

# Language Planners Wales

the professional forum  
for language planners in Wales

**Meeting held on 8 February 2008 at Y Morlan, Aberystwyth.**

## Brief notes

A successful meeting was held on 8 February to discuss **A Professional Qualification - the way forward**. There were 30 people present representing various fields, and 26 apologies were received.

The minutes of the October meeting were submitted, and it was noted that it was the discussion on education and training that had led to this meeting's theme.

## **A model of a professional qualification:**

Presentation by Elaine Davies, Director of Education and Training, Cwmni Iaith

**Why** should a qualification in this field be considered?

- More and more people are working in the language field in Wales today and are directly involved in the process of seeking to broaden and normalize the use of the Welsh language as part of our work on a daily basis.
- There is a need for a qualification in order to develop the field into a profession and to gain credibility.
- We have to understand which processes are afoot, know how to react to these processes and recognize a set of values that set our stamp and identity, our authority and our expertise on that which we are doing.

**What** is needed?

- Ideally, there needs to be a vast continuum of qualifications, but below is a possible content for a series of 7 modules for a postgraduate diploma:
  - Language and Society
  - An introduction to Language Planning
  - Understanding Bilingualism
  - The Principles of Language Awareness
  - Forming and Implementing a Language Strategy
  - Bilingualism, Multilingualism and the European context
  - Skills in the Workplace

**How** can we progress?

- Form a profile of the workforce working in the language field;
- Discover which learning models would appeal to people.

## Mapping the needs of the field

Presentation by Dai Rogers, Senior Lecturer, Trinity Collage

Following a discussion on education and training issues in the October meeting, the following points were noted:

- There is a need to develop a professional postgraduate qualification in language planning.
- This qualification needs to be professionally validated by the field.
- Consideration should be given to developing professional qualifications for different aspects of the profession and associated key posts.
- There is a perceived market for a qualification of this kind and it needs to be delivered quickly.
- Providers need to consider bilingual provision.
- There are diverse and wide-ranging occupational training needs which need to be met on many levels and in many fields.
- There is a lack of current information regarding the education and training opportunities which are available.

In December 2006, the report *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills* by Lord Leitch was published which emphasised the importance of raising skill levels in the UK. In response to this report the Welsh Assembly Government published a draft report on skills and employment in January 2008: *Skills that work for Wales: a skills and employment strategy*. There will be an opportunity to respond to this draft consultation document until 10 April.

Lifelong Learning UK has already done a lot of work on mapping the needs of the workforce.

### Recognizing the needs of the workforce: a possible methodology

1. Conduct an assessment of the sector in order to recognise the skills that are needed (short term, mid term and long term).
2. Conduct a review of the current provision (education and training) on every level - the nature, extent and relevance of the provision.
3. Recognise gaps and weaknesses. Agree on priorities.
4. Review the possibilities for working in partnership - persuade employers to invest in developing skills - assess that which employers are willing to support.
5. Agreement between employers, funding bodies and relevant bodies to ensure appropriate provision in relation to education and training.

### Activity

All present were asked to answer a few questions individually about their education and training experiences in language planning.

Three groups were then formed to discuss the needs of the workforce in relation to the following considerations:

- level? (e.g. modules, certificate, diploma, Master's degree?)
- flexibility and progression?
- content - specific aspects?
- content - transferable skills / work skills?
- Welsh / English / bilingual provision?
- learning methods? providers? validation / accreditation?
- location(s)?
- relationship with Continuing Professional Development program(s)?
- any other considerations?

The priorities identified as a result of the discussions are noted below:

- to ensure a qualification and assessing framework at Level 4, i.e. a postgraduate qualification;
- to consider the “daisy model”, i.e. core modules and a range of other optional modules;
- to form a qualification framework that would be relevant to the world of work;
- to form a qualification framework that would combine the practical and the intellectual;
- to ensure an accessible, flexible and bilingual access to the qualification;
- to encourage HE institutes to see the opportunity;
- to consider setting up a Skills Sector Council for the field of Welsh in general in order to establish the relevant qualifications for language planning and other relative qualifications;
- to consider allying with others, e.g. the equal opportunities field;
- to carry out a skills audit in order to recognise the present functions of the workforce.

## **Professional Validation**

Presentation by Gareth Ioan, Chief Executive, *laith: y ganolfan cynllunio iaith / Welsh centre for language planning*

He described professional validation as a process that a profession implements to approve the content, standard and quality of the qualifications which are relevant to that profession. He explained that this is a process which runs hand in hand with academic accreditation. He said that the purposes of professional validation are to:

- Gain the profession’s approval
- Ensure consistency in relation to content, standard and quality
- Ensure relevance to professional values and practices
- Coordinate training, education and professional development in the workplace
- Ensure quality of service to the public/clients.

He outlined different examples for various other fields and suggested certain steps for the way forward, e.g.:

- Values and principles
- Recognizing the needs of the field
- Agreeing on core information, aspects, skills and qualifications
- Establishing National Occupational Standards
- Working in cooperation with the Higher Education sector
- Working in cooperation with the Welsh Language Board
- Establishing a process for validating and monitoring

He finished his presentation by emphasizing the pivotal significance of professional validation to the development of language planning in Wales by rephrasing the definition of the process: a process through which the language planning profession approves the content, standard and quality of language planning qualifications relevant to the field of language planning.

## **What next?**

It was agreed that it is necessary to:

- Assess and map out the provision that is currently available and consequently transfer the information;
- Assess the needs of the workforce;
- Carry out extensive consultations;
- Establish a working group to achieve the above points and to move forward.

The following people were proposed to form the working group:

- Lowri Angharad Hughes, Canolfan Bedwyr
- Hywel Glyn Lewis / Dai Rogers, Trinity College
- Rhys Dafis, Dyfal
- Representatives from Cwmni Iaith
- Cefin Campbell, Sbectwm
- Meic Raymant / representative from Rhwydiaith
- Representative from the Welsh Language Board
- Steve Morris, the South West Wales Welsh for Adults Centre
- Merfyn Morgan, DCELLS
- Dai Bryer, Menter Iaith Abertawe (Chairman of Mentrau Iaith Cymru)

## **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held in May / June. The following ideas were suggested for the meeting:

- A speaker with experience of a similar situation in another country
- A presentation on the work achieved by the working group on assessing and mapping the provision.