

**Contract for Digital Languages Mentoring Project**  
**Appendix A – Contractors Solution Attachments**

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## Question 1 – Past Project Evaluation



### Digi-mentoring project 2018

#### Evaluation report July 2018

'The world is different than I thought'

(Digi-mentee)

#### Key findings

- 43% of pupils mentored opted to take a GCSE in MFL. This represents a conversion rate of 26%-28% of those who had previously been undecided or said that they would not do so.<sup>1</sup>
- More than nine out of ten pupils rated their experience in the Digi-mentoring project as 'Excellent' (49%) or 'Good' (43%). Over half (58%) said it had changed the way they think about languages in relation to their futures and another third thought that perhaps it had.
- Beyond the groups taking part in Digi-mentoring, take up for MFL in Key Stage 4 increased more generally in all except two of the project schools.
- These results indicate that Digi-mentoring is at least as effective as face-to-face mentoring, and in some cases may be more so. However, Digi-mentoring is more difficult to organise than face-to-face mentoring. Access to technology and the internet in schools adds another layer of difficulty and has been problematic.
- More than three quarters of pupils said that there had been problems in their school in relation to access to computers and the internet. Although in the majority of cases (51%) these were 'small problems quickly resolved', they were deemed severe enough by 26% of respondents to interfere with their ability to benefit from the programme.
- There was widespread agreement among mentees, mentors and teachers that the on-line materials and activities were of high quality, interesting and appropriate. The use of Hwb has presented certain limitations, particularly in terms of ease of on-line interaction between mentors and pupils but also in relation to the types of activity which can be included.

#### Overview

The Digi-mentoring project is an extension of the MFL mentoring project which ran in 2016/17, involving students from four universities working with local schools to support take up of MFL.<sup>2</sup> It was developed to meet the needs of schools and pupils for whom geographic and other factors made face-to-face mentoring unfeasible and to trial a less resource-intensive way of mentoring pupils with the potential to be rolled out more widely. Pupils received face-to-face mentoring at the beginning and the end of the programme and engaged with their mentors at a distance using interactive materials and resources online.

The project was originally conceived as a pilot involving ten schools with ten pupils in each. At a late stage in planning, the pilot was extended to include 19 schools. Several withdrew within days of the project commencing and their places were taken by new schools which came into the project within days of the intervention commencing. Eighteen schools started the project, however one was unprepared to deliver the digital element and special arrangements were made for the mentor to deliver an extended face-to-face session instead.

#### Objectives

The purposes of the evaluation exercise are to:

<sup>1</sup> Percentages are calculated on less than one hundred pupils and should be read as indicative only.

<sup>2</sup> Alcantara Communications, *Raising the profile of MFL mentoring initiative. Evaluator's final report*, July 2017.

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- Evaluate the success of the Digi-mentoring project in increasing take up of MFL at GCSE among mentees.
- Gauge the success of the Digi-mentoring project in engendering enthusiasm for languages, broadening horizons and raising expectations (as regards pupils' future careers)
- Draw comparisons with the results of face-to-face mentoring.
- Investigate the quality of the interaction via the online platform, and its attractiveness for pupils.
- Ascertain what level of digital literacy is required in order to benefit, and whether a different platform would be more suitable.

### Data collection

The evaluation exercise draws on evidence from the following sources:

| Source                                                                                              | Status                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Baseline pupil survey                                                                               | 781 responses                                                                                                                                |
| Baseline school survey                                                                              | 17 responses                                                                                                                                 |
| Interviews with mentors                                                                             | 10 interviews with mentors from all four universities, carried out by Skype and telephone, 22 March 2018                                     |
| Interviews with teachers                                                                            | 6 interviews carried out in March/April: one in person, 2 by phone and 3 by email questionnaire                                              |
| Interviews with pupils                                                                              | 9 interviews carried out face-to-face at Pencoed School, 13 March 2018                                                                       |
| Exit survey of all pupils taking part in Digimentoring                                              | 87 responses                                                                                                                                 |
| Interviews with project team                                                                        | Interview with project manager carried out 23 April 2018. Interviews with the mentor consultant and the technical manager 8 and 17 May 2018. |
| Feedback via email and from project meetings                                                        | Throughout the project                                                                                                                       |
| Information on take up of each pupil taking part in the Digi-mentoring.                             | Available from 18 schools as at June 2018                                                                                                    |
| Schools which also took part in the Face-to face mentoring: take up data by individual pupil.       | Available from 3 schools/colleges as at June 2018                                                                                            |
| Overall figures for take up in each participating school for the Year 10 starting in September 2018 | Available from 15 schools as at June 2018                                                                                                    |

### Findings

#### 1. Baseline pupil surveys

A baseline survey for pupils was designed with two purposes in mind. Firstly, to inform the selection of pupils to take part in the project: schools were asked to select pupils who were unsure about whether to opt for MFL at GCSE, who were also confident users of IT. Secondly, data was collected for the purposes of tracking

pupil choices and the impact of the intervention. The intention was therefore for the baseline survey to be completed by all pupils in the cohort. Data was collected from 959 pupils in 13 schools. Data could not be collected from the rest, mainly for time reasons (schools joining the scheme at a very late stage), but also, in at least two cases, because teachers felt it would not be helpful. This means that schools which did not complete the survey chose pupils to take part on their own criteria. Two schools subsequently dropped out of the scheme before the beginning of the project, and a few further responses were eliminated as unusable. This left 723 responses from 11 schools. In addition, 58 pupils from another school completed a different questionnaire intended for pupils taking part in the face-to-face mentoring. The total number of usable pupil responses was therefore 781. Pupils were asked to say:

- What language(s) they were studying (79% French, 25% Spanish, 12% German).<sup>3</sup>
- Whether they intended to continue learning a language at GCSE (24% Yes, 34% No, 42% Not Sure).
- What sort of work they could see themselves doing in future.
- Whether they think learning a MFL will help them in their working life (48% Yes, 17% No, 36% Not Sure).
- If they wanted to find the answer to a question, which of a number of options would they try first. This question was intended to identify pupils who were comfortable using IT and were likely to have good computer skills. Answers were: 13% Phone/text a friend, 54% Look for the answer online, 6% Chat on social media, 26% Ask someone face to face.
- How they would describe their ability to speak Welsh (13% Bilingual, 33% Good, 38% OK, 15% Poor).
- Whether they already used Hwb in class or for homework (31% Yes, 48% No, 22% did not know what Hwb is).
- Whether they felt comfortable using Hwb (optional).

Teachers were asked to select those pupils replying 'Unsure/Don't know' in relation to their intentions regarding MFL, to take part in the project, weeding out those who were not confident about using IT. In fact, only 11 out of the 18 schools would have been able to select pupils in this way.

The data collected allows us to track the actual choices of pupils taking part in the Digi-mentoring, compared to their baseline positions, both individually and as a group. This is then compared with the choices of pupils who did not take part in the Digi-mentoring (as a group).

## **2. Baseline teacher surveys**

A baseline survey was designed for schools taking part in the project, to be completed by the lead MFL teacher for the project. This asked about the current level of take up for MFL in Years 10 and 11 (and, where relevant, post 16), pupil attitudes towards the subject in the school and the main reason constraining take up for MFL in their school. It also asked about use of Hwb and teachers' confidence in doing so. Eight of the schools participating in the Digi-mentoring also participated in the face-toface mentoring during Semester 1.

Schools taking part in the scheme represent a wide range of circumstances in relation to take up for MFL: 5 schools already have above-average take up, one has average take up (18% of the cohort), 6 below average and 3 schools currently had no pupils taking MFL in Year 10. Eight of the schools have post-16 pupils, of which one has no pupils taking a language in Year 12 and four have none in Year 13. Some of the other schools have reasonably healthy numbers taking MFL in the Sixth Form. Four schools rated poor appreciation of the value of languages among their pupils as a major obstacle to take up, seven said their pupils tended to be 'lukewarm' rather than enthusiastic, four said that only a small proportion of their pupils failed to understand the importance of languages, but only one said that pupils were generally very well motivated towards the study of languages. The majority of schools said that the small number of option slots was the main reason why take up

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<sup>3</sup> Percentages derived from the base of 959 pupils.

for MFL was not higher; two said the low importance given to the subject within the school was the main reason, and one said that it was a question of pupils' lack of confidence in their own abilities as language learners. Only four of the schools already used Hwb in their teaching or for setting homework, but the majority (11) said they felt confident about using it.

### 3. Mentor interviews

#### *Overall impressions*

All were enjoying the experience, two had already acted as face-to-face mentors. They liked the concept and the innovative aspect of digital media and were pleased to be involved.

They all liked the material and said that their mentees did too. There was a good variety which that meant it could appeal to different pupils at different times. Mentors found the material 'easy to use', 'fascinating', 'really good', 'interesting'.

#### *Technology*

Around half the mentors reported problems of various kinds with the use of the technology at the school end. These were: the mentees not being sufficiently supported in their use of IT; the school system not allowing the mentor to log on; the process of getting all the mentees logged on being too laborious, meaning that time was lost; mentees having to share passwords because some had forgotten them; YouTube being blocked.

#### *Mentees' response*

Mentors felt that mentees had responded well during face-to-face contact, but some found the email response from pupils disappointing. About a third thought that the emailing worked well, others thought it patchy, with less response some weeks or from some pupils. Mentors in schools where there were IT problems and not sufficient support felt that this had impacted on the amount of interaction.

Mentors felt that the face-to-face session at the start was crucial. At the time of their interviews, they had not yet completed the final session and were eager to see their mentees again. Many felt that four weeks without seeing them was too long (in some cases, it was going to be longer than that because final sessions had been postponed because of snow). They suggested that videoconferencing or Skype might be better, or an additional face-to-face session.

All the mentors felt that the personal contact they had had with the mentees had engaged them over and above what they might have learned from the on-line material alone. They talked about their own passion for languages, the 'positive vibe', the relaxed way in which pupils were able to ask questions about their own experiences, and the way they were able to act as a bridge between pupils and their teachers and 'position it beyond information', leading the mentees into a different way of seeing things.

#### *Impact beyond the mentees*

About half the mentors were able to give examples of how the project had had a ripple effect beyond the pupils being mentored. These included use of Twitter, teachers who said they will use the material with other classes, other pupils in the school becoming interested in the ideas and wanting to take part, and the mentors themselves saying how much they personally had learnt and passed on to friends. *Mentors' own gains*

All the mentors reported positively about what they themselves had gained from the experience. This included 'the idea that I can make a difference', 'realising that not everyone likes languages as much as I do', 'experience in liaison and project management', 'an experience I never thought I'd get', 'people will ask questions about it in job interviews' and 'learning to communicate [professionally] by email'. Almost all mentioned unprompted that they are intending to go into teaching. One said: 'I thought I didn't want to be a teacher, but seeing the change changed my mind and made me more confident I could teach a group'. Another said they had previously been put off going into teaching by parents and friends, but they found 'opening minds' to be very rewarding. One who had already taken part in the face-to-face mentoring thought that both modes were

useful; another who had long experience with Routes Cymru as a Student Language Ambassador thought that mentoring was better than talking to large groups as it was more concentrated and therefore more likely to be effective.

#### *Suggestions for the future*

- More training and advance information for teachers (the most common observation)
- A set timetable for the mentoring at the beginning
- Someone to go into the school to check Hwb before the start
- Better IT support in schools
- Use of a webcam or videoconferencing instead of email
- A different platform from Hwb as it restricts what activities can be done and there are problems logging on
- Make sure mentees are appropriately targeted, perhaps via a second questionnaire to ensure that the group is correctly constituted.

Mentors wanted to thank the team and especially the project manager who was deemed to have done an 'amazing' job.

#### 4. Teacher interviews

##### *Motivation for taking part*

These included the desire to make more use of departmental I-pads as well as to strengthen the profile of languages more generally in the school. In some cases, the project formed part of wider efforts to promote MFL in the school.

##### *Identification of pupils to take part*

Not all schools followed the instructions to choose pupils identified as 'maybes' from the baseline survey. One school targeted the most able 'nos' and another targeted those for whom timetable clashes meant that they might not choose MFL. In one school, not all pupils completed the baseline survey so those who were more able but deemed to be undecided were chosen.

##### *Overall impressions*

All the teachers interviewed were positive about the content and the concept of the scheme but they were less happy about the logistics, especially the difficulties of dovetailing the availability of the mentor with that of the pupils. It was problematic – and in some cases not allowed – for pupils to miss lessons in other subjects. Difficulties setting up the playlists and with engaging with the mentor online were also mentioned. For one school, the scheme came too late in the year as pupils had already made their option choices (although the teacher was unaware of what they were). All said that they would be delighted to take part again another year, although in one case, where the school had also experience face-to-face mentoring, they would prefer this.

##### *Technology*

This worked well in schools where pupils were used to using Hwb or where there was sufficient IT support – either from IT staff, the teacher themselves or, in one case, a PGCE student. There were problems reported with passwords, with logging in and with the school wifi. One school used the whiteboard to resolve this. The project manager in Cardiff had obviously provided a lot of support and teachers appreciated this.

##### *Content and activities*

Comments ranged from 'fantastic' to 'fairly interesting'. Generally, teachers felt that pupils had enjoyed it. One teacher said that they had not found it as motivating as one-to-one contact with a mentor. Two said that it would be helpful to build in more interaction. One had not had an opportunity to see much of the content because she was 'always teaching'.

##### *The mentors and their preparation*

All reported very positively: 'great', 'excellent', 'well-prepared', 'enthusiastic' and said that the

pupils had responded well. The only critical comment was that mentors need to be better briefed about dress codes in school as one came in very short shorts not deemed appropriate!

*Response of pupils*

Teachers all thought that their pupils had enjoyed the experience, particularly meeting the mentor and taking part in the Award ceremony. They liked 'getting out of normal lessons'. Several said that they had the impression that pupils had decided to take MFL as a result, perhaps as a result of feeling 'special' or the sense of being 'chosen' to take part. In one school, pupils were 'not so keen on the work they had to do on the I-pads' and the teacher felt that this had not helped their 'cause' (to try to improve uptake of MFL). One of the schools had also taken part in the face-to-face mentoring but said they were not able to say which was working better. They said however that the face-to-face mentoring was easier to organise and the earlier timing (in the autumn term) was better.

*Wider impact*

One school mentioned that pupils had been watching the videos at home and sharing them with their parents; another had publicised the initiative in the school newsletter and had tweeted about the project and the Award Ceremony. Although one school said that there had been little or no impact on take up, several of the pupils had said that they might pick up a language again at university.

*Suggestions for the future*

- Allocate mentors who are available at times which are convenient for the school (or convince the Head to let children out of other lessons)
- Run the scheme earlier in the year/in the autumn term (2)
- Use these resources with Year 8 and get Year 9 to lead the sessions
- Allocate longer for pupils to work through the playlist – they did not have time to complete the additional tasks
- Have a chat room or use WhatsApp in preference to emailing and allow the mentor to chat to all at once. Pupils expect immediate responses, which is not possible for the mentor.

