

Submission from Richard Tallaron

Personal Background

I trained to become an MLPS tutor for French in 1999.

I have since trained Primary Teachers in several Scottish Local Authorities, under different formats: from the original 27 day training programme to a combination of twilight sessions and full days.

I have been running CPDs throughout Scotland for Primary and Secondary school teachers and pupils, mostly in French but also in Spanish.

With my organisation, LFEE, I have been running Immersion Courses for teachers in France and in Spain under the EU Comenius “Lifelong Learning” programme. Around 500 Scottish teachers have taken part in one of our 1 week courses over the years. All of them received a grant from the British Council which covers travel expenses, course fee, accommodation and subsistence.

For the past 3 years, we have been running 1 week shadow programmes also under Comenius. Under that programme, Scottish teachers go to France or Spain to shadow a colleague in his/her school for 5 days (we provide them with a 2 day cultural/language preparation in that country). Some groups of French teachers have also come to shadow a Scottish colleague, which has been wonderful for school exchanges.

We are currently running 3 of the Scottish Government pilot projects as part of the 1+2 Initiative: in St Elizabeth’s primary School in Hamilton, Hillside Primary School in Dundee, and Langlands Primary School in Forfar. In these schools, we are trying to embed the teaching of L2 from Primary 1, and L3 at P5, in line with the recommendations of the 1+2 Initiative.

- **Is there enough funding for the Scottish Government’s proposal (including use of EU money)? (The money earmarked by the Scottish Government is £120k for the pilot projects, and £4M for after the pilots in 2013-14).**

This new Initiative will require extra funding to train Primary School teachers and to pay for liaison meetings between primary and secondary schools. Introducing L2 from P1 means that all Primary teachers have to be able to teach a language, and primary and secondary schools will have to work together to ensure continuity.

As far as the training of Primary teachers is concerned, we cannot go back to the original 27-day training programme, which was very expensive to run. I believe we must use a mixture of CPDs and on-line training and support, which will enhance the existing training programmes and make it more cost effective. Linguistic tips and suggested activities could be made available on-line.

In the longer term, we must make sure that all graduate teachers come out of their initial training programme with the skills to teach a foreign language. The profile of languages must be raised in Secondary schools so that pupils come out of their compulsory education with the required skills should they choose to go into Primary Education, and which they will need in other jobs and in their personal life too!

We can also use EU money to send our teachers abroad to work on their language and methodology skills.

We also have fewer schools in Scotland than in Créteil a single suburb of Paris - where we are currently running an exchange programme Fife-Créteil Exchange. Small is beautiful! Let's use this and the fact that our schools are well equipped with computers and internet to our advantage and let's connect Scottish schools to the rest of Europe. In other words, yes, we will need extra funding, but there are good cost effective ways of using that money.

- **Do existing teachers have the skills and teaching resources available for language tuition? Are existing teachers and teaching assistants equipped to teach languages? Should there be more training and support for new and existing teachers for language teaching?**

Many of our teachers in Scotland have been MLPS trained, but not all of them teach a language at the moment. However, teachers do need some language skills, and even if we give them extra on-line support (see above), they will still need ongoing language training.

- **What is the capacity within the curriculum to accommodate greater language study? Can language learning be embedded in existing teaching?**

I believe that in order to teach L2 from P1, we must embed it into the curriculum. It has to fit into each teacher's learning contexts, not be an "add on". With our 3 pilot projects, we have tried to identify interdisciplinary activities to help embed the language into the life of the schools: teaching L2 through maths, cross-curricular ICT, PE and, very importantly, daily routines.

- **The choice of languages for teaching – which languages should children be learning and why?**

I believe that for historical, cultural and economic reasons, one of the three main European languages (Spanish, French and German) must be taught at primary level. Europe is our main trading partner and we share a common history and culture. We must nurture and enhance these ties!

The choice of a third language can be left to individual schools to fit their particular context and/or the school community.

The most important element is **continuity** from the Primary through to the Secondary schools. The choice of languages must be made in conjunction with all partners and stakeholders.

Richard Tallaron
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