

Chapter 10: The next stage of a journey?

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1 Introduction

In the final chapter we will be reviewing the main messages from the book, looking back to what we said in Chapter One were the important issues to consider and considering where we could sensibly and above all creatively move next. As an important part of this we have within this chapter a full case study written by colleagues at Scottish CILT (Centre for Information on Language Teaching) of their coherent policy to increase and enhance the language curriculum from five years old and to make for a continuous provision up to the end of the secondary phase. Scotland began this journey in advance of England and Wales and in the 1990s committed a large sum of money to launching a full scale primary languages programme. The case study that appears here updates us as to where they are currently and gives a model for other contexts to consider when planning provision. There is not at present in England and Wales such a coherent, government-backed and funded keystage two languages development programme as there is in Scotland, as we will see from the case study. In Wales and Northern Ireland, as in Scotland the devolved government responsibilities include education but neither of these two countries have a large focus on languages as part of that. While the populations differ greatly between England on the one hand and the three other home nations on the other, and this would have implications for funding, we can say that without a coherent policy such as the one the Scottish government are working towards, there is not much hope for a consistent emerging policy or practice across the primary schools of England. This is an overriding concern which we note before moving on to discuss the many and varied messages from this book in what we want to be a forward-looking and positive conclusion which asks teachers to take these initiatives and approaches forward and make it their own.

2. What have we learned?

We noted in Chapter One the need to address certain pressing issues which were:

- The rationale for using the children's own contexts and interests to determine the content of the language learning and how best to explore one's own culture and the culture of others;
- The importance for motivation and thinking skills development of creative approaches to teaching and to teaching children to be creative in the primary language classroom;
- The importance of authenticity and credibility in the materials we use – this includes all platforms as paper, video, audio and screen are all equally valid and each can be both creative and mundane, stimulating and restrictive;
- The difference between learning language/s and using language to learn – both strands are important but the second has a more obvious immediate purpose which will appeal to children as it will locate what they are doing in what they know and are interested in. But for the first we need to remember the importance of creative approaches in the emergence of grammatical understanding and the use of language learning strategies.
- The knowledge and skills of the workforce which enable all of the above to become a reality over time. This is a factor which cannot be ignored and for which we need to show as much creativity if we want teachers to feel they can be successful.

What has emerged through the eight chapters which make the core of this book is that we ignore at our peril children's normal everyday experience of being at school and learning in general. Foreign language learning cannot sit quietly in the corner of a disconnected weekly half hour, perhaps taught by a relative stranger as part of a PPA arrangement. It cannot occupy a unique flat model of a carousel of topics all taught at beginner level with no real linking and nor real progression. There are a host of ideas in this volume and in many others which have been published over the last fifteen years and it is urgent that we 'normalise' language learning where it is still not properly implemented and do that in a way that fires enthusiasm. While we hope that more and more new primary teachers will feel keen and well-equipped to teach a language, we cannot ignore our final bullet point above, that at present many teachers do feel under-skilled and that creativity is a long way down the queue which has bare survival at its head. For this reason Languages as a subject needs resources and senior leaders should

prioritise the buying at least of some electronic audio/visual material which will support teachers and offer a taste of real lives in real target-language speaking countries. Go-to places include, as specific support websites for language learning, the extensive Scottish CILT resource at <https://www.scilt.org.uk/Home/tabid/1069/Default.aspx> , The Association for Language Learning site at <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/> which does have an accessible resources links section for primary languages and which also has a cross-curricular/CLIL sister site at <http://www.flameplus.net/> . There is also a resources section of the Network for Languages London site at <http://www.networkforlanguageslondon.org.uk/resources/>.

We placed the chapters in an order deliberately. We wanted to start from a place which is familiar to many teachers who daily create positive learning experiences for children who have other languages than English in their lives and who may have less rich and developed English as a result. While this is different from teaching a foreign language to a class where most children are roughly equal beginners, there are many messages about learning language by learning something **in** a language which are important for both contexts. Teachers can be creative about how children meet the foreign language through varying stimulus across audio, visual and textual platforms, using print and electronic media.

3. D.A.R.E to be different

Although acronyms can be rather tired in the current climate we are concluding with one. D.A.R.E is going to be applied to both teachers and learners in turn with two slightly different variants. This is in keeping with the aim of the book and the series to foster independent creative learners as well as creative teacher-made or -found approaches, resources and tasks.

