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# Gaelchat

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Can asynchronous learning management systems increase the motivation and confidence of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

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A Meta project/dissertation submitted to the University of Dublin,  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Technology & Learning

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# ABSTRACT

Can asynchronous learning management systems increase motivation and confidence of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

Asynchronous learning management systems (ALMS) have been shown to facilitate this learner interaction in an environment that is seen as less threatening than real-time face to face conversations (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012), thus allowing learners develop at their own pace. Anxiety, which has been shown to be a significant barrier to language learning, can be reduced using such a system and through this reduction in anxiety, learner confidence can grow and motivation increase (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012). The aim of this study was to see if a WordPress Blog with asynchronous web-text and voice-thread conversation functions increase the motivation and confidence of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish oral examination.

To investigate this, an exploratory case study was undertaken with 19 participants. These participants were transition year Irish language students beginning their preparations for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination. An ALMS, or artefact made up of two linked WordPress blogs was used to facilitate this learning intervention. These blogs contained a searchable database of relevant supportive notes and chat-rooms which were akin to twitter feeds in appearance. These chat-rooms facilitated the participants' asynchronous Irish conversations which were conducted in the form of web-text and voice-thread conversations. Soundcloud.com was used to record the voice-thread element of conversations as it combines well with the Wordpress.com platform.

Questionnaires examining; the type of motivation participants had with regard to developing their Irish oral language skills, and how participants perceived their oral Irish ability were administered pre and post this learning experience. An analysis of participant interaction both with each other and the artefact, in-class observation and a recorded semi-structured group interview provided data to be analysed, triangulated and compared with the literature and theories which had informed the design of this artefact and learning experience.

An analysis of the data provided through the instruments outlined in the methods chapter concluded that this artefact had successfully increased the participants' confidence in their ability to improve their oral Irish skills. It further highlighted a change in motivation type and increase in the motivation, confidence and feeling of autonomy of these participants to engage in improving their Irish oral language skills and knowledge in preparation for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination.

# CONTENTS

1	Introduction .....	6
1.1	Background .....	6
1.2	Research Question .....	6
1.3	Road Map .....	7
1.4	Conclusion .....	7
2	Literature Review .....	9
2.1	Introduction .....	9
2.2	Language Fluency and Social Constructivism .....	9
2.3	Confidence and Motivation in language Learners .....	11
2.4	Motivation.....	12
2.5	Web-based Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning Management Systems.....	12
2.6	Voice recording and learner confidence.....	13
2.7	Are ALMS equally effective in assisting language learning of differing abilities.....	14
2.8	Conclusion.....	14
3	Design.....	15
3.1	Introduction .....	15
3.2	Design Aim and Objectives .....	15
3.2.1	Aim .....	15
3.2.2	Objectives.....	15
3.3	Pedagogy.....	15
3.4	Instructional Design: The ARCS Motivational Model.....	16
3.5	Implementation .....	17
3.5.1	The Artefact .....	17
3.5.2	Mobile Technology.....	18
3.5.3	The Learning Experience .....	20
3.6	Linking theory, Design & IMplementation.....	22
4	Methods.....	24
4.1	Introduction .....	24
4.2	Research question.....	24
4.3	Researcher Bias.....	24
4.4	Participants .....	24
4.5	Research Methods .....	25
4.6	Data Collection.....	26

4.7	Data Collection Tools .....	26
4.7.1	Questionnaires.....	26
4.7.2	Observation.....	27
4.7.3	Analysis of Activity on the “Cleachtadh Cainte” blog .....	27
4.7.4	Semi-structured Group Interview .....	28
4.8	Data Analysis Strategy.....	28
4.9	The Likert scale oral Irish ability questionnaire .....	28
4.10	Implementation of the Research .....	29
4.11	Ethics.....	30
4.12	Conclusion.....	30
5	Findings .....	31
5.1	Oral Irish Ability Questionnaire.....	31
5.1.1	Perception of oral Irish ability.....	31
5.1.2	Key Finding .....	38
5.2	The Situational Motivation Scale Questionnaire .....	38
5.2.1	Types of motivation .....	38
5.2.2	Key Finding.....	41
5.3	Statistical Analysis of the Blogs.....	41
5.3.1	Use of supportive notes ( <a href="http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/">http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/</a> ) .....	41
5.3.2	Key Finding.....	42
5.3.3	Web-text and Voice-thread comments ( <a href="http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/">http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/</a> ) .....	42
5.3.4	Blog Activity outside class time.....	44
5.3.5	Key Finding.....	44
5.4	Observation.....	45
5.5	Semi-Structured Group Interview.....	45
5.5.1	Has using this technology improved your motivation? .....	46
5.5.2	Has this improved your confidence? .....	46
5.5.3	What do you think about integrating this technology into Irish classes?.....	47
5.5.4	Did you feel more or less in control of how you were learning?.....	48
5.5.5	How likely are you to continue using this? .....	48
5.5.6	Are you better than you were?.....	49
5.5.7	ARCS Motivational Model.....	50
5.5.8	Key Finding .....	50
5.6	Unexpected Results .....	51
5.7	Summary .....	51

