing a regular, productive exchange of ideas, to address issues facing the discipline nationally and globally.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. How can departments demonstrate a common framework and conceptual coherence in what they do?

Curricular reform is perhaps the best way to achieve this, as is a commitment to move past a silo mentality that sees language areas/departments/units as in some way in competition, the kind that no one benefits from. The only way to dissolve these structural linguistic boundaries is to work towards a coherent and trans-disciplinary model for MLs, i.e. to agree on a definition of it as a disciplinary field, with its object, methodology and relevance. It is as important for staff as it is for students to agree on what MLs is, and this understanding needs to be articulated in all inward and outward-facing documentation from the first year onwards.

4. AHRC Translating Cultures project <http://translatingcultures.org.uk>; OWRI projects <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/themes/owri/>

5. This is reflected on the evolution of the titles of our conferences, from 'Our Uncommon Ground' to 'Where are we now'.

Having an underlying sense of coherence and purpose that promotes an open view of the world makes the process of curriculum review easier and allows for a solid framework in which first-year teaching can be situated. Once this is established, it also becomes easier to explain the rationale behind modules later on in the degree. In addition to this, setting up an on-going induction programme for the first year is a useful way to steer students away from limiting views about MLs and expose them to the national and transnational topics they will encounter during their degree. For instance, in our induction programme, delivered to all first-year students in the School across terms one and two, we are focussing less on literature or cinema studies within particular language areas and more on how cinema and literature transcend nation-state boundaries and are essential media for the study of culture in transnational perspective.

From the point of view of curriculum reform, the reflection of a shared common framework means introducing the changes to module descriptions and syllabi that can ensure a coherence in the modules on offer, especially at first-year level. Crucially, courses should cover how language is being thought about: what the object of their area of study is, what the media that they are looking at are, and what kinds of methodological operations are being introduced.

### **3. What are the key questions that the Modern Languages' curriculum should address?**

Our experience in the process of curriculum review has highlighted the following key questions:

- Does the curriculum promote an awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity? Does it make an explicit move beyond the national standard of the relevant language so that hybrid, mixed, minority language norms and cultural products are core elements?
- Does the curriculum show a diversification and decolonization of the field? Is the curricular model facilitating an enquiry into Eurocentric modes of thought at the very core of the discipline?
- Does the curriculum articulate a vision where MLs students can learn to research inter- and cross-disciplinarily, cross-linguistically and cross-culturally?
- Is there an induction course that sets out the key, broad questions of how languages and cultures are part of the same continuum? Is MLs introduced in this induction as an intellectual discipline that offers a variety of ways to understand real world challenges?
- Do materials expose students to topics and discourses that can show a national (local) and a transnationally (globally) context?
- Is the review of the curriculum reflecting the latest research in the field, e.g. book series, articles, blogs, etc.? It is in this context that the resources that are emerging from publicly funded initiatives like Translating Cultures and OWRI become highly valuable.

#### **4. Have students' perspectives been considered? Has the cultural capital and economic benefit of a degree in Modern Languages been highlighted enough?**

The potential effects on students of the different degree pathways should be considered in a review of the curriculum so that particular skills, benefits and implications of a specific route can be highlighted from the beginning of the students' period of study. It is essential that, from the very first week, the induction and first-year courses focus on developing the knowledge and proficiency that students will be bringing in their individual languages from Sixth Form or its equivalent. At the same time, this transition period will inevitably mark a 'before & after' in their experience as students, as what they have learnt at school will have only been a preparation towards the more comprehensive and comparative approaches that they will encounter at various stages of the degree.

Students react well to a clearly articulated rationale of what they will be doing and how they will be pursuing their studies in their degree. It is important to communicate to them (in our teaching, in tutorials, in social events!) how the curriculum works, how the learning process is organised in stages, and what the relevant expectations and outcomes are. Equally, the value of a degree in MLs needs to be well articulated. We are all very aware of the (highly desirable) set of skills that the study of languages provides; however, we might wonder whether, as a disciplinary field, we are highlighting with sufficient clarity to students how the interdisciplinarity and interculturality of their MLs degree prepare them for future local and global challenges.

#### **5. Are language modules interacting with cultural modules and their materials?**

A review of the curriculum must take an honest look at the relationship between 'language' and 'content' courses and establish if it's working in a way that's beneficial for students. If polarisation is still an issue and there is evidence that language-learning skills are treated as separate from the development of cultural competence, it is time to promote changes (curriculum, materials, teacher training, etc.) so that an actual integration and interdependence between both areas can happen. The way we have addressed this issue at Durham is by setting up conversation opportunities between academic staff in language and cultural courses, so that both areas of expertise benefit from an integrated approach to teaching. So far, this dialogue has produced some very exciting developments: collaborative teaching projects, the recognition that translanguaging and transculturality are essential in linguistic and cultural analysis, and an appetite for cross-lingual, cross-cultural departmental modules that can act as the structural bones for our transnational curriculum. This kind of collaboration has the added benefit of helping students develop the terminology they need to manage cross-lingual and cross-cultural communication more efficiently in and out of the classroom.



## 6. How can departments capitalise on the linguistic and cultural diversity already present in the classroom and the community?

Language learning has historically focussed on immersion in the target language – to the detriment of students’ competence in other languages – and has aimed at achieving the closest possible version of the native standard. There has been criticism about this learner-centred approach in the relevant literature because, first, the language of study is only conceived in terms of its immediate achievement and, second, the emphasis on accuracy and ‘success’ doesn’t develop an appreciation for diversity, linguistic or cultural, given the emphasis on the national.<sup>6</sup>

Those of us working in MLs departments already have at our disposal a capital of linguistic and cultural diversity that we don’t emphasise enough: bilingual and multilingual staff and students having conversations in the corridors, an increasing number of heritage speakers in our classrooms, access to transnational spaces through the year abroad and cultural resources, just to mention a few. By virtue of living in the UK, we may also have multicultural and multilingual community on our doorstep.<sup>7</sup>

A curriculum that acknowledges the value of the community in the learning process can take students further and can help them appreciate the role of languages within and beyond the language classroom. Combining academic study with participation in research projects, social responsibility schemes, and outreach work will bring about a curiosity for the role of languages in people’s lives that will provide an important dimension to their MLs degree.



6. See Pountain, C. J. (2019) 'Modern Languages as an academic discipline: the linguistic component', *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 32:3, 244-260, DOI:10.1080/07908318.2019.1661153 and Corcoll López, C.(2019) 'Plurilingualism and using languages to learn languages: a sequential approach to deal effectively with language diversity', *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, DOI:10.1080/17501229.2019.1662423

7. A number of OWRI projects have been focusing on this, e.g. the Cross-Language Dynamics, Reshaping Community project <http://projects.alc.manchester.ac.uk/cross-language-dynamics/>, which includes the Multilingual Communities strand <http://mlm.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/owri/> and the Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies project <http://www.meits.org>

# APPROACHING CURRICULUM REFORM: SHAPING YOUR CHANGE <sup>1</sup>

**Rachael Langford and Liz-Wren Owens**

## **Shaping your change: Questions to ask**

Embarking on any major change in teaching can be an exciting experience, but also a daunting one, involving a change not only to practice but also to mindset. It asks us to think not just about what we do, but also to question why we do what we do, why we choose specific approaches and methodologies, and how we understand the discipline of Modern Languages in the contemporary world. A major change asks us to reflect on the value of what we offer. Major change requires a significant investment of time and energy for thinking through ideas, planning, and the development and implementation stages. It provides the opportunity for new modes of thinking to emerge and a new vision to be crafted. It requires the input, understanding and buy-in from a broad range of stakeholders who will shape and be shaped by the changes. The following set of questions may help you to shape your change, to think through key issues, to plan and to prepare. More context to some of the questions is given below, based on the experiences of curriculum change undertaken in Cardiff University.

- Why are you undertaking change? What needs are you trying to address?
- Are there cultural shifts needed before embarking on a programme of change?
- What are the principles that would underpin your curriculum review?
- How might you present this to senior leadership beyond the School/Faculty?
- Who are your stakeholders?
- What kinds of questions would you ask your student body?
- Who are the employers you could approach? What questions might you ask them?
- What is the cost/benefit analysis? What are the risks and challenges? How can you mitigate them?
- What is your timeline?
- What will a successful review look like?
- Will your change help you to prepare for the future landscape of teaching (including a move to more distance learning)?



## **Why are you undertaking change? What needs are you trying to address?**

Some key areas to think about here might include a lack of understanding about the discipline and the need to craft a better narrative about what we do and why we do it. This can be particularly important in relation to a challenging market for recruitment and a decline in Modern Languages uptake in schools. Change might be about (re)creating programmes that are legible and clear to students, stand out for quality, content and vision, and which speak to young people's world view. It might be about incorporating elements such as employability, internationalisation, sustainability and a combination of applied and theoretical knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> This work is based on presentations by Prof. Rachael Langford & Dr Liz Wren-Owens prepared for the symposium '(Re)Creating Modern Languages: Conversations about the Curriculum in UK Higher Education'. The symposium was organized for March 19-20, 2020 at the University of Oxford but was cancelled due to COVID 19. Presentations were shared among delegates in an asynchronous online platform.