## **5. Interviews with the mentor consultant and technical manager**

The project was conceived with creativity at the forefront and with a desire to frame language learning within a global context. Developers expressed a certain frustration with the limitations of Hwb and felt that they had had to compromise with what they would have liked to achieve in terms of communication between mentors and mentees. In an ideal world they would have had the facility for mentees to chat at whatever point they wanted, but this was not possible. They were left with no choice but to make pupils exit Hwb to email mentors via Outlook. Other ideas were not possible either, such as integrating activities with 'open' answers rather than making them either correct or incorrect.

Although they were not surprised by the technical issues reported in schools, they were disappointed to find Hwb used so infrequently. The technical manager suggested that in future, in an ideal world, it might be possible to go into schools and speak to IT staff in advance of running the project, in order to pre-empt difficulties such as blockage of YouTube videos, reported by some schools.

## **6. Pupil interviews**

Nine pupils were interviewed at Pencoed School, having completed four out of five of the Digi lessons. They were interviewed in three groups of four, two and three pupils respectively. At the time they had all made their initial GCSE choices, though teachers did not know what these were. Pupils said they were chosen to take part in the scheme but were given the choice to opt out. One group said they thought they had been chosen because they were all good at French and behaved well in class.

*Overall impressions*

Pupils provided a very favourable response overall, though they said it was 'not yet perfect'. They thought it was 'very interesting' 'informational', 'cool'. They liked the quizzes and said it was a fun way to learn. They said they found out things they didn't know before.

*Technology*

Pupils had been using I-pads which had not worked well because of a poor wifi signal (or bandwidth). This meant they could not see the videos. Sometimes the I-pads were not sufficiently charged. They had not used HwB in their school before, though some had accessed it in their primary schools. They found it easy to get the hang of and were keen to use it in other subjects. They found the actual resource easy to navigate and interact with, challenging but fun because 'you got to know the answer'.

*Content*

The content was very well received. Pupils felt that they had 'learned a lot'. They thought the videos were interesting and the coverage of many countries very good, and that it was pitched at the right level.

*Communication with mentor*

This was not always as easy or as fluid as pupils would have liked. They found it difficult to get the hang of the email and having to exit Hwb to do so. They were impatient with the inevitable delays in receiving a response because the mentor was responding to several pupils at the same time. They said they should not be made to email the mentor so frequently – once to twice would be enough. Others said they got a quick reply and that it was good to hear about the mentor's own challenges with the language (e.g. rolling 'r's). On one occasion there was a fire drill which interrupted the session. Some pupils had had no contact because they had used the wrong email.

*Impact on attitudes*

Although it appeared that most pupils interviewed already had a good perception of language learning, all said that it had taken them further. They liked the wider idea that it 'wasn't just about French' 'you get to travel and learn about culture'. They liked hearing other peoples' experiences and about job opportunities they hadn't thought about. They mentioned particularly the Sports Liaison officer and the Army. 'It makes you think about different countries, and it's not just croissants'. (One student added that she had realised that 'pain au chocolat' means 'chocolate bread'). Most appeared to have chosen to study French in the first option round.

Within the wider school they said there were less positive attitudes towards languages 'some love it, some see it as just another subject, some would rather do Spanish'. 'It's frowned upon by some', but they said that although the majority don't like it, they understand its value.

*Parental attitudes*

All the pupils interviewed reported that their parents were supportive of their language learning – one said that he translated Welsh for his parents but his parents thought that French would be more useful than Welsh. Some parents had learned languages themselves, others regretted not having done so. Parents were reportedly delighted that their children had had an opportunity to take part. Pupils had been showing them their emails and discussing the videos with them. Some had watched the videos at home.

*Suggestions for the future*

- There should be 16 slides rather than 10, but fewer mentor interventions (or more mentors so they can answer more quickly).
- They would like more activities to do.
- It should be run every year, for more people
- They should get the password and user name in advance, and use laptops, not i-pads
- The format could be varied – it was a bit repetitive
- Teachers should be better briefed in advance so they know what to expect

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- A better system than Outlook for emailing.

## 7. Pupil exit survey

There were 87 responses to the survey. Around half (49%) rated the overall experience of Digimentoring as 'Excellent' and 43% rated it 'Good'. Five pupils rated it as only 'Satisfactory' and there were two pupils who deemed it a 'Waste of time'. This gives a very high satisfaction rating, with praise from more than nine out of ten pupils.

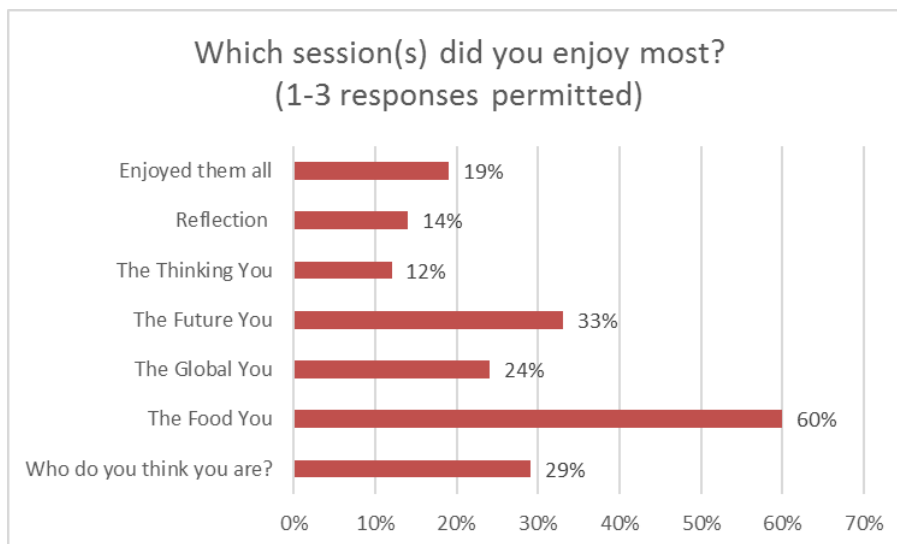
More than three quarters of respondents said that there were problems in their school in relation to access to computers and the internet, but in the majority of cases these were 'small problems quickly resolved' (51%). However, 26% of respondents said that these problems were severe enough to interfere with their ability to benefit from the programme.

Only 17% were already frequent users of Hwb, 46% had used Hwb 'once or twice' and 37% had not used it at all.

The vast majority (88%) found Hwb easy to use, although mostly 'quite easy' (59%) rather than 'very easy' (29%). The rest (11%) found it 'not very easy' but none said they found it difficult.

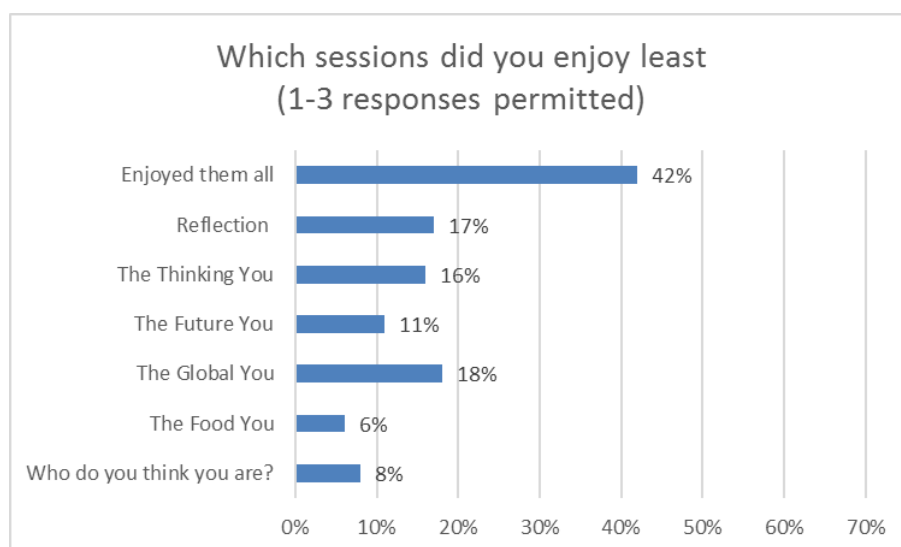
All except one said that the resources were easy to use once they were logged on. For 52% this was 'quite easy' and for 47% 'very easy'. The outlier said that this was 'not very easy' rather than 'difficult'.

The most popular session by far was the one about food and with a spread of support for the other sessions appealing to different pupils. Twenty per cent of pupils said they enjoyed all the sessions.



The least popular session was 'The Global You'; however, 42% of respondents said there was no session they particularly disliked.

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More than half (53%) said they did not know or could not remember whether they had completed the optional 'over to you' activity. More than a quarter (27%) confirmed that they had done this, and 21% said they had not. Although one or two commented that they did not know what to do, or did not have the 'necessary tools' to complete the tasks, most comments were positive, e.g.:

*'I enjoyed creating an international menu and asking questions to people who work within a workplace where they use languages almost everyday!!'*

*'I found each activity fun and or interesting.'*

*'The option activities were OK although with it being an aside course/mentoring scheme, some tasks took a while and it began to feel like homework due to poor timings with Hwb and time allocation wasn't long enough. The activities set were quite good to reflect on the lesson'*

The vast majority (88%) said it was easy to communicate with their mentor, and the remainder (12%) said it was 'not very easy'. Nearly half (48%) said it was 'very easy' and 40% 'quite easy'. However, there were a number of comments about difficulties, such as: 'I lost my login details', 'I had the wrong email', 'sometimes the email didn't work', 'slow connections'. Some pupils said that they had used Skype instead, and one suggested that Facetime would be better. In other cases, communication worked well:

*'I emailed my mentor and she emailed quickly. She was talkative and sociable and easy to get along with.'*

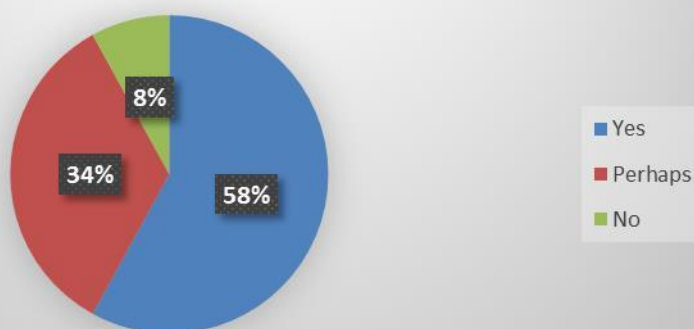
*'She was extremely kind and helpful and understanding with my queries and issues, along with my opinions and feelings.'*

*'The mentor responded quite quickly but if she was in person i think it would have been better.'*

There was a very high satisfaction rating for the help received from the mentors – 63% rated this as 'very good' and 30% as 'good'. Six rated it as only 'satisfactory' and none ticked the box for 'not very good'.

More than half (58%) said the experience had definitely changed the way they think about languages in relation to their future, and another 34% said that perhaps it had. Only 7 pupils said that it had not.

## Has taking part in the programme changed the way you think about languages in relation to your future?



Pupils provided a large number of positive comments in response to this question, showing how the experience had expanded pupils' horizons and ambitions, e.g:

*'I'm starting to realise the significance of what learning another language can do for you'*

*'It was very good and changed the way I think about other countries'*

*'This program strengthened my love for French and languages as a whole'*

*'I can pick up more languages if I decide to in the future'*

*'101% sure I want to take French for GCSE'*

*'It has made me think about how much languages can help you get good jobs and it will help you when you want to travel somewhere'*

*'It has helped me a lot, and hopefully in the future I will have a chance to learn a new language/s' 'French could help a lot more than I thought'*

*'I have now been persuaded to take Spanish for GCSE but I wasn't even considering it before'*

*'I didn't enjoy languages but now I do'*

*'It will definitely help me in the future however I didn't pick it for GCSE'*

*'I now realise that languages are not just ways to communicate but they improve knowledge and also improve your chance of getting jobs. I no longer see languages as boring' 'It changed my thoughts on languages as it showed how important they can be'*

*'I wasn't planning on taking Spanish as a GCSE but after mentoring I decided to take it as it opened doors to a lot of jobs around the world'*

*'I didn't think languages were very important but I realised how many jobs that need you to be able to speak a foreign language'*

*'It makes me respect languages a lot more'*

*'There's a lot more to languages than I thought'*

*'Has made me consider taking languages in uni so that I can go to a different country'*

*'I have realised that you don't just have to be a translator or French teacher to need a French qualification'*

*'It has made me think that I can travel around the world and meet new people and teach them new languages'*

*'I have not opted for a language for GCSE, but now I may do one at A level'*

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*'I decided not to take a language for GCSE however if there are other opportunities throughout my education to learn a language I will definitely use the opportunity!'*

Pupils' responses to an open question about what they had learned from taking part in the Digimentoring were very diverse and endorsed the broad-based design of the project:

*'I learnt that languages and roots are extremely important'*

*'French is used a lot more than I thought'*

*'I learnt about jobs you can get from learning a language'*

*'I learned that there are many different types of lifestyles and cultures around the world' 'I learnt about how in English a word means one thing and in other languages it could be totally different'*

*'How languages influence our country'*

*'The world is different than I thought'*

*'I learnt some Norwegian and Chinese'*

*'I learnt many facts about how languages can improve mental health and decrease anxiety' 'That languages can be used for a lot of things, not just speaking to people' 'I learnt about lots of foods from different countries'.*

## 8. Reported take-up in project schools

### 7.1 Number of mentees choosing MFL

Data is available on 168 pupils from 18 schools. Discounting data from the school which only took part in a single mentoring session, and another where pupils were in Year 8 and do not choose options until next year, we have 151 pupils, of which 65 chose to take MFL, success rate of 43%.

Success rates varied between schools from one to nine out of 10 pupils. It is notable that schools which joined the scheme late (asterisked) are outliers. This seems to be connected to the way that pupils were selected to take part.

| School/College                | Number of pupils mentored | Number choosing MFL | Success rate |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Llanidloes*                   | 10                        | 1                   | 10%          |
| Welshpool High School         | 10                        | 1                   | 10%          |
| St Richard Gwyn               | 8                         | 1                   | 13%          |
| Bedwas High                   | 8                         | 1                   | 13%          |
| Llanfyllin High School        | 11                        | 3                   | 27%          |
| Porth County School           | 10                        | 3                   | 30%          |
| Glan-Y-Mor                    | 8                         | 3                   | 38%          |
| Argoed School                 | 9                         | 4                   | 44%          |
| Tredegar Comprehensive School | 10                        | 5                   | 50%          |
| Ysgol Tywyn                   | 10                        | 5                   | 50%          |
| Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen     | 9                         | 5                   | 56%          |

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|                               |    |   |     |
|-------------------------------|----|---|-----|
| Monmouth Comprehensive School | 10 | 6 | 60% |
| Rhyl HS*                      | 10 | 6 | 60% |
| Ysgol Eifionydd               | 10 | 6 | 60% |
| Y Pant*                       | 8  | 6 | 75% |
| Pencoed                       | 10 | 9 | 90% |

*Chart 1: Success rates by institution*

Not all schools were able to provide full data sets to enable a comparison of actual with intended take up, and six had not been able to supply baseline data because they joined the project late. Tracking of individual pupils and detailed analysis of data has only therefore been possible in the case of 9 schools.

