

## Learning, teaching and assessment for plurilingualism and democratic citizenship

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### Keywords

Plurilingualism, languages, migrants, citizenship, e-learning, mobile learning

### Description

As a result of globalization, workplaces in the UK and the wider world have become multicultural and multilingual. The limitations of language teaching policies in the UK mean that the workplace is often a place where people of a predominantly monolingual mindset encounter colleagues who use the resources of several languages in their daily lives. Whereas, in the UK, there is a powerful drive to ensure that migrant workers are proficient in English, and that they are prepared for citizenship, there has been less focus on the potentially harmful effects of monolingualism. As Pachler notes: monolingualism fundamentally threatens European integration and can be seen as a major stumbling block to mutual understanding as well as to cultural diversity (2007: 5).

One response to the threat

posed by monolingualism is to develop new pedagogies for the workplace, including schools, colleges and academic settings that draw on understandings of plurilingualism defined by Trimas: languages are not seen as simply existing side by side, quite separate in the mind, but as interacting to form one integrated competence upon any part of which a user may draw to meet the demands of communication (in Pachler, 2007: 7). Language education, whether for migrants or for the majority, by recognizing and valuing languages as part of the cultural landscape in post-colonial and globalised economies, contributes to education for democratic citizenship and will potentially promote social justice, equity and widening participation.

Foregrounding plurilingualism requires conceptual development, new pedagogies and interdisciplinarity. Crucially it involves working with teachers and learners of less widely taught languages most of whom are likely to be migrants.

The context of this proposal is a result of two collaborations.

1. Paris-based PLIDAM research group (Pluralité des Langues et des Identités en Didactique: acquisition, médiations [plurality of languages and identities

in didactics: acquisition and mediations]. PLIDAM has made an initial significant contribution to conceptualizing the terrain of plurilingualism, notably by publishing an edited book *Précis du plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme* ([http://www.inalco.fr/ina\\_gabarit\\_article.php3?id\\_rubrique=1792&id\\_article=3067&id\\_secteur=1](http://www.inalco.fr/ina_gabarit_article.php3?id_rubrique=1792&id_article=3067&id_secteur=1))

A major conference on plurilingualism is to be planned and a major research bid to be prepared to take forward the work and development beyond current funding periods (from 2011).

MFL (Pachler, Redondo, Turner) and TESOL (Block, Hyland, Paran, Wallace). This grouping includes two online MAs, TESOL and Citizenship Education.

2. The second collaboration is with LWW (Languages of the Wider World) CETL at SOAS/UCL. LWW has notably a project on mobile learning of languages.

PLIDAM's strategic plan includes four research axes:

- I. Language policies
- II. Understanding language teachers and learners

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- III. Mapping the content of language courses
- IV. Creating teaching and learning materials based on a plurilinguistic perspective

The aim of this project is to contribute to this agenda and to prepare for a joint conference, to be held January 2010 in Paris and London and for a major bid.

The time appears to be ripe to launch a new SIG to be associated with WLE that would bring together all those interested in plurilingualism, languages, identities, media including multimodality, and learning through technologies.

The project aims to explore the relationship between pedagogy, assessment and learning with a particular focus on e-learning and mobile learning.

### Methodology

The methodology for this project will be based on desk research, networking, organising meetings and preparing a research bid.

The principal academic (Hugh Starkey) will require time to undertake a review of the literature produced by IOE colleagues, particularly those associated with WLE and with TESOL, PLIDAM colleagues and others working in the field. This literature review, undertaken in collaboration with colleagues and co-authored will be prepared for publication (e.g. Language Learning Journal).

### Outcomes and deliverables

Outcomes include creating a new research focus and body of work associated with WLE and incorporating e-learning, workplace learning and interdisciplinarity.

The major deliverable will be the initial planning of a conference.

A second deliverable is the basis of a joint research bid for a new wave of funding for a collaborative project.

The literature review will be prepared for publication.

A new SIG is a further possibility.

### Dissemination

Dissemination will initially be through attendance of IOE colleagues at meetings, study days and the planned conference.

The conference call for papers from November 2008 will itself be very significant dissemination .

Papers from study days will be made available on the WLE website and reciprocal links will be established with LWW CETL and PLIDAM.

A literature review will be prepared for academic publication.



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