Change might also be driven by the desire to respond to the work of the BA, AHRC, UCML and the subject associations and to align with the work undertaken in secondary schools. Staff wellbeing can be a driver for change, looking to balance workloads and create time for research and scholarship.

Being clear about the drivers for change at the beginning of the process and referencing them throughout can help to scaffold the proposed changes.

### **Are there cultural shifts needed before embarking a programme of change?**

Often having a critical core of colleagues who have the skills and/or enthusiasm to deliver the change can help the process. Is there a need for colleagues to re-skill in certain areas? Are new appointments needed to support the change? Are colleagues prepared to think innovatively?

Change could be about bringing out the importance of what you do rather than creating a new model.

### **What are the principles that would underpin your curriculum review?**

A clear vision is key for successfully implementing change.

There are specifics to Modern Languages teaching and learning that make it exceptional within university contexts – a skills-based as well as theoretical discipline, with a compulsory period of immersion in a country or countries where the languages are spoken– so there is a need to craft a curriculum that works for Modern Languages and that challenges specific narratives ‘out there’ about the discipline, providing a coherent understanding of what it means to do Modern Languages at university.

Principles may include the need to develop a common framework and unified approach across languages within a school.

Principles might address the connectivity between language and culture, the approach to culture (e.g.a transnational approach / the idea of linguists as experts in inter-/trans-cultural understanding), making certain elements of what we do more explicit (such as translation), or making the methodologies (the set of critical operations) behind teaching clearer.

It could be helpful to think about what graduate attributes we are aiming towards, and plan how to develop them from the first year. How could skills training and/or employability be embedded into teaching? It may be useful to think about the conceptual coherence in what we do and make the links between different elements of the curriculum more explicit in a clear learning arc.

The need to embed inclusivity and diversity may be an important principle.

## **How might you present this to senior leadership beyond the School?**

Communicating the change to senior university management (in ways that are understandable to non-linguists as well) can provide an opportunity to emphasize how the change aligns to university goals and priorities.

## **Who are your stakeholders?**

Major change will require input and support from a range of stakeholders. These may include for example colleagues, students, senior management in the university, partners in other departments in the university where joint honours programmes operate, employers and third sector organizations.

What role will they play in bringing about your change?

What does it mean to engage with them? And once the vision is set, how will you ensure that engagement is not confused with consultation?

## **What kinds of questions would you ask your student body?**

Most major change requires student consultation. The rationale for any change should be clear from the students' perspective and help them understand the cultural capital and economic benefit of a degree in Modern Languages. It is worth reflecting on what kinds of questions you might ask, and which parts of the student body you would target and when (for example what would be the implications consulting with final year students in the run-up to National Student Survey on a new model for teaching that they will not be part of?). At what point in the process of thinking through change do you want to consult with students? At an early stage (when they have agency to shape thinking), when you have more solid proposals (that they can feed back on), or both? How will you use their feedback?

## **Who are the employers you could approach? What questions might you ask them?**

If employability is going to be a significant element of your change, could you engage with employers about the kinds of skills they are looking for in graduates? Are there local employers (e.g. Chambers of Commerce) you could approach, or would a national perspective be more useful? What information do you need?



## **What is the cost/benefit analysis? What are the risks and challenges? How can you mitigate them?**

Effecting major change can bring long-term benefits to workloads, student experience, recruitment and so forth. However, in the short-term it can pose significant challenges: workload whilst delivering one curriculum and planning/ preparing for another; resistance to new ways of thinking with the school and limited buy-in; potential risks to recruitment. Mitigating these challenges can require a significant investment of time and energy. Are there strategies that could be useful in helping colleagues to take ownership of the vision, such as devolved leadership or workshops with high-profile research leaders from across disciplinary areas? Is this an opportunity to further career development for colleagues who have not held leadership roles and could be entrusted to lead on specific areas?

## **What is your timeline?**

Embarking on a programme of major change can require a significant investment of time. As an example, when we introduced major changes to our curriculum at Cardiff, our timeline spanned several years:

- [2010-2015: cultural changes within the school]
- 2015-16: size and shape review; engagement with stakeholders; developing a vision for the new curriculum
- 2016-17: building buy-in; detailed planning and development of the new teaching; re-writing programme descriptions for UCAS and coursefinder
- 2017-18: new teaching rolled out for year 1; review of new teaching (and revising where necessary)
- 2018-19: new teaching rolled out for years 2 and final year; ongoing review and revision



## **What will a successful review look like?**

Once you have your vision for change, it is helpful to think what your measures of success will be. Change is an ongoing, dynamic practice, but it may be useful to plan how you will measure the success of your project.

## **Will your change help you to prepare for the future landscape of teaching (including a move to more distance learning)?**

The face of higher education is constantly evolving, and any changes will need to be responsive to the demands of the moment. Will your change make your teaching more nimble and agile?

Undergoing a significant process of change requires the support of staff and senior management and the rationale and benefits need to be clear to students. If all have some input into shaping the change, this shared ownership will help it to be embedded into ways of thinking and working.

# INNOVATIVE APPROACHES: MODERN LANGUAGES BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

## WORKING WITH SCHOOLS: THE STUDENT TEACHING MODULE

**Liz Wren-Owens**

### **What is the student teaching module?**

The module is a credit-bearing option for final year MFL students (30 credits over 2 semesters). Students undertake a mentored teaching placement in a regional school, and participate in lectures on pedagogy and workshops on teaching practice at Cardiff University. These are run by academic staff at the university and by lead teachers from the regional education consortia. Students have a mentor in the host school, and a language mentor in the university to help them prepare teaching materials.

### **What do students do in the host school?**

Students spend at least 30 hours in the host school. This is split between lesson observations, supporting teaching in the classroom, and delivering new teaching resources that they have designed for their classes.

Students also organise and deliver a 'Languages Discovery Day' in Cardiff University for year 8/9 pupils, to encourage the uptake of languages at GCSE.

### **How are students assessed?**

Students are assessed through:

- A lesson observation report
- A pedagogical literature review
- A presentation at the Languages Discovery Day and an evaluation report
- 3 new language resources which they produce and an evaluation report
- A reflective essay

### **Why did we start the module?**

The initial impetus for the module was a request by a local school which needed extra support with language provision. It was popular, and we saw the potential in the project, and so it grew and grew across languages and with an increasing number of partner schools.



### **What works well?**

The module enhances student experience – it offers a different way of engaging with language, and fosters great employability skills both for those looking to a career in teaching and more broadly in the other soft employability skills it develops, such as communication, workplace practice, organization and time management. In addition, the Languages Discovery Day is organized by an events team drawn from the students on the module.

The module is part of our mission to support languages uptake in Wales at a time of significant decline. Since 2002, entries for modern foreign languages in Wales have declined by 57%. The decline has particularly affected German and French, with entries for German now at just 29% of the 2002 level, and entries for French at 36% of the number of candidates in 2002, see <https://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/language-trends-wales>). The students work to promote languages in their host school, and also in the Languages Discovery Day.

The module promotes widening participation. By bringing university students into schools, we hope to make university more accessible to pupils from a non-traditional background.

'The light bulb moment': every year students come into their university seminars bursting to tell me about an experience they have had in their school, where they have managed to reach a pupil who has struggled to understand something. The joy of our students (and presumably the pupils) makes it worthwhile just for this.





Feedback from students and partner schools is overwhelmingly positive. In a letter to the VC, the Headteacher of our first partner school (a comprehensive with a mixed social demographic) wrote:

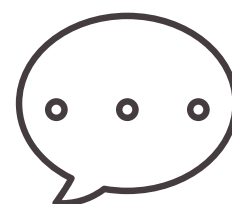
'From the School's perspective, the programme has been an excellent success as it encourages pupils at all ages to engage more proactively with a MFL and network with students who are nearer school pupils age and could share ideas and interests. One of the outcomes has been to encourage greater uptake. The impact at KS3 has resulted in significantly improved achieved levels from pupils' (Mrs Susan Gwyer-Roberts, Headteacher at Caldicot School, 4/7/13).

We have a range of partner schools, and Cathedral School (an independent school) wrote:

'We were, in my opinion, exceptionally fortunate to have enjoyed the presence of two students from Cardiff University. Their attitude was exemplary, always giving more than was required - to the extent of coaching our German debating team! It was extremely helpful, particularly for our AS set to be able to talk in German with people who were closer to their own ages. I cannot recommend this scheme strongly enough' (Simon Lovell-Jones, Cathedral School Llandaff, June 2014).

