

## 2.5 Helping secondary school Modern Language students to become autonomous and independent learners: mission impossible?

Lidia Acosta, Senior Language Teaching Fellow of Spanish, University of Strathclyde

My class is boring.... I can't remember all of the words...I don't know what to revise... I'm not good at languages.... I get too stressed in the oral exams, I don't see the point...I prefer to use Google translate...I don't want to memorise the entire glossary...Is this part of the exam?

These are common responses by many secondary school students who have lost their motivation and don't engage in the language learning process. The reasons behind this are various, from their inability to see how speaking a foreign language will be useful for them in their daily life, to the fact that classes based on controlled assessments tend to be boring and unappealing with coursework perceived as a memory task. As a result, their experience with Modern Language learning ends there, with some of them still regretting that years later. So, as Modern Language teachers, if we cannot change the assessment regime, can we at least, increase their engagement and motivation in and outside the classroom? Are we doing enough to help students become more autonomous learners? Modern Language teachers are always looking for new approaches and strategies to support students towards autonomy and independent learning in the classroom, but to what extent does motivation by the teacher play a role in the student's decision to favour this approach?

In this presentation, I will explore and discuss the benefits and challenges of some of the possible strategies, from using the target language as the main means of communication in the classroom to integrating creativity as an essential part of the teaching and learning language process.

17.30 – 18.45

### Enacting Plurilingualism: From student teacher to languages educator

Joanna McPake, Dr Alan Huang and Dr Inge Birnie, School of Education, University of Strathclyde

In this session we will present the National Framework for Languages (NFFL), recently developed by Scottish teacher educators concerned with plurilingualism in primary and secondary schools: i.e. with provision for modern languages, English as an additional language and Gaelic-medium education. The Framework, based on the GTC's Professional Standards, establishes core principles underpinning the professional practices of languages educators, and will inform initial teacher education, as it begins to be implemented across Scottish teacher education institutions from autumn 2018 onwards. Given the cross-curricular reach of the 1+2 initiative, aimed at ensuring that all Scottish pupils learn two other languages in addition to their mother tongue, and due to be fully implemented in schools by 2021, all Scottish teachers are – or will shortly be – languages educators.

This session focuses on how the principles set out in the Framework might be translated into classroom practice. For example, what does it mean to “foster positive attitudes towards all languages and cultures” (one of the elements listed under Professional Knowledge and Understanding) and what would such a classroom look like? Following the presentation and some initial debate discussions will continue with a glass of wine, in the diverse languages represented at the event: these will include French, German, Italian, Spanish, Gaelic, Mandarin and English. Participants will have the opportunity to contribute their thoughts to the early stages of research into the impact of the Framework.