6	Discussion & Conclusions.....	52
6.1	Attitudes and Perceptions .....	52
6.2	Answering the Research Question.....	53
6.3	Limitations of Research.....	54
6.4	Future Research .....	54
6.5	References .....	55
7	Appendices.....	58
7.1	Appendix 1: Student Questionnaires .....	58
7.2	Appendix 2: Board of Management Information & Consent Form .....	61
7.3	Appendix 3: Parent Information & Consent Form .....	64
7.4	Appendix 4: Student Information and Consent Form.....	67
7.5	Appendix 5: Email of Ethical Approval from SCSS Ethics Committee .....	69
7.6	Appendix 7: Interview questions for semi-structured group interview .....	70
7.7	Appendix 8: A Priori and Emergent coding and theming of semi-structured group interview .....	71
	.....	72
	.....	74
	.....	77
	.....	80
	.....	81
7.8	Appendix 9: Irish questions for structured web-text chats .....	84
7.9	Appendix 10: Comhrá Lochtach .....	86



## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Blogs' Features and Functions .....	18
Figure 2: Gaelchat Blog Screenshot .....	19
Figure 3: Cleachtadh Cainte Blog Screenshot .....	20
Figure 4: Results for question 1 from pre & post questionnaires.....	31
Figure 5: Results for question 2 from pre & post questionnaires.....	32
Figure 6: Results for question 3 from pre & post questionnaires.....	33
Figure 7: Results for question 4 from pre & post questionnaires.....	33
Figure 8: Results for question 5 from pre & post questionnaires.....	34
Figure 9: Results for question 6 from pre & post questionnaires.....	35
Figure 10: Results for question 7 from pre & post questionnaires.....	35
Figure 11: Results for question 8 from pre & post questionnaires.....	36
Figure 12: Results for question 9 from pre & post questionnaires.....	37
Figure 13: Results for question 10 from pre & post questionnaires .....	37
Figure 14: Figure showing intrinsic motivation pre and post. ....	38
Figure 15: Figure showing identified regulation pre and post.....	39
Figure 16: Figure showing external regulation pre and post.....	40
Figure 17: Figure showing amotivation pre and post. ....	40
Figure 18: The number of time the notes were viewed each day .....	41
Figure 19: Total number of participant comments each day .....	42
Figure 20: Total Comments made inside and outside of school.....	44

## TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: ARCS model, illustrating its relevance to this learning experience. Created from text from (J. Keller, 2010)	17
Table 2: Outline of Learning Experience Lessons	22
Table 3: Design and Implementation from Literature Review	23
Table 4: Data Collection Tools	26
Table 5: The Situational Motivation Scale codification key	27
Table 6: Number of participant comments per day	43

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Irish language is legally recognised as both the first language of Ireland and the national language; it is also recognised as a modern European language. This language is a compulsory school subject in the Irish education system both at primary and secondary levels, but rather than being a subject which students enjoy and take pride in learning, Irish has been shown to be one of the least popular and most difficult subjects studied by Irish second level students (Smyth, McCoy, & Darmody, 2004). The teaching and learning of this has long been believed to be a challenge in which the lack of confidence and motivation of its learners act as a constant barrier (Smyth, 2006).

Language learning is a social process in which the cooperation and collaboration of peers plays a vital role (Vygotsky, 1978). However it has long been acknowledged that learner progress and success can be impeded by barriers such as anxiety (Yang et al., 2012a). It is vital that this anxiety be lessened and learner confidence and motivation be increased as these are accepted as having a direct influence over success and progress and consequently successful and meaningful communication and oral production in the language being studied (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012).

This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of asynchronous learning management systems (ALMS) in increasing the confidence and motivation of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination.

This examination of the value of ALMS as a resource for language learners will be analysed in terms of the Irish language and the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The central research question this exploratory case study seeks to answer is:

Can asynchronous learning management systems increase the motivation and confidence of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

The sub questions stemming from this central research question are:

- Will participants find this asynchronous learning management system (ALMS) artefact to be more accessible and more beneficial to them than previously used methods in assisting them improve their oral Irish language skills?
- Will participants see this ALMS artefact as providing them with the ability to improve their oral Irish language skills for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination?

- Will this learning experience increase participants' confidence and motivation and change the type of motivation they have towards preparing for the Leaving Certificate oral Irish language examination.
- Will using this ALMS artefact in conjunction with social constructivist pedagogies cause these participants to feel more in-control of their learning and preparation for the Leaving Certificate Irish language oral examination.

### 1.3 ROAD MAP

A review of the literature exploring social constructivism and collaborative pedagogies describes their importance in garnering learner confidence through fostering independence and autonomy in language learners (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008). This chapter illustrates social constructivism as being an essential element in successful language learning (F. Wang & Shao, 2012), describing how it facilitates and cultivates language skills and knowledge through social interaction, problem solving and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978).

The design chapter outlines the key features of social constructivism and ALMS with the design implications for this artefact; two Wordpress.com blogs. ARCS Motivational Model for instructional design theory, which underpins the design of these blogs, is then clearly described. This chapter then delineates the framework of the learning experience including; topics from the Leaving Certificate Irish course for the oral examination being covered, technology being used and the pedagogy underpinning the lesson.

The methods chapter will present the validity of using an exploratory case study approach to answer the research question being examined in this learning intervention. The data collection tools and data sets being studied are also demarcated here. The methods of data analysis, implementation of the learning experience and a description of the ethical procedure followed are also included in this chapter.

