



# Nellip

Network of European Language Labelled Initiatives and Projects



## EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE IN PROJECTS THAT WERE AWARDED THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL

### UNITED KINGDOM



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## **Best Practice in School Education, United Kingdom**



### **Primary Language Podcasting**

The main aim of this project was to provide resources to enable primary school teachers across the 480 primary schools in Lancashire (NW England), who are in general not speakers of French, to be able to provide interesting, motivating lessons and to develop their own classroom language and language teaching skills.

30 podcasts were produced for French using up-to-date technology to serve as an easily available resource that could be directly used in class. The podcasts were accompanied by notes and worksheets to make them easier to use. The Lancashire local authority was able to inform teachers about them through their own newsletters and website.

The podcasts were short (8-10 minutes) but were packed with ideas for teaching: games, songs, rhymes, ways of teaching language in context, cultural awareness, etc. This was to encourage a flexible learning approach and to enable teachers to use them in any order according to their programme of work and the pace of learning/teaching in their classes.

The project was organised in three main phases. The first involved a cross-section of teachers in practical tasks followed by feedback and sharing. The second phase focused on piloting the units in the developers' own schools with the developers evaluating this, before piloting them with teachers who were not familiar with the project and obtaining feedback by questionnaire and oral discussion.

The final phase was making the units freely available (not just in Lancashire) via the local authority's website.

#### **How did the project exemplify best practice?**

- The key issue with introducing languages at primary level (from age 7 in this case) is the ability of teachers to deal with the challenge, given that they usually do not know the language at all well and are incorporating language teaching into their weekly routine of cross-curricular teaching with the same pupils. This project was an efficient and innovative way of providing easy training and

support to a large number of teachers across hundreds of schools who were new to language teaching.

- A small core team of motivated 'specialists' was formed to actually write and produce the podcasts. Attempts were made to widen the team, but when this proved unsuccessful, the core team again took over to ensure delivery of the materials. Having a core group who think alike, communicate well and share the same vision is critical in achieving project objectives.
- The materials, which are simple and not intimidating for inexperienced teachers of languages, were carefully piloted first with the involvement of the developers themselves, then beyond this group. In both cases, feedback was collected and acted on before the materials were more widely disseminated. This kind of trialling and experimentation with a small group and the gathering of and reflection on feedback is essential in any project that involves innovation and targets a wide group of teachers and pupils.
- The material was supported by notes and worksheets in PDF form and was made easily downloadable for use at home (by teachers) or in class with pupils, depending on the content. The website provided guidance in how to download and use the materials and the local authority ensured that teachers were informed about what was available and where. Making materials easily available to teachers and keeping them simple is important in ensuring that they will be widely used.

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**Project-related web sites:**

<http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/nationalstrategy/primary/pml/>

<http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/podcast/pml/french/rss.xml> ;

<http://www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/podcast/pml/spanish/rss.xml>

**Project duration:** 2008 to July 2011

**Link to the project description:** [http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/DB\\_database\\_scheda.php?art\\_id=129](http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/DB_database_scheda.php?art_id=129)

## Best Practice in School Education, United Kingdom



### Fashion International

The main aim was to encourage more children to understand the career relevance of learning foreign languages and to keep going with French in particular. Teachers at five schools in the West Midlands (in and near Birmingham) wanted to help students understand how important languages are as work and life skills and to increase take-up of French at Key Stage 4. They were also keen for students to bring in other curriculum areas including enterprise, textiles and ICT to demonstrate the value of languages in conjunction with these and to pool the experience and enthusiasm of their different schools. The schools collaborated to produce teaching units and schemes of work around the theme of fashion.

The project was officially launched by Kim Knowles, an industry expert, who highlighted how important language and cultural skills are in fashion and how he personally had benefited from them during his career. Pupils were then mixed into multi-school teams to participate in a work-based activity in French describing fashion celebrities and challenging stereotypes. For the six weeks afterwards, pupils worked through the units and used their learning to produce their own fashion magazines. These were submitted to Kim at the end of the project and prizes were awarded.