Chart 2 below shows that, of the 451 pupils in these schools completing the baseline survey, 119 (26%) were intending to take MFL at that point. This is higher than the national average of 18%, suggesting that pupils completing the survey were either screened or self-selecting as more likely to be taking MFL than all pupils in the cohort. For example, in one school with very low take up for MFL 50% of pupils who completed the baseline survey said they were intending to take the subject.

Of the 451 pupils, 85 took part in the Digi-mentoring project, and 27 chose to take MFL, giving a 32% success rate. Of these 27 pupils, 18 had originally said either that they would not take a language (4) or that they were not sure (14). Five pupils from two schools had originally said they would choose MFL and data is not available for the other 4 pupils. The lower success rate apparently achieved in this group of schools compared to all schools taking part is likely reflect the choice of pupils in the schools which joined the project late, since they were not able to choose pupils on the basis of 'not sure' replies in the baseline survey as was intended. The higher success rates in Pencoed, Y Pant and Eifionydd (see Chart 1) seem to be linked to the targeting of larger numbers of pupils who were already intending to take MFL.

| School          | Number completing baseline pupil survey | Pupils intending to take MFL (baseline) | Number mentored | Choosing MFL after mentoring | Original choices (from baseline survey) |    |     |     |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----|-----|-----|
|                 |                                         |                                         |                 |                              | Not sure                                | No | Yes | N/a |
| St Richard Gwyn | 53                                      | 8                                       | 8               | 1                            | 1                                       |    |     |     |
| Bedwas          | 40                                      | 19                                      | 8               | 1                            |                                         | 1  |     |     |
| Monmouth        | 61                                      | 31                                      | 10              | 6                            |                                         |    | 3   | 3   |
| Tredegar        | 26                                      | 3                                       | 10              | 5                            | 3                                       | 2  |     |     |
| Llanidloes      | 52                                      | 17                                      | 10              | 1                            | 1                                       |    |     |     |
| Llanfyllin      | 69                                      | 10                                      | 11              | 3                            | 1                                       | 1  |     | 1   |
| Welshpool       | 47                                      | 16                                      | 10              | 1                            | 1                                       |    |     |     |
| Glan-Y-Mor      | 41                                      | 3                                       | 8               | 3                            | 3                                       |    |     |     |
| Eifionydd       | 62                                      | 12                                      | 10              | 6                            | 4                                       |    | 2   |     |
| TOTALS          | 451                                     | 119                                     | 85              | 27                           | 14                                      | 4  | 5   | 4   |
| %               |                                         | 26%                                     |                 | 32%                          |                                         |    |     |     |

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*Chart 2: Actual choices compared with baseline data*

### 7.2 Conversion rates

The table below shows the actual choices of pupils who took part in the Digi-mentoring compared to their intentions as stated at the time they completed the baseline survey. Of the 85 pupils mentored, 68 had not originally chosen MFL and the choices of another 10 are not available (because they did not complete the baseline survey). The conversion rates are therefore:

Fourteen pupils of the 56 who were previously uncertain about whether to opt for MFL did so following the mentoring (25%).

In addition, four pupils of the 12 who had originally said they would **not** opt for MFL did so following the mentoring (33%).

And of the 10 pupils for whom baseline data is not available, 4 opted for MFL (40%).

Two pupils who had originally opted for MFL changed their minds following the intervention.

The overall conversion rate works out at 26% (18/68) or 28% 22/78 if we include those pupils whose original choices are unavailable. NB: percentage figures should be treated with caution since they are calculated on numbers of less than one hundred. They are provided as a general indication of the success of the project.

| Original choices | Yes | Not sure | No | Not available | Total |
|------------------|-----|----------|----|---------------|-------|
| Glan-Y-Mor       | 1   | 7        |    |               | 8     |
| Eifionydd        | 2   | 8        |    |               | 10    |
| Welshpool        |     | 10       |    |               | 10    |
| Tredegar         |     | 6        | 3  | 1             | 10    |
| Richard Gwyn     | 1   | 7        |    |               | 8     |
| Monmouth         | 3   |          | 1  | 6             | 10    |
| Llanidloes       |     | 10       |    |               | 10    |
| Llafyllin        |     | 4        | 4  | 3             | 11    |
| Bedwas           |     | 4        | 4  |               | 8     |
| Total            | 7   | 56       | 12 | 10            | 85    |

*Chart 3: Original choices of mentees by institution*

### 7.3 Impact on take up rates for MFL within the project schools

In the vast majority of schools which took part, take up for MFL has risen as a proportion of the cohort in comparison to the last two years. All three establishments where previously no pupils had taken MFL to GCSE, (two schools and one college) now have pupils wishing to do so. It is to be hoped that they will be allowed to do so.

Two schools have lower take up than previously. In one of these, the IT department had reportedly shown considerable negativity towards the scheme, and in particular in relation to Hwb. This school also took part in face-to-face mentoring, as a result of which 4 of 16 mentees chose to take MFL. However in this school, two of the face-to-face mentees and one of the digi-mentees who had originally indicated their intention to opt for MFL, withdrew from doing so after the intervention. The other school where take up for MFL actually dropped joined the scheme at a very late stage. The project manager reported that it had been very challenging to communicate effectively with the school and that many sessions had been disrupted. Clearly a project such as this cannot compensate for particular circumstances within schools and there will inevitably be other factors

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influencing take up – positively as well as negatively.

| School/College            | Previous take up for MFL in 2017/18 |         | Reported take up for Year 10 in 2018/19 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|
|                           | Year 11                             | Year 10 |                                         |
| Pencoed                   | 16%                                 | 29%     | 32%                                     |
| Porth County School       | 17%                                 | 28%     | 27%-30% <sup>4</sup>                    |
| St Richard Gwyn           | 10%                                 | 25%     | 8%                                      |
| Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen | 0%                                  | 0%      | 10 pupils                               |
| Bedwas                    | 10%                                 | 15%     | 30%                                     |
| Monmouth Comprehensive    | 28%                                 | 23%     | 28%                                     |
| Tredegar                  | 0%                                  | 0%      | 11 pupils                               |
| Llanidloes                | 17%                                 | 11%     | 7%                                      |
| Llanfyllin High School    | 8%                                  | 6%      | 12%                                     |
| Welshpool High School     | 19%                                 | 14%     | 30%                                     |
| Argoed School             | 30%                                 | 18%     | 36%                                     |
| Glan-Y-Mor                | 0%                                  | 0%      | 11%                                     |
| Ysgol Eifionydd           | 7%                                  | 9%      | 21%                                     |
| Ysgol Tywyn               | 17%                                 | 4%      | 14%                                     |

*Chart 4: Take up rates for MFL in project schools*

## 9. Comparisons with the results of face-to-face mentoring

The Digi-mentoring project achieved a 43% success rate in stimulating take up for MFL. This is lower than the 50-57% success rates achieved with last year's face-to-face mentoring, but improvements were made this year which made it more successful in targeting undecided pupils rather than those who had already intended to take the subject. A far higher proportion of mentees in this project were previously undecided or negative towards choosing MFL – 80% as opposed to 41% in Phase 1 and 50% in Phase 2 of the face-to-face mentoring.

The conversion rates for the Digi-mentoring are therefore higher – 26%-28% depending on assumptions made in the calculation, compared to 21% in last year's face-to-face mentoring.

Two schools and one college which took part in the Digi-mentoring also took part in this year's face-to-face mentoring, of which only one was able to provide baseline data. The results reported show that in two cases, digital mentoring was actually more effective than face-to-face mentoring.

|  | Baseline data available | Pupils choosing MFL in the baseline survey | Number of mentees | Mentees choosing MFL after the intervention | Success rate face-to-face | Success rate Digi <sup>5</sup> |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  |                         |                                            |                   |                                             |                           |                                |

<sup>4</sup> 30% figure excludes SEN group not eligible to choose MFL. It is not known whether baseline figures supplied by the school took this group into account.

<sup>5</sup> From chart 1 above.

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|                                 |    |   |    |   |     |     |
|---------------------------------|----|---|----|---|-----|-----|
| Coleg<br>Cymunedol Y<br>Dderwen | 0  |   | 10 | 0 | 0%  | 56% |
| Rhyl                            | 0  |   | 20 | 9 | 45% | 60% |
| St. Richard Gwyn                | 12 | 2 | 16 | 4 | 25% | 13% |

*Chart 5: Results of face-to-face mentoring in Digi-mentoring schools*

We must conclude that the Digi-mentoring has been at least as effective as face-to-face mentoring in promoting take up of MFL, and in some cases even more so.

### Conclusions

#### I. The success of the Digi-mentoring project in increasing take up of MFL at GCSE

The Digi-mentoring project has been successful in encouraging 43% of pupils mentored to opt for MFL, most of whom were previously undecided or had expressed an intention not to take the subject. Given that a quarter of pupils reported that technical problems in schools had interfered with their ability to benefit from the project it is likely that the success rate might potentially have been even higher.

Also as a result of technical issues, the level of on-line interaction between mentor and mentees has not always been high. The personal contact established between mentors and mentees in the face-to-face sessions at the beginning and end of the mentoring remains an important element. The success of the project relies on much more than simple information-giving. It is the establishment of a rapport and a connection between mentees and mentor which helps to lead pupils into different ways of seeing themselves and their future.

The barriers to increasing take up for MFL, which have been well rehearsed elsewhere, still remain. A project such as this cannot compensate for the small number of option choices pupils have, clashes with other subjects they are interested in, or the perception that it will be difficult to obtain a good grade with MFL.

#### II. The success of the Digi-mentoring project in engendering enthusiasm for languages and broadening horizons

There is widespread praise for the quality of the resources produced as part of this project by pupils, teachers and mentors and there is interest in using them more widely. The choice and spread of topics has been well thought out to appeal to different pupils and the level of the content is deemed to have been well-judged.

It is clear that the experience of Digi-mentoring has had an impact on many more pupils – perhaps twice as many – as those who will now go on to take MFL at GCSE. There is also evidence that the project has raised awareness more generally in the schools taking part, and among parents. All this is a necessary part of developing the profile of the subject, particularly as regards school management.

#### III. Benefits and drawbacks compared to face-to-face mentoring

The evidence here suggests that Digi-mentoring has been at least as effective as face-to-face mentoring, but it has been demanding in terms of logistics and organisation.

The technical requirements in schools add another layer of organisational complexity and arrangements have clearly been less than satisfactory in a number of cases. The results achieved by the project have been in the face of a very high incidence of problems with access to computers and the internet in schools. In a context in which digital literacy is a policy priority, poor support for the use of technology in schools is an issue with wide-reaching implications beyond the smooth-running and effectiveness of this project.

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Aside from the technical issues, there have been difficulties coordinating the availability of the mentor with that of pupils and teachers. Schools seem to prefer face-to-face mentors and mentors prefer more contact with pupils. They feel they gain more from face-to-face mentoring but nonetheless the Digi-mentoring experience has still been very valuable for them personally.

#### **IV. Issues relating to the on-line platform**

The limitations of Hwb had been well understood in advance by the development team. Feedback from pupils and mentors confirms that the facility to chat within the resource, rather than coming out of it to send emails, would have greatly enhanced the experience. The level of online interaction between mentor and mentees was perhaps one of the least successful aspects of the project, along with disappointing technical support in schools. However, it is understood that a more agile system was not simple to set up and in fact what was achieved through built-in interaction within the resources was very well-received. The resources were deemed attractive by pupils and they clearly possessed sufficient technical skills to allow them to benefit.

#### **V. Final thoughts**

The project manager reported many communication difficulties with the project schools, who were not always forthcoming with the support and information needed to run (and evaluate) the project successfully. In view of the benefits of the project for pupils and schools, the amount of support provided free of charge, and the prestige of working in collaboration with a university, this experience is disappointing and perhaps highlights the pressures under which schools in general, and MFL departments in particular, are working. If the project were to be rolled out across Wales, it is likely that it would continue to face these difficulties.



**Raising the profile of MFL mentoring initiative**  
Evaluator's final report  
July 2017

**Contents**

Key findings

1. Introduction and objectives
2. Evaluation plan and methodology
3. Impact of the project on take-up for MFL at GCSE
4. Other impacts of the project in schools and on pupils
5. Added value of the project: impact on mentors
6. Conclusions and recommendations

**Key findings**

Quantitative impacts

- In Phase 1, 57% of the total number of pupils mentored chose to take MFL in Key Stage 4 and in Phase 2, 50% did so. These represent very significant increases on the baseline figures and on the national picture in which the participation rate is around 20%.
- In Phase 2, only 29% of mentees had originally said they would take MFL, but an additional 190 pupils decided to do so after the intervention, representing an added value of 77%.
- In three consortia, the number of pupils choosing MFL more than doubled.
- 4 schools had had no GCSE group running for several years, but were able to run one after taking part in the project.

Qualitative impacts

- All pupils, and especially those from isolated or economically disadvantaged areas, have benefitted from direct personal contact with university students who have recent experience of living in a foreign country and embody a wider range of experiences and options. The opportunity to visit universities for Award and Recognition ceremonies has stimulated pupils' ambitions and discussion about their future careers.
- The project has actively addressed the challenge of building confidence and resilience among MFL learners and has been warmly welcomed by their teachers.
- Mentors have benefited from the training and the experience that the project has provided and will take this forward into their future careers.
- The scheme, in particular because of the way it has linked schools with higher education, had given MFL an improved profile with senior school management. The project has highlighted the importance of school leaders in achieving the objectives of the *Global Futures* plan and the potential to engage them more systematically.

Other insights provided by the project

- Although pupil attitudes towards MFL are a 'major obstacle' in a minority of schools, it is by no means a general rule that pupils are badly disposed towards MFL or that they are badly informed about the potential benefits. Nearly two thirds of pupils generally enjoy their MFL classes.

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- Pupils may be strongly aware of the benefits of the subject and greatly enjoy their lessons, but still not choose to take it to GCSE because of systemic factors, particularly the way that MFL appears in option columns.
- Welsh may sometimes ‘compete’ with MFL because of the compulsory nature of Welsh and the dearth of slots for free choices. Pupils who decided to drop MFL were spread across all categories of self-reported competence in Welsh and bilingual pupils were as likely as monolingual pupils to drop the subject.
- There is considerable potential to improve deepen awareness of the specific ways in which MFL can enhance and enrich pupils’ lives and their future careers, and to improve take up from Key Stage 4 through to higher education.
- The attitudes of parents and the wider community are an important determinant of pupils’ choices and thought might be given to addressing these on a future occasion.

#### Success factors

- The National Coordinator has played a central role in organising, delivering and supporting the project.
- Mentoring in small groups has provided a more personal, individualised way of engaging pupils with key messages and ideas.
- University mentors who are relatively close in age to the pupils mentored have provided realistic but inspiring role-models.
- The professional development and training programme for mentors not only provided excellent preparation for their work in schools, but a development opportunity that they will take with them into their future careers.
- The link with higher education and opportunity for pupils to visit a university for the Award and Recognition ceremony have impacted both on the pupils themselves and on school leadership.

#### Limiting factors

- Organisation and facilities within some schools have been poor.
- Financial constraints in schools are squeezing MFL classes and the viability of smaller groups.
- The way schools offer MFL within option columns is a major constraint on pupil choice.
- For these reasons, some pupils who wanted to take MFL as a result of the project have not been able to do so.

