

**Participant’s report**  
**to the National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point**

**Meeting report**

In the three weeks after the event, please complete this report. It contains two sections:

1. **Reporting:** this is intended as a feedback on the event, on what was learnt, on how the event will affect your work and on how it will be disseminated. In addition to the ECML National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point in your country the ECML will use the report<sup>1</sup> in the “Experts involved in ECML activities” section of each ECML member state website (please see <http://contactpoints.ecml.at>).

This section should be written in one of the project’s working languages.

2. **Public information:** this is intended as an information on the ECML project and its expected value for your country. The content should be of interest for a larger audience. Thus it should link up to interesting publications, websites, events etc. which were discussed on the occasion of the workshop or which are relevant in your country. The public information should be a short, promotional text of about 200 words.

This section should be written in (one of) your national language(s).

**The completed file should be sent to**

- the ECML National Nominating Authority and the National Contact Point in your country (contact details can be found at <http://www.ecml.at/aboutus/members.asp>)
  - and in copy to ECML Secretariat ([Erika.komon@ecml.at](mailto:Erika.komon@ecml.at))
- within the given deadline.

**1. Reporting**

<sup>1</sup> Only if you authorised the ECML to publish your contact details.

Name of the workshop participant	Sarah O'Beirne,
Institution	Institute of Technology Sligo, Sligo, Ireland
E-mail address	obeirne.sarah@itsligo.ie
Title of ECML project	Languages in Corporate Quality [LINCQ] Workshop
ECML project website	<a href="http://www.ecml.at/l1/Workshop/tabid/1497/language/en-GB/Default.aspx">http://www.ecml.at/l1/Workshop/tabid/1497/language/en-GB/Default.aspx</a>
Date of the event	21-22 November 2013
Brief summary of the content of the workshop	<p><b>Introduction to the concept of Quality in the Corporate world; definitions of non-formal and informal language learning; defining Quality with regard to objectives of the LINCQ project; projections re. viability of introducing informal and non-formal language learning as element of Corporate Quality; validation and recognition of outcomes of informal and non-formal language learning; presentation of structured interview questions and research on the role and application of plurilingualism in the corporate world (range and levels of languages used); presentation of software to aid non-formal and informal learning for autonomous learners (<i>Epos</i> project, U. Bremen); presentation on seeking justification for plurilingualism in workplace and education from the point of view of citizenship, mobility, business, professional and social integration; working groups to devise approaches to introduce non-formal and informal language learning into the Corporate Quality model; working groups to identify industry benchmarks and approaches which will advance the objectives of LINCQ; report of the rapporteur general of the workshop; conclusion on the impact of workshop outputs.</b></p>
What did you find particularly useful?	<p><b>All presentations were of interest. Particularly illuminating for those from a non-business background were the presentation by Mr Rolf Schärer on the attitude of the corporate world to concepts like introducing plurilingualism by informal/non-formal means and how this can be documented, assessed and validated. The presentation by Frank Heyworth on the meaning of Quality was lucid and very instructive as a guideline to understanding what Quality can be taken to mean in the context of the LINCQ project. The presentation by Mr Franz Mittendorfer underlining the constructive and valuable outcomes to be expected from a</b></p>

	<p>successfully implemented LINCQ programme from the point of view of mobility, citizenship, trust, employability, social and professional integration. Mr Mittendorfer additionally categorises non-formal and informal language learning and the ancillary skills this kind of learning involves under Key Competences with regard to staff development and creating a positive, progressive institutional culture in the corporate world. Mr Mittendorfer also underlined that collaboration between the worlds of business and of education is vital, not only to the implementation of the project objectives, but also to the future development of both sectors.</p>
<p>How will you use what you learnt/ developed in the event in your professional context?</p>	<p>Implementation of strategies to promote informal and non-formal language learning in the Institute of Technology Sligo Languages Policy. Presentation to Academic Council on the importance to utilising informal and non-formal language learning as a Quality feature in Organisational Culture. Propose to Institute of Technology Sligo to purchase Epos software (U. Bremen) to assist in peer-assisted and autonomous language learning.</p>
<p>How will you further contribute to the project?</p>	<p>This would very much depend on the nature of the tasks required. Given the comparatively heavy teaching load at the Irish Institutes of Technology, further collaboration might unfortunately not always be possible.</p> <p>Note to LINCQ project team:</p> <p>On discussion with HR colleagues, coverage of the completed project could possibly be disseminated among influential HR Journals such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>International Journal of Training and Development</i> <a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-2419">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-2419</a></li> </ul> <p><i>People Management:</i> <a href="http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/">http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/</a></p> <p><i>Society for Human Resource Management:</i> <a href="http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.shrm.org/Pages/default.aspx</a></p>
<p>How do you plan to disseminate the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to colleagues</li> <li>- to a professional association</li> <li>- in a professional journal/website</li> <li>- in a newspaper</li> <li>- other</li> </ul>	<p>Dissemination of Workshop proceeds to colleagues in education <i>via</i> 1) Presentation and 2) Report contributed to Institute magazine and Institute website.</p> <p>3) Presentation of Workshop proceeds to colleagues in the Irish Institutes of Technology Languages Strategy Network.</p>