#### HOW DID THE PROJECT EXEMPLIFY BEST PRACTICE?

- Fashion is interesting to teenagers and has international relevance with key centres across the world, and multinational brands based in and outside the UK. Having a focus of interest that ensures that participants genuinely use the language and understand the relevance of the foreign language to their lives in the real world is a key advantage.
- A straightforward one-year model made the project manageable and helped with deadlines:
- group planning > launch event > teaching modules > closing event. This kind of project structure (overseen in this case by a professional in project management) is more likely to lead to a sense of achievement and a positive impact.
- The fact that each school was represented in the running of the project by at least one teacher ensured that the school contributed what it had undertaken to

contribute. Distributing responsibilities where possible among different teachers and students is more likely to build a good project team and collective effort.

- Having a launch event and a closing event were important factors, as were the interventions of the industry expert. It is important that projects have a clear beginning and target dates for completion either of phases or the project as a whole. If these are public events with an audience extending beyond the project participants, this can only increase motivation.
- It was also important that the project manager and industry expert visited each school during the project to maintain motivation and provide more insight into the topic and encouragement to continue the work. Ongoing support and guidance throughout the project is essential so that participants can resolve difficulties and 'give of their best'.

#### Project coordinator

Integra Project Management

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#### Partnership

Links into Languages

#### Website

<http://www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk/resources/2464>

#### Project duration

1 year

2010 – 2011

A screenshot of the 'links into LANGUAGES' website. The page title is 'Information &amp; Resources' with the subtitle 'Find the latest policy news, CPD resources, classroom materials and more.' Below this, there are navigation tabs for 'Introduction', 'Policy', 'Awarding organisations', 'Professional development', 'Promoting languages', and 'LinkedIn'. The main content area is titled 'Fashion International' and includes a 'Theme: Employer engagement', 'Keywords: Employer engagement, Enterprise, Fashion, French, German, Work-related learning', and 'Sector: Secondary'. There are also logos for 'LinkedUp funded project', 'links into LANGUAGES', and 'Employer engagement'. At the bottom right, there is a logo for 'BLC BUSINESS LANGUAGE CHAMPION'.

[http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/CS\\_scheda.php?art\\_id=53](http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/CS_scheda.php?art_id=53)

## **Best Practice in School Education, United Kingdom**



### **Reading together/ Leggiamo insieme**

In Cambridge (as in other towns nearby) there are many families where one – or both – of the parents are Italian or of Italian origin. These families are naturally concerned that their children also learn and develop their knowledge of Italian and Italian culture, but just using the language in the home is not sufficient, and Italian is only taught as a language in a few schools in the UK. To ensure that children from 0-12 have regular contact with the Italian language outside the home the Cambridge Italian Club has teamed up with the city's central library to form a reading club. The basis of this is a collection of Italian books suitable for children of different ages which is being added to every year.

Apart from borrowing these books from the library, the reading group meets regularly for an hour during which different activities are organised to encourage the children to use Italian in a natural way in group activities. These include drawing pictures, looking at projected pictures to help with comprehension, asking and answering questions and singing. Each session explores several topics such as festivities, famous people, nature, science, comics and so on.

The titles and topics of the books are carefully selected in order to respond to the needs of the young learners and children of all ages as they become more confident in using the language. The Cambridge Italian Club is collaborating with schools and libraries in Italy to exchange books and keep the selection fresh and attractive.

The initiative is very popular in the Italian community, who contribute their own suggestions and books, and attendance is good after four years of operation. The concept has been copied by the Polish, French and Spanish communities in Cambridge.

#### **HOW DID THE PROJECT EXEMPLIFY BEST PRACTICE?**

- This project springs directly from the community rather than from education professionals. It is motivated and run by them for their own children. This kind of set-up ensures the durability and momentum of the project since it meets a clear need and provides a valued source of language learning for the children in the community.
- The project has a simple and clear structure that depends on the collaboration of parents in gathering

and pooling suitable books in Italian under the auspices of the very well organised central library (a very popular resource in the city). This helps to ensure that the project is sustainable and does not depend on regular funding from outside

- The children who benefit from the project do not see the reading group as just another school activity. It takes place outside school hours in a library (which they probably also borrow English books from) and spans all ages up to 12. This makes it more likely to be a motivating experience for them and to help them maintain and develop their proficiency in the language and their knowledge of the culture.
- The initiative has proved a good example to others in the local community, presumably due to its simplicity and the willingness of the central library to assist. It has already been replicated in other language communities and could easily be further replicated in Cambridge and elsewhere.

