



EOL – an impact study

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- **Target groups**

The team set up a survey during the school year 2017-2018. This survey was distributed to students in three EOL partner schools. The survey was conducted in two main phases: the piloting phase took place in two upper secondary schools where 300 students answered a questionnaire and the final survey was undertaken with 293 lower secondary school students. Students answered an online questionnaire (see EOL tool number 15). These three schools were chosen because they belong to the same educational system and still developed different models of EOL. Four more schools participated in the first phase of the survey in order to help the team identify typical school profiles.

- **Objectives**

The aim of the survey is to measure the impact of certain environmental models on:

- language skills, language awareness and self esteem
- plurilingualism in use
- plans and motivation related to language learning

Language proficiency was deliberately set aside. Beyond these considerations, EOL promotes a global approach to language education based on projects and the dissemination of values such as democratic culture, social cohesion, language diversity, etc. and not only on the development of communication skills. One further goal was to clarify indicators of learning environments where modern languages flourish. The survey was linked with the feedback from the partner schools on the indicators.

- **Methodology**

From a methodological point of view, the same questions were asked to the same students twice (in October 2017 and in May 2018). The students were divided into two groups:

- EOL students = students involved in one or several projects linked to EOL
- Non-EOL students = control group

The percentages mentioned below show the variance between the first and the second round of questions in comparison with the control group.

None of the objectives of the survey were reformulated as direct questions. Instead, the questions put students in various situations or mentioned some simple scenarios. The interpretation of the answers to the survey took into account various aspects of learning environments:

- formal and specific use of languages in language class;
- formal and integrated use of languages such as through CLIL, interdisciplinary approaches, etc.;
- formal and informal use of languages, namely a general approach to language learning in school;
- systemic approach to formal, informal and non-formal education in, around and out of school.

This is an output of the project “Learning environments where modern languages flourish” (2016-2019) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). The ECML is a Council of Europe institution promoting excellence in language education in its member states.

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- **Survey-schools**

The complete impact survey was undertaken in three lower secondary schools. Each one of these “survey-schools” developed a specific model of language learning environments.

| <p>Model A: Event Classes and projects converge towards a main intercultural event</p> | <p>Model B: Pathways A central project develops language learning pathways</p> | <p>Model C: Hub A wide range of projects contribute to set up a language learning environment</p> |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Collège Vernier, Nice</p> | <p>Collège Vauban, Belfort</p> | <p>Collège Munch, Niederbronn</p> |
| <p>The school's EOL project is based on a central event: Model UN. Students prepare to contribute to a simulation of a United Nations session with debates using different languages.</p> | <p>This school hosts students with very different language biographies. The school's EOL project is to work on language learning pathways where each learner gets the chance to share his repertoire with others.</p> | <p>The school's main aim was to make the large diversity of projects converge towards a whole school language policy. In this school, learners get the chance to share a multilingual breakfast, to participate in mobility projects, to host international students, to be placed in an international company, etc.</p> |
| <p><u>Action plan</u> Giving meaning to academic learning while fostering global awareness. How to develop language skills, citizenship and personal growth through modelling international institutions (UN, European Parliament etc.) and bringing together a network of secondary schools</p> | <p><u>Action plan</u> Developing multilingualism building on specific structures How to rely on two specific structures (UPE2A and an International Section) and the multilingual skills of these learners to spread multilingualism throughout the school and reinforce the language skills of all the members of the school community</p> | <p><u>Action plan</u> Combining languages and other subjects for school orientation How to support school orientation through languages and international partnerships</p> |

Figure 1 – 3 models

- **Indicators for the survey**

The survey tried to measure the impact of each model using five criteria:

- 1. Self-esteem**

The learners' self-esteem in relation to plurilingualism and intercultural communication. In particular, the survey tested the learners' consciousness of their plurilingual and intercultural repertoire and their confidence in managing plurilingual and intercultural situations.

- 2. Non-formal plurilingual use**

The survey tested the use of more than one language outside school: watching films and series in original language, plurilingual use when gaming, multilingual search activities in the Internet, etc.

- 3. Language awareness**

Language proficiency was not our focus; instead we wanted to consider learners' capacity to analyse the way everyday communication works in different languages, to recognise various languages and compare them.

- 4. Learning awareness**

Learners' learning skills and their capacity to find out the best way for them to learn languages is the key aim of this fourth criteria.

- 5. Social values**

We tried to find out if the learning environment could have any impact on the learners' willingness to develop citizenship and act like responsible social actors.

- **Results from the survey's piloting phase**

The main results of the piloting phase of the survey which took place in two upper secondary schools, showed that the impact of a whole-school approach goes far deeper. The intensive approach of the lycée Lesage is based on one school event: the staff set up one intercultural event at the end of the school year. The extensive model of the lycée Avril is a whole-school strategy: all teachers consider themselves as language teachers and collaborate all year long on language education. The staff developed CLIL-lessons, team-teaching projects, multilingual classrooms, international mobility including subjects other than languages, etc.

