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Multilateral Project  
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Lifelong Learning Programme

# Teacher Learning for European Literacy Education (TeL4ELE)

Final Report

Public Part

## Project information

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## Executive Summary

The aim of the Teacher Learning for European Literacy Education (TeL4ELE) project was to support literacy educators in five European countries to become experts in genre based literacy pedagogy and in turn support teachers to improve learning outcomes for all students especially those who are educationally disadvantaged. Based on the external evaluation of the project<sup>1</sup> this aim was fulfilled. Survey and interview data showed high levels of engagement with the pedagogy on the part of both educators and classroom teachers. Ninety seven per cent<sup>2</sup> stated that, in their view, the pedagogy offered a completely different approach to reading and writing compared to those that are generally used in school. Moreover almost all teachers perceived it had had an impact on their students' understanding of how language operates in different texts to make meaning and on their students' reading and writing. Ninety two per cent wished to continue with the approach citing the following reasons as motivation: improvement in student learning, empowering nature of pedagogy, enjoyed working with the approach. Most significantly students' assessment scores based on their pre and post reading and writing scores showed that all students (drawn from the 97 participating classes) had improved by an average of 14.3 % on their writing and 9% on their reading (in almost half of all cases in less than 5 weeks).

In the first phase (Nov 2011 - Nov 2012) the focus of the project was on developing expert learning teams as well as developing materials:

- between 5-7 key educators from the five participating countries developed expertise in genre based pedagogy through a program of reciprocal learning and through input by third partner experts from Australia at four international meetings in Lisbon, Glasgow, Stockholm and Copenhagen.
- key educators were further supported in extending their knowledge and understanding of genre based pedagogy through input from the lead partner organisation (Stockholm Education Administration) at two national meetings in each country.
- national networks (or clusters) of interested literacy educators were established in the five participating countries. These literacy networks were informed about the nature of the project, contributed ideas and in many cases lent support to the project by, for example, giving access to schools with suitable teachers for project implementation and/or supporting materials development.

In the second phase each of the key educators trialled the pedagogy with classroom teachers (using the nationally adapted materials prepared during the first phase) and collected data on the implementation:

- Five to seven key educators across the 5 partner countries (31 in total) worked as coaches and mentors to support a minimum of two classroom teachers each (98 in total) from their

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<sup>1</sup> This was carried out by Professor Caroline Coffin, the Open University UK.

<sup>2</sup> 30 of the 31 teacher educators completed all 3 questionnaires used in the evaluation process giving a completion rate of 94%. Of the 98 teachers participating in the trialing of the approach 71 responded. This gave a completion rate of 71%. Please note therefore that percentages used in the ensuing sections of the report are based on this response rate.

national network to implement the approach with students in the classroom (approximately 2450 students).

- implementation was supported by two further national meetings in each country with continued support from the lead partner organisation.
- national networks of literacy educators were further strengthened as integral to ongoing and future dissemination.

There was a final international meeting and dissemination activity in Madrid in October 2013 at which strategies for future national dissemination and exploitation were set out.

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## 1. Project Objectives

The ultimate aim of the **Teacher Learning for European Literacy Education** (TeL4ELE) project was, and continues to be, the improvement of student learning outcomes, particularly for those who are educationally disadvantaged, including second language learners. To fulfil this aim the consortium supported literacy educators in five European countries (Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Scotland and Sweden) to become experts in genre based literacy pedagogy, specifically the *Reading to Learn* program which is based on a functional model of language (see Rose and Martin, 2012).

The *Reading to Learn* pedagogy based on a functional model of language

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*“...accelerate the learning of all students at twice to more than four times expected rates...”*

**Reading to Learn is one of the world's most powerful literacy programs.** It is designed to enable all learners at all levels of education to read and write successfully, at levels appropriate to their age, grade and area of study. The Reading to Learn strategies have been independently evaluated to consistently accelerate the learning of all students at twice to more than four times expected rates, across all schools and classes, and among students from all backgrounds and ability ranges.

The program has been developed over ten years with teachers of primary, secondary and tertiary students across Australia and internationally, to integrate reading and writing with teaching the curriculum at all year levels. The strategies apply cutting edge research in classroom learning, and language across the curriculum, in a form that is accessible, practical and meets the needs of teachers and students.

The Reading to Learn program can be accessed as

### The objectives of the first phase

The objectives of the first phase of the project (November 2011- October 2012) were:

- to build shared knowledge and understandings amongst key educators (5-6 in each national partner country) about genre based literacy pedagogy and more specifically the Reading to Learn approach (both internationally and nationally).

- to use existing contacts and connections to develop national networks of learning partners consisting of teacher education institutions, research organisations, schools, teacher associations and other appropriate bodies.
- to identify in each nation a set of teachers to participate in the school based implementation in the second phase.
- to gather data and produce reports on national curricula, student literacy achievement and key national approaches to literacy education.
- to produce learning materials, namely prepared texts and lesson plans that could be used in Phase 2.

