



Maynooth Post-Primary School

Moyglare Road, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland

EOL-E-26

Case study
B

Project coordinator : Helen English

Project title: A Language & Culture Club for Maynooth Post- Primary School

What is the school already doing in these fields?

1. Language and languages	School curriculum languages: English, Irish, German, French, Spanish, Japanese
2. Valuing languages	Language Support Programme: International students are encouraged to maintain strong links to home languages, to improve literacy skills and to prepare for Leaving Certificate exams in home languages. Language exchange programmes for students learning German, French, Spanish. Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Language & Culture week)
3. Interculturality	Informal tandem language learning partnerships exist between international students and Irish students who wish to learn a new language. An international Language & Culture event + international lunch event each year in school. Visits, outings with Syrian refugee students attending St. Paul's School, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare. School tour to a European destination each year E-twinning + Erasmus+ school partnership projects
4. Enriching curricula	Cultural trips for international students to museums, galleries, places of interest in Dublin and country-wide. Participation in EU Council Model Debate for secondary schools. Debating/Public speaking. Extensive range of sporting activities. Transition Year programme offers many curriculum enrichment activities.
5. Everyday languages	English, Irish

Project aims

- Support and celebrate students' home languages and backgrounds
- Affirm, value, develop language biographies of students
- Develop welcoming and inclusive attitudes to diversity and minorities
- Involve parents as mentors to support the learning of students
- Develop links with the wider community
- Provide opportunities for interested/talented students to develop, extend their language repertoires
- Broaden language provision in whole school context and promote linguistic diversity
- Create autonomous and informed language learners
- Increase motivation and engagement among learners
- Encourage creativity and innovative approaches to language learning in less formal learning environments
- Develop plurilingual and intercultural education

The club will likely function as an after school initiative. Motivation and engagement are key to the approach with learners not only choosing the language they wish to learn, but also exercising choice in elements of what and how to learn.

Students who join the club will wish to learn another language and/or wish to strengthen their home language(s). They may require help with literacy in this language and may want to learn more about the culture of their home country. In some cases they may choose to do Leaving Certificate exam in this language where possible.

The **coordinator** acts as a facilitator of language learning rather than a teacher of a specific language by creating the conditions for students to manage their own learning processes and supporting them to learn collaboratively with their peers. The coordinator will liaise with parents, language teachers, volunteer mentors and students in overseeing the activities of the club.

Mentors are an integral part of this language project. Mentors are parents or volunteers from the local community who are expert linguists in the target languages that students are studying. They may be native speakers or people who are fluent due to an extended period of study, or time spent abroad.

Mentors come into school to work alongside the students, helping with language investigation, tasks, projects, pronunciation and role plays. At the start of each lesson a mentor is given guidance by the coordinator about the ways in which they can support the key objectives for the lesson.

Project summary

The club will work in tandem with the languages' provision already in place in school, and is not designed to 'teach' a language, but to equip students with the skills to develop as independent learners supported by school, home and a language proficient mentor from the community.

Action plan

<p>Period 1 : Initiating draft version of project, April – June 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Liaised with Clodagh Cooney, University of Leicester re Language Futures project. My EOL project is based on the Language Futures model, with some adaptations to suit Irish school context.- Drafted and submitted proposal for <i>Language & Culture Club</i> to school Principal & Deputy Principal in May 2017. Approval granted.- Discussed proposal with language teachers at end of year meeting in May 2017.- Explained proposal to international students and school management at end of year Review & Prize-giving ceremony for International Students in May 2017.	Project coordinator, School Management, language teachers.
<p>Period 2 : Planning, August – September 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Commenced EOL Action Plan for partner schools.- Studied project-relevant ECML literature.	Coordinator
<p>Period 3 : Implementing – September 2017 – April 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sept. 2017: Roll out of project with mentors sourced for Albanian, Lithuania, Russian.- Nov. 2017: International Language & Culture event- Nov. 2017 – Following on from International Language & Culture event, expand range of languages offered through club.- Dec. 2017: International lunch event	Coordinator, language teachers, parents/mentors
<p>Period 4 : Evaluating (interim report) January 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Albanian language club launched 8/11/2017 with senior student as school ambassador for Albania.- Set up Edmodo group for language club 15/11/2017- Lithuanian language club launched 15/11/2017 with senior student as school ambassador for Lithuania.- Russian language club launched 22/11/2017 with senior student as school ambassador & parent as Russian tutor/mentor.- Secured funding from school principal to purchase textbooks and other language-related materials- School will also fund refreshments for Language Club (rolls, wraps, sandwiches).- International Language & Culture Day 14/11/2017; parents of international students invited to attend. Syrian refugee students attending St. Paul's secondary school, Monasterevin also attended. EPAS (European Parliament Ambassador School) students from Mullingar secondary school also attended. 40 countries and 32 languages were represented. Samples of writing in all these languages were displayed in school.- 2017 Juvenes Translatores (European Commission) translation competition in 24 languages offered to all students in senior cycle.- International lunch 8/12/2017 hosted by international students.- 2017 Irish Translators' Association Translation Competition for secondary schools – one school winner for German.	Coordinator, school principal, ambassadors and mentor for Russian