A selection of comments from students who have taken the module:

- 'A lot more satisfying than any of the other modules I've had' (Charlie Pettit)
- 'The whole experience has changed what I wanted to do in the future...it's a challenge I'm so glad I took on' (Ffion Thomas)
- 'It's definitely inspired me to go into teaching' (Anna Tindall)
- 'It's a brilliant module' (Rachel Wilcox)



### **What do I know now that I wish I'd known before?**

#### Time

Setting the module up takes far more time than I imagined it would. This is especially true of the first few iterations, where the process is new to schools and to students. Getting sign-off from schools needs to go through several layers of management, and schools are already very busy. The allocation of student places can be complex. A long lead-in is needed, to manage elements such as DBS checks for students.

#### The need to set out a really clear agreement with the schools

It helps to have a clear fact sheet for schools, outlining the aims of what the module is trying to achieve, what is expected from schools, timelines, benefits to the school (see appendix). This should be aimed at teachers, but be relevant and accessible for governors and/or parents. The university may require formal documentation, if the school is a collaborative partner.

## The importance of a selection process

It's very important that students are completely committed to the module. It's a different way of working, and may require more time than other modules (or for the time to be managed differently). Missing a session where a teacher is expecting you to turn up is very different from missing a lecture. It was helpful to have a selection process, to identify students who were committed. A simple process such as asking for a letter explaining why a student wants to take the module can suffice – the question of whether the student takes the time to write a (good) letter can be indicative in itself. Usually half to one third of the students who pre-select the module go on to write the formal application. It can be tricky to match students to schools – there may be lots of French students applying, but lots of schools looking for Spanish students. The selection process can also be useful in ensuring the module is accessible to students with additional needs (e.g. placing students with mobility issues in a school closest to the university).

## Financial cost

The module is expensive to run. We pay students' travel expenses to schools, the fee for DBS checks, and allocate a budget for organizing the Languages Discovery Day.



## Who marks the work?

I have struggled to find the right balance in assessment. Students (understandably) want to be assessed on the practical element of their teaching as well as their engagement with pedagogical theory, but it can be tricky to devolve marking to schools, as there can be different interpretations of marking criteria. If schools do not make recordings of the teaching sessions which are assessed, it cannot always be moderated/second marked. If work is all theoretical, students who do not engage well with their schools can gain an unfairly high mark, and schools can feel students are not invested in the school. I am experimenting with including teacher commentaries as part of the documentation included when students submit their learning resources to ensure teachers have a voice in the process and that students are aware that their overall contribution is evaluated.

## Back-up plans

If a student doesn't engage with the module, and does not complete the placement, it can be tricky to manage re-assessment.

If you would like more information, please contact Liz Wren-Owens (wren-owensEA@cardiff.ac.uk )

# Sample Guide for Schools

## Overview

The Student Teaching Scheme engages two sets of inter-linked learners: final year Modern Languages students at Cardiff University and secondary-school pupils learning foreign languages in regional schools. The University students receive practical and theoretical pedagogical training by University staff and external teaching experts, then gain mentored teaching experience in the local schools. They observe teaching by professionals, and take part in classroom activities and generate new learning materials in the target language for which they are taking the module, deepening their understanding of the target language.

## Practicalities

Over 2 semesters (October half-term to Easter) students spend 30 hours in the host school (if both student and school wish to carry out additional hours, this can be agreed amongst themselves).

The 30 hours contact time in the host school usually comprises:

- 3 hours of students observing lessons being taught by teachers
- Approximately 24 hours of teaching support
- 3 hours (or parts of hours) in which students can deliver lessons/ activities based on their newly generated learning resources

The 14 hours of teaching support will depend on the learning environment. In schools with large classes, this might include helping individual pupils to complete a task, help with group work, talking with pupils in the target language to develop oracy skills, working with a small group whilst the teacher continues with another activity. In smaller classes (or at A level) this might involve one-one-one tailored support for pupils. In some schools this might take the shape of running extra-curricular clubs (in which case the hours devoted to this might be higher, especially if they are team-delivered).

Students are assessed by the University on lessons observations, a pedagogical literature review, three newly-designed learning resources, an analytical essay, and their contribution to a study day held at the University.

The 3 new learning resources support classroom activities of the classes they are involved with. These resources should be appropriate to the level of the students, and the material they are covering. They should be produced in consultation with the teacher, and the language mentor at the University.

The students will host a study day at the University for pupils involved in the module. This will take place on February 8th 2019, and is designed to support the uptake of MFL for year 8/9 pupils.

## Contacts

University course convenor: Dr Liz Wren-Owens (wren-owensEA@cardiff.ac.uk )

## **What you can expect from students:**

- To punctually adhere to the timetable agreed with the host school, including observed lessons, teaching support sessions and student-led sessions
- To behave in a professional manner in the classroom (e.g. appropriate dress and manner of speaking, not using mobile phones in class)
- To communicate any absences to the school as soon as possible
- To liaise with the school and university convenors to ensure progress is being made
- All students are DBS checked by the University before taking up a placement

## **What we ask of schools (in schools hosting a small number of students, the convenor and mentor would be the same person):**

### School convenor

- To oversee the student experience in the School
- To organise timetables where the students can attend classes (at least 30 hours)
- To respond to general student queries, through the provision of a brief weekly session where the convenor is available for consultation, and through timely responses to email enquiries
- To familiarise students with the relevant level indicators and assessment criteria for the relevant Key Stages
- To ensure that teaching colleagues are aware of the assessment criteria for students
- To liaise with teaching staff to organise timeslots where students can use the learning materials they have prepared, and to ensure teaching colleagues have all necessary equipment

### School language teaching mentor

- To allow students to attend their classes to observe teaching practices
- To allow students to produce teaching materials to be used in one (or more) of their classes
- To discuss with students what kind of materials would be best suited to the level of the class and the topics being covered
- To provide a supportive atmosphere in which students can deliver their teaching materials and presentation
- To negotiate levels of student autonomy in the classroom

A more detailed breakdown of the scheme is available in the student course kit, which can be supplied to all teachers involved in the scheme.



# LINGUISTS INTO SCHOOLS: LEARNING TO TEACH AND TEACHING TO LEARN

**Amanda Deacon**



## What is Linguists into Schools?

Linguists into schools (LiS) is the title for 3 optional credit-bearing modules, offered to undergraduates in their second or final year in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies (LCS) at the University of Leeds. The modules form part of a larger university-wide Students into Schools (SiS) programme, which operates across West Yorkshire to help raise the aspirations and attainment of young people, and to give Leeds students the opportunity to develop skills in an educational setting. Approximately 400 undergraduates and postgraduates (taught and research) take part annually, assisting in over 70 schools and colleges to deliver and support a range of educational interventions tailored to the needs of each school.

On all SiS modules students undertake a 30-35 hour placement in a local school combined with completing academic assessments for credit. A full training programme is offered, both specific to the teaching and learning of the discipline but also generic workshops on classroom management, safeguarding, lesson planning etc. On placement, students are attached to a Link teacher.

From 2020-2021, all other disciplines, apart from Linguists into Schools, will be merged into a faculty module. In the School of Languages, we have kept our distinct identity in order to maintain the assessment in the target language, which, we feel, is a vital part of the student experience when considering teaching languages as a career.

## The modules

The LiS modules are currently offered in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Portuguese. We have, in the past, also placed a student for Arabic.

At the university, students are supported by the module leader and a target language tutor.

The specific training for LiS begins in registration week with a two-day intensive “Boot camp” which allows students to meet each other and their module leader and target language tutors, to understand the requirements of the modules and the assessment regime. Workshops in planning activities in different skills, teaching in the target language, introducing new vocabulary and reflective writing, led by the module leader and target language tutors, are interspersed with talks from teacher training agencies and guest speakers.

During the year, in addition to the SiS training mentioned above, further LiS sessions are available. In semester 1, these include those led by the target language tutor and workshops facilitated by practising teachers, often alumni from the modules or our PGCE programme. In semester 2, we focus on preparing the students for assessment with further sessions on reflective writing and lesson or activity planning. A final workshop serves as point of reflection, where we guide the students to turn their experiences into what we refer to as “CV gold” and to express what they have learnt as tangible evidence of their skills for PGCE or job applications, CVs and personal statement

## What did we do?

We did not have to set the modules up from scratch. These modules developed from a light touch 10 credit volunteering option assessed in English to their current form.

The modules serve several functions:

For the students:

- to offer an opportunity to gain experience of teaching
- to facilitate career and/or year abroad decisions
- to provide opportunities to develop and, more importantly, to evidence so called “soft skills,” relevant to graduate employment in any field.

We also consider it a positive outcome if a student decides, as a result of their experience on one of these modules, not to enter the teaching profession. The modules, in this way, serve as a stepping-stone in the decision-making process. Many find this helps them also decide if they wish to apply for a British Council assistantship for their year abroad.

For the Schools:

- to raise aspirations in schools in underprivileged areas
- to support departments where funding for assistants has been cut
- to encourage pupils to continue language study at the next level
- to serve the wider community and support language teachers in the region.

Students are encouraged to invite their pupils to campus and to be involved in the numerous outreach programmes organised by our Educational Engagement team. This involvement can count towards their placement hours.