### **The objective of the second phase**

The objectives of the second phase (November 2012 – October 2013) were:

- to trial national adaptations of the approach in schools. At this point the goal was for each of the key educators (in the national partner countries) to train at least two classroom practitioners of upper primary and junior to middle secondary students to implement the new pedagogy and support them as they progressively trialled it in the classroom, drawing on results from the Swedish experience (the lead partner).
- to collect data for evaluation purposes, namely pre and post intervention reading test scores and assessed writing tasks

In sum, the project developed educator and teacher expertise in genre based pedagogy (underpinned by the functional model of language) and put into action in the classroom the stated aims of the national curricula by working with a range of reading and writing texts across the curriculum. The school based implementation phase provided data for evaluating the efficacy of the pedagogy. It also provided exemplary materials for future exploitation.

## 2. Project Approach

The TeL4ELE project has been innovative in the way it conceptualizes and implements genre based literacy pedagogy and in its ‘learning through doing’ approach to teacher education. Furthermore the degree of support that teachers received through partnering with teacher educators has greatly increased the likelihood of the future sustainability and success of the pedagogy beyond the life of the project. Below, the main strategies of the project’s approach are explained.

### 2.1 Reciprocal learning and dialogue with input from 3<sup>rd</sup> partner experts

The project methodology was based on a model of reciprocal learning involving 5-7 key educators from each national project partner (31 key educators<sup>3</sup> in total). The project partners and national leaders were as follows:

<b>Lead Partner – Stockholm Education Administration, Sweden</b> International and national project leaders: Ann-Christin Löfstedt and Claire Acevedo
<b>Partner 2 – Strathclyde University, Scotland, United Kingdom</b> Project leader – Sue Ellis
<b>Partner 3 – National Centre for Reading, Copenhagen, Denmark</b> Project leaders Klara Korsgaard and associate professor Ruth Mulvad
<b>Partner 4 – Institute of Theoretical and Computational Linguistics, Lisbon, Portugal</b> Project leader Professor Carlos A. M. Gouveia
<b>Partner 5 – Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain</b> Project leader Dr. Rachel Whittaker
<b>Partner 6 –University of Sydney, Australia</b> Professor Jim Martin Dr. David Rose

In order to create a strong international team during the life of the project, the key educators met four times (for 2 day meetings) - in Portugal, Glasgow, Stockholm and Copenhagen, as well as at the final project and dissemination meeting (in Spain)<sup>4</sup>. Through knowledge exchange activities and through dialogue with, and structured input from, 3<sup>rd</sup> partner Australian experts, Professor Jim Martin and Dr. David Rose, this international team has developed (and continues to develop) its profile as a group of European experts in a functional (genre based) approach to literacy development. The structured input from David Rose (at 3 of the meetings) was particularly important in terms of raising the team’s awareness of the linguistic dimension of the Reading to Learn (henceforth R2L) program. Dr Rose also provided practical demonstrations of new teaching techniques and methods of literacy and learning assessment which the educators then experimented with in their own time and contexts. In total 75% of educators spent more than 10 hours rehearsing the R2L methodology before or whilst working with teachers.

The reciprocal learning activities at an international level were mirrored by reciprocal learning events at a national level. The five national learning networks that were developed and led by the project partners met four times during the course of the project for either one or two-day meetings

<sup>3</sup> Initially there were 37 educators but, of these, 4 withdrew due to illness. A further two members withdrew for maternity leave and work related reasons.

<sup>4</sup> Attendance for all 4 international meetings was between 90% and 100%.

that were jointly facilitated by the national leaders and the project co-ordinators from the lead partner organisation in Stockholm<sup>5</sup>. Their achievements were reported on at each international meeting ensuring that progressive project targets were met over the 24 months. The exchange and dialogue between the international team and national networks enhanced the learning of all involved by encouraging critical reflection on existing practices across the 5 participating European countries and by facilitating mutual support in exploring, contextualising and trialling the new genre based approach to literacy and learning.

## Learning Partnership Model



### 2.2 Developing learning teams

The reciprocal learning model provided a supportive structure for the national and international teams to work through the two 12-month project phases with sequential objectives and in so doing develop strong learning teams. In the first phase, meetings were focused on data gathering, learning about the functional model of language, developing expertise in the R2L pedagogy, adapting national materials and developing a program for teacher learning. This developed and strengthened relationships as the national key educators worked as learning teams to survey their own literacy environments and develop national literacy profiles for dissemination as well as create lesson plans and student learning programs. Such activities and outputs provided a strong platform for the national adaptations that were progressively developed across the two phases.

The international meetings also supported the development of strong learning teams. This was achieved through critical engagement with the functional model of language and the associated classroom pedagogy (Reading to Learn/R2L) - both through participants' reading<sup>6</sup> and through dialogue with experts from Australia and other project members all of whom had varying familiarity and experience with the language model and pedagogic approach. Learning from international meetings informed teacher learning programs as well as the preparation of curriculum ma-

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<sup>5</sup> Attendance at national meetings was between 80 and 87% apart from the 4<sup>th</sup> National meeting which was 60% owing to a teacher lockout in Denmark their 4<sup>th</sup> meeting had to be cancelled and could only be rescheduled after the official conclusion of the project in November 2013. The final meeting in Stockholm was rescheduled for January 2014 so that school leaders could be available to attend as it will take the form of a national dissemination meeting.

<sup>6</sup> Ten R2L booklets were provided as part of the project. Each of these covered a different aspect of the program e.g. *Detailed lesson plans* (Book 2), *Assessing Writing* (Book 4) and *Patterns in Sentences* (Book 7).

terials. The curriculum materials (namely prepared texts and lesson plans) from across the 5 national contexts were made available on the project website and informed the classroom implementation (second) phase of the project.