We are urging teachers to be **direct** about the whole language learning process. This includes a range of approaches:

- Be open with children about why we learn languages and how for the majority of children on earth it is quite normal to be aware of more than one. Use the bilingual children in your own class

/ school to show how useful it can be. Susan Jones' chapter which linked EAL/bilingual teaching to foreign language learning highlighted how important this was.

- Whatever your capabilities use them as fully as you can – talk in the foreign language but show the children as well that you often use a dictionary because you don't know everything. Use Colin Christie's survival kit and guidance to de-mystify how to create a language-rich classroom. Always let the additional language appear to be a language, not an add-on to English which can only work when it's mixed. Short, purposeful and comprehensible messages, rather than words are the really vital units to work in.
- Be direct also about what might be difficult and compare what they are learning to English or other languages known to the class.

Ensure that the children are always **active**. Listening is an important skill but we need to do something with what we hear. When planning continually ask yourself that question: 'and what are the children doing at this point?' Think about how careful you are in other lessons to move away from too much passive time in the classroom and hand over tasks to pairs and groups so the learners engage actively with resources or ideas, whatever they are. Go further and ensure they are actively thinking, deciding, discovering. Chapters in this book by Claudine Kirsch, Sarah Lister and Pauline Palmer, Elaine Minett alone and with Laure Jackson and Kristina Tobutt all emphasised the activity which children can engage with when using the approaches and resources they proposed. Primary age children need concrete and visual stimulation and hands-on collaborative tasks which go beyond imitation and repetition even in game format. Language learning should always involve as real communication as possible. If we review those chapters we see a whole range of stimuli for this; in some cases it involved the use of technology-based devices while in others it was simply about singing together or in groups or even alone.

As teachers we need to be **responsive** to children when they express any and all emotional or cognitive feedback on what they are expected to engage in. This response might be to repeat something that is highly enjoyed and valued or to revise what we offer to take into account creative and innovative suggestions they make or problems they might be encountering. The Tobutt chapter

highlighted that the youngest children will engage with visual, physical, emotional stimuli first and language next. They will not learn language just because we present it to them, but will show pleasure, interest and engagement and then start to construct meaning and absorb words and structures if we notice and respond to their responses. This does not change completely as they grow older.

It should always be our intention to **enhance** the learning that we plan and organise. This enhancement can link back to the responses we have had from the children and involve using techniques we know to be successful from previous language work or from other subjects, but in a new way; or it can be a conscious extension of the learning in a direction in which we have seen the children's interest. The Richardson chapter about transition showed that giving the learners more active ownership over the transition tasks and enhancing their normal experience by siting work in a partner school and with different age students, they were given insights into how their learning could develop and be enhanced in the future. The transition activities also enhanced the knowledge of the primary teachers where that was of benefit to them.

But the children need to DARE too. They will need to be encouraged to play out their own version of the acronym. This is another dimension of the teachers' role of being **direct** in that they need to signal clearly to the children that language learning is heavily dialogic in all its senses. The children's four aspects are all closely linked.

- Language lessons should always be about **discovery** and it is ultimately the responsibility of both teachers and learners to make this happen; the projects involving technologies, physical tasks, research, discussion, creation as epitomised in the central six chapters of the book by Kirsch, Lister/Palmer, Minett/Jackson, Tobutt and Richardson all involve children coming out of activity having controlled their own learning to some extent and having discovered something that means something to them as individuals, (which might be something subtly different from the other children in the class).

- The learners need to **ask** - for words which they want to know; for extension to themes especially if the language learning is linked to class topics which run through the rest of the week; for more of a certain type of resource or more time to pursue activities which they have started; for opportunities to show off their knowledge for example through assemblies; or simply for clarification of more difficult aspects of language.
- The children also need to be encouraged to **research** all and any aspects of the target language communities that interest them and to seek opportunities to meet new language in the process. This does require some care on the part of teachers who will of course carry out their safeguarding duty in offering suggestions for legitimate research sites. The TV based sites in other countries can be a useful resource on a visual level (although of course the language will normally be too difficult) and some are accessible through Youtube .
- Finally, they need to know they can **experiment** with language. On one level this is just substituting words in songs and, if they are really advanced, re-rhyming where they can. But this can grow into using an interview format to others with assumed identities or adapting it for different topics. Further on in time it can be developed into using drama based activities such as hot-seating or conscience alley initially with pre-learned lines which can collaboratively be extended and amended. The Kirsch chapter shows how children enjoy being creative with the language they know and how this in time develops their capabilities. Other core chapters in this volume also encourage the movement from limited building blocks to freer structures, showing the power of motivation generated by content and activities which capture interest.