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#### **Partnership**

Cambridge Central Library

#### **Website**

<http://www.cambridgeitalianclub.co.uk/about-our-events/raccolta-libri-in-italiano-per-la-cambridge-central-library>

#### **Project duration**

4 years

2008 – ongoing



[http://nellip.pixel-online.org/DB\\_database\\_scheda.php?art\\_id=132](http://nellip.pixel-online.org/DB_database_scheda.php?art_id=132)

## **Best Practice in Vocational Training, United Kingdom**



### **Community and Lesser Taught Languages (COLT)**

In the northwest of England quite a few secondary school students from immigrant backgrounds wish to study and take exams in the languages used at home. This is natural since, apart from English, these are usually the languages that they feel most competent in and wish to exploit the potential of. The difficulty was identifying experienced and trained teachers to teach such languages. In response to this need Manchester Metropolitan University, with funding from Routes into Languages, began to design and offer teacher training and teaching resources for teachers of Urdu, Arabic and Mandarin, which are the more widely spoken community languages.

The training focused on classroom management, teaching ideas and confidence building, as well as language development (from the point of view of teaching it). This was done through a series of one-day workshops, interspersed with observation of experienced teachers (of other languages) leading to supervision by experienced teachers of languages in the school context. The trainees could earn credits towards a full university qualification by participating in the programme.

About 200 teachers attended the programme over the three years of its life. Feedback collected during the programme indicated a significant development in the teachers' confidence and attitude. In addition sets of resources in these languages were developed and were made available for download.

#### **HOW DID THE PROJECT EXEMPLIFY BEST PRACTICE?**

- This project responded to a tangible need in the school system to respond to the expectations and wishes of minority groups within the regional community, namely to be able to study the languages that were important in their lives at school level. In this sense, the project was not an enhancement of an existing programme but an initiative that aimed to fill a gap seen by sections of the community and their schools as important.
- Offering full training/retraining to a large number of working teachers and novices in a short space of time was not affordable or achievable. The solution found was to provide a programme of workshops and

practical experience over a one year period that people could participate in while continuing their working lives.

- This kind of solution combines expediency and efficiency with good practice while still encouraging participants to go on to longer term training.
- The project designers realized the importance of combining workshop events in which theory and ideas could be discussed with hands on experience of observation and supervised teaching. Unlike much formal teacher training, it successfully married the more theoretical aspects with practical experience in the classroom while building participants confidence alongside their competence as teachers.
- The importance of providing materials in these languages which could be easily used and adapted was also appreciated since, unlike modern European languages, such materials are not easily found in published form. Developing these over time and making them available was an important support for the participants in the programme.

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#### **Partnership**

Routes into Languages (North West)

#### **Website**

[www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/northwest/resources](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/northwest/resources)

#### **Project duration**

5 years

2007 – 2011



[http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/CS\\_scheda.php?art\\_id=52](http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/CS_scheda.php?art_id=52)

## **Best Practice in Higher Education,**

### **United Kingdom**



## **My Unispace**

The aim of My Unispace was to enable upper secondary students approaching their final year to be in touch with students of languages already at university in order to find out more about what is involved in studying languages at degree level and about university life in general, and to practise using the language in 'real' communication.

The method used was e-mentoring, i.e. a process by which the secondary school students and university students communicated by e-mail during a set period in which the secondary students were able to ask specific questions about the university course, university life and the language, where possible in the language they were studying. From the mentors' point of view, this was a chance to practise their own language skills while doing a useful (if unpaid) job which could be referred to in later job applications.

88 secondary school students were involved as 'mentees', while 49 university students served as mentors. A majority of the mentees felt that the experience had been good from the point of view of improving their communication skills in the languages in question as well as useful in helping them to decide whether to go on to do languages at university. A majority of the mentors also found the experience interesting and potentially useful from a career point of view, and felt that it had also improved their communication skills, including in their foreign language.