Dr David Rose from Sydney, Australia – 3<sup>rd</sup> Country expert

### 2.3 Key educator and teacher partnerships

In Phase 2, each of the key educators (between 5 and 7 from each national network) worked with two to three classroom teachers referred to as key teachers (98 key teachers in total)<sup>7</sup>. These teachers came from a variety of contexts. Over half were subject specialists in secondary schools, approximately a third were primary school teachers and a third specialized in language and literacy or special needs. In terms of student demographics, about a quarter of the teachers had classes where up to 40% of their students did not speak the national language of the country they were living in and were socio-economically disadvantaged.

Educators drew on the expertise and experience developed in Phase 1 and used the learning materials developed in that time to support the teachers in understanding and implementing the pedagogy. To do this they used a mix of activity based workshops, seminar discussions and formal lectures as well as modelling the pedagogy and serving as mentors (with 70% of educators spending more than 32 hours on this). Furthermore a sizeable proportion of the educators (30%) supported the teachers by co-teaching with them in class. They also collaborated on the production of materials throughout the trialling period by helping to identify, analyse and prepare texts (57% of educators worked on between 1 and 5 texts and a further 44% more than 5 texts). Whilst all key educators focused on factual texts, 80% also focused on fiction texts and a further 47% on opinion texts.



Teacher learning

The educator and teacher partnership approach of TeL4ELE was an important part of the overall design of the project. The aim was to extend the traditional boundaries of professional development (often delivered in insulated single or short sequences of face to face sessions) to ensure that the learning was translated into new classroom practices and sustained over time (as advocated by Mc Rae et al, 2001).

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<sup>7</sup> In some cases and at some points key educators worked together in pairs or as a group with their selected teachers.

## **2.4 Evidence based, reflective action research**

A range of data on the classroom implementation was collected: teacher learning data; recordings of implementation and reflective teacher responses; student learning data; classroom recordings and student response data, pre and post intervention analysed writing samples and pre and post reading comprehension tests. The most significant findings based on the analysis of the data are as follows.

### **2.4.1 Teacher learning data**

Prior to the project, almost half the teachers (responding to the questionnaire) had little or no understanding of genre pedagogy including the Reading to Learn approach and most (80%) had had no prior involvement in professional development programs or university courses relating to the approach. Furthermore only a limited number of teachers (3 in total) had extensive experience in implementing genre pedagogy.

Considering the teachers' starting points and the constraints on their time (all involvement in the project was optional and most of it occurred in educators' and teachers' own time) they developed considerable knowledge and understanding of the R2L approach, including how to implement it. Most of them (85%) spent at least 10 hours studying and preparing lessons for R2L, with just under half spending more than 20 hours. Most teachers worked through R2L Books 1-3 and Book 5. These covered the overall approach, detailed lesson plans, selecting and analysing texts and detailed reading and writing. For a variety of reasons, however, some teachers (15%) spent less than 10 hours and only about half of all teachers were able to cover the more linguistically focussed topics of text and sentence patterns (R2L Books 7 and 8). It also emerged through the questionnaire evaluation data that factual texts were more focused on than fiction and opinion texts with approximately a quarter of teachers never preparing or exploring fiction and opinion texts. (One likely explanation for this could, of course, be related to teachers' specialist subject).

In terms of implementing different aspects of the pedagogy a small number of teachers (between 11% – 20%) had the opportunity to try out all three levels of R2L strategies approximately three times a week but most teachers (over 78%) were limited to trialling the 3 levels of strategies less than 3 times a week. Only one teacher was able to trial them more frequently. It is also important to note that while a third of teachers had more than 10 weeks in which to implement the approach almost half the teachers had 5 weeks or less<sup>8</sup>.

Most significantly for this project, despite teachers' varied starting points and the challenging contexts in which some of them were working (with less time for implementation than had been initially envisaged), almost half felt that R2L had had a major impact on their understanding of language and learning, including how language operates in different texts and school subjects and on how to approach the teaching of reading and writing. A small minority were either not sure of the impact (3%) or felt it had no significant impact (3%) in these areas.

### **2.4.2 Pre and post intervention reading tests and analysed writing**

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that a one month teacher lockout in Denmark interrupted classroom implementation. In Spain and Portugal the economic crisis led to teacher pay cuts and increased working hours which affected the motivation of some participants.

All participating teachers conducted pre and post intervention reading tests and ‘assessed writing tasks’ in order to gauge their students’ literacy development after the trialling of the R2L approach. The precise nature of the tests and writing tasks were selected and administered in line with local contexts, opportunities and constraints. Given the variation in these alongside differences in teachers’ experience and understanding of genre based pedagogy and the variation in the frequency and length of the R2L intervention and trialling of strategies, unsurprisingly, the degree to which students showed an improvement in their reading and/or writing varied across and within national contexts.

Nevertheless, across all contexts, pre and post intervention scores on students’ reading and writing showed an overall gain of 9% on their reading and an increase of 14.3% on their writing<sup>9</sup>. Table 1 below shows average gains in relation to each partner country. Since the aim of the project was to improve learning outcomes for all students but especially those who are educationally disadvantaged (through for example, socioeconomic background and/or whether the teaching medium is a student’s first language) the table also shows the relative proportion of students from these categories.

