

Best Practice Presentation

1) Authors of the Plan/Best Practice

Team:

‘A multi-disciplinary team that included a lawyer who was a course designer, in-house IT Co-ordinator and linguists’.

2) Description of the Initiative

The Initiative was designed in response to change in legislation for lawyer training to address constitutional and cultural rights in the provision of legal services in Irish, including an obligation for an Annual Report to the Minister for Justice, demonstrating implementation.

The course methodology is a blended learning with a focus on intrinsic elements of language learning and lawyer focus. The framework of the elementary course is the initial meeting between lawyer and client whereas the advanced programme uses a case study with an exploration of a selection of typical language activities through a medium of lawyering skills (interview, advising, drafting, negotiating and advocating. Assessment for advanced programme (ALPI) incorporates CEFR.

The Moodle VLE software was used to manage educational processes and course administration and a Gaeilge web page was created. This technology links participant identifiers for attendance purposes, standardised assessment processes, permitted uploading of course tasks, time-recording of assignment submission, validation of student-reported ‘technical difficulties’. Faculty members are linked to the course website. On-line tools that support the desired learning outcomes included quizzes, questionnaires, multi-media ICT tools to deliver on-line teaching and participant submission. On line resources are linked to create a ‘one stop shop’ environment and blogging creates a virtual discussion classroom.

At the elementary level the target group are trained to meet, greet and refer the client. At the Advanced level the lawyer is enabled to practice through the Irish language.

3) Presentation of the Coordinator of the Initiative

Brief presentation of the coordinator of the identified initiative (link to their website)

Web page:

[http://www.leargas.ie/media/ELL%20booklet%202012%20\(web\).pdf](http://www.leargas.ie/media/ELL%20booklet%202012%20(web).pdf)

Presentation video:

<http://vimeo.com/50304498>

Biography:

Criminal Defence Lawyer & Academic Lawyer now working in professional training for lawyers. Have volunteered my time and expertise to numerous NGO's that are focused on best practices in Criminal Justice and equality for women in all aspects of their lives.

Specialties:

- *Irish Criminal Law & Criminology*
- *Human Rights Policies for Women*
- *Brehon (Old Irish) Law*
- *Professional Training Course Design & Delivery*
- *Advocacy - as lawyer & NGO spokesperson*
- *ICT in Education*

4) **Improvement Plan**

Identification of strengths and weaknesses

**Strategy for improvement of its quality /innovative approach /
networking potential**

Expected impact

Improvement Plan

- Ongoing interaction using course evaluation by participants and faculty with course designer and interrogation of all new IT developments, as appropriate
- More scaffolding of foreign national learners
- More interaction in discussions to enhance acquisition of legal terminology in Irish
- Monitoring developments in IT

Strengths

- Creating multi-disciplinary collaborative work practices
- Facilitating use of the course language in faculty communications from institution using mobile technology
- Creation of a new community of learners (lawyers with linguists)
- Re-engagement of learners with the language where IT tools broke from old learning methodologies
- Foreign-national participant engagement with Irish culture
- Enhancement of lawyering skills
- Development of IT skills of participants and Faculty
- Career advancement (practicing through Irish)
- Self-paced learning

Weaknesses that are address through continuous review and enhancement:

1. Those with weak IT skills or are technophobic need extra assistance and support
2. Mixed-linguistic ability participants require more scaffolding/course material provision:
 - a. At elementary level,
 - i. Those who have never studied Irish before (mostly foreign national) so as to ensure their integration into the class e.g. increase number of glossaries, phonetic versions of on-line recordings provided.
 - ii. Those who are fluent/above average need to be challenged more by the course
 - b. At advanced level
 - i. The participant working remotely may have variable broadband
 - ii. The on-line resources linked require updating from a technological perspective to facilitate progress at IT provision level (mobile technology etc.)
 - iii. The blogging technology and resources mentioned at b. above require participant engagement in Language lab as not yet compatible with iPads

Strategy for improvement of its quality /innovative approach / networking potential

1. Disseminate the learning from this ICT for language learning project
 2. Source development partners and/or funding to enhance the technological aspects of course design and delivery
 3. Identify IT resources to improve Irish language screen reader software for course participants with disabilities
 4. Network with other language providers, to include those delivering to adult learners and vocational providers
 5. Use the course portal to link with cultural aspects of Irish language
 6. Explore the franchising of the use of the technologies used in creating and delivering the Legal Irish Language for transferability to other language providers
- 5) **Strategy to submit the project to the ELL**
Analysis of the project potential for its successful submission in the framework of the ELL
Analysis of the consistency of the project as in the Improvement Plan with the ELL European and national priorities.

Jury comments (2012):

The project addresses the needs of learners at various levels so as to equip them with the skills to deal with their clients through Irish - some at a very basic level and others at a much higher level (e.g. native speakers)

A wide range of resources is used for blended learning

Highly motivational for learners and teachers as course materials are adapted to suit needs

Very creative use of technology and materials for all different abilities, from students new to the language to native speakers

This project is adaptable to all languages in which legal services are provided and is particularly suitable to less used languages.