4. The Scottish Case: how to harness partners and stakeholders to secure consistent development

Setting the scene

Let us start with a brief exploration of the Scottish context. Education is completely devolved to the Scottish Government who in turn shares responsibility for its governance with the 32 local authorities.

After the publication of the Worton Report in 2009¹, the Scottish National Party (SNP) included a commitment to language learning in their 2011 manifesto².

Over the course of two parliaments we will introduce a norm for language learning in schools based on the European Union 1 + 2 model - that is we will create the conditions in which every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. (SNP, 2011: 24)

As the SNP were returned to government in May 2011, *Language Learning in Scotland: a 1+2 approach*³ (the 1+2 Report) was commissioned and a working group comprising representatives from Scottish Government, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT), local authorities, teachers, parents, universities, teacher education institutions (TEIs), teaching unions and directors of education was set up to consider how a 1+2 approach might look in Scottish schools.

The last ten years have borne witness to a radical rethink of the Scottish education system known as Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It is against this background of unprecedented educational change that the 1+2 approach was formed. The group took into consideration, among other publications, the findings of the Modern Languages Excellence Group⁴. It also identified, amongst other factors, a £0.5 billion deficit in the Scottish economy⁵ caused by a lack of language skills. The recommendations of the report received broad cross party support for what has become known as Scotland's 1+2 language policy.

Although it is the ambitious nature of the report and its recommendations that have made headlines, the recommendations go much further than that. The 1+2 policy actually marks a fundamental change in how languages are taught and who teaches them. By 2021 the expectation is that every learner

¹ Worton, M. (2009) *Review of Modern Foreign Languages provision in higher education in England*

² Scottish National Party (2011) *Scottish National Party Manifesto 2011*.

³ Scottish Government (2012) *Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach*.

⁴ SCILT/Scottish Government (2011) *Modern Languages Excellence Report*

⁵ Foreman-Peck, J. (2012) *Talking the talk, so that Scotland can walk the walk: A rapid review of the evidence of impact on Scottish business of a monolingual workforce*.

should learn two additional languages from ages 5-15. As such, it calls for an absolute reinvigoration of this curriculum area, in line with the design principles of CfE. Its successful implementation requires the upskilling of the teaching workforce in all sectors.

Languages are not new to the Scottish curriculum. SCILT has existed since 1991. Another organisation supporting language learning Cultural Organisations and Local Authorities (COALA) has held regular meetings involving Scottish Government since 1995. However, prior to the 1+2 policy, a decreasing number of local authorities were actively participating.

Since the early 1990s, Modern Languages in the Primary School (MLPS) have been routinely taught by specialist trained MLPS teachers, chiefly but not exclusively, in the last two years of primary education. The MLPS approach had its own set of strengths; specialist teachers had the language skills and confidence to lead the learning. However, there were often issues around workforce planning and if a primary school lost its language teacher, then often it could be left with no language provision at all and children would lose their entitlement to learn an additional language. Similarly, because the additional language was most commonly taught by a “drop in” specialist, there was little chance of consolidation and practice from one week to another, making progression slow.

Furthermore, it became evident that if language learning was left confined to the latter stages of the primary curriculum then it was never going to be considered “the norm” and would continue to be seen as a “bolt-on” rather than an integrated and core part of the broad general education (BGE) from age 5 to 15.

The report, therefore, advocates a change particularly in how languages are taught in primary schools, moving away from the timetabled “slot” delivered by a specialist in favour of a more integrated approach that embeds language learning in the wider curriculum. This effectively means that all primary teachers will be responsible for language teaching in the same way that they are expected to deliver on all other areas of the Scottish curriculum.