The findings chapter illustrates the data results and conclusions garnered from the data sets through the data analysis methods outlined in the methods chapter. These results are then discussed and analysed within the context outlined in the literature review chapter. This chapter then outlines the limitations of this study and areas of future research inspired by this study.

### 1.4 CONCLUSION

Two linked Wordpress.com blogs were created as an ALMS, to be used in conjunction with social constructivist pedagogies to examine if this artefact could increase the motivation and confidence of

Leaving Certificate students in preparing for their Irish language oral examination. The examination of the success or failure of this artefact and learning experience is the fundamental aim of this study.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The relevant literature will be reviewed in this chapter in order to place the research question in context and show the relevance of the intervention carried out as part of this case study. The research question underpinning this intervention is: Can Asynchronous Learning Management Systems facilitate an increase in motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination? This question, which forms the basis for this case study, will be answered through an in-depth discussion of the theories and pedagogies supporting this intervention followed by an analysis of the findings of the intervention itself.

Article 8 of the Irish constitution recognises Irish as the national language and the first language of Ireland (Ireland., 1942). The Irish language is also recognised as a modern European language (EUROPE, 2001; Europe., 2001). The 2006 Government Strategy statement on the Irish language which outlines the policy objectives to preserve and support the language describes it as a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary level education in Ireland. Objective 5 of this statement outlines that the Irish language curriculum at both primary and second level will *“foster oral and written competence in Irish among students and an understanding of its value to us as a people”*(DES, 2006). However the Irish language has been shown to be one of the most disliked subjects amongst second level students and has also been named as the least useful subject (Smyth, McCoy, & Darmody, 2004). The Irish language was also named as the subject students find most difficult and many of these believe that too much time is allocated to its teaching (Smyth, 2006).

In response to these findings, the Minister for Education in 2007 restructured the Leaving Certificate Irish examination by significantly increasing the marks allocated to the oral Irish examination (Hanafin, 2007). The value of the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination was increased from 20% to 40% thus significantly increasing the importance of fluency within the Irish language classroom. By increasing the importance of the Irish oral examination in the Leaving Certificate Irish examination it was hoped that students would re-engage with the Irish language through everyday experiences of meaningful communication through Irish in the classroom (NCCA, October 2013). Whether these changes have successfully improved secondary school students opinion of the Irish language as a school subject has yet to be documented.

### 2.2 LANGUAGE FLUENCY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

The importance of fluency in second language (L2) acquisition is recognised by both teachers and learners (Schmidt, 1992). Achievement of fluency in an L2 however, is a great challenge for language

learners as it involves language knowledge acquisition and being able to monitor speech production, making mental corrections to ensure meaningful accurate L2 oral production (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Fluent L2 speakers do not have to think or search for words as they speak, instead their ability to plan and express themselves, is so efficient it appears automatic (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) further outline how it is through interaction with the target language, that learners improve their L2 language knowledge and skill, thus potentially enabling them in eventually achieving language fluency.

Repetition and drilling of L2 utterances can be confused with fluency. While extended practice and repetition can improve a learners ability to produce utterances (Carlson, Sullivan, & Schneider, 1989), this does not improve their language skill or ability to self-regulate and correct during L2 oral production. Learners being immersed in an environment in which the language they are studying is natively spoken, is seen as most favourable for L2 acquisition (Ibáñez et al., 2011). Yet L2 teachers often express their difficulties in creating an immersive environment within the L2 classroom and this can inhibit second language teaching and learning. Teachers can however, create oral production activities through which meaningful communication can take place for their learners (Lam, 2000). They can further reinforce authentic communication between L2 learners both within and outside the classroom, through the use of Computer aided language learning (CALL) (H. Wang, 2008). CALL based activities can be used to facilitate meaningful and authentic language production thus assisting language acquisition. But language fluency can still elude L2 learners if they do not feel confident enough to engage in these language production activities. A lack of confidence is often coupled with reluctance to partake fully in L2 production and this can directly inhibit an L2 learner's progress in acquiring the target language (MacIntyre et al., 1997). (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) explain that providing learners with comprehensible input, but not requiring oral production until learners feel confident enough to do so is one of the most successful methods ensuring L2 acquisition and assisting oral production.

(Vygotsky, 1978) interprets language learning as being social and active process originating from relationships between individuals. Language learning therefore fits the definition of a social constructivist approach in which he explains that skills and knowledge are developed through relationships with others, through problem solving under guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). The enabling and fostering of social interaction of L2 learners in the target language through authentic and meaningful L2 based communication interactions and activities designed using social constructivist pedagogies of L2 acquisition tie directly to the concept of successful language learning (F. Wang & Shao, 2012).

Cooperative learning has been defined as *“the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximise their own and one another’s learning”* (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1990). Within this pedagogy, founded in social constructivism, students play a central and active role in the learning process. Learners are required to work in cohesive interdependent groups to achieve their learning objectives (Yager, 2000). Cooperative learning as a part of social constructivism focuses on learning as a social process and develops learners’ interpersonal and social skills through group and pair work whilst fostering learner autonomy. The learners actively constructing their knowledge through peer; feedback reflection and assessment (Tran, 2013). Cooperative learning has been shown to increase learner motivation and foster positive attitudes towards learning (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 2008), therefore playing an essential role in L2 teaching and learning.