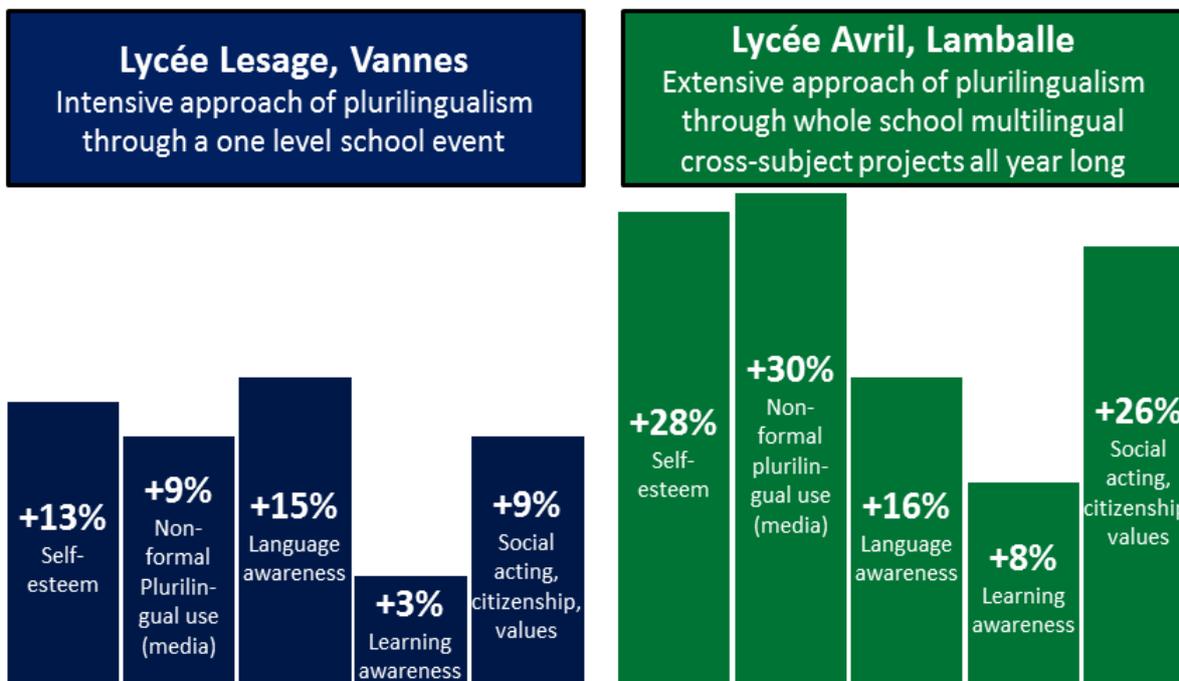


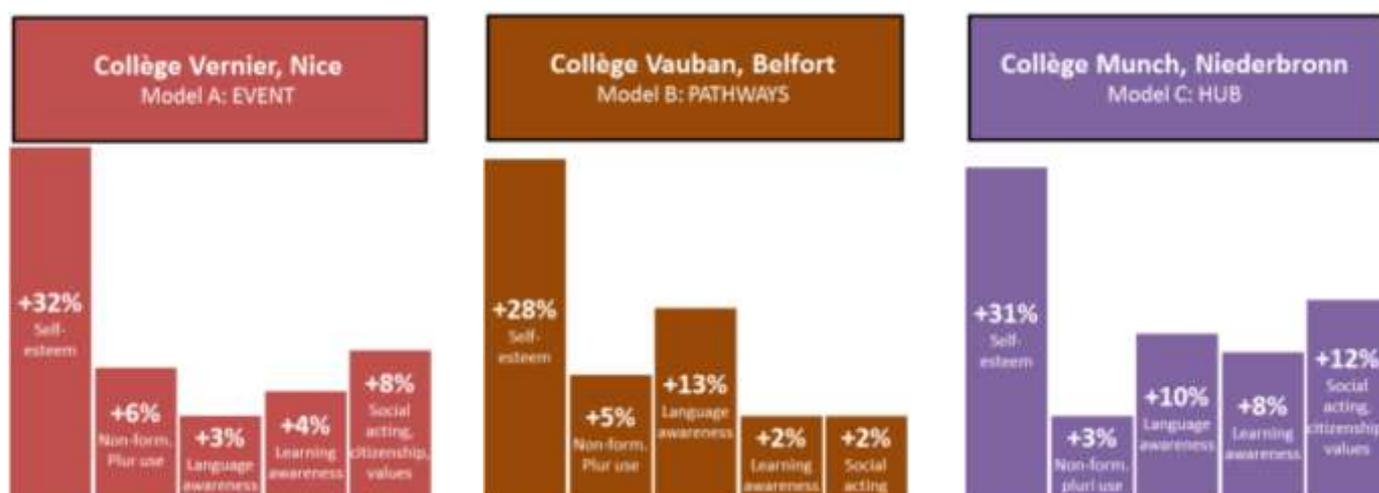
Figure 2 – piloting study

One of the keys to the success of language education in the lycée Avril, was to consider right from the beginning that all teachers were language teachers. This approach encouraged teachers who were not 100 percent secure in using foreign language to rely on the students' language skills. This led many teachers to pass on more responsibility to their students, especially when it came to developing links between language and subject classes.

