WORKSHOP REPORT

DATE: 28 FEBRUARY, 2014

Please send the material mentioned below to Pixel. It should be organized in different folders each containing the listed materials

1) **Information**

   Workshop organised by Universal Learning Systems
   Date: 28.02.2014
   Venue: Church of Ireland College of Education, 96 Upper Rathmines Road, D 6

2) **List of participants**

   Please see enclosed list of participants in the workshop and sector to which they belong

   Total number of participants 10

3) **Programme of the workshops**
   The agenda for the day was distributed by email to potential participants:

   - What ELL is: example provided by the Law Society
   - Presentation of NELLIP
   - Guidelines – dissemination (short version copies circulated among participants)
   - Open discussion – Why is language important for you organisation/work – Irish language and identity
   - How language learning can support diversity and integration – Needs to develop language projects

4) **Moderators and the experts involved**

   Ms. Mayte Martín (facilitator)

5) **Materials used**

   NELLIP Guidelines

6) **Seminar report**

   - Presentation of the ELL: Maura Butler and Robert Lowney from the Law Society and recipients of the award explained their experience and project (for further information see http://www.leargas.ie/media/ELL%20booklet%202012%20(web).pdf, and the video http://vimeo.com/50304498
   - Future of ELL: A representative of the NA, Léargas, was present at the workshop and talked briefly about the future of the European award. Participants had the opportunity to ask specific questions about the ELL as well as to engage and network with Leargas.
   - Open discussions ensued about: needs of practitioners to develop language programmes, the importance of language learning and its added benefits; language and its link to cultural identity (Irish language and languages spoken by migrants in Ireland), and the future of language projects.

7) Conclusions

- Most participants were language practitioners and therefore understood the importance of encouraging multilingual approaches/plurilingual teaching. They highlighted many other 'added' aspects when learning languages. According to participants, plurilingual students are more open to other cultures, more respectful of diversity and understand different ways of thinking. Language learning fosters cultural and humanistic values in education, which have multiplying benefits in both short and long term.

- The Irish language was deemed as an essential element of the Irish cultural identity. Some participants underscored the need to maintain it. Participants considered that one way to do this would be to teach different subjects through Irish. This idea, however, could not translate into action due to the lack of teachers. This system of teaching subjects through Irish is limited to Irish schools.

- It was felt that many migrants to Ireland were compelled to learn Irish in schools and many did so very successfully. There was no agreement about whether this should or not be the case. Irish should be compulsory for migrants.

- EU projects were considered to be challenging as they impose high demands in terms of resources and time. The application process can also be very time consuming.

- It was also agreed that teachers need to be supported in order to encourage innovative and quality language teaching. Teachers need to be taught/trained and change should be encouraged in schools. Participants agreed on the need to provide some type of incentives to teachers to encourage the necessary change in terms of promoting language teaching. Reluctance to do things in a different manner was not helped by the Irish system, which does not promote plurilingualism. ICT training was deemed to be important and inextricably linked to language learning.

- It was also suggested that the same techniques that are usually applied to business could be replicated to promote language learning. While participants recognised the effort made by the Department of Education, they did not agree with the Department's focus on the economic edge that they promoted when encouraging plurilingualism. Furthermore, participants denounced the current situation of many plurilingual workers in Ireland, many of whom are very poorly paid in call centres. Although the reality of the economic driven incentives to learn languages was not undervalued, participants pointed out the need to have advocates of plurilingualism in pre-schools as a way to encourage language learning from the beginning of student life. According to participants, languages should be part of many other degrees. It was pointed out that plurilingual learning should be encouraged by practitioners of these different areas. Furthermore, participants established a link between business, culture and corporate responsibility.

- An award and recognition system, provision of resources and the knowhow of management were all suggestions to encourage language learning. There was also a strong support for the continuation of European exchange programmes such as the Erasmus programmes, which allow students study abroad for an academic year.

- Because Irish students are not encouraged to learn other languages as much as in other European countries, it was felt that they were in a clear disadvantage when competing for the European exams set by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). This difficulty for Irish students is compounded by the fact that most of the companies, which prepare students, are located outside of Ireland.

8) Evaluation Report

The evaluation reports were overall very positive.
Points most beneficial mentioned by participants:
- Cross- sectoral element of the workshop was particularly beneficial
- Networking opportunity (This point was mentioned by several participants)
- The openness of the meeting where all participants could share opinions (mentioned several times)
- Diversity of backgrounds among participants (mentioned several times)

Suggestions and/or interest:

- Key components of language learning and teaching
- On line language projects
- Information about potential cross-institutional international co-operation
- Interest in developing research initiatives and ideas
- Networking with other practitioners

Dublin, 20. 03. 2014
Mayte Martín