For the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies at Leeds:

- to foster closer links with the local school teaching community
- to facilitate co-creation with students as colleagues in a Community of Practice of language tutors

Initially, to deal with students' issues with fulfilling the 30-35 hour placement requirement and to address the late start of some placements, we introduced the idea of students working alongside university tutors as part of our institution wide Languages for All provision or in degree programme ab-intio classes.

We now intend to develop this as a formal part of the module experience and thus create a Community of Practice where students become colleagues as well as learners.



### **What worked well?**

When the placements work out, the students are proactive and the school MFL Department welcoming, everyone wins! Students engage with the whole experience, both practical and academic. They develop numerous important skills and they have access to a detailed reference from both a university tutor and/or a school link teacher for a PGCE and a have a much more varied experience than they would have had by simply taking campus-based modules. They also gain an insight into what it means to work and to teach. Schools benefit from an extra pair of hands, a person more at the age of the students who can develop materials which are motivating and current. For some lesser-taught languages our students are the sole means of language teaching in that language available. They offer lunchtime or after-school clubs and support the teaching of community or heritage languages. Previously, this was also true for placements in the primary sector but we are now encouraging those who are interested in primary teaching to follow the generic faculty module route as in languages we will now only offer placements in the secondary sector.

### **What do you wish you had known at the start?**

As the placements are organised by our SiS administrative team I am, in some ways, protected from the difficulties of managing these directly with schools. However, on another level, I am also distanced from communicating with MFL departments when difficulties arise and can get involved in complex issues where a student approaches me but we have to pass everything through the official channels. From next year, as our modules will be discrete, we will be able to organise events specifically for MFL Link teachers and hopefully a common understanding of the module aims will be easier to communicate.



## The main ongoing problems:

### 1. Delayed placement starts

This is one of the biggest headaches. Many schools are part of large consortiums and it takes a while for information to filter down from the managerial level to the individual classroom teacher who needs to welcome our students. On occasion, for a variety of reasons, the start of the placements can be delayed until late in semester 1. This causes immense dissatisfaction amongst the students who are raring to go, have had the initial actual training but are kicking their heels on campus, waiting for an official invitation to visit the school or to have contact with pupils.

### 2. Disparity of experience.

Some students are on placement from October and are treated from day one as a colleague. In other schools, the MFL department puts them, understandably, at the bottom of the pile after language assistants and PGCE trainees. Despite clear documentation, in the form of a link teacher handbook, which can be made available for interested colleagues, some link teachers do not grasp that these modules are credit bearing and that students must, therefore, have the opportunity to create and try out materials.

### 3. Autonomy versus "left to their own devices."

When students have a degree of autonomy and can try out their own ideas this can be beneficial for all parties: the students because they make resources, the pupils, because they are exposed to something new, off-the-beaten path of the normal curriculum. Students are often able to introduce more interesting cultural aspects from their own experience or studies, and they are more aware than teachers of the youth scene in their target countries and cultures. The schoolteachers may find the new resources are ones they will use, themselves, in future years. However, where the language is not formally taught our students have sometimes been left running a school club with little support or guidance. This can be daunting. They have to deal not only with the new challenges of teaching but of behaviour management and erratic attendance in what is seen by the school pupils as extra curricular and not serious.



### 4. Student language competence

We feel that "s/he who teaches learns" and so in most cases students realise their weaknesses or lack of accuracy when they have to explain something to someone else. However, occasionally, students do not make this effort and produce materials which contain a worrying level of inaccuracies.

### 5. Time consuming selection of successful applicants.

We find that other than those who write too little or have not taken the time to proof their application form, the only way we can choose between candidates is in the section where we ask them to outline their reasons for wanting to take the modules. We prioritise those who recognise that this involves considering not only their own gains but also those of the schools, the pupils and the future of language learning and teaching.

### 6. Reading list

It is a challenge each year to keep our reading lists up to date as none of the tutors are, currently, involved in teacher education programmes.

## Top tips

### Application procedure

- We advertise the modules at subject area level and then invite students to a school wide compulsory briefing. At this meeting, this year held online, we set out the administrative details (application, DBS, etc.) and the highs as well as the challenges. The key message is “not for the faint-hearted”. We also invite module alumni who speak about their experiences.
- Students apply and we have a strict deadline. Applications are only accepted from those who attended the meeting or who arranged to see the module leader on another date. We find a significant (and welcome) drop off in numbers from the initial briefing to the number who finally apply.
- Students must have 2 references and the university one is always followed up. Admin staff check the overall attendance of the student from the start of their degree at Leeds.

### University tutors

- It really helps when tutors who are involved have had some experience of teaching in a school or have school age children. As the workload accorded to the target language support tutors is minimal, it is crucial that they are not assigned simply because they have a “gap” in their allocation but rather that they have an active interest in such modules and the future of language teaching and learning. This could be a problem that colleagues may need to address when setting up such a scheme.

## In conclusion.

I now approach my 15th year of leading these modules and expect in 2021-2022 to hand over to a younger colleague. I have found the experience a welcome continuation to my work on the PGCE in MFL in the School of Education here at Leeds. It is a complex programme to lead, involving many players, and not for the faint-hearted but certainly extremely rewarding when one meets young people who have progressed through our modules to a PGCE and are now in promoted posts in MFL departments regionally and nationally.

## Some emails from students

"Thought I'd let you know that I managed to get a graduate job as a paralegal- and surprisingly much of the interview focused around my teaching experience rather than anything else- so thanks for the last (..Enterprise...) workshop, it was invaluable." LiS 2015 currently a paralegal.

"I wouldn't be here (in current post) without Linguists into Schools so a huge thank you for all the support and encouragement over the past 4 years." LiS 2011 & PGCE 2014 now in management in a regional school .

"My year abroad went really well..... I was an assistant teacher .....Thank you for running the LiS module, . The skills and experience I gained from it were really helpful and I would have felt much less at ease if I hadn't done the module, so thanks." LiS 2014.

"Invaluable preparation for PGCE and I felt more prepared for the PGCE interview because of the last [employability] workshop." Module review 2018

"Essential personal development for life post- university." Module review 2019



# TEACHING INSIDE OUT: REWARDS (AND RISKS) OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

**Joey Whitfield**

Inside Out is a form of teaching in which a University module is delivered in a prison to a mixed class of undergraduates and imprisoned learners. It utilises transformative pedagogical techniques to bring both groups of learners together in an environment which is challenging and ultimately rewarding for both 'inside' and 'outside' students. The Inside Out movement began in the USA in the late 1990s, its founders inspired by both Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and also by Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School, who were key players in the Civil Rights Movement. In Cardiff I set up an Inside Out module called 'Crime and Social Justice in Global Perspective' to be delivered inside HMP Cardiff.

The content of 'Crime and Social Justice in Global Perspective' could be described as 'comparative cultural criminology'. I teach different topics to do with crime and social justice using examples and sources from the UK, the USA, Latin America (my area of expertise) and sometimes other countries like New Zealand. The structure is flexible and I usually have some guest lecturers from Law and Criminology deliver individual sessions. The module is made available as a pathway to undergraduate students who had chosen my research-led module Crime and Punishment in Contemporary Latin American Culture. The inside students are recruited by the Education Learning and Skills Department in the prison.

The method of delivering Inside Out teaching is necessarily different to the usual lecture/seminar format of 'content' modules Modern Language teaching. Because the two groups of learners are bringing very different experiences to the classroom and different levels of formal educational attainment, it is not possible to simply deliver a standard lecture. Instead classes are delivered through experiential learning exercises which place the students in the position of active learners. For example, in a class on restorative justice, I gave the students readings about theories and of the use of restorative justice in indigenous and Zapatista communities in Mexico as well as with Maori people in New Zealand. We discussed the readings briefly but the majority of the time was spent doing an elaborately prepared restorative justice role-play which we analysed to finish off the lesson. Experiential learning draws on the different life experiences of both sets of learners, bringing them together into a productive synthesis.

A vital part of teaching effectively in this way is to spend a lot of time cultivating a learning community, building trust between the students and creating an environment in which everybody feels comfortable expressing themselves intellectually. In order to create positive learning community attention is paid to even very minor details: classes are always delivered with students sitting in a circle, for example, time is spent co-creating clear guidelines about how everybody, students and teachers should behave. The facilitator needs to set very firm boundaries and to be very mindful of the mood and emotions in the room and to guide the latter through the use of short games, trust exercises, or breaks if things are getting too intense. Assessment is also designed to enhance the transformative goals of the course. 20% of the grade is based on journal entries in which students reflect on the different classes, 40% is based on a group project and 40% on a reflective essay which considers the experience of taking the course overall.