### 2.3 CONFIDENCE AND MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A lack of confidence has been shown to be a significant barrier for L2 learners and can directly impede their progress in L2 acquisition. Learners can feel that they are not given enough ‘in class’ time in which to develop their L2 oral skills (Yang et al., 2012). A further difficulty for L2 teachers in eliciting oral production is that these activities are often daunting for shyer learners and they can be reluctant to take part. This reluctance stems from learners deeming their language production skills too inadequate for the task at hand (Yang et al., 2012). This conflict between; L2 learners being reluctant to produce meaningful communication due to their feelings’ of inadequacy and anxiety and the great need for L2 learners to partake in such activities must be overcome by every L2 teacher as it is widely accepted that it is only through practice that oral skills improve and student anxiety in their oral competence lessens (Yang et al., 2012).

Asynchronous learning management systems (ALMS) can facilitate meaningful L2 written and oral communication activities, while alleviating the fears of shyer learners through the provision of a less intimidating working atmosphere. Asynchronous conversations which can be facilitated through ALMS have been acknowledged as being less threatening than real-time, face to face synchronous communication used in synchronous learning management systems (SLMS) (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012). A less threatening environment is vital for language learners as it can lead to reduced learner anxiety. Learner anxiety can be a significant barrier in L2 acquisition and has been shown to greatly impede learner progress and success (Dunn, 2012). ALMS provide learners with the ability to engage in meaningful communication, thus facilitating increased oral production and communication, which in turn leads to increased proficiency in the target language. This increased proficiency and ability to communicate meaningfully can facilitate learners in improving their listening and speaking skills both



within and outside the classroom through the use of ALMS for beginners and SLMS as learners' language competence increases (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012).

## 2.4 MOTIVATION

Motivation greatly influences a student's ability to learn and succeed (Ames, 1990). Motivated learners eagerly engage in learning activities and are far more likely to persevere when faced with challenging learning activities. (Vallerand et al., 1992) have divided motivation into three categories; intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation. Amotivated learners, according to (Vallerand et al., 1992), cannot see the cause and effect between their own actions and their learning progress. These learners are hindered by feelings of incompetence and expect to have no control of their learning. They believe that factors outside their control cause their behaviour, and may opt out of learning altogether, whether that's a learning activity or even the entire learning process. Externally motivated learners are swayed by external influences such as rewards, and/or desirable results. (Guay, Vallerand, & Blanchard, 2000) see extrinsic motivation as containing two sub categories; identified regulation and external regulation. External regulation is defined as "*when a behaviour is regulated by rewards or in order to avoid negative consequences*" and in contrast, identified regulation is "*when a behaviour is valued and perceived as chosen by oneself.*" Both external regulation and identified regulation are still extrinsic as in neither case will an activity be performed for itself. In both of these cases, the activity will be seen as a means to an end and nothing more (Guay et al., 2000). While extrinsic motivation has been said to be less desirable in learners than intrinsic motivation, learners who are extrinsically motivated can still be very capable at the task at hand. These learners value both competition in learning, and competition for tangible rewards, they will however, be less likely to complete activities if there is no incentive present. If extrinsically motivated learners cannot see the value in a learning activity, they will only exert the minimal effort. These learners may also suffer from low self-esteem and high anxiety (Lei, 2010). Intrinsically motivated learners will engage in an activity because of their personal interest in the task, or they will see a value in the task for its own sake (Liu, Horton, Olmanson, & Toprac, 2011), unlike their extrinsically motivated counterparts. Intrinsically motivated learners have also been described as having the benefit of not being hindered by learner anxiety (Lei, 2010). The link between intrinsic motivation and learner success has been shown to be very strong (Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005).

## 2.5 WEB-BASED SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

SLMS facilitate real-time conversations between users and thus can cause great anxiety and put great pressure on L2 learners who are not fluent in the target language but only able to produce

limited utterances. These learners require clearly structured activities which can facilitate the extraction of what language they can produce (Rosell-Aguilar, 2005). ALMS are far better suited to the need of these learners. Tools such as email, web texting, forums or voice blogging encourage interaction and collaboration (Satar & Özdener, 2008). L2 learners who are not fluent can still therefore partake in authentic, meaningful, collaborative and communicative L2 based activities. ALMS are therefore best suited to L2 learners who need to increase their confidence in their own communicative ability in the target language being acquired and ALMS can meet this need. ALMS readily facilitate social constructivist pedagogies of L2 acquisition and learners can interact with their peers meaningfully through the target language. Learners can gain the confidence to take risks in speaking the target language through voice blogging, getting personal feedback, and a forum through which they can self-reflect on their recorded speech (Sun, 2009). Advantages of ALMS in increasing confidence and motivation in Language Learners

Studies have reported ALMS to be less threatening for beginner L2 learners than real-time face to face communication of SLMS (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012). Learners are allowed to work at their own pace, thus ensuring they feel 'in control' of their learning. Further success of these learners can be promoted through the provision of supportive notes showing good modelling of sentence structure and correct vocabulary use (Yang et al., 2012). Feedback through self-reflection and peer reflection and/or correction is another valuable feature of ALMS for L2 learners which can inspire learner confidence, encouraging them to take risks in the L2 (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012). ALMS can therefore promote learner independence and allowing learners to control their own knowledge acquisition can further increase confidence and motivation. Anxiety has long been acknowledged as a barrier to successful L2 acquisition and has a negative effect on learner progress. The less threatening atmosphere created by ALMS can reduce learner anxiety and can assist learners in increasing their confidence in their communicative ability in the target language, thus increasing their motivation to further improve their L2 language skill and knowledge (Vallerand et al., 1992).

