

HIDDEN VOICES

THE BUSINESS & LANGUAGE DEBATE

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DEMAND SIDE: CURRENT VOICES

Urgent need to

- Kick start Ireland's economic growth in a global economy
- Grow existing European & high-growth markets
Brazil, Russia, India, China, Korea
- Develop new language, intercultural & context-based knowledge to support new involvement

PUBLIC SECTOR VOICES: FUTURE SKILLS WORKING GROUP

Key publications

- Key skills for Enterprise to Trade Internationally, Jun 2012
- Guidance for Higher Education Providers on Current & Future Skills Needs of Enterprise, Feb 2012

Identified need to increase

- German, French, Spanish & Italian as well as Mandarin Chinese, Russian & Arabic
- Formal international sales training by introducing degrees & post-graduate diplomas in international sales with foreign languages

LEARNED BODIES VOICES: RIA

Aim of 2011 RIA National Committee Report (Modern Languages) :

- to outline challenges facing Ireland in its development as a multilingual society, particularly in relation to education
- to make recommendations in relation to language education; more broadly to seek to meet the challenges and enhance Ireland's position within an increasingly multilingual global economy

LEARNED BODY VOICES: RIA

Transcultural literacy and intercultural communication, via the learning of foreign languages, is a 'key component of education for democratic citizenship', helping to equip people living in a multicultural society with the skills necessary 'to deal with difference knowledgeably, sensibly, tolerantly and morally', thereby strengthening 'social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity'

Gallagher-Brett 2005 quoted in the RIA Report

RIA REPORT POLICY AS ADMINISTRATION

- It seeks to encourage key stakeholders to collaborate in the development of a coherent & integrated national policy for languages in education.
- Such a policy would ideally put in place a clear & consistent framework for the provision of language education at each level within the education system (primary, post-primary and third level system).
- Judges language research in Ireland 'world class'

MISSING VOICES

There are missing voices in all the reports:

- Professors of German / French / Italian / Spanish / Chinese Business
- Graduates of existing programmes
- The RIA Business language experts & Business practitioners

THE DEMAND SIDE

WESTERN ECONOMIES BASED ON 'FRIVOLITY'

- Shift in MNC focus from tangible to intangible product
- Decline in Pharma, rise of gaming, animation, on-line customer support
- Rising demand for Product/Service creation, development and support, all with cultural fit
- Direct selling or supervision into non-Western cultures particularly Asia which assumes high level of intercultural competence and language

THE DEMAND SIDE

Shifts in industry produce demand for

- Existing traditional languages German French Spanish Italian
- Non-traditional languages Mandarin, Korean etc.
- Specific level of language competence (near-native to native speakers)
- Intercultural competences
- Context-knowledge both private & public sector tied to export market share both tangible & virtual
- Increasing involvement of SMES

MISSING VOICES

EXAMINING THE SUPPLY SIDE

The premise:

- Active research is a basic requirement for third-level learning & teaching
- Presentation here on is based on a review of the research output posted for all language department staff
- In all universities offering Language & Business degrees in Ireland in the autumn term 2012

THE RESEARCH ACTIVE

- Uses the broadest definition possible
- One publication in the last five years in both peer & non peer-reviewed journal or conference presentations
- Across a range of subjects in the areas of business systems, HR, marketing, intercultural business issues, inter-trade connections
- Business language acquisition, intercultural communications
- Sport

OUTCOMES FOR LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Findings: the business & language learning on offer, as it is reported on the University sites, in the degree programmes is simplistic, marginal, externalised, low status, not mainstream & career death

- **Simplistic** - Offered as a five credit module in year one
- **Marginal** - Offered as one among 14/15 options generally in the first year. This is an insufficient base to prepare for the year abroad
- **Externalised** - Seen to be covered by the year abroad which may or may not be in a business orientated faculty or internship
- **Low status** - Frequently the responsibility of language teachers. Never taught by senior academics. There is one exception
- **Not mainstream** - Outside the main corpus as defined in the department
- **Career death** - Not the basis for promotion and I would suggest recruitment