Clearly, in its use of average growth rates, the table masks variation in relation to specific key teachers and educators, schools, length and frequency of intervention and form of assessed writing task and without further contextual detail, such generalizations are no more than indicative of trends and, as such, merit further investigation in future research and development. It is significant to note, however, that both educationally disadvantaged students (Table 2) and lower scoring students (Table 3) made considerable gains – more so than the cohort as a whole, thus narrowing the gap between lower and higher performing students.

**Table 1 Average percentage gain in reading and writing**

Country	First language	Disadvantaged socio economic background	Progress on reading comprehension	Progress on writing assessment (factual)	Progress on writing assessment (fiction)
Denmark	49%	39%	10.9	14.0	10.7
Portugal	84%	21%	14.9	26.4	23.0
Spain	35%	19%	8.1	9.2	10.4
Sweden	42%	33%	4.4	16.4	15.0
United Kingdom	100%	56%	9.1	17.6	15.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>14.5</b>

<sup>9</sup> All teachers provided pre and post test scores from two representative low, medium and high scoring students. The points awarded in the writing assessment relate to the 14 criteria used in the R2L approach to assessment. Students can get a maximum of 42 points. The average percentage gain was calculated by converting each raw score to a percentage point in the pre and post tests and then measuring any increase.

**Table 2 Average percentage gain for socioeconomically disadvantaged students**

<b>Progress on reading comprehension</b>	<b>Progress on writing assessment (factual)</b>	<b>Progress on writing assessment (fiction)</b>
<b>11.4</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>16.6</b>

**Table 3 Average percentage gain in reading and writing for all low achieving students as a total**

<b>Progress on reading comprehension</b>	<b>Progress on writing assessment (factual)</b>	<b>Progress on writing assessment (fiction)</b>
<b>10.1</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>18.3</b>

**2.5 Impact, sustainability and dissemination**

In response to initial EU evaluation, the dissemination strategy of the TeL4ELE project was made integral to the project methodology at both national and international levels across the two phases and, in this way, considerably strengthened. A primary dissemination strategy was the involvement of key educators and key teachers located in educational institutions and schools beyond the regional base of the partner institutions. Furthermore in Spain and Portugal national project leaders negotiated with education ministries for the R2L teacher learning programs to be accredited in order to maximise teacher motivation and commitment to the project over the two phases.

Secondly, careful attention was paid to national network composition so that in addition to targeting teacher educators, teachers and schools, a number of places were set aside for representatives from organisations with a key role in local and national educational decision-making and policy development. Thus, in Denmark, reading consultants from different regional communities attended national meetings and, in Scotland, leaders of teacher professional development from a range of local education authorities (such as Aberdeen) participated in the national meetings. In Sweden, the Head of education from the municipality of Gothenburg together with educators from the University of Gothenburg attended the national network days in Stockholm, and, in Spain, the Head of languages in the municipality of Madrid was present for the network days. In addition to the core network members, a list of associates was developed and they were informed of on-going project activities and outcomes through electronic project updates and invitations to information sessions. This was implemented with a view to the associates taking up the teacher and student learning pedagogy beyond the life of the project.

A third dissemination strategy was to use the three international meetings to host events in order to attract the broadest possible audience (beyond the international learning team) and reach key people and organisations not directly involved in the project but who might subsequently take up

project outcomes. The events included lectures by the Australian and Swedish experts on the systemic functional model of language underpinning R2L and genre based pedagogy. These took place in Lisbon, Stockholm, Scotland and Copenhagen. In Copenhagen the lectures by David Rose were televised by a local station. At the final international learning team meeting the dissemination event took on the characteristics of a conference. Professor Jim Martin and Dr. David Rose from Australia gave plenary papers and members of the five national networks made presentations on a range of project processes, products and outcomes.



Dissemination lecture at Stockholm international meeting

The project website, set up from the outset, was (and continues to be) a key component in the dissemination strategy. Via the open access portal project information and updates (including national literacy profiles and lesson plans) were available in the first phase. More recently, at the end of the second phase, the following outputs were made available:

- key project documents
- units of work
- sample classroom implementation sequences (in national languages) integrating reading pedagogy with national curricula
- sample student texts, some with “success stories”
- sample video sequences of classroom demonstrations or examples of good practice.
- key teacher learning programs (based on input from project leaders and adapted and contextualized for national use)
- key educator training program (from 3rd country participation)
- two way links to websites in national networks to have maximum impact in terms of making project information and results immediately available to future users.

## **2.6 Evaluation of project activities and outcomes**

The evaluation of the project was conducted by the external evaluator Caroline Coffin, Professor in English studies and Applied Linguistics at the Open University, UK. Throughout her academic career Caroline has engaged in a wide range of teacher education projects relevant to the aims of TeL4ELE. She was thus well positioned to monitor the progress of the project throughout the two phases acting as a sounding board and source of ‘formative’ feedback to the project leaders with respect to the management and progress of the project.

In total, Professor Coffin participated in four of the international meetings (including the final dissemination conference) as well as the Danish national meeting (where English was the main medium of communication). At these meetings she took on a non-participant and quasi-participant role using observation and field notes as a basis for providing on-going constructive critique and feedback. She also had access to all project documentation on the website including the national literacy profiles, lesson materials and end of project outputs.