#### Recommendations

- Engagement of school leadership teams – having a named individual responsible for oversight of the project within the school.
- Introduce a requirement on school leadership teams to run MFL courses, even where there are small numbers.
- Require school leadership teams to report on MFL take up.

### 1. Introduction

The project under scrutiny in this evaluation exercise was set up in late 2015 under the direction of Cardiff University, funded by the Welsh Government as a strand within its *Global Futures* plan to improve and promote the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in Welsh secondary schools. Its outcomes and impact are therefore extremely relevant in planning the next stage in realising the long-term ambition of the Welsh Government to make Wales ‘bilingual plus one’.

The *Global Futures* plan was launched in response to growing concerns about the low level of take up for MFL at GCSE and its future impact both on the job prospects of Welsh teenagers and the Welsh economy as a whole. It was noted that, although there is a certain reluctance on behalf of teenagers throughout the UK to choose to take a modern foreign language beyond the phase in which it is compulsory in our various education systems, Wales was suffering from exceptionally low take up. Participation in MFL at GCSE in Wales – already at a low level relative to other areas of the UK – declined by 48% between 2002 and 2016. National surveys of the situation for MFL in secondary schools have found that:

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- Schools are continuing to report declines in uptake for MFL in Key Stage 4. More than a third of Welsh schools now have fewer than 10% of the Year 10 cohort studying the subject.<sup>6</sup>
- Whilst teachers see the Welsh Baccalaureate and the consequent reduction of option slots are the main reasons for the most recent declines, these are now being exacerbated by financial pressures and concerns relating to the UK's departure from the European Union.
- Teachers believe that improving careers advice, changing the assessment and marking of the GCSE exam, increasing the number of free choices and ensuring that MFL appears in all option blocks would be the best ways of improving take up.<sup>7</sup>
- There has already been a high level of involvement by schools in projects to promote MFL, such as Routes into Languages Cymru, but although these have had a beneficial impact on attitudes, they have not substantially improved take up.
- Schools working in more disadvantaged circumstances are more likely to report that pupils do not appreciate the value of learning a foreign language and more likely to have very low take up of MFL.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the mentoring project were as follows:

|                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. To raise the profile of modern foreign languages in the partner secondary schools with a view to increasing the number of pupils taking one or more foreign languages at GCSE | Core objective A               |
| 2. To broaden the horizons of pupils in KS3 by highlighting career and mobility opportunities available to those with language skills                                            | Core objective B               |
| 3. To raise expectations, improve motivation and strengthen the persistence and personal resilience of pupils studying modern languages                                          |                                |
| 4. To create sustainable links between HE Modern Languages Departments and their partner secondary schools                                                                       | Added-value/process objectives |
| 5. To offer employability experiences and opportunities to modern language undergraduate students                                                                                |                                |
| 6. To offer classroom experience to those modern language undergraduate students hoping to undertake a PGCE course                                                               |                                |
| 7. To offer a fully bilingual package so that pupils in both Welsh and English medium schools can benefit from the initiative                                                    |                                |

A further goal was to scope future possibilities for extending and developing work in furtherance of the project aims.

#### Organisation of the project

The mentoring project is distinct from other initiatives to promote take up of MFL in Wales in offering an intervention targeted at selected Year 8 and Year 9 pupils before they make their GCSE choices. The project involved student mentors from 4 Welsh universities and was organised regionally with a National Coordinator working in partnership with Regional Consortium leads for MFL.

The project took place over two academic years, with the first wave of mentoring taking place between

<sup>6</sup> *Language Trends Wales 2016/17*, British Council Wales (2017)

<sup>7</sup> *Language Trends Wales 2015/16*, British Council Wales/Education Development Trust (2016)

January and March 2016 (Phase 1). In Phase 2, there were two waves of mentoring taking place between November-December 2016 and January-March 2017. Mentors attended training weekends prior to going into schools, and Award and Recognition ceremonies were organised at each of the participating universities.

#### Interim evaluation report

This report builds on an interim report on the first phase of the project completed in September 2016 which looked at the impact of the first wave of mentoring on pupils who were to start their GCSE courses in September 2016. It gathered data from schools on the situation for MFL and from pupils on their perceptions of MFL and inclinations regarding the subject. It also took into account the views of mentors who had been leading the intervention in schools:

#### Schools

Data collected from schools at the outset of the project highlighted the mix of factors affecting take up for MFL:

- The large number of subjects from which to fill a small number of slots in the timetable. The introduction of the Welsh Bac and the consequent restriction of option choices meant that in the project schools, there were fewer pupils for languages in Year 10 than in Year 11.
- The perception of difficulty of MFL as a GCSE subject. This is also a factor in England where evidence suggests it is also a reality.<sup>8</sup>
- Attitudes towards MFL. However, the largest number of schools in this piece of research already rated their pupils' attitudes as fairly positive and many participating schools had already taken action to improve pupil perceptions of the value of MFL.

#### Pupils

More than half of pupils in the study had already decided whether or not to take MFL at GCSE at the point of completing the initial questionnaire. At that point, 80% said that they thought that a foreign language would benefit them in their future lives. However, their career ambitions clustered around a narrow range of responses. There was little interest expressed in working 'in business' and those that did so did not see the relevance of being able to speak a foreign language.

Pupils' perceptions of the importance of MFL largely focused on their transactional usefulness and pupils' personal economic benefit. There was little evidence of internationalist values or the desire to access and understand other cultures as motivations for language learning.

Many expressed a lack of confidence in their own abilities as language learners – in many cases linked to their experiences of learning Welsh – as well as a preference for other subjects.

#### Mentors

Mentors reported that the project had been extremely well organised and that their experiences in schools were generally more positive than had been expected. They were pleased with the response from pupils and felt that they had made an important contribution to raising their aspirations and giving them confidence to pursue their studies.

#### Interim results

The interim report found that although the project was in its early stages, there were early signs that the intervention was having an impact not only on the pupils it specifically targeted, but on whole cohorts within the project schools. Thirteen out of twenty-one schools reported increased numbers for their GCSE classes starting in September, including one school where MFL was running as a GCSE option for the first time in three years.

The mentoring experience had impacted on pupils in the following ways:

- Mentors provided inspiring role models demonstrating the personal enjoyment and satisfaction that derives from interacting with other cultures.

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<sup>8</sup> Inter-subject Comparability of Exam Standards in GCSE and A level, ISC Working Paper 3, Ofqual, 2015

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- Mentors were able to build pupils' confidence in themselves as language learners, reassuring them that aspiring to speak a language fluently is not an impossible mountain to climb, and providing tips and study techniques.
- Pupils' aspirations were lifted by contact with university students and opportunities to discuss university life, options for living and working abroad and future careers.

The interim report identified key factors underlying the project's success so far as: the use of university student mentors, the high-quality training and organisational support provided to mentors, and the personalised approach with small groups of pupils.

It also noted some key limitations at the end of Phase 1 of the project, namely that, in a few cases, pupils were targeted who had already made their GCSE option choices and the baseline data did not always reflect their true starting point. External factors, such as the number of option choices available, continued to be important factors which were limiting numbers for MFL, particularly where pupils had a strong interest in a competing subject.

The interim report provided the following recommendations and feedback for the funder and project team:

1. The conception and overall structure of the project were extremely sound and should not be changed.
2. Pupils who have already made a positive choice to take MFL GCSE should not be targeted.
3. Messages about the value of MFL in schools might benefit from a more explicit focus on international values and cultural engagement.
4. Careers information, advice and guidance should be developed which integrates MFL with enterprise in Wales within a global context.
5. Thought should be given to the continuation of the project beyond the current funding period.
6. It was also suggested to the funder that it might consider addressing some features of the external context which limit the project's success including, for example, the disincentives of the current assessment system.

Recommendation 2 was implemented in Phase 2 of the project, and recommendations 3 and 4 fed into the mentoring programme (they were also intended more generally). Plans are already in hand for a continuation phase involving digital mentoring.

### *2. Evaluation plan and methodology*

The evaluation plan was designed to respond to the following research questions:

1. To what extent have the core objectives been met?
2. Where has the project been most successful? And where has it achieved less success?
3. Which factors have contributed to this?
4. What added value has the project provided?

It also sought to capture data which would inform the direction and focus of the project as it moved from Phase 1 to Phase 2, and to highlight the opportunities for future development.

#### **Data collection**

Data was gathered from schools, pupils, mentors and other stakeholders in the project, as set out in Table 1 below.

| Date                 |                                                  | Number collected |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Beginning of project | Baseline questionnaires from schools (hard copy) | 29               |
|                      | Initial pupil questionnaires (hard copy)         | 254              |
| After Phase 1        | Updates from schools                             | 17               |

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|                                   |                                                                          |       |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|                                   | Semi-structured interviews with mentors                                  | 4     |
|                                   | Semi-structured interviews with teachers                                 | 2     |
| <b>Before Phase 2</b>             | Baseline survey of pupils (online) <sup>9</sup>                          | 3,096 |
|                                   | Baseline survey of new schools joining the project (online)              | 16    |
| <b>After Phase 2 mentoring</b>    | Semi-structured interviews with second wave mentors (January 2017)       | 3     |
|                                   | Semi-structured interviews with teachers (April 2017)                    | 4     |
| <b>After option choices known</b> | Updates from schools                                                     | 47    |
| <b>Ongoing</b>                    | Feedback and information by email and in person from Project Coordinator |       |

Table 1: Data collection

**Baseline data from schools and pupils**

In the first phase of the project, quantitative and qualitative data was collected by hard copy questionnaire from schools at the outset of the project. This provided figures on participation in language learning in Years 10 to 13, data on pupil attitudes towards languages, and what MFL teachers completing the forms thought were the most significant barriers to increasing take up. The data collected were transferred to a spread sheet for quantitative analysis and their comments collated separately.

Data was also gathered from 254 hard copy questionnaires completed by pupils at the outset of the project. This was to enable us to compare attitudes expressed at that time with actual GCSE choices from information available as at June 2016. In most cases, the first mentoring session was used as an opportunity for pupils to do this. This meant that these questionnaires did not reflect the actual baseline starting point and the impacts on attitudes from a) being selected to take part in the first place; b) pre-participation briefing/subsequent reflection with parents and friends, and c) participation in the first session, all of which contributed to these initial responses. The responses showed a very high level of awareness of the benefits of MFL and interest in studying languages at university which we would have expected to have been much lower. The reason for this is likely to have been that pupils' attitudes were already being acted on as a result of the project before the questionnaires were collected. These questionnaires have therefore been termed 'initial questionnaires' and analysed with the understanding that they may not have captured pupils' true starting points. Interviews with teachers confirmed that pupils' attitudes and plans in relation to MFL had already begun to change before the initial surveys were completed.

In order to be able to match pupils' previous attitudes with actual behaviour, in the second phase of the project we collected baseline data from pupils, using a similar questionnaire but in online format, before they were chosen to take part in the project. This meant collecting data from a much larger cohort of pupils – more than 3,000 – all pupils in a year group wherever possible, in order to provide a much better basis for judging the true impact of the project.

In the second phase, we collected baseline data from schools joining the scheme in electronic format, in order to be able to manipulate it easily without having to transfer it laboriously from hard copy.

<sup>9</sup> The aim was to survey all pupils in each class, before they were chosen to take part, in order to provide a genuine baseline picture from which to judge success.

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**Mentor interviews**

Semi-structured interviews with seven mentors were carried out as follows:

| ID/Date interviewed | University | Degree course and year                 | School(s)                           |
|---------------------|------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>A/15/4/16</b>    | Cardiff    | French and Italian/4th                 | Treorchy                            |
| <b>S/15/4/16</b>    | Cardiff    | Spanish and Italian/post graduate      | St Josephs                          |
| <b>L/15/4/16</b>    | Cardiff    | French and Italian/2nd                 | Glantaf                             |
| <b>S2/1/7/16</b>    | Bangor     | French, Spanish and Italian, 4th       | Rhyl High School                    |
| <b>E/12/1/17</b>    | Cardiff    | French and Politics, 4 <sup>th10</sup> | West Monmouth                       |
| <b>T/12/1/17</b>    | Cardiff    | French, 4 <sup>th</sup>                | Fitzalan, Ferndale                  |
| <b>L2/12/1/17</b>   | Cardiff    | French and German, 4 <sup>th</sup>     | Llanhari, Coleg Cymenedol Y Dderwen |

Table 2: Mentor interviews

**Interviews with MFL teachers**

Interviews were carried out with MFL teachers in the project schools between 3 and 5 April 2017. The aim was to interview one teacher from each regional consortium and including teachers from both Welsh and English medium schools. Names were selected from the database of teachers who had responded to the Phase 2 Baseline Teacher Questionnaires, taking the first name from each Regional Consortium in each case, and emails sent requesting a short interview by phone or Skype. There were some difficulties in achieving responses and the Project Coordinator had to intervene in one or two cases to obtain a reply. One teacher was unable to take part in the process because of a family incident. Another was unable to speak by phone, but sent responses to questions by email. The following is therefore based on interviews with MFL teachers from the following schools:

| Code/Date        | School       | Regional Consortium |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| <b>T1/3/4/17</b> | Llanwern     | EAS                 |
| <b>T2/5/4/17</b> | Cefn Hengoed | ERW                 |
| <b>T3/5/4/17</b> | Aberdare     | CSC                 |

Table 3: Teacher interviews

Additional feedback from teachers was made available via the National Coordinator on an ongoing basis.

**Take up data from schools**

This was collected by the Project Coordinator once pupil choices were known after the Phase 1 and Phase 2 mentoring. It was not always readily available and at time of writing some schools still have not been able to submit data. Their comments and those of the Project Coordinator have been noted in the evaluation process.

### **3. Impact of the project on pupil take up for MFL at GCSE**

#### **3.1 Baseline situation for MFL in schools participating in the project**

##### **School characteristics**

Both phases of the project included both Welsh medium and English medium schools in all four regional consortia. Schools were selected partly on pragmatic grounds (i.e. distance from the university supplying the

<sup>10</sup> This mentor was a Latvian national.

student mentor) and partly using criteria related to their profile as regards take up of MFL, for example, in EAS, schools were chosen where pupils performed well in MFL at KS3, but where there was low take up at KS4. The desired outcomes varied from school to school: for example, in some schools the goal was simply to recruit enough students to be able to run a GCSE class, in others where take up was already relatively high, the project targeted pupils from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (i.e. eligible for Free School Meals - FSM) or More Able and Talented pupils (MAT).