However, it is not just the primary sector that is affected by the policy. In order to achieve successful implementation the recommendations range across all sectors, calling for better cluster planning to

ensure continuity between primary and secondary schools, more flexible pathways for youngsters to follow to qualification level in the senior phase and cross-sectoral engagement between schools, further and higher education and the business world. It is clear then, from the report, that if we want to win hearts and minds, a galvanised cross-sector approach is necessary; one that engages with wider society as well as education, creating a team of teams, that work locally and autonomously, but that are connected, sharing and collegiate.

2012-2014: Early stages of implementation

Essential to the early stages of implementation was strong leadership from Scottish Government. Responsibility for oversight of the policy was given to the Minister for Learning, Sciences and Scotland's Languages, himself a native speaker of Scots and learner of Gaelic and Norwegian. The Minister was a powerful advocate for language learning who championed the policy in its early stages and underlined publically the importance of languages for our society⁶. This effectively provided the high-level message that allowed the policy to be seeded.

Furthermore, in order to “create the conditions” that support implementation; Scottish Government has given the local authorities both time and money. The date for full implementation of the recommendations of the report has been set at August 2021, effectively two parliamentary terms. Between 2013 and 2018, local authorities received an extra £24.7 million⁷, vital in order to build enough capacity to realise the ambitious nature of the policy. This substantial funding allocation allowed local authorities to tailor their 1+2 strategy and develop their practice. This has sent out a clear signal that 1+2 is not ‘just another initiative’ but a serious attempt to change the languages landscape in Scotland. Local authorities provide a strategy and associated action plan to Education Scotland.

⁶ Dr Alasdair Allan's video message about Scotland's 1+2 languages policy for the Language Leaders Summit at Westminster 17 October 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmFt2zVPKrl>

⁷ Breakdown of 1+2 funding to the 32 local authorities in Scotland: 2013-14 £4 million; 2014-15 £5 million; 2015-16 £7.2 million; 2016-17 £5 million and 2017-18 £3.5 million, with some level of funding guaranteed until 2020-21.

An extensive review of Scottish teacher education undertaken by the Chief Inspector HMI⁸ highlighted the need for the provision of high quality professional learning for teachers.

‘The strong uptake of high quality training given by bodies such as [...] SCILT in modern languages is indicative of a wider need. Immediate priorities might be the teaching of modern languages in primary schools, science, aspects of mathematics and Gaelic.’ (Donaldson, 2011: 104)

In this climate, the SCILT team was extensively enlarged in order to be in a position to support its local authority partners effectively. In 2012, the Confucius Institute for Scotland’s Schools (CISS) joined SCILT. CISS provides the strategic leadership to all of Scotland’s Confucius classrooms, ensuring that the Confucius programme helps local authorities to include Mandarin in their 1+2 strategies. Enhanced funding for SCILT meant there was capacity to undertake successful initiatives from the rest of the UK. Inspired by Routes into Languages, SCILT launched Scottish versions of the Spelling Bee in 2012 and the Adopt a Classroom initiative in 2014. The Spelling Bee pilot was adapted to become Word Wizard⁹ and Adopt a Classroom became Language Linking, Global Thinking.¹⁰ Similarly, inspired by the CiLT Cymru model, SCILT began to develop a Business Language Champions (BLC) scheme¹¹ which links schools with local businesses.

⁸ Donaldson, G. (2011) *Teaching Scotland’s Future. Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland.*

⁹ In 2012-13 the Spelling Bee Scottish Pilot featured three languages (German, French, Spanish) and involved 16 schools. By 2016-17 the rebranded Word Wizard competition featured five languages (Gaelic, German, French, Spanish, Mandarin) and involved 55 schools across Scotland.

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/S1S3/Celebratinglanguages/WordWizard/tabid/4782/Default.aspx>

¹⁰ Language Linking Global Thinking: 2014-2015 a partnership between SCILT and the British Council Scotland, involved four undergraduate students from one Scottish university on their year abroad in France connecting with schools in two local authorities. By 2017-18 the scheme was a partnership between SCILT, British Council Scotland, Project Trust, CISS, the National Union of Students and four Scottish universities with undergraduates and volunteers living and working in a variety of European, African, South American and Asian countries connecting with schools in nine local authorities.

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/BeyondSchool/LanguageLinkingGlobalThinking/tabid/5388/Default.aspx>

¹¹ Business Language Champions In 2012-13 the initiative began with 4 projects, by the end of 2016-17 there were over 100 registered BLC projects.