Other data collected by Professor Coffin was in the form of five online questionnaires (using survey monkey software). Three of these were administered to key educators at key points across the two year project and two were administered to key teachers during and at the end of the implementation phase. These questionnaires were designed to better understand the backgrounds and experiences that the key educators and teachers brought to the project, the learning that took place and both educators' and teachers' critical and reflective response to the R2L approach and its likely impact on students' outcomes.

A small sample of teachers were also interviewed at the start and end of the project.

Quantitative data relating to students' progress was collected by the key educators and teachers in the form of pre and post intervention reading tests and the analysis of students' pre and post intervention writing. The key findings of this data collection are reported on in Section 2.4. At least two samples of writing (one pre and one post intervention) were provided by each key teacher to provide evidence of 'closing the gap' between the performance levels of lower and higher performing students.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

TeL4ELE produced all project deliverables as set out in the project's application within the deadlines set and thus reached its planned objectives for both Phase 1 and 2. Informed by the results of the external evaluation this section highlights the most significant achievements. It also includes the key issues that arose and the implications of these for future related projects and for dissemination and exploitation.

#### 1. The development of expertise in genre based literacy pedagogy

A key aim of the project was to share and build knowledge and understandings about genre based literacy pedagogy based on a functional model of language and so support educators in five European countries to become experts. In combination the project outputs and survey data demonstrate that the 31 key educators developed their expertise in genre based pedagogy in general and R2L in particular. The learning team approach combined with the 'learning through dialogue' and 'learning through doing' led to high levels of critical engagement with the pedagogy and a growing awareness of the meaning-making power and role of language in all learning.

In order to appreciate the full extent of key educators' development in knowledge and understanding of both the linguistic theory underpinning the model as well as the applied aspects of classroom implementation we need to take into account the educators' varied backgrounds. Questionnaire data showed that regarding prior understanding of systemic functional linguistics (the theory of language that underpins the genre pedagogy) just over a quarter (28%) had little or no knowledge and a quarter had only some understanding. In terms of prior understanding of genre based pedagogy, 30 % had a medium level of understanding but almost half had little or none. Concerning prior understanding of the R2L approach there were similar percentages. Finally, with regard to **implementing** genre based pedagogies more than half of the participants had little or no experience and only 11% had a high level (primarily the lead partner Stockholm team). Similarly, with regard to implementing R2L pedagogy (as a particular approach within genre based pedagogies) only 9% had a high level of experience with 77% having little or no experience. As two of the educators commented:

*Up until this project, Reading to Learn was a just a pedagogy I used to talk about in my courses without going into much detail about it.*

*Although prior to this project I had already some knowledge of Reading to Learn, it was not deep enough to implement all its strategies, particularly as far as the Writing assessment criteria are concerned.*

**The Swedish team** (lead partner organization)



In sum, just a small minority (9%) of the key educators were linguistic specialists and equally just a small percentage had practical experience in implementing genre or R2L pedagogy. Acquiring comprehensive understanding of, and expertise in, the approach therefore entailed a steep learning curve. Furthermore, whilst there was a wealth of experience in teacher

education in general, only two thirds of the key educators had experience of running in-service or school based professional development sessions for teachers.

### ***Issue 1 Contexts for teacher learning: pre-service and in-service***

An important point to make in this regard is that in some cases educators more used to working in a university, polytechnic, teacher training college or research centre (and particularly those unfamiliar with the practical aspects of the R2L pedagogy) may have benefitted from more extensive contact with those members of the international team with greater experience of working in the complex field of in-service professional development, a very different context from pre-service education. Equally those with extensive classroom experience but less developed theoretical understanding of the model may also have benefitted from more extensive, structured exchange in which they could raise theoretical and analytical questions and concerns. In other words whilst the key educators formed a rich learning community representing a diverse set of professional contexts and experiences the constraints of time and geography meant that the potential of this community could not be fully exploited. In future related projects it may be beneficial to structure more time for intellectual and practical exchange in order to maximise the learning and sharing to be gained in learning teams that comprise both theoretically and practically oriented members

## **2. Improving learning outcomes for all students**

The second overall aim of the project was to support teachers in improving learning outcomes for all students (especially those who are educationally disadvantaged). To achieve this, each of the 31 key educators worked with a minimum of two classroom teachers from their national network who then implemented the approach with students in the classroom<sup>10</sup> using the nationally adapted materials prepared during the first phase.

As set out in Section 2.4.2, despite teachers' varied starting points and the challenging contexts in which some of them were working (with less time for implementation than had been initially envisaged), across all contexts, pre and post intervention assessment showed an overall gain of 9% on students' reading scores and 14.3% on their writing scores.

Equally significantly, the majority of teachers perceived R2L to have had a major impact on students' reading and writing. More specifically, almost half thought that the approach had had a major impact on students' understanding of how language operates in different texts to make meaning, particularly with reference to fiction texts. Approximately half the teachers also thought that the approach had some impact on students' understanding of how language operates in different school subjects and on their understanding of the structure and language of factual texts. The one area where teachers felt there had been less impact was in relation to opinion texts. Only two teachers thought that there had been no significant impact on students' reading and writing.

