



Nuffield Language Project grants

The following are some of the projects funded by the Nuffield Languages Programme. They cover a diverse range of languages and language teaching and learning issues: from Welsh to Spanish to Urdu; from MFL in primary schools to Higher Education institutions to adult learning.

The language journey starts at...

Recipient: The Russian Language Kids' Club

Awarded: October 2003

A small group of volunteers is being supported by Nuffield to develop this non profit-making organization and to promote its activities. The group believes that the easiest and most spontaneous phase for learning any foreign language occurs in pre-school / infant-age children. To this end, the members have set up a Russian language playgroup club whose weekly programme includes puppetry, story-telling and interactive events – all taking place in Russian. The Nuffield grant will be used:

- to build up an Information and Resource Centre;
- to raise awareness of the Club, sharing information with a wider audience; and
- to disseminate the advantages of early language acquisition and bilingual education.

The Information and Resource Centre will contain new materials sourced in Russia. An information pack about the Club's activities will be prepared and disseminated and a website developed which will enable an exchange of ideas and information. A seminar is to be planned around the theme of spontaneous language learning for pre-school children.

Promoting and evaluating the use of the European Language Portfolio in Higher Education

Recipient: University of Southampton

Awarded: March 2003

Language competence should be valued, whether acquired within the educational system or outside in the community. This project addresses the need for a national standards framework or benchmark for languages in the UK, and will actively promote the take-up of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in UK Higher Education amongst a range of learners.

The project, managed by Vicky Wright, Director of the Centre for Language Study at the University of Southampton, also aims to:

- explore the usefulness of the Common European Framework as a common reference point or benchmark;
- strengthen interest in a range of languages;
- promote the development of good language and lifelong learning strategies;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the ELP as a reflective and reporting tool.

A number of partner institutions will run mini-projects, using an adult portfolio of their choice in order to evaluate their individual usefulness for different contexts. Students who are specialist linguists will take part in the pilots, together with those who are studying other subjects.

Project partner institutions arranging Socrates exchange placements will be encouraged to work with their European partners to develop the use of the 'Passport' section of the ELP. This records language competence in terms of the Common European Framework. It is hoped that, in this way, the problems experienced by sending and receiving universities of the recognition of language level will be minimized.

Findings, due early next year, are likely to be of equal interest to adult education providers of language courses and employers who place a value on the language competence of their staff.

Business Language Champions Scheme

Recipient: Leeds Metropolitan University

Awarded: February 2003

Following a successful campaign during the European Year of Languages in 2001, the Centre for Language Study (CLS) at Leeds Metropolitan University is extending its Business Language Champions Scheme in 2003-2004 in a bid to stop the decline in post-14 language learning in the region. CLS is setting out to identify Business Language Champions amongst local employers – business people or professionals who will visit schools in the area to raise awareness of language learning among the pupils, and to demonstrate to them the advantages and use of language skills for a variety of jobs and careers at all levels.

The Regional Languages Network Yorkshire & Humber is a key partner in the project, and contact has now been made with a number of local schools and business intermediaries. A brochure outlining the scheme and inviting participation has been produced.

The Business Language Champions Scheme was launched by Denise Jagger, Company Secretary of ASDA plc, on 10 September 2003 at Leeds Met.

Models, Methodologies and Materials: Portals for Foreign Languages in the Primary School

Recipient: University of Nottingham

Awarded: February 2003

The University of Nottingham's project aims to develop models to meet the range of expertise, teaching context and resources in individual schools within the city and the region.

The team plans to produce:

- An outline of three 'staged' models for primary language teaching. These potential models will be documented as case studies which give clear guidance to other adopters. Schools will be able to select from the three approaches according to expertise, resources and need and subsequently to fine-tune them for their own use.
- Methodological advice in the form of a teacher handbook (also available electronically) evaluated by teachers, pupils and the HE project team, and applicable to all commonly taught modern foreign languages.
- Schemes and materials in French, German and Spanish (both paper-based and electronic) which exemplify task types and include a good practice starter module.

The project team works closely with initiatives such as the DfES/CILT schemes to develop expertise in primary language learning and is in contact with Nottingham Trent University with regard to its Nuffield-funded project Laying the foundations: Primary Spanish in Nottingham.

Laying the foundations: Primary Spanish in Nottingham

Recipient: Nottingham Trent University

Awarded: January 2003

Targeting the need to establish a body of teachers competent in delivering languages to primary school children, the Department of Modern Languages at Nottingham Trent University has four strands to this project beginning in September 2003.

