

UCML business meeting

Friday 14 January 2022, 10am-12pm



Item 4c: Wales Representative

Routes into Languages- Cymru

- 30 undergraduate students have been trained as Routes Cymru Student Language Ambassadors from Cardiff, Bangor, Cardiff Metropolitan, Swansea and Aberystwyth Universities to deliver digital sessions for secondary and primary schools in Wales this academic year.
- 22 Student Language Ambassador sessions (pre-recorded and live-streaming sessions) and events have been delivered by Routes Cymru since half term (November-December 2021).
- The Pupil Language Ambassador Training will be held a live event in February in collaboration with 'Globe from Home'. Pre-recorded monthly support will be delivered by the cultural institutes and Student Language Ambassadors to maintain engagement with schools.
- The first phase of the Primary Toolkit is coming to its final stages and will be available in French and Spanish on the website in the new year. To enable Routes Cymru to extend the toolkit further, the project was successful in a bid for funding through Cardiff University, and the toolkit will now be developed into German.
- Routes Cymru was profiled positively in the British Council Wales's '[Language Trends Wales 2021](#)' report as a leading example of the international dimension in schools.
- To complement the Governor's Toolkit that can be downloaded from our [website](#) we are currently developing a video championing the case for language learning by five Welsh businesses for the attention of Governing bodies.

Mentoring Programme

"Moving Online: A Post-16 languages recovery project in an ear of Covid-19" is an article published in 2020 and written by Rebecca Beckley, Lucy Jenkins, Rebecca Kirkby and Glesni Owen, which considers the impact of a 12-week intervention established by MFL Mentoring in support of post-16 learners in the first waves of Covid-19.

The Mentoring Programme Project was shortlisted in the 'Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year' category at this year's THE awards and was one of just five projects (of 160 shortlisted) from a Welsh university.

British Council- Cymru. Language Trends Wales 2021 Report

The *Language Trends Wales 2021* report was published by the British Council-Cymru. This time it was conducted by the Queen's University Belfast. Although there are still positive and optimistic points, the whole picture for MFL in Wales is still bleak:

1. Between 2015 and 2021 the GCSE entries in French and German have declined by almost a half whilst the numbers for GCSE Spanish have fluctuated in the same period. If this trend continues, it is possible to have fewer than 100 GCSE entries in French and German in Wales by 2030.
2. The COVID pandemic has been specifically challenging for languages other than French, German, Welsh and Spanish and figures show a decline from 628 students in 2018 to just 175 in 2021. This is partly due to the fact that these languages are often learned or taught through supplementary schools and were unable to receive certification, and partly because, as one teacher said, schools were "unable to sort out outside specialists to support the teaching of lesser taught languages and home languages."
3. A few schools commented that there were no students doing any MFL in year 10, with the corresponding impact this will have for A-Level.

The outcome of the report suggests that "there is growing evidence and momentum which supports a full review of international languages at secondary and post-16 college level to develop a National Languages Strategy for Wales (which) should include a long-term plan to invest in professional skills and resources for teachers." Added to this "urgent coordinated action is required, and the new curriculum provides a once in a generation opportunity to develop a truly multilingual society."

The outcomes of this project mirror the worrying situation of MFL in the UK which was also analysed in a blog published on December 7th, 2021, by Professor Charles Burdett and former UCML Chair Professor Claire Gorrara.

"Erasmus Programme" (Wales)

On 5th January 2022 the Welsh Government, through the Ministry of Education, informed that Wales was about to get a new International Learning Exchange Programme, creating life-changing opportunities to travel, learn and experience. The Government is asking for people to vote for the name of the new programme, with three possible options:

1. Amdani (“go for it”)
2. Taith (“Journey”)
3. Ennyn (evoke)

This programme, according to its website, “will fund people in Wales to study, volunteer and work all over the world, with our international friends coming to visit us here in Wales. It will create opportunities to broaden our horizons, experience new ways of life, and bring back lessons to share with people at home. It will take Wales to the world and bring the world to Wales.” (Home - Name the Opportunity)