In general, based on the questionnaire data, the majority of teachers felt strongly that R2L offered a completely different approach to those currently used in schools, primarily through the greater attention it gives to the preparation of texts and its use of modelling and joint writing for note taking and text production. Most felt that R2L is suitable for all levels of students but in particular for less able students.

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<sup>10</sup> In some cases and at some points key educators worked together in pairs or as a group with their selected teachers.

Whilst there was general agreement that the approach was time consuming a number of teachers commented on its rewarding aspects particularly in relation to giving greater confidence to students:

*It's not easy because you need to practice a lot. But I can see how my student and I are developing together...I got a whole new awareness of the language complexity and power. The student can participate even though they are struggling with their language. ... I now clearly see that it is so important for us science teachers to help our students with the "science language" that has another structure.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*I believe that the modelling part has had a great success, because weaker students let go of their fears and were able to write, some of them for the first time. I think this is the key for the success of this approach in my class.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*One of my best memories was when our new arrived girl raised her hand frequently under the R2L-lessons, something she never did during other classes.*

Other benefits of the approach (not specifically planned for) also emerged in teachers comments:

*Besides the reasons above mentioned, one of the advantages was also the enjoyment and the usefulness of working together with teachers of different subjects. I became aware of the different perspectives each subject teacher has in the text and reading activities within his/her scientific field and teaching process.*

### ***Issue 2 Supporting the embedding of genre pedagogy and future dissemination and exploitation***

In the context of questionnaire and interview data a number of related issues came to light that should be taken into account in order to embed and sustain current achievements and to support future dissemination and exploitation. These can be summarized (with supporting comments) as a need:

1. for schools to implement the pedagogy in a school in a systematic way, coordinating different subjects so that the approach is not an independent, isolated exercise in one teacher's classroom
2. to establish where and how to most effectively develop an understanding of R2L (namely, in pre or in-service teacher education)
3. to be realistic regarding time and effort required for engaging in new approaches and to manage expectations of those involved
4. to promote the pedagogy and engage and support new teachers
5. for opportunities for team teaching combining more experienced and less experienced teachers
6. for structured exchange between theoreticians and practitioners in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the model and how best to implement it

*one of my concerns is that my knowledge is a bit "shallow", staying in the Books 1-10 we have studied. It's important to be able to convince and explain to new colleagues about the method*

7. to re-think the sequencing and presentation of the R2L work books to make them more teacher friendly and contextually appropriate
8. for a large resource bank of sample texts in national languages analysed for structure and key language features  
*time for teachers to try-reject-redo lessons plans and time to find-try-search again for good example texts.*
9. for lesson outlines that meet the demands of national and local context
10. for greater understanding of the theory underlying the approach.

### **3. Document production for dissemination**

National networks and 3<sup>rd</sup> country partners created a variety of documents and products. In Phase 1 these served to guide national adaptations of the R2L approach (e.g. national literacy profiles) and then to support the classroom trialling of the approach (i.e. curriculum materials in the form of lesson plans for both fictional and non-fictional texts). Finally key educators created teacher learning programs based on national adaptations of materials offered by the 3<sup>rd</sup> party experts and project leaders. The 3<sup>rd</sup> country experts also provided educator/facilitator training programs. The full set of documents, many of them available on the project website, and which will be used in future activity and in the dissemination strategy comprise:

- national literacy profiles
- sample classroom implementation sequences (in national languages) with R2L pedagogy integrated into national curricula
- sample student texts, some with “success stories”
- sample video sequences of classroom demonstrations or examples of good practice.
- key teacher learning programs
- key educator training program (from 3<sup>rd</sup> country participation)

#### **4. Partnerships**

Several TeL4ELE partners informally identified the added value offered by the TeL4ELE project through the opportunity to collaborate with European partners representing very distinct traditions of teaching literacy and very different contexts of educational disadvantage. Western and central Europe, with all its differences, is represented by Scotland, the Northern Europe and Scandinavian perspective is brought in by the Swedish and Danish partners and southern Europe is represented by Spain and Portugal. The opportunity to discuss ideas and work within such a heterogeneous setting was identified by all partners as a professionally and pedagogically unique opportunity.

Although many of the participants involved only met for the first time during the opening meeting in Lisbon (December 2011), through the subsequent international meetings and the opportunities for informal socializing as well as academic and professional exchange, the international team was able to share and learn from a broad range of complementary expertise and experiences.

At a national level the process of creating national networks was useful for identifying and making contact with key stakeholders and for seeding partnerships with policy makers, local authorities and educators in other universities. Through their participation, these partners have shown interest in building on, and taking further, the outcomes of the project (as further outlined in Section 5).

## 5. Plans for the Future

The outcomes and outputs of TeL4ELE, the lessons learned and the experience gained by the international learning team and national networks have been progressively communicated to, and shared with, the widest possible international audience during the life of the project (2011-2013). It is planned that dissemination and exploitation activities (including mainstreaming and multiplication) will continue into 2014 and beyond in order to strengthen and maximise the impact of the project findings. This will be done by integrating existing innovations in a sustainable way in systems and practices at local, regional and national levels and by extending the work to new contexts both nationally and internationally. Given that 28 out of the 31 key educators and 61 out of the 66 teachers (who responded to the questionnaires) plan to continue with implementing the approach it is highly likely that such integration and extension work will be successful, at least at a local level. Of the key educators 75% would like to do further research into the approach and a number would like to integrate the approach into education degrees or into in-service teacher training thus further increasing the likelihood of sustainability.