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/Business/Developinglanguageskillsfortheworldofwork/tabid/1597/Default.aspx>

In order to give the national steer, government established the Strategic Implementation Group¹² to develop an engagement strategy and oversee delivery of the 1+2 policy commitment. The group, jointly chaired by Education Scotland and Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) with representatives from SCILT, the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS), teaching unions, school leaders, parent organisations and local authorities, jointly hosted a series of five engagements between 2012 and 2015. The group was later expanded to include representation from teacher education and HE. A subsequent sub-group looked at wider engagement.

As 1+2 funding became available, local authorities seconded development officers to lead the implementation of the policy. As a result active participation in COALA grew exponentially. It became an important forum for a widening range of stakeholders and partners including development officers, HE and ITE, consular staff to meet and collaborate. As attendance rose, it became evident that the format was no longer fit for purpose. In 2016 COALA was rebranded as Languages Network Group for Scotland (LANGS)¹³ The meetings now have a theme and include interactive workshops led by members of the group.

In line with Recommendation 5 of the 1+2 Report, a total of 11 schools in all sectors agreed to undertake national pilots between 2012 and 2015 and were accorded additional funding and support from Education Scotland and SCILT. Each pilot had a different focus, all projects aiming to positively contribute to the learning and teaching of languages. Creative approaches were encouraged. The primary school pilots included introducing/embedding an L2 into the life of the school; establishing progression in language learning; developing literacy skills across several languages; using IT effectively to support primary language learning and developing interdisciplinary contexts for language learning. The secondary school projects focused on contextualised language learning to suit local employment opportunities and alternative qualification pathways for a variety of learners.

¹² Strategic Implementation Group

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/LanguageLearning/SIGremitandpurpose>

¹³ Languages Network Group Scotland (LANGS) formerly COALA

http://www.scilt.org.uk/Partnerships/LANGS_exCOALA/tabid/2098/Default.aspx

Each project was evaluated by an HMI Inspector. The individual evaluations and a document detailing the overarching themes that emerged were published¹⁴. In 2013-14 four regional learning events were held around Scotland in partnership between Education Scotland and SCILT. The events focused on the 1+2 pilot projects and the creative, solution-focused approach of school management, teachers and learners. A second round of regional events was organized in 2014-15. This time the focus was on approaches to L3 in all sectors and means of effecting positive uptake in secondary schools.

In autumn 2012, a working group was set up by the then HMI national specialist for languages at Education Scotland with a view to developing a progression framework for second and third level of CfE (P5 – S2/3, age 9-14/15) that would encourage a common understanding of assessment standards across stages, levels and sectors. The resulting framework was published in December 2013 with further refinement and exemplification published in 2015. In response, the Council of Europe ratified a Scottish version of the European Language Portfolio¹⁵.

In 2013 Education Scotland recruited a Senior Education Officer for Languages and Literacy who convened a further four working groups between 2013- 16 comprising practitioners and development officers from SCILT and local authorities. These resulted in the publication of:

- a comprehensive online resource with written guidance, video exemplification and vocabulary lists with audio files in six languages to support the earliest steps of primary language learning.
- curricular descriptors for first level CfE (earlier stages of primary school)¹⁶.
- a progression framework for first level CfE.

¹⁴ 1+2 pilot project evaluations

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/A12ApproachtoLanguageLearning/Implementation/tabid/4339/Default.aspx>

¹⁵ Scottish version of the European Languages Portfolio

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/News/NewsView/tabid/1311/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/4515/European-Language-Portfolio-ELP.aspx>

¹⁶ Addition of 1st level CfE Experiences and Outcomes <https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-%28building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5%29/Experiences%20and%20outcomes#lang>

As a one-stop shop for language learning and teaching, SCILT developed a new, independent website (<https://www.scilt.org.uk/Home/tabid/1069/Default.aspx>) which launched in October 2012, with a specific 1+2 area clearly identified on the landing page. Over the following few years SCILT also produced information leaflets for parents about the 1+2 policy in general, about the entitlement for all learners and about the impact of language learning on literacy.

2014-17: Middle stages of implementation

During this period, the University Council for Modern Languages Scotland (UCMLS) developed a network of local hubs aimed at increasing engagements between university to school, creating fora for cross-sector dialogue and raising the profile of languages education.