## 2.6 VOICE RECORDING AND LEARNER CONFIDENCE

ALMS tools such as web-text chats and emailing are excellent tools through which L2 learners can engage in meaningful target language based activities, however such tools neglect the crucial language acquisition aspect of pronunciation as they have no oral production element (Hubbard, 2009). While language knowledge and skill are essential in L2 oral production, learners cannot engage fully in meaningful interaction in the target language without developing the pronunciation aspect of L2 acquisition. A further difficulty for L2 teachers and learners finding class time for learners to practice speaking (Satar & Özdener, 2008). Voice blogging and voice-thread

conversations are some of the ALMS tools that facilitate oral production while still fostering a less threatening atmosphere for L2 learners. While shy students are often reluctant to partake in 'in-class' oral activities (Yang et al., 2012), ALMS voice blogging and voice-thread conversations assist teachers in monitoring learner participation and gather samples of good practice to guide and assist other learners within the class group (Dunn, 2012). Such tools are invaluable as they allow learners control their pace of conversations, use supportive notes which provide good modelling of sentence structure and correct vocabulary use and facilitate self-reflection and peer feedback on recorded communications (Yang et al., 2012). Increasing learner confidence in their L2 oral production ability will further motivate them to improve their listening and speaking outside class through continued use of such ALMS tools (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012).

## 2.7 ARE ALMS EQUALLY EFFECTIVE IN ASSISTING LANGUAGE LEARNING OF DIFFERING ABILITIES

Although much literature regarding the implementation of ALMS in L2 classrooms exists, there appears to be a gap in the examination of the effectiveness of ALMS for learners of differing abilities in the target language. Many advocates of ALMS clearly illustrate the advantages of introducing such technologies to the L2 classroom (Dunn, 2012; Gleason & Suvorov, 2012; Yang et al., 2012) but none have tackled the issue of implementing ALMS based activities in a target language with groups of varying abilities. Yet the use of ALMS to promote learner confidence, motivation and progress in L2 acquisition has been examined from first to third level, leading to the belief that ALMS can lead to successful L2 acquisition and has benefits for all L2 learners regardless of their level (Dunn, 2012).

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

CALL provides many advantages to language teachers hampered by the confines of the L2 classroom (H. Wang, 2008). ALMS is an example of one such tool which can create less threatening learning environments for L2 acquisition, while allowing learners be in-control of their learning. This feeling of control and autonomy facilitated by social constructivist pedagogies and ALMS can increase learner confidence and thus improve motivation and progress (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012), leading to greater success in acquisition of the target language and improved oral and written L2 production (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009).

## 3 DESIGN

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the rationale for the creation of an artefact which allows for asynchronous learning of Irish by Leaving Certificate students. The first section will describe the design aim and objectives (Section 3.2), then the pedagogy underpinning the study will be described (Section 3.3) and finally a description of implementation will be given (Section 3.5). The artefact created to facilitate this learning intervention was two linked WordPress blogs which provided a searchable database of notes necessary to prepare for the Irish Leaving Certificate oral examination and chat-rooms for asynchronous web-text and voice-thread conversations through Irish.

### 3.2 DESIGN AIM AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.2.1 AIM

The aim of the project is to assess if asynchronous learning management systems facilitate an increase in the motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students preparing for their Irish oral examination

#### 3.2.2 OBJECTIVES

To develop an artefact to:

1. Facilitate asynchronous Irish language production
2. Provide a means for students to practice and improve their Irish language oral skills
3. Investigate whether allowing students to develop the Irish oral skills at their own pace will increase both; their confidence in their oral skills in Irish and their motivation to further improve.

### 3.3 PEDAGOGY

The literature review clearly supported the creation of a language learning intervention based on social constructivist pedagogies such as cooperative learning, facilitating problem solving and collaboration with peers. These pedagogies were shown to develop language learners' social and interpersonal skills whilst developing a sense of autonomy in their learning, increasing learner motivation and foster positive attitudes towards learning. It has also been clearly established in the literature that ALMS are very successful increasing language learners' confidence and motivation by developing their communication skills and promoting learner autonomy and control. So based on

this and using ARCS motivational model for instructional design an ALMS artefact comprising of two Wordpress.com blogs was created.

### 3.4 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: THE ARCS MOTIVATIONAL MODEL

ARCS motivational model is a model of instructional design that looks to bridge the gap between “*concepts theories and principles resulting from the study of human motivation*” (J. Keller, 2010; J. M. Keller, 2010), p.2) and the “*procedures, successful practices and design processes...whose aim is to improve human motivation*” (J. Keller, 2010; J. M. Keller, 2010), p.2) is used as part of the design of this learning experience. This model focuses on promoting and sustaining learner motivation, which is a key element of both ALMS and social constructivist pedagogies. ARCS consists of four essential elements, which are listed in (). Learners’ attention will be sought through the use of a blog hosting web-text chat-rooms and voice-thread conversations. Translations of some common social media slang into Irish are provided as part of the database of supportive notes provided in a second linked blog. This slang has been shown to be very popular amongst younger learners (Rosenthal & McKeown, 2011), thus grabbing the learners’ attention. This learning experience will be relevant to the learners as it is an essential part of their Leaving Certificate Irish examination, and through their web-text and voice-thread conversations they will use role play, or act out the conversation section of the Irish oral exam. It is hoped that through the asynchronous conversations and the support of relevant notes learners will become more confident in the ability to prepare for and Irish oral examination, therefore experiencing satisfaction through practicing a meaningful skill and receiving feedback and reinforcement.

(Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) explain that once a learner can envision their future selves, they become more motivated to achieve that future. It is hoped that once the learners partaking in this experience will see these blogs, which make up the artefact, as a useful tool in assisting them in improving their oral Irish skills, thus providing learners with the satisfaction of achievable success.

TABLE 1: ARCS MODEL, ILLUSTRATING ITS RELEVANCE TO THIS LEARNING EXPERIENCE. CREATED FROM TEXT FROM (J. KELLER, 2010)

Attention	Relevance	Confidence	Satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptual arousal</li> <li>• Use surprise and uncertainty to grab attention</li> <li>• Inquiry arousal Pose challenging questions and problems</li> </ul> <p>E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role play</li> <li>Games</li> <li>Devil's Advocate</li> <li>Stories &amp; narratives</li> <li>Images, sounds, videos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You not only need to make the material relevant, you also need to establish its relevance to the learner</li> </ul> <p><u>6 Categories:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience</li> <li>Present worth</li> <li>Future usefulness</li> <li>Needs matching</li> <li>Modelling</li> <li>Choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the learners confidence in their ability to succeed (but do not over reward simple accomplishments)</li> <li>• Be clear about process and assessment</li> <li>• Allow them some control over criteria for success</li> <li>• Success must be meaningful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learners must achieve satisfaction in their accomplishments</li> <li>• Provide the opportunity for them to use their new skills in a meaningful way</li> <li>• Feedback and reinforcement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-text chat forum &amp; voice-blogging</li> <li>• Voice Blogging</li> <li>• Twitter like appearance</li> <li>• Social media slang</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaving certificate oral examination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive Notes</li> <li>• Structured classes with topic based oral questions to guide conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comhrá lochtach (Role play – rewriting and then recording a conversation and with its mistakes corrected)</li> </ul>

(J. M. KELLER, 2010)

### 3.5 IMPLEMENTATION

#### 3.5.1 THE ARTEFACT

It was intended that this artefact would be created using one WordPress blog, with a chat-room plugin. This, however proved too difficult to implement within the time limit of this learning experience, therefore this artefact is made up of two linked WordPress blogs. The features and functions of each of the blogs are listed in (Figure 1). Both blogs are hosted by Wordpress.com, and thus come with all of the design and security features provided by this site. Both blogs have similar banners, to make it feel like one large site, and therefore a less disjointed experience for learners. Each of the participants in this learning experience will be invited to sign up as authors to <http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/>, the chat-room blog, and prior to the commencement of this experience. Each participants school Gmail address was used as all emails within the domain of

stpaulsg.ie go to the school I.T. department, thus allowing transparency throughout the learning experience and adhering to the school IT acceptable use policy. Each participant was asked to use their school computer user name when accepting the invitation to be an author on the blog for ease of identification. Authors of a WordPress blog may publish posts and comments thus facilitating asynchronous web-text and voice-thread conversations between the participants. However, all authors' initial posts must be approved by the administrator and all subsequent posts are sent to the administrator. These can be edited or removed at any time thus encouraging learners to stay on-task. This security feature also assists the teacher to easily see what learners may require assistance. The blog administrator can also remove any material at any time, thus ensuring that all conversations adhere to the I.T. acceptable use policy of St. Paul's Secondary School.

### 3.5.2 MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

As the "administrator" of these Blogs, the researcher is required to approve each participant or authors first few comments before the security settings would allow these approved authors to freely post comments and participate in web-text and voice-thread conversations. Participants who find technology challenging would also need more assistance during this first lesson, or until they become comfortable with the technology. Wordpress.com and Soundcloud.com both have mobile Apps which can be downloaded to any electronic tablet or handheld device through both "Google Play" and the "Apple App store". Using a handheld device provides the administrator or teacher with the mobility to assist individual students throughout the room as needed, while still approving posts. This mobility can facilitate a smoother transition period as participants become familiar with the technology as the teacher can assist individuals both online and in person at the same time.



	
<p>Database of supportive notes</p>	<p>Web-text chats / threads</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Theme – adventure journal</li> <li>2. Search function</li> <li>3. Link to web-text chat blog</li> <li>4. Sign in function</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Theme – P2</li> <li>2. Search function</li> <li>3. Link to database of supportive notes</li> <li>4. Sign in function</li> <li>5. Recent Posts</li> <li>6. Recent Comments</li> </ol>
<p><a href="http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/">http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/</a></p>	<p><a href="http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/">http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/</a></p>

FIGURE 1: BLOGS' FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS

The first blog, found at <http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/> (Figure 2) uses a simple theme called “Adventure Journal” with three widgets located on the right side of the blog. The first widget provides a direct link to the second blog (<http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/>), the second is a search bar, allowing users find the notes they need and the third widget is called “meta” allows users to login to the blog. This blog acts as a database containing six pages of notes, which can be accessed using the custom menu at the top of blog. Each page contains a selection of screen shots of notes relevant to that topic for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral exam. Each screenshot has embedded alternative text within its post, and a title, to enable learners to more easily find the particular notes they need. Screen shots were chosen rather than notes in text form as learners would not be able to copy and paste, but instead need to read, and accurately reproduce the desired language output. It is hoped that this will increase language acquisition through correct use of modelled sentence structures and vocabulary.