Below are the set of strategies that have already been implemented or that are planned for the near future

### 5.1 Embedding practices in national contexts

#### ***Accrediting professional development***

In Spain and Portugal national project leaders negotiated with education ministries for the R2L teacher learning programs to be accredited (and thus mainstreamed) in order to maximise teacher motivation and commitment to the project. It is planned that such programs will continue to be offered and will be extended and adapted based on the valuable experience gained over the course of the project. In particular the challenge of providing in-service professional development to busy, time-poor professionals needs to be taken into account, including in socio-economic environments where salary cuts and increases in teaching hours (such as in Spain and Portugal) further problematize engagement.

#### ***Promoting the approach and engaging with policy makers, educators and teachers***

Different national contexts have used different mechanisms to engage with educators (both at policy and school level). In Denmark, for example, the Danish television network dk4 ([www.dk4.tv](http://www.dk4.tv)) made a 33 minutes long TV programme “The Reading Magazine” (“Læsemagasinet”) presenting the Reading to Learn method and featuring Dr. David Rose. The programme can be seen on <http://www.videnomlaesning.dk/film/laesemagasinet/> and is also available on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywcCV0P5rCY>. A further dissemination video (currently also available on youtube) was made by the Danish team (see [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=AYQGpyCi-Xs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=AYQGpyCi-Xs)

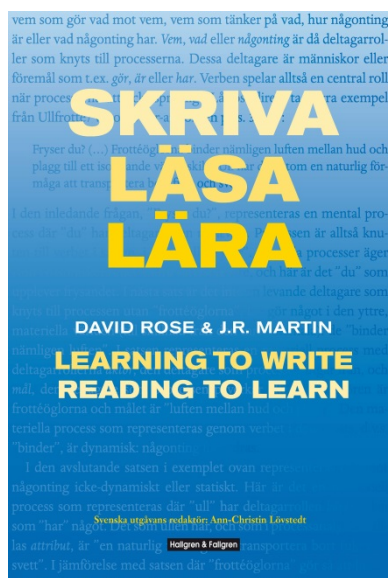
In Spain the project leader Dr. Rachel Whittaker has built a strong relationship with Leer.es (a reading organisation). Both Leer.es and the Ministry of Education National Centre for Education Research and Innovation presented papers as part of a round table at the Madrid dissemination conference. Dr. Whittaker is currently planning to bid for funds from the Spanish Education department to continue the work of the project. A presentation on R2L was also given at the TESOL

conference in Sevilla (see: <http://hancockmcdonald.com/blog/claire-acevedo-literacy-genre-awareness>) and an article written for the proceedings.

In Scotland a dynamic and informative website *Literacy Scotland* was set up in order to engage policy makers, educators and teachers with the project and R2L approach. The website provides a comprehensive set of sample lesson plans, video recordings with teacher trainees and a list of dissemination events including presentations for the local authority, the Scottish Learning festival and the national literacy network. (see [http://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/schoolofeducation/tel4ele/lesson\\_plans/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/schoolofeducation/tel4ele/lesson_plans/)). In May 2013 the project was included in an article published in the Times Educational Supplement - *Scotland gets to the point on literacy progress* (<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6334974>).

In Sweden, an Associate Partner to the project, the University of Helsinki, built on the example of the TeL4ELE project to obtain funding from Nordplus Horizontal to implement a related Reading to Learn project (referred to as the HOT program) involving teachers in Helsinki (Finland), Ovanåker (Sweden) and Tallin (Estonia) (see <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/r2l-hot/>). The Reading to Learn - HOT project leaders attended the final dissemination conference in Madrid to report on the project and establish links with the Te4ELE partners (see section 5.2). R2L HOT will create a Nordic Network for Reading to Learn and in addition, one of the Swedish key educators (Eva Oivio) successfully gained a grant to implement the genre pedagogy with subject teachers at a local school (in the 2013 autumn 2014 spring terms).

### Contextualising and translating



The *Learning to Write: Reading to Learn* pedagogy book (Rose, D. and Martin, J.R.) has been translated into Swedish due to demand from educators and teachers interested in learning more about the R2L approach. Currently, a Danish publishing company is considering a Danish translation.

In Portugal and Spain all ten R2L booklets have been translated into the national languages.

### 5.2 Engaging in new contexts

### ***Building new consortia and learning teams and gaining funding for related projects***

As a result of the successful bid for funding from Nordplus (the R2L HOT program) the Department of Education in Helsinki has initiated a R2L project with 40 -50 teachers. Alongside this Ovanåkers municipality in Sweden is funding the training of R2L teachers to become mentors. It has also decided to train all teachers in the municipality in R2L. Members of Stockholm National Network from Gothenburg have also taken up a R2L project with 100 teachers and are also training 4 mentors. There is also a new project in Botkyrka Kommun south of Stockholm initiated by a school principal who was also part of the Tel4ELE Swedish national network.