## 1. Public information

Short text (about 200 words) for the promotion of the ECML event, the project and the envisaged publication with a focus on the benefits for target groups. This text should be provided in your national language(s) to be used for dissemination (on websites, for journals etc.).

The ECML workshop entitled *Languages in Corporate Quality*, an element of the CoE LINCQ Project, was held at the ECML premises in Graz, Austria on November 21-22, 2013. The principal objective of the LINCQ Project is to seek out viable means by which to introduce non-formal and informal language learning as an element in Corporate Quality, thereby consolidating the effort to create plurilingual workspaces throughout the EU and wider Europe, and not solely in bi- or trilingual regions. The workshop comprised broad representation from across Europe and North America with 24 countries represented. Presentations and video/audio-linked contributions came from Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, Russia, UK, and Armenia. All of these societies are plurilingual whether through geography, history, migration or economic development; most of the countries represented routinely use one or more foreign languages in their Business Sectors. The task of the workshop was work out a strategy for incorporating plurilingualism as a concept in Corporate Quality so that all of Europe can begin properly to gain from the enormous linguistic wealth it possesses, not just in European languages but in world languages.

The workshop's initial task was to work out a definition of Quality in the context of introducing plurilingualism to the Corporate world through non-formal and informal learning methods. It was considered that the most effective means to promote plurilingualism in Corporate organisational culture was through the Corporate Quality Management structure, possibly awarding a Quality Mark/Award to workspaces which strive to incorporate plurilingualism.

Working groups during the Workshop discussed industry benchmarks for plurilingualism; areas within corporate culture which could benefit from informal and non-formal language learning; participation in plurilingualism initiatives driven by employee rather than employer; specific business sectors such as Tourism where the initiative could be applied to obvious benefits.

Evidence was heard from a selection of sectors (automotive; legal; marketing) about the increased use of several languages in the business world in order to access international markets and to expand business activity and research opportunities.

As an aid to informal and non-formal learning, the University of Bremen introduced its *Epos* software programme which is a system to support autonomous and peer-assisted learning and which can be used in conjunction with educational platforms such as Moodle.

The workshop finally discussed the concept of plurilingualism as one of the key competencies sought by employers who seek to expand their business internationally or whose activity is export-oriented. Eurobarometer surveys have shown that in every age-group from the 20s to the retired, being able to speak one or more foreign languages is desirable for employability, integration, social cohesion and mobility. Ongoing dialogue between the world of education and the world of business was encouraged so that both sectors work out a common understanding on the value of plurilingualism to

the ambitions and development of society as a whole. In building this relationship frequent allusion was made to the importance of trust, of assessment of expertise and of validation of expertise. It was felt that full utilisation of the CEFR framework and of the European Language Passport was important in building this context of trust between the corporate and education world with regard to realising productively the objectives of creating the plurilingual workplace and of supporting formal and informal language learning.

An argument in to support the introduction of informal/non-formal or even formal language learning into corporate training programmes is that language learning can be seen to deliver tangible long-term results. If the Wall St Journal reported in 2012 that the correlation between training and actually learning something of lasting value is very weak, and that only 10% is retained from most in-house training programmes<sup>2</sup>, language learning might assist in reversing this trend. This article explains that an effective training programme is characterised by design, by training needs analysis and clearly defined outcomes including testing on a formal and informal basis. These are the hallmarks of a well-planned language programme. WSJ also reminds us that successful corporate training takes place where the organization itself sets signals that learning is important to its culture.

The ongoing work of the LINCQ project will need to identify those organisations in the corporate world where plurilingualism can be proven to be of added benefit and to assist those organisations in developing systems for training, assessment and validation which are agreeable to the overall training objectives of the company and to its organisational culture.

---

<sup>2</sup> Silverman, Rachel E (2012) 'So Much Training, So Little to Show for It' in *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 26, 2012