## Why?

My personal motivation for teaching an Inside Out course goes back to my doctoral research on prisons. I heard about Inside Out at a prison conference and resolved that if I ever got the opportunity to take the Inside Out training course in the United States I would definitely take it. It is clear that there are numerous benefits to teaching Inside Out courses to both universities and prisons. For me, it is about treating education less as a programme for the accumulation of social capital in the form of grades or degree certificates, and rather as tool for political and social consciousness raising. The feedback I've had from both outside and inside students on these courses indicates that it is highly transformative for both groups, building confidence for both, expanding the horizons of both. It is a form of teaching that metaphorically breaks down the walls that divide different sectors of society. Inside Out teaching also transforms the university by expanding the people it can impact through education. It forms part of the University's 'Civic Mission'.

## The benefits of Inside Out teaching include:

- Education – opportunity to learn alongside learners from different backgrounds and for Inside students to experience university education
- Transformation -- transformative model of education encourages the discussion of complex social problems in the context of finding solutions and making positive change, both individually and at a societal level
- Release preparation – encourages respectful dialogue even in the presence of conflict, allows inside students to interact with students outside, breaking down preconceptions etc.
- Motivation – motivates improvement in reading, writing and research skills, improves self confidence
- Teamwork and an ability to reflect on the development of interpersonal/teamwork skills.
- Experience of giving presentations and to communicate ideas and arguments in spoken form
- Sensitivity to the values and interests of others and the dimensions of difference
- Knowledge and critical understanding of debates relating to justice in global perspective
- Identification, use and application of criminological and cultural theory



There have also been benefits for me professionally. Although Inside Out is not itself research, thanks to connections I have made through teaching Inside Out in prisons in the UK and with academics in Latin America I have been successful in winning grants to do further projects in HMP Cardiff and in other prisons in Wales and in Mexico.

## **What worked well?**

Teaching Inside Out is the most rewarding thing I have done professionally. The following extracts from reflective essays indicate the extent to which it has been successful for both groups of students:

'I have found this experience to be truly extraordinary, eye opening and beneficial for helping me grow both as a student and as a person...Through discussion with people I would be unlikely to encounter in my everyday life, let alone enter into academic discussion with, I have had all of my assumptions questioned. I feel I have been part of a highly engaged group who have made me feel respected, listened to and valued.'

'For me, this [the gender class] was the class that most challenged my beliefs and preconceptions about the topic in question. I felt quite tired after class, it was really frustrating to talk so in-depth about a topic and still come out with more questions than answers.'

'The Inside Out programme is an experience like no other. I have learnt so much and really expanded my understanding of the people around me.'

'When we were in the classroom, I did not feel as though I was in a prison. It just felt like an engaging university class in which some of the participants were older than the rest of us. In fact, in the following sessions, I began to notice that the inside students were arguably more engaged than the outside students. They strived to do well on the course and absorbed the content week in, week out. They had opinions on every discussion posed to us and always had extracts from the readings which they had found useful.'

'I never thought going to prison would be something I would look forward to every week.'

'In my mind crime and punishment are indisputably linked, but why? I had spent my 22 years never questioning this. Why did I believe crime meant punishment? Why not resolution, justice or restoration in certain instances?'

'The sessions have boosted my passion and commitment to trying to help individuals in the future.'

'The way the Crime and Social Justice course unfolds allows the 'Inside' students particularly, to reflect on issues of crime and justice which may have personally reflected on them and their loved ones [means] it could even form part of the rehabilitative process.'

'Through engaging in courses such as 'Inside Out', we can examine not only the sociological causes of criminal behaviour, but also both rediscover and embrace the essential goodness of our humanity.'

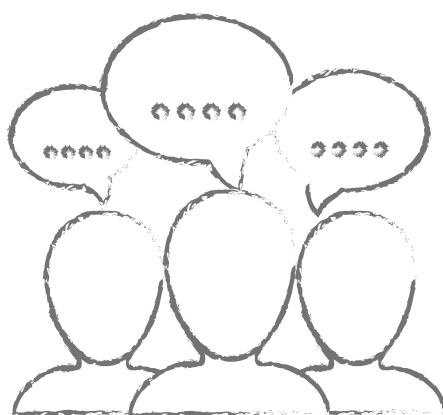
## Obstacles

One problem I've had has been attempting to get Cardiff University to give university credits to the imprisoned learners. This has turned out to be a very difficult bureaucratic process which has been going on now for nearly two years without resolution. I don't know what I should have done differently because I still haven't actually managed to achieve the goal.

## Advice

Seeing the students grow in confidence and engagement over the 10 weeks of the IO course is extremely rewarding. The intensity of engagement achieved by teaching in an environment like a prison cannot easily be replicated in the ordinary classroom, but I have used elements IO, especially experiential learning, in other teaching. What I've learned is not only the importance of planning and attention to detail in designing engaging activities but also the crucial importance of relationship building both between the students and between them and myself.

My use of experiential learning exercises in ordinary seminars has not always been a success, and in fact has got me into hot water on one or two occasions. Experiential learning calls on students to engage not only intellectually, but also emotionally with course themes. Inside Out teaching creates well-boundaried atmosphere of trust and engagement and invests time in making students feel safe and 'held'. Where I have got into trouble has been when I have sprung emotionally challenging exercises on groups in large co-taught modules where I didn't know students well and trust had not been built. This occasionally led to some students behaving immaturely and others getting upset.





## THE 3 LANGUAGE DEGREE AT BANGOR UNIVERSITY

**David Miranda-Barreiro**

### **Description of the programme**

The 3 Language Degree has been running at Bangor since 1996, when it started combining any three of French, German, Italian and Russian. A few years later, Russian was stopped, and Spanish was introduced in 1999. More recently, Chinese was also incorporated in 2017.

Students can choose to study three of these languages (Chinese, French, German, Italian and Spanish) from year 1 (we advise to take one Beginners language only), following two possible paths:

a) Three major languages (with the exception of Chinese):

For the 3 Major combination, students begin their placements in Semester 2 of their Second Year and spend three consecutive semesters abroad.

Most of the credits are taken up by language modules. In Year 1, students take 40 credits per language. In Year 2, they take 20 credits per language in Semester 1, and they do their final exams in December, before leaving for their first placement in January. During their Year Abroad, they have to complete a '3 Language Project' in each of the languages (20 credits each). The assignment for each project is different, choosing from an extended translation, a dissertation and a long presentation. In Year 4, the students take again 40 credits per language module.

b) Two major languages plus a minor language (Chinese can only be taken as a major language in this combination, and not as part of a 3-Major degree):

For the 2 Major and 1 Minor combination, students spend two semesters abroad in their third year (although we advise them to also spend some time in the country of their minor language, for example a summer placement).

In Year 1 and Year 2, they take 40 credits per language module. In Year 4, the 2 Major languages are worth 40 credits and the Minor language 20 credits. For the remaining 20 credits, the students have to write a project assignment (10 credits) in each of the Major languages, choosing from a presentation and a short dissertation (the type of assignment has to be different for each language).

3 Language students (also called 'Triplists') focus mostly on developing their language skills (translation, essay writing, video and aural comprehension, conversation). The programme is very demanding and requires a great deal of organisation and commitment on the part of the students. In order to ease the students' workload, their assignments are staggered to avoid 'bottlenecks'. It is crucial that the different language sections work together when scheduling assignments and exams to avoid having several deadlines on the same or close dates.

The programme has been quite popular since its introduction. Many of the students who have taken it are excellent linguists who have achieved a high level of fluency in all three languages. It is especially suited for students who have prior knowledge of two languages, although some students who have started two languages from scratch have also achieved excellent results.

## Challenges

a) Given its almost sole focus on language, there has been an increasing number of students who start a 3 Language Degree to avoid taking cultural modules owing to their lack of interest in literature, history, cinema, etc. This has created some organisational and educational challenges:

Some of these students struggle to learn 3 languages from Year 1, with some poor results in their weakest languages. In some cases, they decide to drop one language at the end of Year 1 but have not taken any cultural modules and therefore are lacking in essay writing and critical analysis skills, which can be detrimental in Year 2, although this is not always the case. The feedback provided to these students on essay writing and academic skills in Semester 1 modules is of vital importance to ensure that they can achieve good results in Year 2.

In other cases, students decide to drop one language in Semester 1 of Year 2, and therefore there are adjustments that have to be put in place in terms of their module choices to make up for their missing credits in their remaining languages, which means that they have to take 40 extra credits in Semester 2 (20 per language). In some extreme cases (not common), some students have decided to drop a language during their Year Abroad, which has created a more complex situation and has required creative solutions to ensure that they fully switch to a Joint Honours degree before the end of Year 2.

The role of Personal Tutors is key to avoid some of the unwanted situations described above, by identifying students who might struggle to study 3 languages in Year 2, and advise to drop one by the end of Year 1.

Academic support in Year 2 is also greatly important (especially in Semester 1) for those students who have switched to Joint Honours degree and have not developed essay writing skills in their first year at University.

b) The almost sole focus on language allows students to greatly expand their language skills, but they lack greater specialisation in the cultures associated with said languages.