#### Participation in MFL in Key Stage 4 in the project schools

At the point of starting to take part in the project, schools provided details of participation rates in MFL in Years 10 and 11: the national average is believed to be a little over 20%. In both phases, there were significant differences between partner schools in terms of take up, ranging from more than 50% in one school, to 0% in several schools where there was currently no GCSE course running. In Phase 1, schools had on average higher participation rates in Year 11 than in Year 10, indicating a downward trend. However, those schools participating for the first time in Phase 2 of the project, although starting with lower participation, seemed to be on an upward trend, since on average they had more pupils taking MFL in Year 10 than in Year 11.

|                | Year 10 | Year 11 |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Phase 1</b> | 20%     | 24%     |
| <b>Phase 2</b> | 17%     | 15%     |
|                |         |         |

Table 4: Percentage of pupils studying MFL in Key Stage 4 in participating schools at project initiation

#### Choices already made by pupils

The initial/baseline surveys completed by pupils asked whether they had already decided whether to continue with MFL in Key Stage 4 and if so, what their plans were. The responses to this question show a substantial difference between the Phase 1 mentees, who had already been chosen to participate in the project, and the Phase 2 cohort, who are more representative of the general pupil population. In the interim evaluation, the large proportion of Phase 1 pupils already saying they would continue with MFL was a barrier to identifying the true impact of the project, and in Phase 2 schools were advised to select ONLY those pupils who had said they were planning to drop the subject or were undecided. In fact, a small proportion of those who took part in Phase 2 were those who had already planned to continue. It is not clear why schools selected these pupils to take part, possibly because they did not expect the preferences expressed to be definitive.

|                             | Phase 1 | Phase 2 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Planning to continue</b> | 39%     | 18%     |
| <b>Planning to drop</b>     | 15%     | 45%     |
| <b>Undecided</b>            | 46%     | 37%     |

Table 5: Pupils' plans regarding MFL on completion of initial questionnaire

### 3.2 Mentees' take up of MFL following the intervention

In Phase 1, the evaluation data is based on 136 pupils who were mentored, of whom 93 supplied data at the beginning of the mentoring process about their choices regarding MFL. As noted earlier, this data cannot be regarded as reflecting their 'baseline' status, since their choices may already have been influenced by the input they had received at this stage (and the very fact of being selected and agreeing to take part). Of these, 56 already said that they wished to continue with MFL in Key Stage 4. At the end of the mentoring intervention, the total number of mentees (including those for whom baseline information was not available) had risen to 77, **equivalent to 57% of the total number of pupils mentored in Phase 1**. This

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proportion varied considerably by Regional Consortium, reflecting the different criteria used by schools and consortia to select pupils to take part.

|              | Pupils mentored | Initial data available | Originally choosing MFL | Choosing MFL post intervention | Proportion opting/mentees |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>CSC</b>   | 39              | 28                     | 20                      | 29                             | 74%                       |
| <b>EAS</b>   | 22              | 16                     | 10                      | 16                             | 73%                       |
| <b>ERW</b>   | 41              | 15                     | 5                       | 14                             | 34%                       |
| <b>GWE</b>   | 34              | 34                     | 21                      | 18                             | 53%                       |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>136</b>      | <b>93</b>              | <b>56</b>               | <b>77</b>                      | <b>57%</b>                |

Table 6: Phase 1 evaluation data by regional consortium

In Phase 2, two important changes were made. Firstly, data was collected from pupils **before** they were chosen to take part in the project; this was in order to establish a true baseline in advance of any possible impact of the project. Secondly, based on recommendations from the interim evaluation, schools were asked **not** to select pupils to take part in the project who had already indicated that they wished to take MFL in Key Stage 4. In addition, the project was extended to include a vastly increased number of pupils. The data available for Phase 2 is therefore much more conducive to assessing the true impact of the project.

| Pupils mentored |            | Baseline data available | Pupils baseline choices unknown | Originally choosing MFL (N) | Originally choosing MFL (% of baseline) | Pupils baseline choices unknown, deemed originally choosing MFL | Total deemed to have originally chosen MFL | Choosing MFL post intervention | Now choosing MFL (% of mentees) | Added value (N) | Added value (%) |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| A               | B          | C                       | D                               | E                           | F                                       | G                                                               | H                                          | I                              | J                               | K               | L               |
| <b>CSC</b>      | 226        | 168                     | 58                              | 60                          | 36%                                     | 21                                                              | 81                                         | 114                            | 50%                             | 33              | 41%             |
| <b>EAS</b>      | 166        | 84                      | 82                              | 23                          | 27%                                     | 22                                                              | 45                                         | 89                             | 54%                             | 44              | 145%            |
| <b>ERW</b>      | 330        | 202                     | 128                             | 59                          | 29%                                     | 37                                                              | 96                                         | 173                            | 52%                             | 77              | 118%            |
| <b>GWE</b>      | 146        | 95                      | 51                              | 16                          | 17%                                     | 9                                                               | 25                                         | 61                             | 42%                             | 36              | 183%            |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>868</b> | <b>549</b>              | 319                             | <b>158</b>                  | 29%                                     | 89                                                              | 247                                        | <b>437</b>                     | <b>50%</b>                      | <b>190</b>      | 77%             |

Table 7: Phase 2 evaluation data

As shown above, in Phase 2, baseline data was available from 549 out of 868 mentees and of these a total of 29 per cent had said before being chosen to take part that they would like to continue with MFL (column F). It is clear that for one reason or another, the intention for all mentees to be pupils who had not already decided to take MFL was not fulfilled, varying between consortia from 17% to 36%. We have taken these proportions and applied them also to the mentees who did not complete the baseline survey, on the assumption that a similar proportion of these would have originally wanted to continue with MFL (column G). This gives a base figure (column H) with which to compare the total number of mentees who in fact decided, after the intervention, to take MFL to GCSE, allowing us to show the added value of the project in terms of the number of additional pupils opting for MFL (column K) and as a proportion of the original number who said they would do so (column L).

The key findings from Phase 2 are therefore that:

- **50% of pupils mentored chose to take MFL in Key Stage 4, up from the 29% who had originally said they would do so.**
- **This represents an additional 190 pupils, and an added value of 77%.**
- **In three consortia, the number of pupils choosing MFL more than doubled and in one case nearly tripled.** Added value was less high, although still very positive, in the consortium where a high proportion of pupils had been selected who already said they wanted to take MFL.

Although the proportion of mentees who chose to take MFL was lower in Phase 2 (50%) than in Phase 1 (57%), this was because Phase 2 was targeted more precisely at pupils who were ‘unsure’ or who had previously thought they would not to take MFL. However, Phase 2 clearly made a more impressive impact, not only because the ‘conversion rate’ was higher, but because a larger number of pupils were involved, more than six times the number in Phase 1.

**The conversion rates of 50% and 57% both represent very significant increases on the baseline figures and on the national picture in which the participation rate is around 20%.** In the baseline pupil survey of the whole Phase 2 cohort, only 18 per cent said they would choose MFL, and 37% were unsure. Comparing this to the national participation rate of around 20%, we can see that only a small proportion of these pupils who were unsure would be likely to decide to take the subject. (And indeed, some who were positive when they completed the survey might change their mind or would find themselves unable to take the subject).

The very low level of take-up in some schools at the start of the intervention also needs to be taken into account in judging the success of the project – **4 schools had had no GCSE group running for several years, but were able to run one after taking part in the project.** And in one such school, although only 4 out of the 23 mentees chose to do MFL, there were only 6 choosing to do so in the whole year group.

### 3.3 Case studies

In this section we have identified examples of schools where the project has proved particularly successful, and those where its impact has been more limited.

#### Radyr

This is a school which has traditionally attracted relatively high numbers to its Key Stage 4 classes, which run for three years with pupils opting in Year 8. It currently has 20% take up in Year 9, 39% in Year 10 and 25% in Year 11. The school joined the project as part of Phase 2, as a result of which 17 out of the 20 mentees chose MFL, two of whom had previously said they would not choose to do MFL and 7 who were previously not sure. This represents one of the best conversion rates in the project. However, higher up the school, 5 pupils opted to take French at AS level next year and the Headteacher will not allow this course to run.

Cantonian High School/Lewis Girls School/Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen

These three schools, where no GCSE MFL classes have run for several years took part in Phase 2 of the project and will now run GCSE classes from September 2017. (See also Dylan Thomas below).

#### Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen

The school took part in both phases of the project and has seen a successful impact in both. In Year 1, 5 out of 8 mentored pupils decided to take MFL, when only 2 had previously said they would, and in Year 2, 17 out of 23 mentored pupils opted for the subject. This school had only 10% uptake for MFL on initiating participation in the programme. The Head of Department said that she now had the biggest GCSE class she had ever had at the school, and commented ‘[Our mentor] has been fantastic, the students here have loved her sessions. She has worked totally independently and made a real effort to build a relationship with the students’.

#### Dylan Thomas

This school has had no GCSE class for MFL since 2014 and took part in both phases of the project. In the first year, none of the mentees opted for the subject, but the school runs a three-year GCSE course and has 17 pupils taking Spanish in Year 9. As a result of participation in Phase 2 of the project, 13 out of 23 mentees opted for MFL and there will be two language classes running for next year’s Year 9: Spanish GCSE and French Global Communication, each with 10 pupils.

#### Ysgol David Hughes

Although this school took part in both phases of mentoring, their engagement in the scheme was reported to have been very poor: no teacher from the school attended the teachers' briefing at Bangor University, or the Award and Recognition ceremony. There has also been a low level of engagement from the Regional Consortium, meaning that the selection and approach to schools was done by the National Coordinator in conjunction with the Bangor University Lead. After Phase 1, none of the 10 mentored pupils opted for MFL, although 3 out of 21 did so in Phase 2.

#### Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni

This school took part in both phases of the project, with strong support from the Head teacher. It was one of the schools where poor appreciation of the value of language learning among pupils was reported as a major obstacle and the mentoring project was part of a concerted effort to improve take up for MFL, which included the introduction of a Chinese class. Take up for languages has increased year on year, from 12% in (current) Year 11, to 56% in (current) Year 10, reaching 70% in current Year 9, spread over French, Spanish and German. The Head teacher has made French compulsory for all top-set pupils. As a result of involvement in the mentoring project, 16 out of 20 mentees opted for MFL.

### 3.4 Take up for MFL in the project schools following the intervention

Data on take up in the project schools more widely following the intervention is available for 21 schools which took part in Phase 1. These schools reported on the level of take up for MFL for the Year 10 groups starting their GCSE courses in September 2016: 11 had seen numbers for MFL fall in the period before the initiative, whereas after the initiative, 13 schools had increased numbers.

*Changes in the proportions of pupils taking MFL in Year 10, 2014 to 2015, by school:*

- 8 increases
- 11 decreases
- 2 no change (including one school with no GCSE MFL class in either 2014 or 2015)

*Changes in the proportions of pupils taking MFL in Year 10, 2015 to 2016 (i.e. after the intervention)*

- 13 increases
- 5 decreases
- 3 no change, including one with no GCSE MFL classes running

Although these figures cannot show causality, they suggested that the project had an impact on take up more widely in the project schools, beyond the actual pupils being mentored. This hypothesis was given further substance in interviews with teachers and mentors. Clearly where mentoring enables a GCSE class to run where it has not done so before, other pupils benefit too.

### 3.5 Other factors affecting take up

In assessing the impact of the project, it is necessary to take into account other factors which may have limited or boosted the indicators used to judge its success: whilst on the one hand some of the successes of the project may be in part due to other actions, on the other there are well-known systemic factors which were not within the remit of the project to address which continue to limit take up.

In addition to the mentoring programme, it is evident that many other initiatives and projects have been taking place in schools to raise the profile of languages. These included visiting speakers, student Language Ambassadors provided through Routes into Languages, and efforts by the teachers themselves. One teacher mentioned, for example, that she was providing careers information through the medium of French by looking at different jobs in French lessons. Many of these types of activities have already been running for several years, and it is likely that in conjunction with the focused efforts of the mentoring programme, they have contributed to its success, echoing its key messages and reaching a wide range of pupils and year groups. However, one teacher noted that although such efforts were often effective in 'firing up pupils', 'the problem comes when the option blocks appear'. This and other systemic issues have clearly been a factor in limiting the potential impact of the mentoring project.

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#### Reasons for low take up

In both phases, teachers were asked in their baseline questionnaires to give reasons why take up for MFL was not higher in their school. In the Phase 1 questionnaire, teachers were invited to say in their own words what they thought the main reason was for more pupils not taking a language to GCSE in their school. By far the most frequent reason given was the dearth of option choices and the plethora of subjects to choose from, in which languages are perceived as more difficult than other subjects. In Phase 2, the question was asked as a multiple-choice option (one answer permitted) based on the main reasons given in Phase 1. Here the small number of option choices once again came through as the most frequent reason, followed by the perceived difficulty of the subject. It is significant that only one school said that pupil attitudes were the main problem.

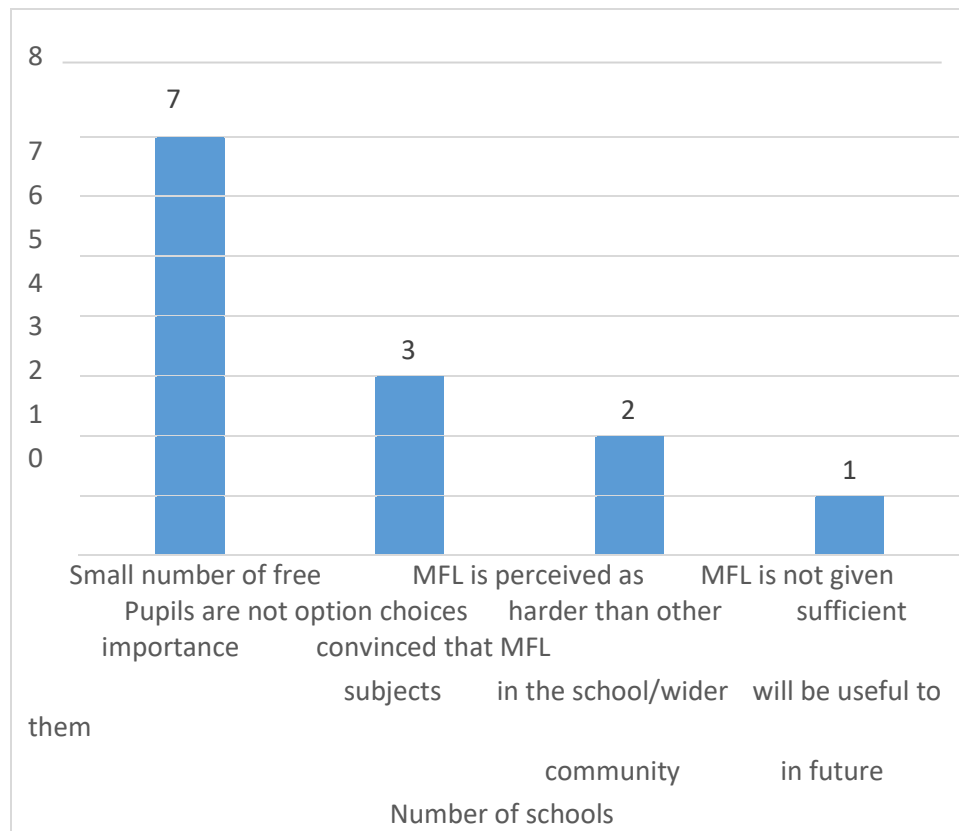


Figure 1: Main reason given by teachers why take up at Key Stage 4 is not higher, Phase 2 schools

In relation to perceptions of the difficulty of the subject, one teacher commented:

‘Unfortunately, the pupils also have a preconception that languages at GCSE are very difficult, which was proven in the listening exams for German today!’

Evidence collected for this report shows that **the attitudes of senior management and the wider community are indeed an important factor**, and we make some recommendations on this below.