- To support and develop the linguistic, cultural and teaching skills in Spanish for teachers in inner-city Nottingham primary schools. Participants will attend a two-hour weekly seminar, supported by the Spanish Embassy's Consejería de Educación. The project is expected to end with a short immersion course in Spanish language, culture and language teaching methods in Spain. The project team will also be acting as mentors for the PGCE Spanish students doing their teaching placements in Nottingham schools.
- To create a range of teacher training and teacher development materials.
- To create primary Spanish teaching materials and activities.
- To provide an international dimension alongside the teaching of Spanish in those primary schools. Online international networks will be developed so that language teachers can share their experiences, and existing links between Nottingham City primary schools and the Avila School of Education (University of Salamanca) will be strengthened.

The project is building on past success – in 2001 Nottingham Trent, in partnership with the University of Salamanca, won a European Award for Languages for its project 'Spanish language and culture training', organised by Nottingham City LEA.

British Airways Flag Award for Schools

Recipient: British Airways Community Learning Centre

Awarded: October 2002

Winner of a Languages for Export award in 2001 for its innovative Flag Award for Schools

scheme, British Airways Community Learning Centre is being funded by the Nuffield Languages Programme to expand this highly successful project.

The scheme was devised when British Airways discovered, on introducing a language requirement as part of the recruitment criteria for new cabin crew, that the necessary skills were not to be found amongst the majority of UK applicants.

The Flag Award is a 'qualification' requiring communication skills and focusing on the practical application of the language. The test is a 15 minute oral exercise including:

- general conversation on everyday GCSE-type topics;
- making a public announcement in the target language;
- two role plays without scripts;
- paraphrasing statements from the target language into English and vice versa.

Schools and colleges offering the test have noted that the BA programme:

- supports them to meet some of their objectives as Language Colleges;
- encourages the partnership between their school and BA;
- illustrates the need for languages in the workplace;
- motivates young learners to continue language learning;
- supports them in raising the profile of community languages;
- challenges young learners to test their own limits in a stress-free situation.

An article in TES (May 2002) stimulated a number of enquiries from schools keen to take part in the scheme. The BA Community Learning Centre is taking advantage of the interest shown by promoting the scheme to schools around airports in areas outside their base in the South East and Central South regions – Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol. 20-25 schools will be involved, with up to 60 teachers being trained to deliver the Flag Award. A range of at least 10 languages will be offered.

European Awards for Languages

Recipient: Norfolk Adult Education Service

Awarded: September 2002

The European Award for Languages is a European-wide initiative supported by the European Commission and, in the UK, by the DfES. The aim of the award is to promote best practice in innovative and effective language learning initiatives.

CILT, assisted by an advisory panel, is responsible for organising the Awards in the UK. Each year, the panel selects 12-15 projects to receive an Award.

This year, the Nuffield Languages Programme offered a special prize of £1,000 for the project, selected from among the Award winners, which made the greatest contribution to translating the Nuffield Inquiry's recommendations into practice.

The winners of the Nuffield prize were Norfolk Adult Education Service, who challenged the vicious circle that can be created when businesses, in particular smaller companies, don't export because they don't have language skills ... and they don't invest in language skills because they're not exporting. They set up E-urocom, which provides an innovative combination of ICT and language skills to a range of local and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Norfolk. The package includes the design of foreign language websites for

individual or clusters of businesses, enabling them to reach and compete in new European markets. Satisfied customers include a small specialist brewery which sells to France, a group of Bed & Breakfast owners advertising in Germany, and a company specialising in automotive design which deals with German manufacturers.

They were presented with their award by Sir Trevor McDonald at a ceremony held at the German Embassy on the 26th September.

Arousing a Taste for Languages at School (ATLAS)

Recipient: University College London

Awarded: July 2002

ATLAS is co-ordinated by UCL's Department of Education and Professional Development. Funded by Nuffield, UCL and the Centre for British Teachers, the project targets pre-university students and adult lifelong learners with the aim of addressing the decline in the number of students studying languages beyond 16 in the belief that attitudes to language learning can be changed. The project is hoped to arouse the interest, in particular, of underachievers.

During the first phase of the project, a survey of the attitudes to language learning has been carried out amongst approximately 700 14-19 year old students from the ATLAS partner schools and FE colleges. The next phase will see specific partner schools piloting an interactive virtual learning environment (to be made more widely available at a later date) to encourage students to 'taste' some of the more unusual European languages: Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Polish, Portuguese and Russian.

¡Olé! Spanish in the Primary Classroom

Recipient: University of the West of England

Awarded: July 2002

A group of West Country primary school teachers has been 'fast-tracked' to enable them to deliver some Spanish to their pupils. Led by the University of the West of England and supported by the Education Department of the Spanish Embassy, the project was cited as an example of good practice in the Languages Strategy document for England, *Languages for All: Languages for Life* (p.20).

Building on experience gained during a European Year of Languages project, ¡Olé! Spanish in the Primary Classroom focused specifically on the needs of primary schools and involved training teachers in ab-initio Spanish, as well as language-teaching methodology. Learning materials produced by the team were used over a twelve-week course, partly for classroom-based teaching (36 hours) and partly for self-study (approximately 24 hours). The teachers reached a level of grammatical competence equivalent to GCSE – helped, no doubt, by an innovative approach to learning the reflexive passive: Spanish recipes were used, the food cooked and the whole process described (in Spanish) whilst eating the results!