The incorporation of the 3 Language Projects in Year 3 (3 Major combination) and Year 4 (2 Major 1 Minor combination) fills this gap, as the students have to engage with a cultural topic for their dissertation and presentation, conducting independent research and providing critical analysis. In order to ensure that they are fully equipped to undertake this task, they attend a workshop on research and essay writing skills before their Year Abroad and are supported by a 3 Language Project supervisor until they submit their work. Students perform generally well in these modules, although they sometimes need extra guidance from their supervisors to hone in their analytical skills

More recently, Year 1 language modules have also introduced a greater degree of structured cultural content, by using cultural products (short literary texts, films, etc.) for translation, listening comprehension and oral conversation practice, encouraging students to also engage in critical analysis. This is something we are currently developing further. For example, Year 1 Spanish language is now organised around a chronological and wide-ranging introduction to Hispanic Culture, including key events and figures from the Middle Ages to the 21st century. This introduction to Hispanic Culture is taught together with language practice in translation, essay writing and conversation and provides students with a solid foundation in the history, literature and culture of the Hispanic World. The cultural content included in Year 1 language modules helps students to develop an understanding of key aspects Hispanic Culture, even if they do not take any cultural modules.



## Benefits of the Programme

The programme is attractive to students who excel at languages, especially if they have prior knowledge of more than two languages, but do not have a strong interest in the study of culture. It therefore caters for a specific type of student profile.

This demanding programme greatly enhances the employability of our students. They become fluent in three languages, potentially combining European and Asian languages, which makes them both attractive for national employers, but also increases their chances of being able to work in any part of the world. Spending three consecutive semesters abroad, in three different countries, also boosts their interpersonal skills, their cultural awareness, and their independence and adaptability to new cultures and environments. Students who studied this degree have developed a variety of exciting careers afterwards, for example: pilot for a company such as Ryanair, sports commentator for several British and international channels, translators based both in the UK and in Europe and schoolteachers.

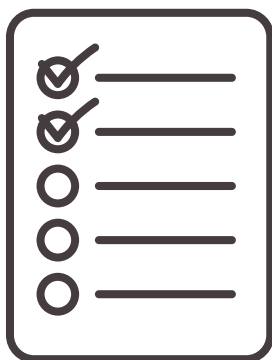
## Advice for colleagues interested in introducing this type of programme

### Organisation is key.

It means not only introducing a whole new programme to the existing degree offer, but one that works in a very specific way.

It is essential to work in close collaboration with colleagues from other languages to ensure that the assessment runs smoothly, and the students are not overworked.

Having an overall 3 Language Coordinator (as well as coordinators for each language) is very helpful. The order in which students complete their projects varies depending on the order of their placements and spans several semesters. Having a coordinator mapping out the full picture avoids the chances of assignments falling through the cracks.



**It is important to closely monitor students' results in Year 1 and give straightforward advice.**

Some students might be reluctant to change to a Joint Honours degree at the end of Year 1, even if they have not performed well in one of their languages. Although it is ultimately their decision, direct and honest advice on changing to a 2 language degree programme can avoid the student continuing to struggle in Year 2 and beyond.

**Do not forget culture.**

Although some of the students who choose the 3 Language Degree do so because they lack interest in or are intimidated by the study of culture, both language and culture are of course intertwined. Implementing strategies to incorporate cultural elements to a degree programme that focuses mostly on the development of language skills is key to providing students with the full experience of a degree in Modern Languages and Cultures.



# REFORM, RENEWAL AND DIVERSIFICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

**Evan Stewart**

The creation of the triple language degree (BA Modern Languages) at Warwick, alongside many other new degree combinations in 2013, was facilitated by contemporaneous structural reorganisation. Academic departments were merged with the Language Centre to form the School of Modern Languages and Cultures. This enabled an offering of nine languages in a dual or triple languages degree, instead of four. Moreover, this was at a time when ab initio language (not IWLP – institution-wide language programme) pathways were being introduced into language degrees. Also, dialogue took place with Social Science departments (languages joint degrees already existed with Humanities subjects), in order to provide more language combinations with other degree subjects as well as within languages.

## **The overall evolution in Warwick can be divided into three phases:**

a) The conjuncture of several elements expedited initial structural renewal, or macro-reform: senior management 'push'; organisational structure; departmental co-operation; national decline in MFL numbers; new degree structures; university internationalisation; language range; language entry level

b) Structural reform in turn encouraged more staff debate around a variety of issues: ab initio language teaching methodology for language specialists; development of translation studies; refreshing of cultural module topics and approaches; year abroad structures; student employability

c) Staff discussion encouraged further curriculum renewal, or micro-reform: e.g. language teaching approaches post A-level; restatement of School ethos; objectives and outcomes of modules; social science v. literature within 'culture'; cross-School cultural themes and modules; more innovation in assessment; target-language culture teaching; integration of year abroad outcomes.

d) More recently, the effect of Covid-19 has enforced optionality of the year abroad; increased online teaching; more blended learning; assessment implications of no exams



There is no doubt that structural organisation facilitated the variety of pathways and degrees now on offer at Warwick. It would have been very hard to develop new degrees and pathways without support from senior members of staff, and without one integrated School committee to discuss new combinations. Initial resistance from more conservative quarters crumbled in the face of the evidence of inexorably declining admissions to language degrees at national level. The Language Centre already had respect for the quality of its language teaching, and the conditions and status of tutors there had improved so that there was little dependence on hourly-paid tutors. The Centre had delivered credit-bearing modules for degrees for many years (including core pathways for International Business); it was not a centre, as in some universities, which only delivered languages for all without credit. Furthermore, it had already developed fast-track 'accelerated' modules which could be adapted to language degrees, thus enabling an acceptable minimum exit level at the end of the language degree, even where residence abroad was not possible.

One key to consensual acceptance of new degree structures was to add new degree combinations in the first instance, not to replace existing degrees. This provided some reassurance that there was no attempt to replace the culture-based curriculum, or the research-active colleagues associated with them. There was acceptance from senior management that a transition period was necessary, especially since a variety of prospective groups were targeted; there was no intention of abandoning the students who were attracted by the traditional Warwick strengths in culture and literature. In Warwick we recognised that in the medium-term it would not be possible to develop full joint honours degrees with the additional languages, hence the decision to offer 25% degree pathways. The existing resource did not extend to further, culture-based staffing appointments. Nevertheless, as the degrees developed, colleagues became interested in delivering a culture component to finalists within the final year language module. Clearly there had to be a commitment to providing minor pathway languages to the requisite language level in final year; but since the large IWLP already had viable higher levels on offer (unlike many universities), this was not an issue.





## Matching supply to demand

Many students are quite conservative in their initial UCAS choices. Students often arrived intending to do a two-language degree, and changed on arrival to the triple language degree. The BA Modern Languages therefore grew quite quickly, alongside the existing combinations.

The reasons for students to choose the BA Modern Languages are manifold. For some, the 'attraction' is the chance to do more language (and/or linguistics) and less 'culture' at a prestigious university. For others, it is the opportunity to try out a new non-European language which is not on offer in school or college (generally listed as important for the country, the economy and for student employability on a variety of websites). Some love French and Spanish so much that they cannot resist the lure of another cognate language like Italian or Portuguese.

## Degree Structures

The original four languages, from the original academic departments (French, German Italian, Hispanic Studies) continue to offer cultural modules (history, literature, society, politics), while the additional languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian) are offered for 30 credits out of 120 each year; primarily a language pathway, but with a cultural component in the final year.

Three languages can be combined with either cultural modules or with linguistics, thus BA Modern Languages; or BA Modern Languages and/with Linguistics while the 'minor' pathway languages, supplied by the Language Centre, can also be taken within a two-language degree or in the BA Modern Languages and Economics (this may extend to Modern Languages and Politics in due course).

Students are able to move from three languages to two at the end of the first year. This flexibility is necessary, and must be promoted in the degree advertising and marketing; risk-averse students feel more at liberty to try a new ab initio language in the first year, without having to commit themselves for the duration of a full degree. Some may love the new language, and some may dislike it; but the choice is there at the end of the first year to move to a joint or single honours degree. It also allows students to try two languages ab initio, although students are counselled about the challenge that this represents.

In the triple language degree, two of the Language Centre languages cannot be taken; the degree always involves two of French, German, Italian, Hispanic Studies. Each language is worth 30 credits out of 120 credits each year, and the remaining 30 is devoted to cultural modules, translation studies or linguistics. In Warwick students have contact time in European languages for 3-4 hours per week and 4-5 hours of for non-European languages; however this is supplemented by a lot of online work through the VLE (virtual learning environment) and by online virtual exchanges with other countries.

The first term of the first year is crucial; we have found that students who fall ill during that first term have difficulty catching up; there is some correlation between first term absence, and the dropping of one language. Tutor support, as well as student commitment, is vital at this key time.