In Denmark, inspired by the National Cluster meetings, numerous local initiatives have been taken to share knowledge from the project and to build local clusters of educators who can provide support to each other in future trialling of the approach. For example,

- ❖ A reading instructor from one of the participating schools, Rådmandsgades public school presented the project to a science teacher study group on 13 March, 2013.
- ❖ A reading instructor in the municipality of Guldborgsund presented R2L and the Tel4ELE project progress to 14 reading instructor colleagues at a local meeting on 10 April, 2013.

### ***Digital Promotion***

Promotion through digital media has meant widespread international dissemination. The project website (<http://tel4ele.eu/>) holds many outputs and documentation relating to the project and is outward facing and reader friendly. On the dissemination conference website (<http://www.telcon2013.com/>) the presentations of the project partners can be downloaded.

The keynote presentations were streamed and can now be watched at [http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=tel4ele+madrid&sm=12](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=tel4ele+madrid&sm=12).



Dissemination conference in Madrid, Oct 17-19, 2013.

At the end of the first phase of the project, aspects of the project's aims and methods was included in the brochure 'Comenius Good Practice Examples' ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/practice\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/practice_en.pdf)) and published on the Comenius Literacy website. More recently the final results of the project and the final dissemination conference were presented there.

### ***Conferences, seminars and publications***

The conferences and seminars that project leaders, key educators and key teachers have presented at are numerous. Three to highlight are presentations by the Danish team at the *Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics Association* in Australia (September 2013), the final dissemi-

nation conference in Madrid at which many of those involved in Tel4ele presented papers (October 2014) and Claire Acevedo's (from the lead partner organization) presentation before the UK National Committee for Linguistics in Education (February 2014).

To date the following publications have been planned or submitted:

Coffin, C., Acevedo, C. and Löfstedt, A. C. Reading for Learning: a report on a pan Europe project raising educators' and teachers' awareness of the relationship between reading, language and learning, to be submitted to *Language and Education*

### **Future Research projects**

Three quarters of the key educators expressed an interest in carrying out further research and more than half the key teachers gave 'doing further research into the approach' as a reason for continuing with the R2L program. Beyond the immediate group a postgraduate researcher is planning to look into the uptake and sustainability of some of the aims of the R2L project over the long term as part of a PhD with Nottingham University.



Dissemination conference in Madrid, Oct 17-19, 2013.

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

As the key focus of the TeL4ELE project was to improve literacy and learning outcomes particularly for disadvantaged learners through pedagogic innovation, the project outcomes are of broad relevance for EU policies in several areas, namely education and training, poverty, integration and social justice. More specifically TeL4ELE makes significant contributions to two areas of key concern to EU policy makers.

### **The development of basic life-skills and competences**

As the key focus of this project was to improve literacy and learning outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged learners, it addressed the Comenius and EU objective of “helping young people acquire basic life-skills and competences necessary for their personal development, for future employment and for active European citizenship”. The genre based pedagogy taken up in the TEL4ELE project has previously been proved to be successful in Australia particularly for Indigenous and migrant students. For example, the OECD report *Where Immigrant Students Succeed – A comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003* (p54, 2006), found that Australia was one of very few countries where immigrant background learners did not achieve below expected levels in literacy. The genre pedagogy project conducted in Sweden in 2010 (Acevedo, 2010) showed similarly promising results with immigrant students. This was particularly the case with those in the special student individual program IVIK who did not qualify for admission to the final years of secondary schooling.

TeL4ELE has thus built on earlier implementations of genre based pedagogies in order to specifically target the improvement of the educational situation of pupils with a migrant background and those who have poor literacy levels and therefore limited access to the entire curriculum. As Section 2.4.2 noted it is significant that, across the student cohort as a whole, the educationally disadvantaged and lower scoring students showed the greatest gains (in line with previous studies e.g. Culican, 2006).

Research has shown that language, and particularly academic language, is central in the achievement of school outcomes in all subjects and throughout all school grades (Christie and Derewianka, 2008, Schleppegrell, 2004). It is this growing recognition of the relationship between language and learning that underpins the *European Core Curriculum for Mainstreamed Second Language – Teacher Education*, a framework developed as part of the Comenius funded project *EUCIM-TE* (2011) and which is currently informing pre and in-service education through the European network of Teacher Education Partnerships (established as part of the project). In the *EUCIM-TE* project there was a strong focus on the development of language as a meaning-making resource and the need to see language development as both learning language and learning through language. The TeL4ELE project has thus extended the foundational work of *EUCIM-TE* by further raising educators’ and teachers’ awareness of the interconnectedness of language competence and educational achievement. With teachers trained to address language and literacy needs in a focused and sustained way students are more likely to have the linguistic resources to pursue their studies and achieve higher educational certificates.

### **The development of innovative pedagogies**

In order to improve literacy and learning outcomes, this project has developed the use of innovative pedagogies in a range of European contexts and in so doing has enhanced European wide work in teacher in-service education. It has much to offer in relation to the various concerns raised in the recent Eurydice report on *Teaching Reading in Europe* (2011) particularly in relation to improving the knowledge and skills of teachers delivering reading instruction, providing them with enough support to identify and tackle reading difficulties; ensuring that all subject teachers, not only those teaching the language of instruction have sufficient grounding in the theory and practice of teaching reading. (Eurydice report on *Teaching Reading in Europe*, 2011, pg. 136)

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