### **HOW DID THE PROJECT EXEMPLIFY BEST PRACTICE?**

- This project aimed to bring secondary students into one-to-one contact with university students, to whom they naturally might look up. In a period where enrolments in university foreign language courses are falling this is important, but also an excellent way of helping secondary students find out more about what studying at university is like. Finding ways of enabling school students and university students to communicate in a structured manner is important for those students who are in a position to apply to enter university as it should raise their awareness about what to expect.
- The 49 university students involved benefited from the project by taking part in an interesting and useful activity involving responsibility for others that could be relevant to their future careers and enabled them to use and even develop their foreign language skills and

knowledge. Finding ways for university students to begin deploying their skills in a responsible and worthwhile way while still at university can only have positive effects.

- An e-mentoring system was used which took advantage of ICT and at the same time reduced the need to complicated arrangements about meetings and travel. It makes sense to use ICT and the communication channels that students are now most used to in language learning projects and initiatives, and is likely to increase participation and the chances of success.
- Feedback about needs and expectations was collected before the project began from both mentees and mentors, and at the end of the project quantitative and qualitative feedback was gathered on the process. This is highly desirable in any project of this kind as it indicates not only how successful it has been in meeting participants' needs and expectations but also highlights issues that might need to be resolved if and when the project is repeated.

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### **Partnership**

Routes into Languages (South)

### **Website**

<https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/south/news/975>

### **Project duration:**

2 years  
2009 – 2010



[http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/CS\\_scheda.php?art\\_id=133](http://projects.pixel-online.org/nellip/CS_scheda.php?art_id=133)

## **Best Practice in Adult Education, United Kingdom**



### **Welsh for Adults**

In the North of Wales, including in the town of Mold in Flintshire and the surrounding area, Welsh is spoken as a first or second language. However, many in the community do not speak Welsh and others would like to improve their command of Welsh for social and professional reasons. Adult learners taking courses in Welsh at intermediate level realised that it would be beneficial if they could have real contact with the language outside the classroom setting.

This feeling was enhanced by the national Eisteddfod (see <http://www.eisteddfod.org.uk/english/content.php?nID=2>), which was held in the area in 2007, and brought in funding which could be drawn on.

The project manager, who is given time for this by Bangor University, capitalised on the enthusiasm of students attending intensive summer schools in Welsh and the willingness of Welsh speakers in the area to work with them. The aim was (and is) to enable learners of Welsh and mother tongue speakers of Welsh to come together socially at local events and in clubs and societies of all sorts in the area. While the success of the project depends on individual willingness and motivation, the project manager intervenes to ensure that interaction is happening and people are continuing to participate.

About 150 learners of Welsh and 50 or so mother tongue speakers of Welsh are involved every year. 10 community-based events are organised by the group each year, and they also attend various other local events and meetings according to their individual interests and availability. This has maintained and/or increased the proficiency in Welsh of the learners concerned as well as their motivation. From the point of view of the mother tongue speakers, it is an opportunity to contribute to the development of Welsh in the area as well as to meet new people.

#### **HOW DID THE PROJECT EXEMPLIFY BEST PRACTICE?**

- So far as the project leader knows, this project is unique in its structure and the way it functions as it builds on the shared interests and enthusiasms of people in two language communities. This kind of innovation is essential in adult language projects as they need to see language learning as part of their social (and/or professional) life.

- The issue of Welsh as a less widely taught and spoken language is very important for that country, especially for the communities in the north. While Welsh is now taught as an obligatory subject at school, this was not always the case, and many people leave school with an unsatisfactory command. A project of this kind is a real boost for the development of proficiency in the language among adults and a wider understanding of its relevance to modern life.
- The group is more or less self-motivated, having been stimulated by the ideas of some of the learners and the Eisteddfod and activities are self-selected and voluntary. This makes it easier for the project leader to maintain momentum and simply oversee the sharing of information about relevant events and following up with participants where possible. Facilitating the formation and work of a self-motivated group is a key advantage in any project, especially one involving adult language learners.
- The project leader is allowed some time to maintain and monitor the project by her university. This is seen as part of the university's contribution to the local community and no doubt raises its profile among those involved in the project (many of whom have attended extra-mural and summer courses under the university's auspices). This kind of ongoing support is virtually essential for long-term projects like this to work.

#### **Project coordinator**

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#### **Project duration :**

5 year:

2007 - ongoing



[http://nellip.pixel-online.org/DB\\_database\\_scheda.php?art\\_id=113](http://nellip.pixel-online.org/DB_database_scheda.php?art_id=113)