## Learning from experience: Ongoing refinements

The pace of change described above is not without its difficulties; for example, when so many subjects come together in one School, there is an inevitable tendency for students to draw comparisons, where previously they seemed to accept that a separate department meant different departmental cultures. Some explanations in staff-student committees were needed around the tension between harmonisation and diversity, and the real value of different approaches in different modules and languages. Students were generally happy, provided there were rationales for different approaches; and this was valuable in that it obliged staff to reflect and question long-accepted practices. For example, the 'integrated skills' approach of languages taught in the Language Centre, contrasts with the essay/translation approach used post-A-level by former academic departments. This in itself does not necessitate change; but a restatement of clear objectives becomes inescapable. If these are not clear, the NSS suffers.

In relation to the three-language (or major/minor two-language) degree, defining an appropriate exit level for 'minor' language pathways within language degrees has been a matter of debate. Whereas major degree languages generally use C1/C2 as a measure of 4-year degree skills development, this is not necessarily realistic for an ab initio minor language pathway. B2 is more realistic as an exit level, although where residence abroad has taken place, this might be exceeded in certain specific language skills.

Evaluation of the delivery of non-European languages initially revealed that the pace was too fast during first year; we had to re-balance the pace between first year and second year, to take account of first year struggles and growing confidence during second year.

The subject areas of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Russian were able to develop together with regard to the new degrees. Initially this was about language teaching pedagogy, pace and expectations, but gradually this grew into a common approach to a finalist culture component. Innovative delivery and assessment methods, such as video essays, have resulted from cross-language co-operation. Those who had thought of themselves only as language teachers developed new horizons and gained confidence, as they developed fascinating approaches to the study of their own cultures, while inviting specialists to help from other departments such as History, Politics and Comparative Literary Studies.



## **The year abroad: adapting to different degree models**

Students have been expected, during their year abroad, to spend time in at least two countries of their target language and have been advised to spend the summer period in the country of their third language (where applicable). As part of the new degree development, we developed partnerships with universities in China, Japan and Russia, and found that students (even in a three- language degree, not only a two-language one), studying Chinese, Japanese and Russian increasingly want to spend a semester in these countries, at the 'expense' of a European language.

In our year abroad structure of pass/fail (not a contribution to degree classification) this is not a problem. However, this meant that there was a difference in level between the finalists who had done this and those who had chosen to study or work in Europe or Latin America. We also discovered that the time spent in formal study of the language was much greater in China and Japan than in other countries, thus differential progress was greater.

We attempted to mitigate this by increased support for students in Europe. Those studying in European universities were often able to study their other languages, but it was not possible for those working or teaching; so we asked for regular work to be sent back so that there would not be too much memory lapse on their return to Warwick. The current compromise is for all students to go into the same final year level for credit; but returners can audit an even higher level on the IWLP if they wish, in order to extend their knowledge and stretch themselves.

The year abroad is the aspect of our degree structures most affected by Covid-19 and Brexit. We have had to accept that our degrees now have to have an optional year abroad; and that this situation is permanent rather than temporary. Without a 3-year option, withdrawal of Erasmus funding in a 4-year degree means that languages risk becoming even more elitist. Interestingly, the paucity of research into language acquisition and 'learning gain' during the year abroad is likely to continue and be overtaken by new research into language learning through digital means; although the current mismatch between staff expertise and the types of courses demanded by students is likely to continue. This mismatch exists not only in the expertise within languages, but also between languages. We only need to compare the numbers of researchers into French and Chinese culture in the UK.

## Conclusion

Extensive curriculum innovation would probably not have happened (and certainly not to the same extent) without the external threat of falling admissions. The simultaneous formation of a School (which most other languages departments already) provided a catalyst.

The introduction of ab initio language pathways in major subjects as well as in four new Language Centre languages enabled a broader range of languages for two as well as three-language degrees, and appealed to other departments such as Linguistics and Economics; but this does not mean that a triple language degree cannot be introduced with a narrower range of languages. The inclusion of a Language Centre in degree structures largely depends on the history, structure and stable staffing of such a Centre; the emphasis on income generation in some Centres elsewhere works against the more academic objectives which Warwick emphasised. A Centre cannot realistically be expected to pursue both, without further staffing investment which is improbable at this time. Nevertheless, the MFL community as a whole must find ways to encourage diversification into global languages, for the sake of the country as well as for their own survival.



# CONNECTING LANGUAGES IN THE INSTITUTION

## INSTITUTION-WIDE LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES: A TOOLKIT FOR WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Mark Critchley



This section includes suggested strategies for closer collaborative working between academic departments of modern languages and University-wide language programmes (also known as institution wide language programmes, and hereafter referred to as IWLP). This recognises the wide variety of organisation and management structures in place across UK Universities.

The objectives for such closer collaboration are considered to be:

- A new narrative for the benefits of multilingualism and inter-cultural competence across society, within and outside the University, across all disciplinary fields, and with different levels of immersion or specialism
- Greater choice, and increased study of languages across UK Universities
- Increased language learning in schools, for all purposes, leading to commensurate increase in admissions to modern languages programmes at University
- Increased engagement with external partners including other Universities, the public and private sector, local communities and alumni as regards language learning
- A more centralised institutional leadership role for languages departments in University internationalisation strategies
- An improved professional status for language teaching and language teachers

### **What is an Institution Wide Language Programme?**

Before describing the suggested toolkit, it is important to understand what is meant by an institution-wide language programme (IWLP). IWLPs are delivered via a number of different organisational and management structures. The most common are presented in Appendix 2 to this Toolkit.

However, whatever the management structure, an IWLP should always be much more than simply the delivery of language courses. They also encompass infrastructure, technical support, and advice and support for international mobility and independent study. IWLPs are super-diverse. They are where wider language learning takes place both within formal and informal settings, in both physical and virtual spaces, led or informed by language teaching experts. The following summarises activities already taking place in IWLP across the UK.

<b>Learning and Study</b>	<b>Building community</b>
Elective modules	Internationalisation at home
Evening courses	Language cafes, world weeks, etc.
Learning resource centres, language zones	Language promotion and outreach
Autonomous and independent learning	Language certification
Language centres and study spaces	Teacher training and CPD
Languages for specific purposes	Cooperation and collaboration with external bodies
Supporting student and staff mobility	Supporting regional and community languages
Inter-cultural communication	Community engagement and social inclusion
Support for academics involved with international research	

Most of these activities are also taking place, or are of interest to, the delivery of language learning in the majority of degree programmes. However, levels of active coordination and collaboration remain limited.

In delivery of the above programmes, IWLPs and language centres are already highly collaborative. Through the AULC, and its membership of CercleS (the Confederation of language centres in Higher Education in Europe), there exists a highly collaborative network of language centres across Europe. In the UK, there are currently 72 University members, with more than 70,000 language learners and 1,600 language teachers. Across CercleS, this extends to 348 member Universities (May 2020), more than 500,000 language learners, and 10,000 language teachers. This is a significant resource that can be used to the benefit of the wider academic discipline.



## Toolkit for Closer Collaboration

There are clear opportunities for close collaboration in six key areas within each institution:

- Academic policy
- Teaching & learning
- Non-accredited learning
- External partnerships
- Institutional leadership
- Professional development

At its heart, this toolkit allows a new narrative for language learning institution wide that offers the discipline a leading role in the promoting our institutions as genuinely global.

This will also break down negative connotations associated with service teaching, and replacing this with a clear educational role for languages and cultures across the University curriculum. Degree pathways and IWLP can work together to establish a new narrative that emphasises the benefits of multilingualism and inter-cultural competence across the institution. With this in mind there may be scope to develop a new Manifesto for Languages. AULC has been undertaking some work on this already, and a draft AULC Manifesto is included at Appendix 1.



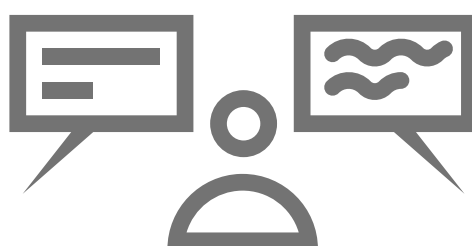


A suggested Toolkit for degree programmes at IWLP Working Collaboratively is presented here.