Participants were unanimous in their praise for the course and are keen to put their new skills into practice after the summer break. A trip to Madrid to visit the schools with whom links have been forged has been planned for February 2004.

Languages work! / Mae ieithoedd yn gweithio!

Recipient: Ceredigion & Carmarthenshire LEAs

Awarded: May 2002

The number of pupils in Wales opting to study a foreign language after the age of 14 is not high. To address this issue, Ceredigion & Carmarthenshire LEAs, supported by CILT Cymru and Agenda Studios, were given top-up funding from the Nuffield Languages Programme for their imaginative project to produce two 20-minute videos (one in Welsh and one in English) to show the benefits of language learning.

The videos have been produced by Agenda, a professional local television company, and feature a range of people who use their knowledge of another language in their work. Huw Edwards, the newsreader, has been involved in the project.

The finished videos, aimed at Key Stage 4 pupils, are being distributed to all schools and careers offices in Wales, and form a central part of CILT Cymru's campaign to enthuse children.

Celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity in the primary school

Recipient: Coventry City Council

Awarded: May 2002

Coventry LEA is seeking to foster a positive attitude to cultural and linguistic diversity at an early age, using the time and opportunity afforded by literacy and citizenship activities in city primary schools.

Working with six primary schools in Coventry, the team has developed a range of resources, including a video for distribution to all local primary schools, a materials pack, and The Language Investigator website. A primary school MFL newsletter, highlighting a range of approaches to primary MFL, including language appreciation, has been produced with the support of Tile Hill Wood School and Language College and is to be circulated termly.

The project, led by Nick Jones (MFL Adviser) and supported by the Nuffield Foundation, has helped Coventry in its successful bid to the DfES to become a pathfinder for Primary MFL.

Teach a Friend a Language (TAFAL)

Recipient: Woodbridge High School

Awarded: May 2002

Students at Woodbridge High School, a specialist language college in Essex, speak over 50 languages between them. The TAFAL competition was originally created in 2001 to allow students to demonstrate and celebrate their linguistic and cultural diversity. The Nuffield Languages Programme gave an award for the project to be extended in 2002, and the competition has just been run for a third year.

To prepare for the competition, pupils work in pairs over a few months to teach each other

their home language, supported by teaching staff. A dialogue is then performed before external judges on the day of the competition, and prizes awarded. The competition has attracted much interest, both from the press (TES, October 2002), and from other schools. Woodbridge has designed an information pack that it sends to enquirers and presentations have been arranged in local schools.

In addition to the growing popularity of the TAFAL competition locally and nationally, Woodbridge has found that the competition has had a positive effect on their students, broadening their attitudes to language learning generally, and to community languages in particular. The school is now hoping to involve parents in a similar exercise at a PTA evening.

Yorktalk 2001

Recipient: College of Ripon & York St John

Awarded: June 2001

Yorktalk 2001, which took place in York city centre on 29 September, was a project developed to celebrate the European Year of Languages.

Co-ordinated by Ann Gregory from York St John, the event brought together language trainers, providers, pupils, students, businesses, the general public and tourists to celebrate and raise awareness of linguistic diversity in the city.

The programme included:

- an exhibition of advice about language-learning;
- a display of a pupils' poster competition;
- a 'languages treasure hunt', with clues displayed in different languages in the city centre;
- a series of performances on an outdoor stage, which involved 6th form rock bands performing songs in German written especially for the day, young Nepalese dancers, African drumming, choirs singing in 12 different languages and school children demonstrating games, role plays and songs;
- a 'languages parade' through the city centre, representing a range of languages, including European and world languages which are to be found in York.

The most visible event was a mass balloon release. 1000 supporters, including the Lord Mayor, Eric Hawkins, pupils, students and adults, wrote balloon tags in over 50 different languages. The sea of bright blue and yellow balloons were paraded through the main pedestrian centre of York by pupils and performers, before being released into the sky.

There's a 'U' in Europe

Recipient: Edinburgh Telford College

Awarded: June 2001

There's a 'U' in Europe, organised by the Edinburgh Telford College in June 2001 and co-ordinated by Gill Turner, was a European Year of Languages activity.

The project aimed to raise awareness of, and interest in, language learning by demonstrating various enjoyable ways of learning. It also set out to celebrate the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe.

The key activities included:

- A demonstration of language learning using online facilities and by means of taster sessions in a range of languages at the College.
- The 'Just say it' challenge: a video showing people from all walks of life saying something in a European language.
- An exhibition of all things European, including information on student exchange programmes.
- The College Dinner, run by students with disabilities. A different European country was chosen as the theme each day (France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Ireland and Germany) and the language and food chosen to represent it.