# MFL Mentoring Steering Group Update
# January 2022

The following report provides details of the progress of the two streams of activity relating to the MFL Student Mentoring project. These are:

1. The Year 8/9 Online Mentoring Programme.
2. The Teacher Resources and School Support Programme.

The project team are grateful for the support of colleagues throughout the last few months.

# 1. Year 8/9 Online Mentoring

## Project Summary
The project has received funding to work with a minimum of 45 schools and a maximum of 65 schools in the academic year 2021-22. Two rounds of 6 sessions of mentoring will be delivered to Year 8 and 9 learners. For the second semester, as for the first, all mentoring sessions will take place online. Turbo-mentoring has also been successfully reintroduced and facilitated online.

## School Partners
As of 14th January 2022, 59 partner schools have confirmed their placement, 11 of whom are doing turbo-mentoring. The team are waiting on a further six schools to confirm. The breakdown of all confirmed schools is as follows:
- Partneriaeth: 12
- GWE: 13
- CSC: 13
- EAS: 15
- No consortia affiliation: 6

**Total: 59**

## Individual School Report
In September-October 2021, the learner baseline survey gathered 5,803 responses which have been used as a basis for the individual school reports. 42 schools have requested a report with 20 being sent before Christmas and the other 22 being sent by 21st January. Consortia aggregated reports will also be sent by 28th January.

The reports consider the learner intentions on whether or not to take the GCSE in relation to their demographic (gender, ethnicity and language profile), enjoyment of different school subjects and their ability or desire to travel. The reports also address motivations and barriers to taking languages for GCSE. Individual school data has been contextualised with data from all schools across Wales and reference to secondary research, such as Language Trends Wales. Unfortunately, due to limited

resource the reports are only available in English. The aim is that any future reports will be available in both English and Welsh.

Teachers have been asked to feedback on how useful the reports have been and how they intend to use them within their context. The three schools who have so far fed back agreed that the reports were '*very useful'* and that they would '*definitely'* like a similar report next year.

## Mentors and Accreditation

Mentor attrition has been higher this year compared to previous years. This may be as a result of continued stress due to the disruption caused by the pandemic. Some students have also cited family circumstances, including bereavement, as a reason for not continuing.

Fortunately, there are sufficient mentors to fill the number of school placements with some mentors taking on a full mentoring placement as well as turbo-mentoring. This has meant that there was no need to recruit and train a new group of mentors in January which is a very time-consuming process for the project team. 55 mentors have confirmed their participation with the project in the second semester with a further 4 waiting to confirm.

As of 14th January 2022, the number of confirmed mentors per university was as follows:
- Cardiff University: 31
- Bangor University: 8
- Swansea University: 7
- Aberystwyth University: 5
- University of Wales Trinity St. David: 0
- Oxford University: 4

**Total: 55**

### Accreditation

All mentors are offered the opportunity to complete the accreditation created by the project in the last academic year. Click here to view Unit 1 and here to view Unit 2.

9 students completed Unit 1 in the first semester (3 from Cardiff, 2 from Swansea, 2 from Bangor and 2 from Aber). 2 students have so far signed up to complete Unit 2 in the second semester (2 from Cardiff). All students are able to complete either unit in the second semester with the deadline to sign up on 4th February.

## 2. Teacher Resources

### Project Summary

This stream of the project focuses on increasing project sustainability and reach by developing resources that will be accessible to all schools in Wales via the MFL Mentoring website. The resources will target Year 7 learners and will support the transition to the Curriculum for Wales.

Confirmation of the proposal for the Year 7 learning resources was received from Welsh government in June 2021. Work for this stream commenced mid-June 2021 and will run until end of March 2022. This work will be developed during an 8-month period with the aim to user-test a small set of learning resources in early 2022, to validate format and user experience.

## Focus Group

The focus group was scheduled to meet in November 2021 and December 2021. The meeting in November took place successfully with teachers attending from across the 4 consortia. Teachers were presented with an example of a resource in advance. Attendees were asked to provide feedback on the resource and this was recorded in the meeting minutes. A segment of this reads as follows:

- A member noted that they felt this was exactly the type of short, sharp resources that were needed to help teachers implement the CfW. They said that they were excited to see further resources that the team develop as they felt they were going to be very supportive to schools and teachers in aiding their understanding of the CfW.
- A member felt that learners would engage really well with the content and felt that the learning experience was very user friendly.
- A member felt the resources could dig deeper and add greater depth in terms of multilingualism. They encouraged the project team to include more vocabulary that would prompt learners to make links between different languages, in the same way they are encouraged to do so in the primary setting.

Further work and iterations of the resource have since taken place and were shared with the focus group ahead of the scheduled meeting in December 2021 which was cancelled to alleviate additional pressures on teachers at that time. Teachers were offered the opportunity to feedback on resources that had already been shared with them via a Padlet link. Further focus groups are scheduled to be help in February and March.