AREA FOR COLLABORATION	OBJECTIVE	BENEFIT
<b>Academic Policy</b>		
Development of institutional language policies, including EAP and multilingualism, embracing languages and cultures at the heart of a global University.	To place language learning on a formal setting within the institution	Establishes a framework for future strategy
Develop clear promotion of all modern languages programmes in academic Departments, including research, postgraduate programmes, immersive undergraduate programmes, and institution wide learning programmes.	To recognise IWLP as a clear area of interest for academic departments, and to give a clear strategic role for IWLP in the context of the academic discipline	Integrates marketing, helps learners understand what is available
<b>Teaching and learning</b>		
Map out full range of language offer in an institution from single honours, through joint honours, combined honours, minor routes and electives, and promote as an integrated whole. Offer clear pathways for learners with different needs and expectations, signposting as necessary.	Clear understanding of a range of options to help promotion of options according to learner needs and expectations	Ensures clear understanding amongst all staff of the range of options, and allows more efficient liaison between different types of course.
Comparison of learning outcomes for all language courses	To ensure consistency of language learning in academic contexts	Recognises that IWLP learners are also serious in their language learning objectives, and removes perceptions of difference in quality of provision.
Comparison of methods of assessment for all language courses	To share best practice in language assessment	Introduces common practice for all language courses to ensure similar assessment methods for similar learning outcomes
Developing common forms of language certification, including, DELF/DALF, Goethe, DELE etc. Work collaboratively across all areas of language learning to develop the UNILANG certification scheme.	To allow all students to access a clear measure of their language proficiency	Allow degree and IWLP students to understand language ability and to offer certification understood by employers
Where appropriate, and where of interest, extend offer of additional languages into degree programmes with combined teaching from IWLP	To increase diversity of language options to modern languages	Allows specialist students to access learning in other languages

AREA FOR COLLABORATION	OBJECTIVE	BENEFIT
	students (especially beyond the traditional FR/GM/SP core)	
Elaboration of a clear statement on development of core "soft skills" for employability	To better explain the role of soft skills development for linguists, especially in the context of Year Abroad	To allow the discipline and graduates to better promote their exceptional abilities
<b>Non accredited learning</b>		
Development of integrated language study programmes for PhD students, academics and University staff	To involve all language teaching staff in wider specialist language learning across the institution	Most language teaching outside immersive UG/PGT programmes takes place in IWLP. This includes in depth learning for PhD students (for example). A wider overview of such learning across academic departments would be beneficial
Creation of communities of language learners, including joint programmes for native speaker support	To develop means of access, for all students across all language programmes, access to native speaker input. To facilitate integration of international students into a multilingual environment coordinated through languages departments	Will allow a more systematic approach, and will optimise access to native speaker exchange students
<b>External partnerships</b>		
Joint outreach programmes focussing on promotion of language learning, introduction to the wider discipline of modern languages, including research, inter-cultural awareness and language	To develop strategic outreach programmes that meet all objectives, including admissions, and a public engagement agenda	Will allow coordination and integration of outreach activities for wider purposes, and improved deployment of resources
<b>Institutional leadership</b>		

AREA FOR COLLABORATION	OBJECTIVE	BENEFIT
Participation in University internationalisation committees, and greater involvement in Internationalisation at Home	To raise the profile of language learning and inter-cultural awareness across the institution, and to recognise the multinational multilingual reality that is the University	Allows a clear leadership role for languages and cultures in the international life of the University
Joint development of language cafes, world weeks and other language events to promote multilingualism and language learning across the institution and across all stakeholders.	To embed multilingualism, multi-cultural awareness and global citizenship in the day-to-day life of the University	Allows a clear leadership role for languages and cultures in the international life of the University
<b>Professional development</b>		
A commitment, by the wider academic discipline, to recognise and promote the role of professional language teaching	To continue ongoing improvements in the terms and conditions of language teachers	To ensure the long-term security of high quality language teaching in Universities
A joint review of effective scholarship for language teaching staff with teaching-only contracts	To better define scholarship and its objectives in the context of language teaching	To focus scholarship into areas of maximum impact
Combined continuing professional development programmes (also including language teachers in EAP and classical languages)	To develop meaningful and consistent CPD programmes	Will protect future requirements with regards to leadership in language teaching, external examining and other necessary innovations
A renewed focus on language teaching as a career, also working with Schools of Education	To increase the numbers of language teachers entering the profession	To support the discipline and to ensure that issues of lack of capacity are addressed in both Schools and Universities



## Appendix 1: A Manifesto for Languages

There is a quotation from the President of CercleS on their website ([www.cercles.org](http://www.cercles.org)), which succinctly captures the ambitions of institution wide language programmes: “We are committed to promote state of the art language teaching and learning, as well as research in higher education in and for a multilingual Europe and world. Please join us in this fascinating endeavour.”<sup>2</sup>

All language teachers have this commitment. Collectively, the discipline needs to seize the initiative when it comes to internationalisation of the institution. This includes promoting multilingualism as a benefit to the institution for students and staff alike. Nationally, AULC and UCML can also collaborate to promote a number of wider aspirations:

- All PhD students should have the ability to use at least 2 languages (mother-tongue + 1)
- All academic staff should have the ability to use at least 2 languages (mother-tongue + 1)
- All professional services staff should undertake inter-cultural competence training
- All undergraduates should study a minimum of one language course whilst at University (by deep immersion or otherwise)

Much of the activity now being undertaken through IWLP is geared towards these objectives, and increasingly we see the same institutional ambitions expressed within degree programmes.

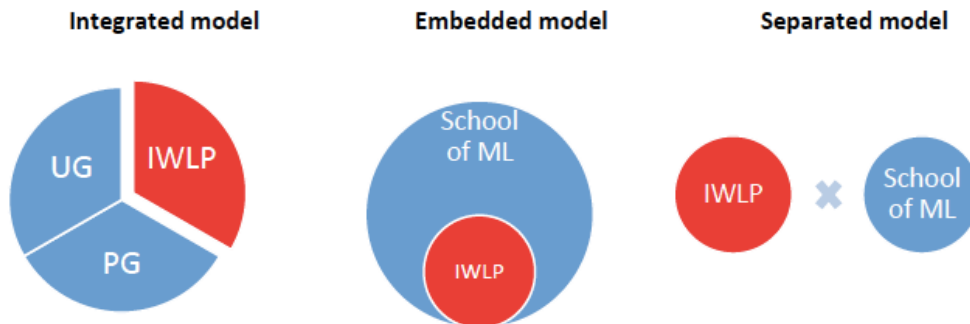
Harnessing this through closer collaboration can only be a good thing. Meanwhile, IWLP is taking its own initiatives and, with this in mind, AULC has recently put forward a manifesto for languages in the global institution. As yet (May 2020), this is not formalised, but recognises the role that the study of languages and cultures has across society. We would be delighted if this can be adopted more broadly within the discipline, at least as far as the teaching and learning of languages is concerned.

## **AULC Manifesto**

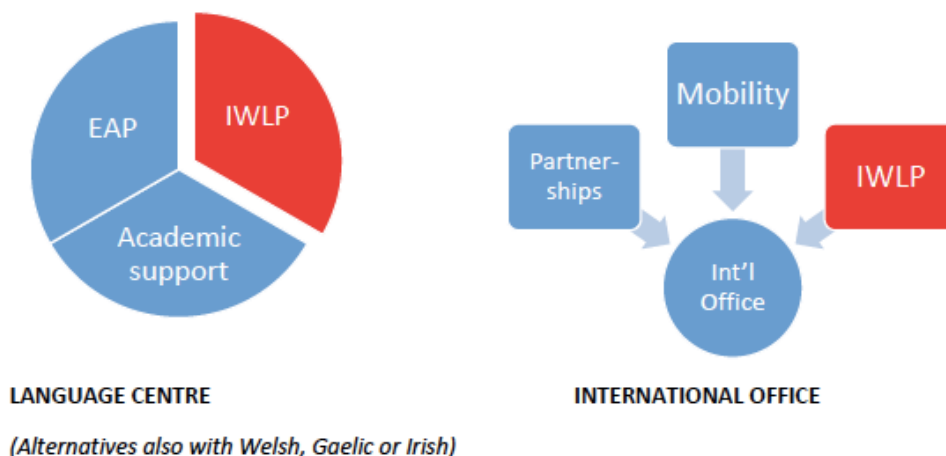
- A global university celebrates the international and intercultural diversity of all its staff and students in an environment that fosters mutual trust and respect.
- Language programmes will foster a multilingual and multicultural environment across the university to support this.
- A global university will be committed to developing its students into global graduates; with education and international mobility strategies that reflect this. Language programmes support the development of language and intercultural skills amongst students for global citizenship, employability and mobility; and will actively support international mobility and engagement.
- A global university's research strategy will reflect the need for language and intercultural skills, collaborating as equals in the co-creation of shared understandings, approaches and solutions to global challenges. Language programmes will enable the development of these skills in academic researchers.
- Language programmes support the development of language and intercultural skills amongst university lecturers, so that the global university can adopt a curriculum and a mode of academic discourse that is international, diverse in its content and outlook, and inclusive in its delivery.
- A global university in the UK will adopt an effective institutional language policy that prioritises English but recognises the importance of multilingual communication and multicultural experiences, and fosters the development of second language and intercultural competence amongst all staff and students.

## Appendix 2: Structures for Language Education

Levels of management integration of an IWLP within an academic Department, School or Faculty of course do not reflect levels of collaboration. Where such integration exists, there are three common models:



The integrated model assumes integrated programme management. The embedded and separated models assume separate programme management. The separated model usually involves an organisational structure that is often referred to as a language centre. Even in an embedded model, operations can be completely autonomous. There are also alternative models of IWLP delivery. In what might be referred to as “traditional” University Language Centres (operating independently from MFL departments), IWLPs usually work more closely with EAP practitioners than with degree teachers, even when teaching the same language.





# Notes