FIGURE 2: GAELCHAT BLOG SCREENSHOT

The theme of the second blog <http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/> (Figure 3) is called “P2” and is modelled on the appearance of a “Twitter” feed. As many posts (conversation threads) as the administrator of this blog desires can be set up and each post acts as a chat-room in which authors



can post web-text comments or voice-thread recordings. Each user will have set up an account on [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com). This website facilitates free recording and sharing of sounds online. As learners record voice-thread messages, they will easily be able to post them to the WordPress blog using the soundcloud.com embedding code provided through the “share” function. This blog contains five widgets in the right hand widget area: a direct link to <http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/>, a search bar through which any post can be found, a list of recent posts, a list of the most recent comments and a “meta” widget, which allows users to login.

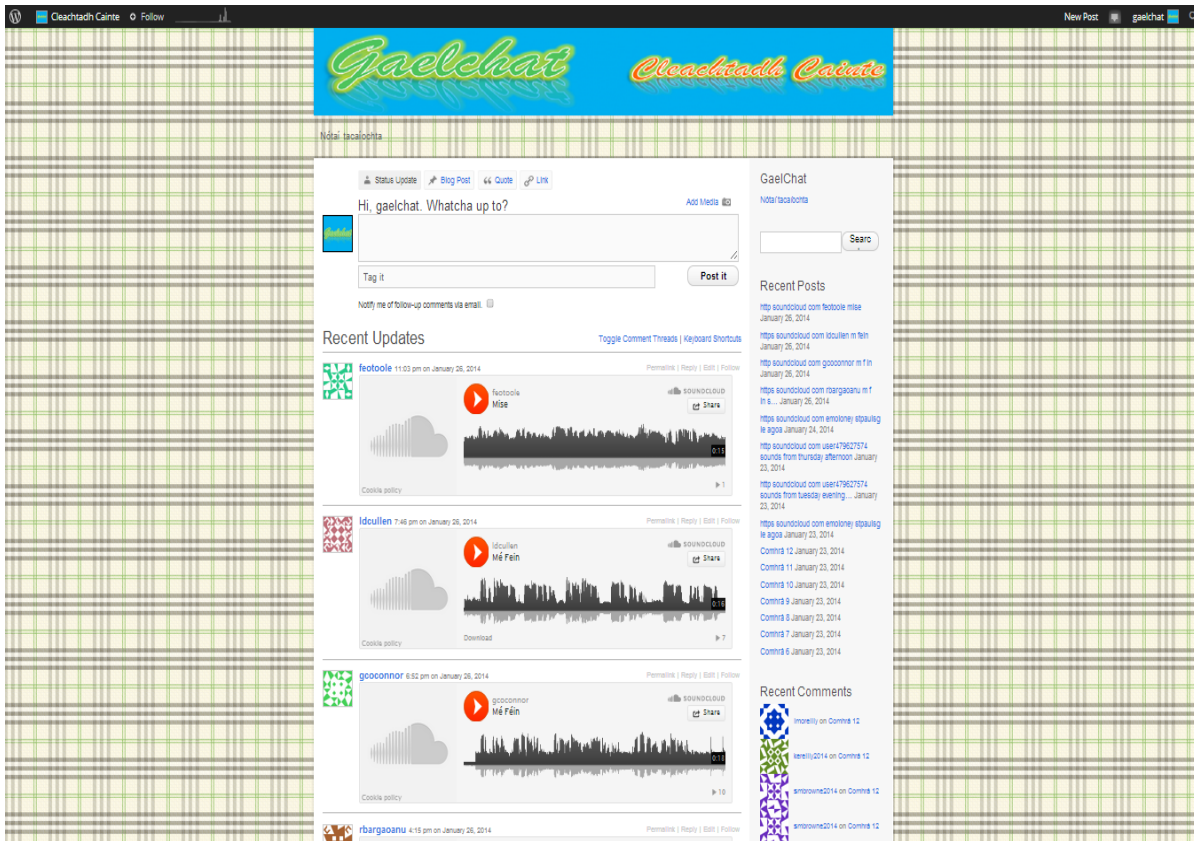


FIGURE 3: CLEACHTADH CAINTE BLOG SCREENSHOT

### 3.5.3 THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The learning experience was designed to be undertaken using the artefact described in Section 3.5.1. It is divided into seven lessons (see Table 2) and each one is suitable for a class period of 40 minutes. During each class, all participants are required to work in pairs. This was explicitly designed into the learning experience to harness the effectiveness of cooperative learning described by (Hsiung, 2012) who found learners who worked in pairs significantly out-performed their peers who learned individually. Pairs for the current study were selected by the learners themselves to ensure increased learner autonomy.

The first lesson asks the students to complete the pre-experience questionnaires (see Appendix 1: Student Questionnaires), accept the invitation to be a blog author and to familiarise themselves with the technology. The last point is facilitated through engaging the students in some basic chat on the topic “mé féin” (me / myself) and “mo chlann” (my family).