In 2014/15 SCILT's budget was increased, allowing us to further expand the team and develop new activities such as an annual series of business brunches¹⁷, led by business leaders and taking place across the country that aim to convince young people of the importance of languages as a key employability skill. In addition SCILT was able to develop much more support for community and heritage languages, including the national roll out of a Routes into Languages inspired poetry competition Mother Tongue, Other Tongue¹⁸.

A national languages leadership programme was launched by Education Scotland and SCILT in 2014¹⁹. Beginning with a week long Summer School, the programme provided an introduction to early language learning pedagogy, new online guidance resource, giving access to professional learning providers, networking and collaboration. This professional learning opportunity aimed to build capacity and contribute to local 1+2 implementation strategy. This Masters level programme has professional accreditation from the GTCS, the independent professional body for teachers.

¹⁷ Business Breakfasts 2015 became Business Brunches in 2016. More information <http://www.scilt.org.uk/Business/BusinessBrunches/tabid/6095/Default.aspx>

¹⁸ Mother Tongue Other Tongue multilingual poetry competition in Scotland <http://www.scilt.org.uk/MTOT/tabid/5841/Default.aspx>

¹⁹ Between 2014-2017 four cohorts numbering 148 participants undertook the national languages leadership programme with representatives from 31 of the 32 local authorities and 2 of the 7 TEIs.

Subsequent iterations of the programme have a much sharper focus on leadership and aim to create agency and advocacy for language learning in the local authorities.

In 2015 questions about language learning included in the Scottish Survey of Social Attitudes²⁰ revealed that the vast majority of those interviewed thought that language learning was very important for their children. As a result of these kinds of activities, government felt that it was increasingly important to harness the opinions of the business world and society in general in order to make the case for the policy. As a result, the initial Strategic Implementation Group (SIG)²¹ was split into SIG (education) and SIG (wider engagement). This has been an important move in that SIG (education) continues to provide the high-level steer in terms of the recommendations of the policy while the SIG (wider engagement) provides the forum for collaboration and inter-connection. This group comprises representatives of wide and disparate sectors of society who will help create the climate in which languages are valued, challenging the mind-set that English is enough.

Coming from discussion in the SIG education group, ADES collaborated with the University of Edinburgh to produce *A review of progress in implementing the 1+2 language policy*²². The findings of this report were important not just in giving a greater understanding of how the recommendations of the policy were being realised in eight local authorities across the country, it also highlighted important areas for development that informed SCILT's strategic plan 2016/17. The conclusions called for greater clarity and guidance around L3, more consistent approaches to cluster planning that include the secondary sector and more inter-authority collaboration and sharing of ideas.

On a positive note, it indicates that almost all local authorities are set to be able to fulfil the recommendations by 2021 and that the majority have the recommendations for language 2 in place, or are currently rolling out the strategy that will allow them to achieve the entitlement for L2 for learners from age 5 to 15, by the expected date. The researchers also found that the 1+2 policy was welcomed

²⁰ Scottish Survey of Social Attitudes 2016

http://www.scilt.org.uk/Portals/24/Library/research/SG_2016_ScottishSocialAttitudesSurvey.pdf

²¹ Strategic implementation Group

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/LanguageLearning/SIGremitandpurpose>

²² Christie, J., Robertson, B., Stodter, J. and O'Hanlon, F. (2016) *A Review of Progress in Implementing The 1+2 Language Policy*.

by most stakeholders including learners and their parents and that it represented “*a positive aspect of broad general education and one where the enthusiasm of teachers, parents and learners is demonstrated.*” (ibid: 6)

During discussions of the SIG (education) group’s response to the report it became evident that a plan was needed to join up the efforts of each member organisation. As a result, the SIG (education) strategic plan²³ was published in December 2016. This was followed by the cross-sector plan from UCMLS²⁴ in March 2017, and a new SCILT strategic plan in April 2017. Overall, this has fostered a much more cohesive, multi-agency approach to supporting the policy and marks an important step forward.

Also in March 2017, further curriculum guidance in the form of the Modern Languages Benchmarks²⁵ was published by Education Scotland along with benchmarks for the majority of other curricular areas. The Benchmarks incorporate previous publications and progression grids that have been developed across the policy implementation period so far.