HIDDEN VOICES STAFF

- **Few** The total number of academic staff in the language departments identified as 199. Identified as active in business relevant areas: 7
- **Junior** All but one were junior & isolated with the exception of Trinity where two staff were found in one department
- **Scattered** Four were found in German
 - One in general intercultural management & two in Chinese
 - Interest & activity were stated but no publications were found in Slavonic studies and in Modern Irish
- **Research**
 - The research areas focus identified are
 - Intercultural management & leadership
 - Cross-cultural adaptation
 - Irish X Business relations
 - Intercultural theory in language learning acquisition

HIDDEN VOICES THE STUDENT

- **Not mainstream** - Buried in the overall mass of Commerce students
- **Dumbing Down** - Points entry seen as inferior in Commerce faculties
- **Absent** - No evidence that third year absence is leveraged on by either commerce or language departments
- **Bias** - Mono-cultural & linguistic focus of Commerce staff
- **Accountability** - No academic responsibility role within Commerce faculties. Evidence of allocation to language staff in language department
- **Deafness** - No evidence of response to student complaints or changes have occurred
- **Representation** – No student societies

THE CULTURAL WHY

SOME UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

- **Ethical ranking** 'They teach greed'
 - **Cultural disquiet** Buttimer's analysis of the market
 - **The Dinner Party argument** 'Let's discuss Cervantes'
- **Convergence theory** 'They will all come to be like us' (USA)
- **Complexities of change**: Flight, Fight & Mummification. (Peter Maaris)
- **Differing research approaches** around time (ahistoric), evidence & multiculturalism

DOMINANT RESEARCH POLICY TIED TO GROWTH (SCIENCE)

- 'Israel as a benchmark for economic success'
- Government provided significant funding of USA based science & technology innovation models (Creation of SFI)
- Recruitment of world class science teams outside existing University norms
- Model is a-cultural, transposable, mono-linguistic, supportive of location & growth of Irish product-based MNC R&D

HOW TO RESPOND TO SHIFTING DEMAND (MACRO LEVEL)

- Link with Business to create a Business & Higher Education Task Force to respond to identified demand
- Link with 'on the ground' best practice through industry & HE groups to create an ongoing language development strategy
- Differentially fund and develop according to market involvement
- Report to the Department of Enterprise & Skills

STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES

- 'Let them all die off' Poland 1998
- No funding of new appointments
- Outsourcing of competency-based language teaching, communication & intercultural skills (virtual delivery)
- Higher Education language centre model (norm in many European countries for 20+ years); **OR**
- Refocusing of existing strengths
- Graduate partnerships with industry to develop sector specific near-native language competences

'THE FIVE AREA' MODEL

Re-focus the existing Knowledge Base to meet identified demand

Five area model (Medenhall Oddou1985)

- **Area studies** - corporate models & profiles, legal, financial & political systems
- **Cultural assimilation** - cultural themes around authority leadership, success, individual & the group conflict responsibility the entrepreneur & manager
- **Language preparation** with a focus on business discourse
- **Sensitivity training** - intercultural understanding & skills understanding of the person in different cultural settings
- **Field experience** - the focused year abroad & internships

BENCH MARKING MEDENHALL AND ODDOU

- Area Studies: Largely missing sometimes found elsewhere
- Cultural assimilation: Buried required refocusing of literary criticism media analysis
- Language preparation: Strong and research active
- Sensitivity Training: Strong with research base
- Field Experience: Strong and improving
- New models: Mandarin with no literary but philosophy base
- Partnerships in Asia and Latin America

MOVING 'OUT OF THE SILOS'

- As officially a multilingual society language diversity is part of our cultural definition
- In my work I increasingly find Irish used as a negotiating tool in international business
- We need to draw on this legitimisation and usage and paraphrasing the comments in the RIA report draw - but in a different way - on the first class research which exists in the universities to get it 'out of the silos' and, additionally, provide partnerships with industry to develop first class multi linguistic culturally and contextually competent business graduates to grow our economy