



COMMENTARY – St Martin’s College Carlisle

The MOBIDIC Project has given us an excellent opportunity to build upon and extend our experience of CLIL teaching and learning. St Martin’s had already co-ordinated two projects on bilingual teaching, but MOBIDIC was different, as it was very much based on on-going creation, delivery and evaluation of in-service course materials. Firstly, this took the form of videoed classroom sessions in the partner countries, secondly, regional courses and finally a joint in-service COMENIUS 2.2.c-course. This international course for those who teach, or wish to teach, through the medium of a foreign language, allowed us to trial and evaluate different modules with a range of different teachers. As this course consisted of a combination of activities and materials that had been tried with largely national audiences in the regional courses, the COMENIUS 2.2.c-course embodied a multi-perspective approach in the truest sense of the word. Indeed, the multi-perspective nature of the whole project permeated all levels of activity, from the courses themselves to our meetings and discussions. This has served to enrich our own experience, scholarly activity and practice.

We found the evaluation of our regional course(s), materials and activities by colleagues from other countries and contexts extremely valuable. It was equally important for us to be able to attend and help deliver other regional courses. In this way we were able to gain insight into the education and teacher-training systems of different partner countries. In particular, we welcomed the opportunity to work with teachers and trainees from these countries, not least because it raised our awareness of their needs.

In general, the project allowed us to collaborate with other teacher educators from a range of backgrounds and this made for an interesting and, at times, lively exchange.

In our opinion, there is still scope here for an extended debate in order to provide some kind of methodological synopsis of our results. Nevertheless, the ideas that have been generated by the project serve to enrich our own CLIL training courses and have certainly raised our awareness of different educational traditions and cultural differences.

We welcomed the opportunity to observe some bilingual classes in school and, in Frankfurt, to trial materials and work with pupils. After all, classroom practice is our main focus, so it is important to spend time in school, if at all possible.

Through MOBIDIC, St Martin’s had the opportunity to host a major international teacher-training event in a relatively remote part of the UK. In this way, the COMENIUS 2.2.c-course certainly contributed to the internationalisation of the Carlisle and Ambleside campuses. This was particularly the case for the support staff (Library, Catering, Media Services, Education Development Unit, etc), who provided invaluable help in ensuring that course participants had everything that they needed. The COMENIUS 2.2.c-course also contributed to the general internationalisation of the Faculty of Education and hopefully has encouraged other Faculty staff to become involved in EU-projects.

In all of the above respects, the MOBIDIC project was extremely motivating for those involved and we hope very much that we have formed lasting partnerships and friendships.