- **Results from the main phase of the survey**

Based on the results of the piloting phase, the EOL team encouraged partner schools to set up whole-school approaches which are based on cross-subject approaches (horizontal perspective) and continuity of learning (vertical perspective). All three EOL models are based on both horizontal (cross subject) and vertical (pathway related) perspectives.

The results of the survey in the three lower secondary schools show in a very clear way how much a whole-school approach to languages can impact in a positive way on learners' self-esteem.



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Figure 3 – impact study

Looking more closely at the differences between these three models, we can see that every model has its own advantages:

- Ensuring all efforts converge on a common intercultural event (model A) probably leads to more awareness of the social dimension of language education and helps learners discover the non-formal use of languages;
- setting up differentiated learning pathways where the learners' language profile is taken into account by the staff and where everyone gets the chance to share his own competences with others (model B) fosters language awareness;
- supporting various multilingual projects to give learners the opportunity to practise communication and multiply the use of languages, develops language and social competences.

• Conclusion of the survey

Even if the results of such a modest survey should be interpreted carefully, the different results illustrate how important it is for schools to set up a whole-school language policy that develops a strategy on language learning environments and on language learning pathways.

The three points that can be underlined from this survey are:

1. Developing **learners' self-esteem** should be a common thread within language curricula in lower and upper secondary schools
2. Emphasising teaching methods that help students to become **social actors and responsible citizens** has to become a more explicit objective of language education
3. Working on language learning environments should not be considered as a stand-alone aspect of the school's education **policy** but should be combined with aspects of **continuity** (pathways) and professional **development** (policies). The combination of these three features – **whole-school language policy, language learning environment, language learning pathways** – illustrated by an integral approach (figure 4), really makes a difference to learners.

All these three points converge towards the idea of passing on **more responsibility to learners** and sharing language education as a common cross-subject objective. Language learning environments should not be developed **for** the learners but **with** the learners. The use of the matrix as a central and interactive tool should help schools in this regard.

How do the different levels, spaces and types of education interact?
Which levers can be used to set up collective agency on language education?

Whole school language policy

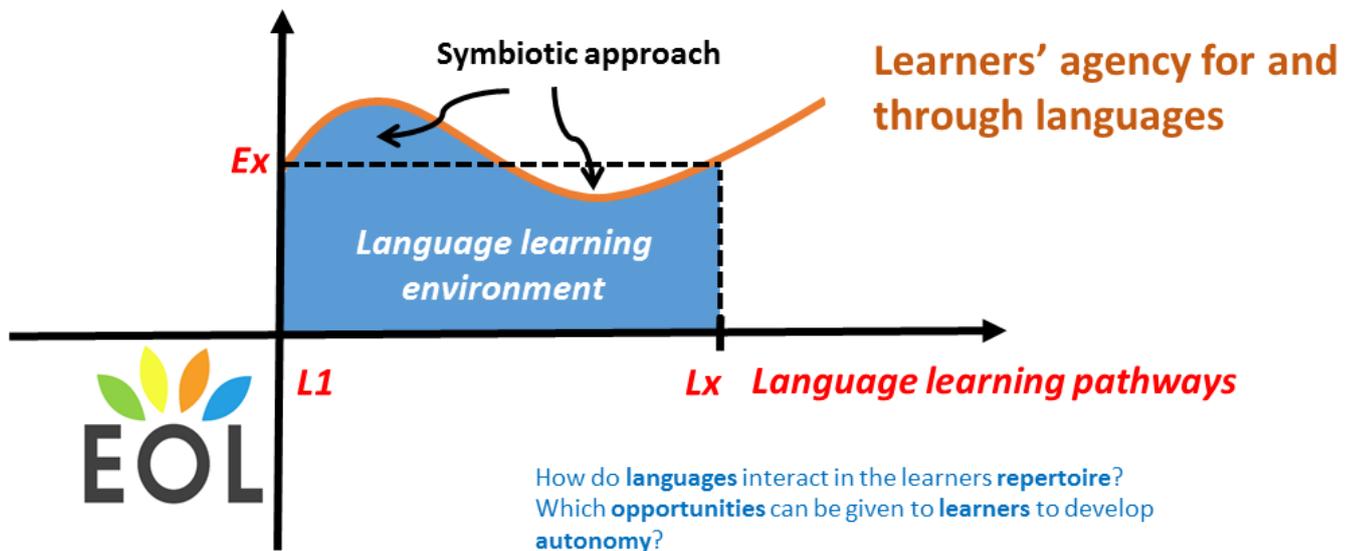


Figure 4 – integral approach