#### Reasons for pupil choices regarding MFL

The very plentiful data from the Phase 2 baseline survey involving more than 3,000 Year 9 pupils provides some exceptional insights into the factors which pupils say affect their choices at GCSE. The multiple-choice options listed in the chart below were derived from the free text responses to the question put to pupils in Phase 1.

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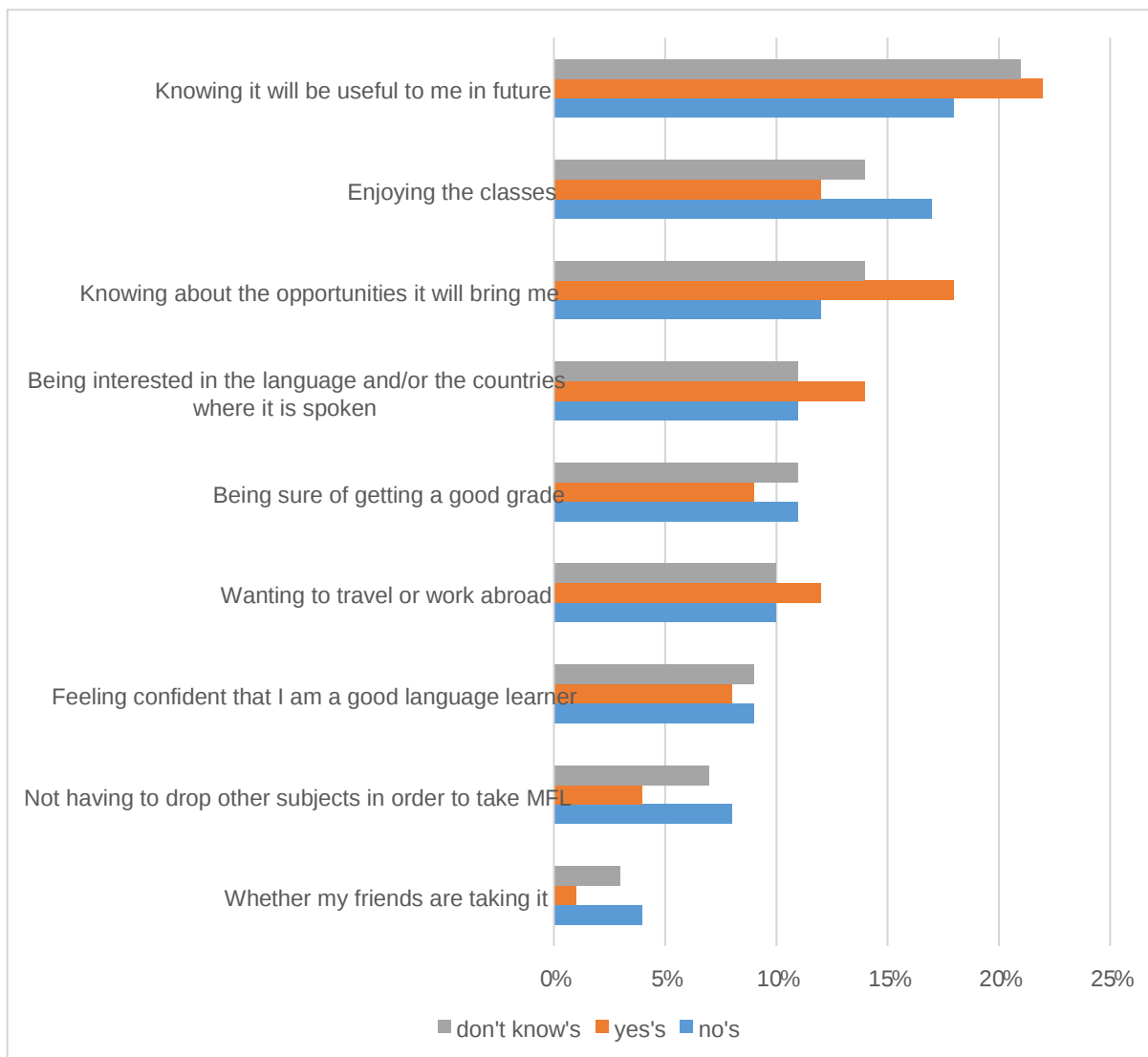


Figure 2: Factors in deciding whether to take MFL to GCSE, Phase 2 cohort, by pupil intentions

The findings presented above show very little significant difference in motivation between pupils who wanted to continue with MFL, those who wanted to give it up, and those who were not sure. For all three groups, the perceived 'usefulness' of the subject was the most important factor: we can see therefore that while the perception of 'usefulness' works to motivate those who wish to continue, a corresponding perception that the subject is not useful acts as a rationale for giving it up. As one pupil who had decided to give it up commented: 'because I shall never use it again'. Another said: 'I need to know that I will have a good grade to carry me and that I can trust that this will help me through life not just a waste of time just so I can talk to other people in different countries'. It is notable that pupils who already knew they wanted to study the subject did not rate enjoyment or the prospect of achieving a good grade as highly as their peers who were still unsure or who had already decided not to take MFL. Instead, pupils who wanted to take the subject valued being interested in the language and culture, and the idea of the opportunities that would come their way as a result. These findings highlighted the **importance of the project in tackling the issue of 'usefulness' and raising awareness of the opportunities through young role models who could speak from direct experience.**

Although the 'confidence' factor did not feature strongly in the quantitative results, it was picked up in pupil comments, especially in the Phase 1 survey. Pupils who did not yet know whether they were going to choose MFL for GCSE or not were uncertain both about the extent to which it would help them, and about their own abilities as linguists. Mentors were made aware of the importance of building pupils' confidence and overcoming the perception that learning a language is hard work for little reward.

In contrast to the comments from teachers, competition with other subjects did not feature strongly in the findings from the pupil survey. This may have been because pupils were surveyed in the autumn term,

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before they had been made aware of the particular choices they would have to face in the option blocks in their school.

#### Characteristics of pupils deciding not to take MFL

Using data from Phase 1, we explored the characteristics of pupils who had decided not to take MFL.

Given the development of a new national curriculum for Wales in which the teaching of Welsh, English and MFL will be linked in a single curriculum area, we explored whether pupils' perceptions of themselves as bilinguals were linked to wider attitudes towards learning languages. In both phases, pupils were asked to assess their own competence in Welsh by ticking one of 4 boxes. The findings clearly reflect only pupils' own perceptions and indeed, one teacher interviewed for the study noted that pupils may under-estimate their capability in Welsh. They show a wide span of ability, with the Phase 1 mentees generally rating themselves higher than the wider cohort who completed the Phase 2 survey.

|                  | Phase 1 (mentees) | Phase 2 (wider cohort) |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Bilingual</b> | 23%               | 11%                    |
| <b>Good</b>      | 33%               | 35%                    |
| <b>OK</b>        | 35%               | 41%                    |
| <b>Poor</b>      | 8%                | 12%                    |

Table 8: Pupils' self-reported competence in Welsh, Phases 1 and 2

The responses of the Phase 1 mentees were analysed in conjunction with other answers provided to the questionnaire, but no significant patterns emerged. **Those who decided to drop MFL were spread across all categories of self-reported competence in Welsh and bilingual pupils were as likely as monolingual pupils to drop MFL.** It was not possible therefore to draw any quantitative conclusions about whether pupils' perception of their ability in Welsh is associated with any particular attitudes towards MFL or choices made. However, some pupils made comments showing how **Welsh may sometimes 'compete' with MFL because of the compulsory nature of Welsh and the dearth of slots for free choices.** This was echoed by one teacher who commented: 'Pupils largely from very non-aspirational and extremely insular background/ approach to life find Welsh EXTREMELY hard and see it as ostensibly a foreign language hence another MFL on top, by options, for majority is too daunting.' One pupil, who rated himself with very low competence in Welsh, made a similar observation: 'I don't have enough options in my column to choose an MFL and we already have to learn Welsh'.

Not enjoying the classes was a factor for pupils deciding to give up MFL, but not a very significant one. Three pupils who decided to drop the subject were in the highest category for enjoyment, and only 4 had said that they did not enjoy MFL lessons at all (although all of these were from the same school).

Just under two thirds of the pupils dropping MFL (28 out of 44) had said that they thought the subject would be useful to them in future. Although this was lower than the 80% of all pupils in the study who regarded MFL as useful, there was not a strong correlation between dropping the subject and believing it is not useful. Seven of those dropping the subject had previously said that the MFL would not be useful to them in the future, the rest were unsure.

This evidence shows that, despite the evidence from the baseline surveys, pupil awareness of the value of languages is not the only factor affecting their subject choices. Teachers' observations about the importance of systemic factors, particularly regarding the number of option choices available and clashes with other subjects clearly also come into play. **Pupils may be strongly aware of the benefits of the subject and greatly enjoy their lessons, but still not choose to take it to GCSE because of these systemic factors.**

#### 4. Other impacts of the project in schools and pupils

This chapter looks more widely at the impact of the project on pupil attitudes and aspirations within the schools which took part.

#### 4.1 Pupil attitudes before the intervention

Teachers responding to the baseline survey were asked to rate their pupils' attitudes towards language learning by ticking the prompt which best described the situation in their school:

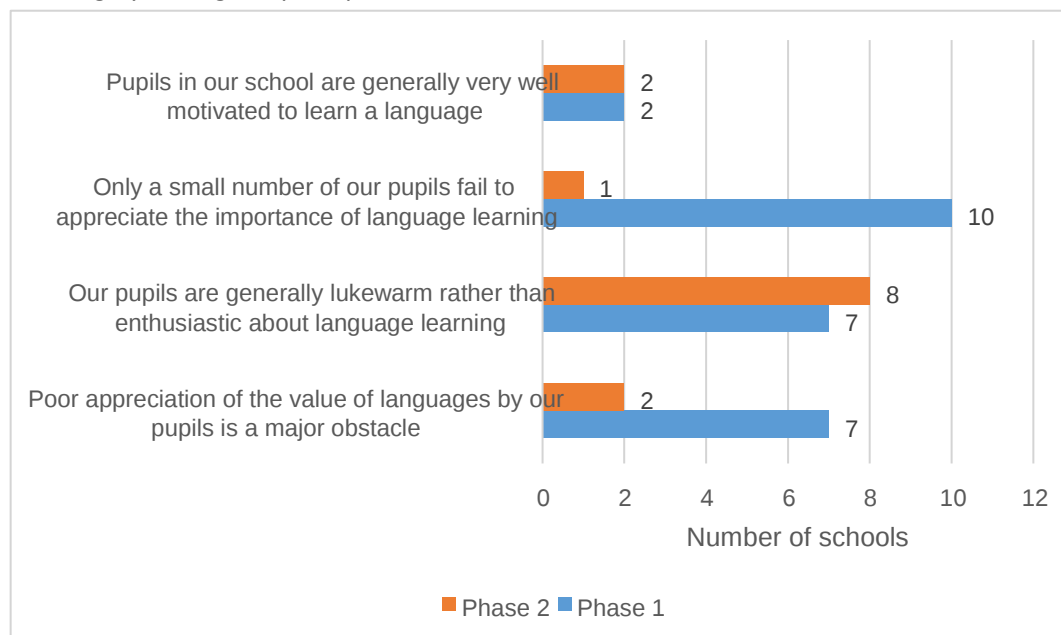


Figure 3: Pupil attitudes towards MFL, Phases 1 & 2

The disparity of the responses shown above highlights the varied circumstances of the project schools and the different contexts in which the mentoring took place. Teachers who were concerned about pupil attitudes towards language learning in their schools commented on the insularity and lack of opportunities pupils had to experience life beyond their immediate communities:

‘Students see no reason to study a language as many have never left the country. They do not understand how learning a language can help job prospects until we tell them or they listen to outside speakers. Many enjoy the lesson but feel that they will never use a language in the future’

‘Many pupils are from an agricultural background and do not believe that language learning will directly affect their future plans’.

One teacher commented that such attitudes particularly affected less academically-oriented pupils: ‘Lower ability pupils tend not to see the value of languages so much.’ Another made a significant point about parental influence, a factor which has not so far been taken into account in the design of the project:

‘Students’ backgrounds are the main influence on attitudes to language learning. Many parents have the same views on languages and don’t see them as important in comparison to other school subjects. Students and parents do not understand the benefits of language learning mostly due to where they live. Most students never venture outside of Wales and therefore have never experienced different cultures.’

**These comments reinforce the value of the project in bringing pupils into direct contact with university students who have recent experience of living in a foreign country and embody a wider range of experiences and options.**

Teachers were also asked to rate pupils’ aspirations in relation to language learning (Figure 4): once again there was a disparity between schools where teachers thought that pupils’ awareness of the advantages of speaking another language was relatively high, and those where there was considerable work still to be done. **This reinforces the finding that, although pupil attitudes towards MFL are a ‘major obstacle’ in a minority of schools, it is by no means a general rule that pupils are badly disposed towards MFL or that they are badly informed about the potential benefits.**

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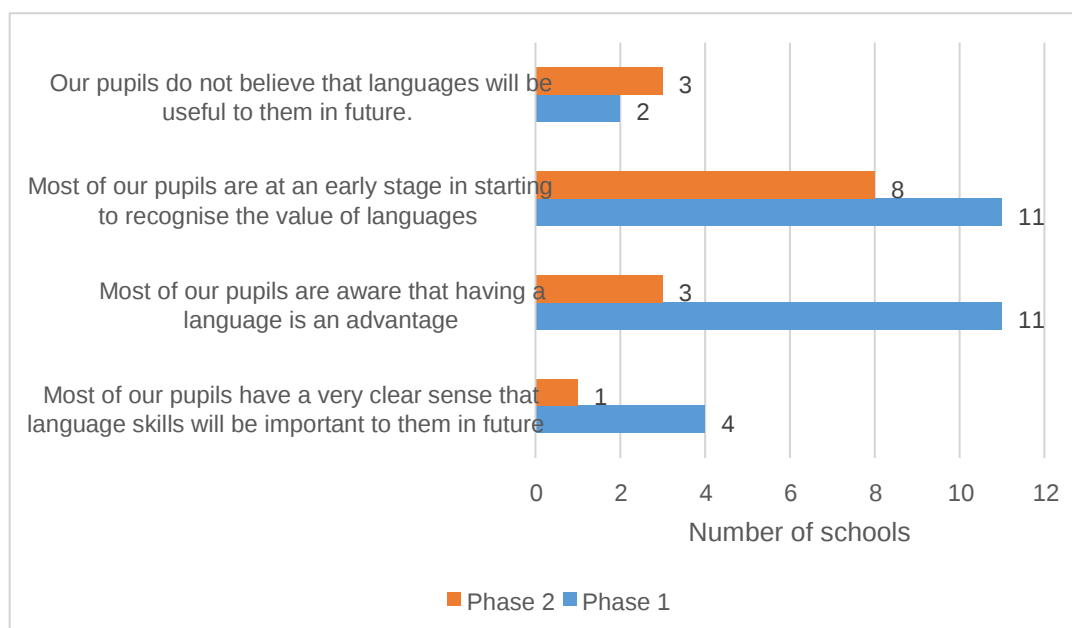


Figure 4: Pupil perceptions of the value of MFL for their future careers, Phases 1 & 2

However, even where awareness is relatively high, this does not necessarily lead to high take up for MFL. Teachers commented: 'I think our pupils are aware that learning languages is very useful and are quite enthusiastic generally in lessons, but parents and other teachers tell them they need other subjects for certain jobs. Other apparently less challenging subjects are often more appealing'. Here again, the influence of parents comes to the fore.