In May 2016, a cabinet reshuffle led to the loss of the ministerial brief for Learning, Sciences and Scotland’s Languages on one hand, with the Deputy First Minister becoming Cabinet Secretary for Education on the other hand. This marked a major refocus on closing the attainment gap, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in Scottish education. At first it was perceived that there was a pulling back from 1+2. Subsequently, the publication of the Scottish Government’s *Delivery Plan for Education*²⁶ underlined the importance of developing the provision of language skills within education:

²³ Scottish Government (2017) *Language Learning in Schools – Strategic Plan for Implementation 2017-2021*.

²⁴ University Council for Modern Languages Scotland (2017) *1+2: Looking Back and Moving Forward. To 2020 and Beyond for Scotland’s 1+2 Language Policy*.

²⁵ CfE Modern Languages Benchmarks <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/curriculum-for-excellence-benchmarks>

²⁶ Scottish Government (2016) *Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education. A Delivery Plan for Scotland*.

'We will take action to help young people develop the skills and knowledge they will need in the workplace in particular in the areas of STEM, digital skills and languages' (Scottish Government, 2016: 9)

Furthermore, the Deputy First Minister clearly and publically demonstrated his commitment to 1+2 and to language learning as a core part of the curriculum and a benefit to society²⁷.

Looking forward 2017 and beyond

Most local authorities have chosen to concentrate on embedding L2 before turning their attentions to L3. However, as we move past the half-way stage, L3 is now beginning to present its own set of challenges. Timetabling issues in the secondary school have constrained how L3 can be realised in the secondary sector and also have implications for flexible pathways leading to national qualifications in the senior phase. Several schools have resorted to taking time away from L2 in order to offer L3, but this approach has implications for attainment. Concerns have been voiced that learners are not having sufficient time to develop the skills in L2 that will underpin their learning and enjoyment of L3 and support progression. SCILT has, therefore, developed a series of case studies with attendant curriculum maps that provide exemplification and guidance for school leaders on how some schools have creatively introduced L3²⁸. Crucial to the support offered by SCILT and Education Scotland, is a series of professional learning events across the country that bring language teachers and their school leaders together, to discuss examples, case studies, etc. and plan a way forwards that best suits their local circumstances. Building on the success of UCMLS school to HE partnerships, a similar network for further education has recently been established with a view to reenergising languages in the college sector.

²⁷ Deputy First Minister (DFM) Languages interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMf9NTYbahc&list=PLXe6vDIHtEF8MvvXGjEccfgmiu6Z3IS9P>

²⁸ L3 case studies on SCILT website

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/A12ApproachtoLanguageLearning/Fromprimarytosecondary/tabid/2248/Default.aspx>

In the interests of sustainability, we hope all stakeholders and partners will turn their gaze beyond the recommendations of the policy itself towards creating the climate where language learning becomes “the norm”.

5. A Box of Landscapes

We conclude the book by taking the image, appropriately, of a *Scottish* poet and illustrator (Thomas A and Laurie Clark) who together produced literally a box full of fragments of writing and drawing which showed tens of pathways towards reflecting aspects of landscapes. The items contained there are different in form and content but create a consistent and coherent whole both within the box and when they are extracted and viewed. This book has presented a similar menu of academic arguments and reports, snapshots from classrooms, signposts to resources and advocations to approach language teaching from specific pedagogical stances. It is not an instruction manual but a collage of thoughts which requires all readers to ponder and make sense for themselves of their own personal take on language learning and teaching. In harmony with the principles of both book and series, it offers creative ideas but asks the practitioners to become creative themselves in making them real and alive in classrooms. It asks them also to ensure that the children they teach do likewise. Children want to be creative as their energy-levels mean they will become bored with over-rigid frameworks and moulds, over-use of repetitive techniques, with an imposed belief that there is only one way. The education policy makers in England have too often believed that there are simple solutions and that we can ‘crack’ any problem with a prescription and a framework. It is actually much harder than that and the most creative people we have to ensure progress and success in our young people are to be found more amongst teachers in schools than amongst those who work in ministry offices. This is how it should be, but it requires the restoration of a level of trust in the pedagogical understanding and capabilities of the teaching workforce which is currently lacking if it is to mean anything tangible for schools and classrooms. There is no doubt that if we want to teach languages creatively, books like

this might be helpful, but in reality we need to trust and promote those who actually do it day after day.

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