## Surveying

A key objective of this phase of development was to collate teacher thoughts and views. A detailed survey was shared with our network and closed mid-October. The survey itself is available here: https://tinyurl.com/cfnr44na.

Key details relating to completion data are:
- The survey was completed by 49 teachers across 49 different schools.
- 47 full responses were received and 2 partial responses.
- 29% of responding schools had a higher FSM percentage (29%) than the national average of 22.9%.
- There was a good geographical spread of responses from across the consortium.
- The majority of teachers surveyed teach French in Year 7.

A presentation of the key conclusions drawn from the survey can be found here. These findings have informed decisions relating to the resource development.

## Collaboration

The project continues to work with a small team of colleagues based at Ulster University creating a Language Awareness for Key Stage 3 ('LAwKS-3') module. More information about the project can be accessed here. We continue to learn from their linguistics expertise and are reshaping some of their detailed linguistics resources to be used in Wales.

## Resource Development

The team have developed a format for the resources using PowerPoint and a functionality within PowerPoint called Zoom. You can find out more about this functionality here. The Focus Group have agreed with this approach and approved the presentation of the resources.

Each resource is extensive, but sections within the resource are designed to 'stand-alone', allowing teachers to utilise individual sections as suits their needs and contexts. Each resource includes full notes to support teacher delivery and includes a wide variety of possible extension activities. All resources include worksheets that can be printed out and given to learners, and all resources offer differentiated activities to scaffold learning. Resources focus on a specific object or theme as a way to discover multiple aspects and perspectives.

So far, resources completed include:
- Alebrijes
- Biscuits
- Lego
- Idioms
- Surfing

All resources are subject to rigorous quality assurance processes and will require final approval from the Focus Group. Further resources are currently in development.

## User Testing

The five completed resources outlined above will be released for user-testing to teachers in the Focus Group at the beginning of February. Feedback will be collated from learners and teachers. Further development of resources will be informed by this feedback. A short report will be published with the outcomes from the user-testing which will inform any further iteration of the resources beyond March 2022, should funding be confirmed.

## 3. Other Outcomes

**Times Higher Education 2021 Award Nomination:** GO attended the award celebrations in London funded by Cardiff University. Whilst the project didn't win the award, we were delighted to be nominated and would like to thank everybody for their support and well wishes.

**Covid Recovery Funding:** in collaboration with Physics Mentoring, the team have been approached to bid for funding from the Welsh Government Covid Recovery fund to scope, develop and pilot a post-16 cross-subject mentoring programme. An outcome from this funding bid should be known later in January.

**Collaboration with MISTI Global Teaching Labs in Wales:** the project has developed a partnership with the Global Teaching Labs in Wales. Mentors have been invited to participate in a speaker series and a variety of workshops to support learners in Wales, in collaboration with university students from MIT who are undertaking placements with schools in Wales. These events have formally only focused on STEM subjects. The project is delighted to be involved to develop a cross-curricular focus in support of the ambitions of the Curriculum for Wales.

**Training on using the WIMD framework:** colleagues attended training on using the Welsh Government's WIMD framework. This training will inform thinking about how to reach the most deprived areas of Wales where uptake of languages will be lowest.

**Contribution to event with Ulster University colleagues:** the project has been invited to contribute to an event in Northern Ireland in March, launching the work of the colleagues supporting the project's learning resources work. Details this event can be found here.

**Collaboration on research grant:** the project has been invited to collaborate with an Academic at Leeds University working with schools in Wales to map transnational experiences of landslide disasters. Aberfan is part of this work. The project will support the multilingual element of this project.

**Institute of Government and Public Policy Presentation:** CG will be giving a presentation on the MFL Mentoring project at an event on 'Shaping the Future of Modern Foreign Languages in Education.'

**The Alliance of Modern Languages, Area Studies and Linguistics Subject Associations UK (AMLUK) Annual Symposium Event March 25th:** LJ will be giving a presentation at this event, entitled: 'International Languages in Secondary Schools in Wales: Why Don't Learners Choose Languages and How Can Mentoring Provoke Change?'

**Future Leaders Fellows Development Network Session:** in collaboration with Physics Mentoring, LJ will be providing a session for the FLFDNetwork. The session is entitled: 'Research in Practice: Policy, Practice and Schools Engagement.'

**Promotional video:** the project is finalising a short promotional video which outlines the project's vision. This will be shared shortly.

**Funded Internship:** the project had the pleasure of hosting Georgie McGarry as an intern for 6 weeks between November and December 2021. Georgie supported data processing and analysis which will be used in future research relating to the project. The team would like to thank Georgie for her hard work.