Findings from the project also contradicted the perception that pupils do not enjoy language learning. Pupils in both phases were asked to tick the answer which best described their feelings towards MFL lessons, and attitudes towards MFL were generally positive, as can be seen in the following table:

|                                              | Phase 1<br>(mentees) | Phase 1 <sup>11</sup> | Phase 2<br>(whole cohort) |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>I thoroughly enjoy all MFL lessons</b>    | 25%                  |                       | 12%                       |
| <b>I generally enjoy my MFL lessons</b>      | 60%                  | 4%                    | 51%                       |
| <b>MFL lessons are generally rather dull</b> | 8%                   |                       | 21%                       |
| <b>I do not enjoy MFL lessons at all</b>     | 3%                   |                       | 16%                       |

Table 9: Pupils' enjoyment of MFL lessons

The difference between the Phase 1 responses reflecting mentees only, and Phase 2 which reflect the whole cohort, can be attributed to pupils who already enjoyed MFL classes being more likely to be selected to take part in the project. Nonetheless, it shows that **nearly two thirds of pupils generally enjoy their MFL classes** and that, although some pupils find them dull or actively dislike the subject, low take up cannot be attributed a poor experience of language learning. In Phase 1, pupils were asked to comment further and, where they expressed reservations, these tended to be around the level of difficulty, the amount to remember, or not liking particular aspects of the language-learning process. Expressions about 'confusion' were also quite common. Pupils who did not like their MFL lessons said they found it 'boring' or 'hard', or disliked particular activities. But even pupils who said they did not enjoy their MFL lessons at all, or generally found them dull, were able to articulate some positive feelings towards the subject. **These remarks highlight the importance of building confidence and resilience among learners, something the project has actively sought to address.** However, as noted above, enjoyment of the subject alone is not sufficient to deliver high take up, as one teacher observed: 'Pupils comment that they enjoy the lessons but think other subjects will

<sup>11</sup> A small number of pupils in Phase 1 ticked an intermediate response.

be of more use to them.’

With low aspiration a key factor not only in take up for MFL, but for educational achievement more generally, the project sought to broaden pupils’ horizons and raise ambitions as regards their future careers. In Phase 1, three quarters (75%) of pupils said that they planned to go to university, with 23% undecided, and only 4 pupils saying they did not plan to go on to higher education. In the Phase

2 cohort, a lower proportion, 62%, said they planned to go to university and 31% were not sure. In Phase 1 (but not Phase 2), pupils were asked what subjects they might be interested in studying at university. Just over a quarter of pupils (26%) said that they might be interested in studying a modern foreign language at university – a surprisingly high proportion, although multiple answers were permitted and most put languages alongside a range of other possibilities, such as ‘Law or MFL’, or ‘geography, sociology, drama and French’. The number of pupils saying that they wanted to study sciences was very slightly higher than those interested in MFL, and the interest in PE/Sport Science also very high. The large number of pupils saying that they might study a language at university showed that pupils are open-minded at this stage and that **there is therefore considerable potential to improve take up from Key Stage 4 through to higher education.**

When pupils were asked about what jobs they could see themselves doing in future, the most popular area of work in Phase 1 was the Sports Industry, and in Phase 2 this came second after professional careers such as law or architecture. Although some responses were very specific (e.g. ‘running my own carpentry business’) responses tended to cluster round a narrow range of responses, suggesting that pupils were not yet aware of the full range of careers open to them. It was significant that very few pupils stated that they were interested in careers in ‘business’, although MFL is frequently promoted for this purpose.

In Phase 1, as many as 80% of pupils said at the beginning of the project that MFL would benefit them in their future career, 15% were unsure and 5% (12 pupils) said it would not be useful to them. These responses contrasted strongly with those from the wider cohort surveyed in Phase 2, in which only half that proportion – 41% – said that a language would benefit them, 38% were unsure and 20% said it would not benefit them. This contrast suggests that pupils’ opinions in Phase 1 had already been modified by the intervention by the time they completed the survey, but it also highlights the generic challenge which the project sought to address.

There was evidence that some pupils, around 10%, had thought specifically about the usefulness of a language in relation to the future careers that interested them, for example: ‘It could help because people get a boat to Holyhead and their car might need repair and might speak a different language’. These messages almost certainly came from work to raise awareness of MFL either before the intervention or during the first session. Messages about general employability and the ability to speak another language making the difference at interview, which have been strongly promoted by Routes into Languages and CILT Cymru for many years, had evidently made an impression in the minds of pupils who commented to the effect that employers would be likely to choose a person with experience in languages over someone without. However, some comments belied misconceptions about the benefits of languages – e.g. ‘It’s not useful on computers’ – highlighting the importance of more in-depth careers information and advice. Some comments provided evidence of the lack of opportunities some pupils had had to travel abroad or interact with people from abroad: ‘Just in case you meet someone from a different country you can talk to them’.

Only a very small number of comments related to the cognitive or cultural benefits of speaking another language and it was notable that most of the views expressed focused on the transactional or instrumental value of learning a language and pupils’ own benefit. **There was very little evidence of internationalist values or the desire to access and understand other cultures as motivations for language learning.**

The number of comments from pupils relating to the value of languages for business purposes, for example ‘if you make a business you can deal with different suppliers in different countries’, contrasted with the relative dearth of pupils who expressed interest in taking business studies at university, or working in the business sector. Conversely, several pupils expressing an interest in business did not see how a language would benefit this. This leads to the conclusion that **careers information, advice and guidance focussing on enterprise education combined with MFL might help pupils to develop their thinking and ultimately could support the development of the Welsh economy.**

#### 4.2 Pupil attitudes during and after the project intervention

### *Mentors' views*

Mentors all said that they felt that the pupils had enjoyed the mentoring. They expressed surprise at how low take up for MFL is and talked of wanting to inspire children, and to 'share passion for languages'. They felt that the situation was all the more 'shocking' because of Wales being a bilingual country which they had expected to be more open and understand the need to do languages. One mentor noted that pupils had a mindset which saw languages as 'just another class, not a skill', and they only saw limited career possibilities. They had been memorising phrases and couldn't understand if the sentence was turned around. She said they loved the GCSE oral practice she did with them. She was surprised by the pupils' lack of opportunities to engage with the language: 'They have never spoken French outside the classroom, have never seen films in French or listened to French music. They see language learning as academic, not alive.'

Mentors were aware that pupils in schools did not see enough 'of what you can do' and felt that they had contributed greatly to this. Pupils had enjoyed hearing about travel and working abroad and had been eager to learn more. All the mentors interviewed felt they had inspired pupils to realise that they could use languages if they 'followed their dreams'. One said that she based her second session on pupils' responses to the initial survey question on what pupils saw themselves doing in future and how languages might help. She followed up interests with them such as medicine, music or working for MI5, so that they could see the direct relevance for themselves. She said pupils were confused and shocked to find out that languages were not just useful for teaching or for holidays. They warmed to mentors' own testimonies of using their languages, such as 'even working in a burrito place it's helped me', and had started to understand the more general benefits such as confidence and presentation skills. Another felt that, even though the pupils she mentored had already decided to take a language, they had been inspired, reassured, and even equipped with some study techniques which would help them. One mentor commented that the pupils were sad when she left and all wanted to do French afterwards, for different reasons. However, mentors were realistic that not all would choose to do a language, but felt that at least they had 'seen what languages can bring' and pupils would at least be able to 'make a more educated choice'. 'It's a short amount of time, you don't think it is going to have an effect, but it does'.

Some mentors also felt that sessions on similarities between languages, and the quirks of different languages had interested the pupils in languages generally. One mentor said she had tried to 'show language from another side' by discussing French slang and French words in English. In addition, one mentor did a session on safety on the internet which she said the pupils had enjoyed.

**Mentors could see that the impact of their intervention spread beyond the group being mentored.** In one school, the Head of Languages had already spoken to the Year 8s about their involvement in the second year of the project, and the pupils being mentored had told their friends, creating a 'pyramid effect'. Another mentor commented that 'you could tell from the way they reacted that they were going to spread the word', and another said that pupils' friends were asking about the sessions and she encouraged them to show their friends the packs they received. One mentor had heard other pupils starting to use a phrase she taught her mentees, and assumed that they had shared it. In another school, the mentor felt she had not been more widely recognised and that 'they think I'm a social worker'. However, other pupils who heard about the scheme were 'jealous' and wanted to take part.

One mentor noted a difference in the responses of the boys and the girls, saying that the girls engaged better, while the boys were more fidgety. However, another mentor who worked with mixed pairs of pupils said that the boys were more proactive and the girls were shy. The social aspect of the mentoring had been important for pupils getting to know each other.

### *Teachers' views*

Teachers interviewed were clear that **one of the great successes of the project was in building ambition and broadening horizons**, and that the link with higher education was key to this:

'I think it made university life in general, and languages in particular, seem more accessible.'

'Not only were the pupils learning about the values of languages but they were having a chance to speak to a real student'.

One teacher in particular highlighted the importance of the link with the university for pupils in a deprived area of the country:

‘Our pupils are from the economically disadvantaged Valleys and as such a lot of them would be the first member of their family to go to university. It was great for them to see that university is a real option for them and that travelling the world is open to all of them!’

Another noted that pupils more generally had been ‘talking more about universities and their options for the future.’

Teachers interviewed commented that **the scheme, and in particular the link with higher education, had given MFL an improved profile with senior management** and mentioned that ‘the Head spoke about the Award Ceremony and the link between Science and Languages. Other pupils want to take part now’. Another teacher commented: ‘It raised the profile and the Head was pleased.’ **The role of school leaders is clearly crucial in achieving the objectives of the *Global Futures* plan and evidence from this project highlights their importance and the potential to engage them more systematically.**

Teachers had nothing but praise for the mentors and said that they had ‘really motivated the pupils’. All of those interviewed said that they would ‘definitely’ take part again if the programme were offered to them, and they would like it to be made available to more pupils.

### *5. Added-value of the project: impact on mentors*

Mentors felt that the project had benefited both sides – both the pupils and themselves: ‘it felt like success all round’. One commented how useful the experience working with children and lesson planning had been, which they said was good preparation for going into teaching.

The training sessions were greatly valued, particularly ‘how to give good feedback’ and ‘motivational skills.’ Mentors saw that these skills would stay with them long after their involvement. The experience of working in a school was also very valuable: ‘it’s good to say I can work with kids and I’m definitely going to put the training on my CV’. Mentors were pleased to be treated as equals by the staff and allowed in the staff room: ‘I was called ‘Mr Peters and I’m only 21’. S said she wanted to go into teaching and this had reinforced her love of working in schools. She had enjoyed the experience of leading a session: ‘this is my session, I’m leading it’. Another benefit was described as ‘learning to communicate positively’ - becoming more aware of the impact of ‘how you say things’ and how it might be misconstrued. **All these skills were felt to be extremely useful for their future employability** and ‘good to talk about in job interviews’.

One stressed how much she had learnt about the concept of mentoring: ‘it is different, getting pupils to work out examples rather than giving them the answers.’ She had not understood before what ‘mentoring’ meant.

Another mentor said that although she had got a lot out of training and had enjoyed it, she still felt unprepared, and unsure of the titles of sessions. Another stressed how she had to be creative in interpreting the sessions: there was not enough time available and technology was a problem. There is evidence that the experience had taught them to be more autonomous in their planning and preparation. One said that they would ‘be more organised with my lesson planning’ and another said that in future she would plan ‘back up ideas’ as not all groups responded well to the same input.

## Conclusions and recommendations

There is a large amount of both quantitative and qualitative evidence to show that the project has fulfilled its core aims, both in relation to the specific objective of boosting take up for GCSE MFL in the project schools, and in relation to the more general aim of developing pupils' aspiration and enthusiasm.

The key findings are summarised below, together with an analysis of factors which made the project successful. We also provide a summary of factors which limited its success and recommendations on how these might be addressed.

### 7.1 Key findings

#### Quantitative impacts

- In Phase 1, 57% of the total number of pupils mentored chose to take MFL in Key Stage 4 and in Phase 2, 50% did so. These represent very significant increases on the baseline figures and on the national picture in which the participation rate is around 20%.
- In Phase 2, only 29% of mentees had originally said they would take MFL, but an additional 190 pupils decided to do so after the intervention, representing an added value of 77%.
- In three consortia, the number of pupils choosing MFL more than doubled.
- 4 schools had had no GCSE group running for several years, but were able to run one after taking part in the project.

#### Qualitative impacts

- All pupils, and especially those from isolated or economically disadvantaged areas, have benefitted from direct personal contact with university students who have recent experience of living in a foreign country and embody a wider range of experiences and options. The opportunity to visit universities for Award and Recognition ceremonies has stimulated pupils' ambitions and discussion about their future careers.
- The project has actively addressed the challenge of building confidence and resilience among MFL learners and has been warmly welcomed by their teachers.
- Mentors have benefited from the training and the experience that the project has provided and will take this forward into their future careers.
- The scheme, in particular because of the way it has linked schools with higher education, had given MFL an improved profile with senior school management. The project has highlighted the importance of school leaders in achieving the objectives of the *Global Futures* plan and the potential to engage them more systematically.

#### Other insights provided by the project

- Although pupil attitudes towards MFL are a 'major obstacle' in a minority of schools, it is by no means a general rule that pupils are badly disposed towards MFL or that they are badly informed about the potential benefits. Nearly two thirds of pupils generally enjoy their MFL classes.
- Pupils may be strongly aware of the benefits of the subject and greatly enjoy their lessons, but still not choose to take it to GCSE because of systemic factors, particularly the way that MFL appears in option columns.
- Welsh may sometimes 'compete' with MFL because of the compulsory nature of Welsh and the dearth of slots for free choices. Pupils who decided to drop MFL were spread across all categories of self-reported competence in Welsh and bilingual pupils were as likely as monolingual pupils to drop the subject.
- There is considerable potential to improve deepen awareness of the specific ways in which MFL can enhance and enrich pupils' lives and their future careers, and to improve take up from Key Stage 4 through to higher education.
- The attitudes of parents and the wider community are an important determinant of pupils' choices and thought might be given to addressing these on a future occasion.

### 7.2 Success factors

The National Coordinator has played a central role in organising, delivering and supporting the project. Mentors reported that the project had been extremely well organised, often very much in excess of their expectations that it would be somewhat chaotic. Organisers 'understood what was needed' and had supported them with weekly emails and ideas. One mentor described the National Coordinator's support as 'amazing', another described it as 'super-helpful'. Teachers also all confirmed that the project had been very well organised, one commenting in particular that the initial meeting with the National Coordinator was 'thorough and very well explained'.

Mentoring in small groups has provided a more personal, individualised way of engaging pupils with key messages and ideas.

