

Education Committee, 5 February 2019

Report from SIG Wider Engagement Meeting: Modern Languages on 4.12.18

Strathclyde University: 9.30 – 12.00

There are approximately 40 members of this special interest group, which will be moving into its third year, although it is now called the Wider Engagement Network. There has been one twilight meeting since 19th Jan 2018, which was held on 5th September in Strathclyde University and was a networking event to meet new Erasmus partners from the National Language Centres in Denmark and Norway. SCILT had made a successful funding bid, securing €186,000 for this 3 year project: 'Generation Global: Multilingualism and intercultural skills for a dual-competency workforce of the future'. [paper A attached]

A sederunt was passed round the 14 reps in attendance and among the organisations represented were: SDS, ESOL, Open University languages, DYW, Chartered Linguists, SCDI, Reform Scotland, EIS and SG with Angela de Britos of SCILT in the chair. The agenda had 4 items:

1. 'Breaking the Languages Barrier Report' [Appended]
2. Feedback from recent events
3. Focussed discussion in three groups
4. Plenary

Items 1 and 2 took up most of the meeting leaving no time for 3 & 4.

1. Alison Payne, Research Director Reform Scotland spoke to the report of which she is co-author. The report has 5 recommendations:
 - PISA currently does no comparison of attainment in foreign language learning and RS believes it would be helpful if languages were included in further studies and that Scotland participates in these
 - Data gaps: an audit of the number of primary school teachers who are trained in Modern Languages and Gaelic along with looking at how many of these trained are currently engaged in teaching languages. The chair suggested the EIS could do this audit but it was explained that this was not the remit of EIS and should be for Scottish Government given their policy of primary school pupils learning two foreign Languages by 2021.
 - Review the 'language spoken' question for the 2021 census from '*Do you use another language other than English at home*' to '*what languages, other than English, do you use regularly*' The same review of question should be made in relation to pupil census data.

- End the distinction between ‘community’ and ‘modern’ languages. Linked to final recommendation in that this approach to learning languages concentrates on saturation of soft skills but emphasises that teachers must be qualified to teach the many languages spoken in Scotland.
- Piloting different approaches: the recommendation pointed out that, in secondary, two periods of non-examinable PE were used to promote health and wellbeing, so might a similar approach be taken for promoting soft skill language-learning. Equally, what about the possibility of Foreign Language Medium Primary Schools?

The chair prompted further discussion, posing suggestions for advancing the skills approach to teaching languages: the British Council CEFR levels, the European Language passport, Connected Scotland, GTCS consultation on ITE [BGE teacher question] and ***Language reporting in Primary Schools***

2. Feedback/Flagging from recent events:

- The new SCILT DYW Toolkit provides ideas for schools and businesses <https://www.scilt.org.uk/Business/Toolkit/tabid/8062/Default.aspx>
- SCDI flagged the RSE Interdisciplinary Learning: Creative Thinking for a Complex World conference on 30th January 2019.
- SQCF My Skills, My Future
- CBI report “Winning Worldwide”
- SCILT and National Parent Forum flier “Languages in a Nutshell”
- SCDI summit on 30th October 2018: to look at the future of Skills & Employability in Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise’s ScotExport18 event November 6th 2018
- The Enterprise and Skills Board’s [Strategic Plan](#) (notably p37)

The meeting overran with most members having to leave at 12.00 though discussion was ongoing. The next meeting is proposed for February 2019.

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