Mentors observed that many pupils had already had a lot of input on encouraging them to take languages, but not in such small groups. This made the intervention more personal: pupils were less inhibited and able to ask questions, for example about the Year Abroad. However, some mentors and teachers suggested that there should be at least one session in a larger group to allow more pupils to benefit.

University mentors who are relatively close in age to the pupils mentored have provided realistic but inspiring role-models.

Comments emerging from the mentor interviews indicated that using 'younger people' to talk to pupils was a particularly important factor in the success of the project. Another said that it made the experience more real for the pupils as mentors were role models close in age and could remember their own GCSE orals!

One teacher who had experienced two different mentors in her school felt that one was better than the other, with one being rather quiet and the other more outgoing, although she stressed that both were very reliable and felt that it was a question of personality, not training. Teachers commented:

'Our pupils really liked our student mentor and enjoyed the sessions with her. She knew what she needed/wanted to do with the pupils over the 6-week period.'

'The success of the programme comes down to your student mentors. I know you are thorough when choosing who will participate, and I agree that it is so important to do that. If there was a student mentor who was not passionate and approachable then the programme would certainly not be as effective.'

The professional development and training programme for mentors not only provided excellent preparation for their work in schools, but a development opportunity that they will take with them into their future careers.

Mentors were unanimous that this had provided an excellent developmental opportunity for them, as well as preparing them for the task in hand. They all felt that the training received had been useful, enjoyable and well-focussed and that they would be able to put what they had learned to use more widely in their future careers. The whole experience was clearly exceptionally useful from the point of view of their future employability. Although only one of those interviewed intended to go into teaching, they all felt it was an excellent experience to include in their CVs and would give them plenty to discuss in future job interviews.

The link with higher education and opportunity for pupils to visit a university for the Award and Recognition ceremony have impacted both on the pupils themselves and on school leadership.

One teacher identified the university visit as the absolute key factor in the success of the project, saying that 'if anything makes a difference it will be Award Ceremony at Cardiff University.' She described the chance to see life outside of a housing estate as a 'momentous' experience for pupils. Evidence from both teachers and mentors shows that linking the world of higher education to schools in this way has been hugely beneficial in raising aspiration and making progression to higher education seem a realistic and achievable proposition for pupils. This is an impact which goes far beyond the MFL subject area and is particularly important for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### 7.3 Limiting factors and recommendations for future

Organisation and facilities within some schools have been poor.

Some mentors were quite critical of their reception in the schools they worked in, saying that schools were not prepared, seemed chaotic, and that pupils arrived late and this interfered with the time available.

## Contract for Digital Languages Mentoring Project

### Appendix A – Contractors Solution Attachments

Several commented on timetabling issues and the difficulty in finding a suitable time to run the sessions. Those who had to travel long distances felt that it was a 'long drive for a short input' but recognised that there was not much that could be done about the logistics of distance.

Mentors were also dissatisfied with the space allotted to them. One commented: 'I expected to be in a classroom, not a small cupboard or corridor, which was very overcrowded. People were always coming in late and there were disruptions when pupils were thrown out of classes.'

Another point of dissatisfaction was the lack of IT facilities. One sought to remedy the lack of a computer by bringing her own laptop but then found there was no wifi. Several agreed that having a projector and better technology would have improved the experience for pupils.

Teachers in schools are clearly very busy: one said that they had had very limited with the mentor for this reason, and a lack of engagement with the project in some schools may be attributable to this reason.

Another issue that emerged was the resistance of other departments to pupils being taken out of their classes, but as one teacher commented, 'when pupils are identified as needing extra literacy work, they are taken out of MFL classes, so it works both ways'.

Staff sickness, reorganisation and other types of disruption limited the potential impact of the project in a few schools, as the following comments show:

'Unfortunately, this year we have had quite a lot of disruption and this has really affected our numbers for next year. One of my department is on maternity leave and the another is off with stress. Consequently, the year 9 classes of those teachers have been covered by a string of supply teachers and this lack of continuity has had a knock-on effect on options. In German, only 10 pupils have opted and in French we have 18 in one column and 3 in another, so the 3 have been asked to re-choose. This is a big blow for us as we always have 2 healthy classes for French in Year 10.' (Head of MFL)

'A very difficult year in the school, as the teacher had to apply for her job, also they couldn't take part in the second phase as the school was closed and pupils had to be taught in other schools' (National Coordinator)

'The school had never done it before and the Head of MFL was hospitalised during the process and was the only person who taught languages so she had to deal with supply teachers who weren't informed.' (Mentor)

**Recommendation: school leadership teams should be engaged in the project from the outset, with a named member of the senior school leadership responsible for oversight of the project within the school.**

Financial constraints in schools are squeezing MFL classes and the viability of smaller groups

This issue has affected not only the minimum numbers schools will allow for a course to run, but their very ability to provide data on take up, as these comments show:

'Due to budget cuts, the options columns keep changing and I have still not been given the final list.

GCSE PE was set against French and a lot of the boys plumped for that instead earlier in the year. However, since then options for PE have been modified and I do not know whether this has affected decisions. So far only one definite, but maybe more. Really sorry not to be clearer. I found out today that Music had changed columns to the one for French which means some pupils who chose French may not do so as they also wanted to do Music! A result of cuts I am afraid.'

Later the same teacher commented: 'The options have still not been confirmed to us. There are still meetings going on with pupils and SLT regarding courses being offered, and courses are still changing. This is due to the school facing budget cuts and rationalising courses. I have been assured that French will run, and that there are 'healthy numbers'. As I said before I am only sure of one of the boys being mentored who is taking French. All participants were very enthusiastic and gave very positive feedback to the mentoring. Curriculum leaders were not consulted on options columns unfortunately, and there is very little more I can add. Really sorry for this unsatisfactory response.'

This school was participating in the project for the second year. In the first year 4 out of 5 mentored pupils chose MFL, though all had previously said they would. The school had a take up rate of 1719% on starting to participate in the project.

**Recommendation: engagement of school leadership teams, as above.**

The way schools offer MFL within option columns is a major constraint on pupil choice

As teachers indicated in their baseline responses, the small number of free option slots in schools is a limiting factor and this prevented the project from achieving a bigger impact. As one teacher commented: 'Some of the pupils who took part in the programme came to speak to me to say how much they wanted to do a MFL but their choices were limited'. Others complained about 'problems with option columns' and the way the columns were organised which put MFL at a disadvantage: 'Our school has put Triple Science and French together again this year and this has really affected numbers, more so than last year. I have asked for French to be placed in another block but this has been refused. Very frustrating and upsetting!' (School where 7 of 18 mentees chose MFL, of whom only one had originally said they would do so.)

'Pupils in our school are having to do more Maths and this is cutting down on their option choices.'

'This year French was only put into one option column which we feel seriously affected our take up. Senior Management disagree with this though! They think it is due to the loss of [a teacher] this year! (School where 3 out of 22 mentees chose MFL – none having done so previously).

I'm afraid only 2 of the 16 have opted for MFL. This is no reflection of the programme or [the mentor] - our numbers have dropped from 27 this year to 8 next year, unfortunately. I think factors such as compulsory full course Welsh this year as well as the Welsh Bacc have had a negative impact!

**Recommendation: that schools taking part in the project be required to arrange for MFL to appear in a sufficient number of GCSE option blocks so that all mentees who wish to take the subject are able to do so. The Welsh Government might consider making this a national requirement for all schools, so that all pupils have an entitlement to take a GCSE in a modern foreign language.**

Successes of the project not reciprocated in schools: some pupils who wanted to take MFL as a result of the project have not been able to do so

There was frustration expressed by some teachers – and by one mentor too – that although the programme had achieved considerable success, decisions within the school had prevented the impact from being realised. In one school which had not run a GCSE MFL class for (at least) the past two years, although five out of nine mentees chose to take MFL, the class was not allowed to run.

(Tredegar)

In another school, although 22 pupils (12 of whom were mentored) wanted to take French, the Head teacher would only allow it to run as an after-school group (West Monmouth).

In another school, although the project provided enough pupils for a French class, take up was too low for German and it was not allowed to run. The teacher in this school commented: 'We are suffering from the choice boxes, as probably every school in Wales, due to financial restraints and the BACC. It is a sad state of affairs that schools are reducing to one language at GCSE, as we will eventually find that we no longer have the expertise needed in the future. The profile of Global Futures could be emphasised to Heads and the demands of languages within the Donaldson report needs to be raised.'

One mentor noted that in her school 'they had to make their preliminary choices during the mentoring and most wanted to do MFL, but although some pupils opted in, the teacher ruled some out.'

These comments contrast sharply with the experience of the school which has experienced year on year increases in take up for MFL as a result of the head teacher's commitment to supporting the subject.

**Recommendation: that senior school leaders in partner schools be required to report on their MFL take up in May/June to the National Coordinator.**

Teresa Tinsley

9 July 2017

### **Question 3 – Existing Platform Screenshots**

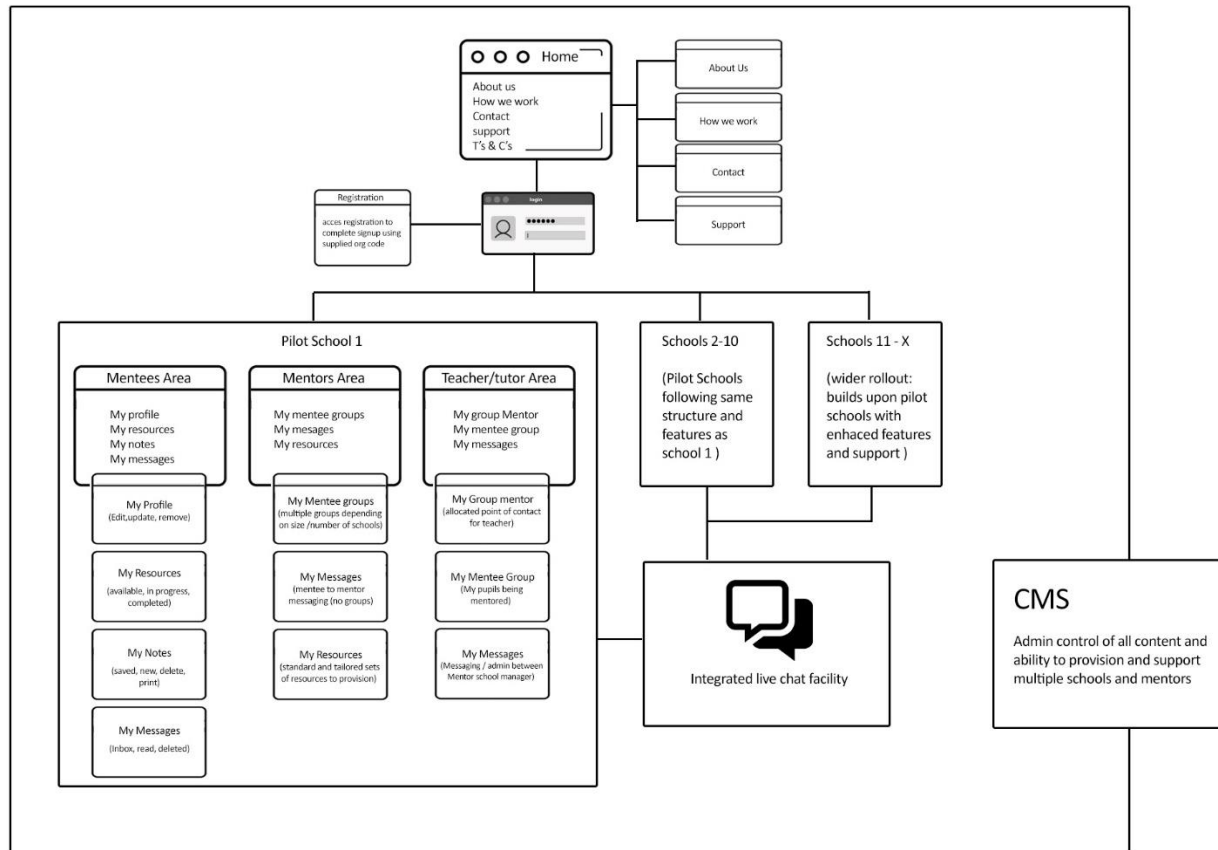
See below document for existing platform screenshots:



Existing platform  
screenshots.pdf

### Question 3 – Existing Platform Screenshots

Digi Languages mentoring platform: initial architecture concept v1.0



### Question 3 – Indicative Architecture New Platform

The screenshot shows the login and registration interface for the Digi Languages Mentoring Project. On the left, there is a white sidebar with a 'LOG IN' section containing fields for 'Username' (with the example 'Username@mfl.co.uk') and 'Password' (masked with asterisks), a 'Log in' button, and a 'NOT REGISTERED?' section with a 'Complete registration' button. On the right, a large image of students in a classroom is overlaid with the project logo 'Digi Languages MENTORING PROJECT'.

The screenshot shows the 'MY RESOURCES' dashboard for a user named Adam Jones. It displays a grid of six resource cards for Weeks 1 through 6. Week 1 is marked 'Complete' with a green arrow. Week 2 is marked 'Active' with an orange arrow. Weeks 3, 4, 5, and 6 are all marked 'Not active yet' with grey arrows. Each card includes a thumbnail image of students or a teacher.

## Contract for Digital Languages Mentoring Project

### Appendix A – Contractors Solution Attachments





### RESOURCES: WEEK 2

|                 |   |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| True or false   | → | True or false   | → |
| Drag and drop   | → | Drag and drop   | → |
| Question Time   | → | Question Time   | → |
| Multiple Choice | → | Multiple Choice | → |
| Quiz            | → | Quiz            | → |
| Quiz 2          | → | Quiz 2          | → |
| Question Time   | → | Question Time   | → |

CHAT WITH A MENTOR →





### RESOURCES: WEEK 2

CHAT WITH A MENTOR

 Hello Adam! How are you getting on today? 19:56pm

19:56pm

 Great, looking at week 2 resources, I have a question!

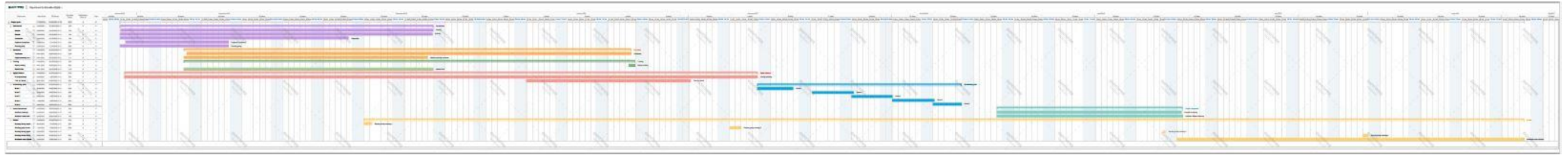
 Sure, how can I help? 19:56pm



Type your message here ... →

|                 |   |               |   |
|-----------------|---|---------------|---|
| True or false   | → |               | → |
| Drag and drop   | → |               | → |
| Question Time   | → |               | → |
| Multiple Choice | → |               | → |
| Quiz            | → |               | → |
| Quiz 2          | → |               | → |
| Question Time   | → | Question Time | → |

## Question 4 – Project Plan GANTT Chart



See below document for detailed version:



Q4 Project Plan  
Gantt Chart.pdf