Each subsequent lesson focusses on a specific topic covered in the Irish leaving Certificate curriculum. The second lesson focuses on “mo theach” (my house / home) and “mo cheantar” (my area / local environment). The third covers the topics of “mo theach” and “mo cheantar” and introduces the posting of voice-thread messages through using [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com). Using [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com) learners post a voice recording of “mé féin”. The fourth lesson is based on the topic “mo chaitheamh aimsire” (my hobbies / pastimes) and is delivered both through web-text and voice-thread conversations. At this stage learners also give peer feedback on voice recording of “mé féin”. The fifth lesson focuses on “mo scoil” (my school) and learners continue to have asynchronous web-text and voice-thread conversations. In each of these lessons the learners are given a list of topic based questions, similar to those asked in a Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination to guide their conversations.

The final lesson sees the learners rewrite a conversation which includes commonly made mistakes which they have made in the previous lessons (see Appendix 10: Comhrá Lochtach ). This conversation is prepared using many of the mistakes made by the learners in their prior web-text and voice-thread conversations. The aim of this final activity is to enable students to correct the more common mistakes, through using the supportive notes modelling correct use of vocabulary and sentence structure. It also provides material upon which the students can reflect in the final lesson.

**TABLE 2: OUTLINE OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE LESSONS**

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Technology</b>
<b>1</b>	Pre-questionnaires Accept invitation to join Blogs Sign up to soundcloud.com Mé Féin (me /myself ) Mo Chlann (my family)	School Gmail accounts Wordpress.com Web-text chat
<b>2</b>	Mo Theach (my house / home) Mo Cheantar (my area / local environment)	Web-text chat
<b>3</b>	Mé Féin (me /myself ) Mo Chlann (my family) Mo Theach (my house / home) Mo Cheantar (my area / local environment)	Voice-thread conversation
<b>4</b>	Mo Chaitheamh Aimsire (my hobbies / pastimes) Peer feedback on earlier voice-thread recordings	Web-text chat Voice-thread conversation
<b>5</b>	Mo Scoil (my school)	Web-text chat Voice-thread conversation
<b>6</b>	Comhrá Lochtach (faulty conversation / conversation with mistakes)	Web-text chat Voice thread conversation
<b>7</b>	Post-questionnaires Semi-structured group interview & Debriefing	

### 3.6 LINKING THEORY, DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

A table linking the salient points from the literature review with the design implications of the learning intervention and how these were implemented in the linked WordPress blogs is given in Table 3 below to aid the reader.

**TABLE 3: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION FROM LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature Review	Design Implications	Implementation
<b>Social Constructivism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning experience that is a social interactive process</li> <li>• Cooperative learning</li> <li>• Learner autonomy</li> <li>• Learners actively construct and acquire knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair work</li> <li>• Learner centred / led language learning</li> <li>• Screenshots of notes rather than text so learners must read and reproduce rather than copy and paste.</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing confidence in language learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asynchronous conversations allowing learners to be in control of their learning &amp; create a less threatening atmosphere</li> <li>• Facilitate learners in practicing their oral skills through asynchronous conversations</li> <li>• Facilitate meaningful communication in the L2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wordpress.com blogs which can host asynchronous chats (ALMS)</li> <li>• Web-text chats &amp; voice-thread conversations</li> <li>• Searchable database of supportive notes with good modelling of sentence structure and correct vocabulary use</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing motivation in language learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARCS Motivational model for instructional design</li> <li>• Allow learners to feel in control of their learning</li> </ul>	
<b>ALMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflection &amp; correction</li> <li>• Peer collaboration, assessment, feedback and reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blogs hosting web-text chats &amp; voice-thread conversations</li> </ul>

## 4 METHODS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the exploratory case study approach taken to investigate the use of asynchronous learning management systems tools such as web text chats and voice-thread conversations in tandem with social constructivist pedagogies in improving motivation and confidence of Irish language students in their ability to prepare for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination.

### 4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The central research question used to inform this study is:

Can asynchronous learning management systems increase the motivation and confidence of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

The sub questions relate to:

- Will participants find this ALMS artefact to be more accessible and more beneficial to them than previously used methods in assisting them improve their oral Irish language skills?
- Will participants see this ALMS artefact as providing them with the ability to improve their oral Irish language skills for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination?
- Will this learning experience increase participants' confidence and motivation and change the type of motivation they have towards preparing for the Leaving Certificate oral Irish language examination?
- Will using this ALMS artefact in conjunction with social constructivist pedagogies cause these participants to feel more in-control of their learning and preparation for the Leaving Certificate Irish language oral examination?

### 4.3 RESEARCHER BIAS

The researcher is the Irish teacher of the participants in this study. The participants were made aware that they were partaking in a research study. They were reminded throughout this learning experience that they could choose to withdraw at any time without any penalty. This learning experience took place over seven class periods.

### 4.4 PARTICIPANTS

A transition year class group taught by the researcher was selected as having appropriate possible candidates for this learning experience. All nineteen students enrolled in this class were willing to

partake in this study. This transition year class group were selected as they had yet to begin preparations for their Irish language Leaving Certificate oral examination and so had spent little time developing or improving their oral Irish communicative ability and skills, but were familiar with using I.T. through the medium of Irish as part of this class. This class have spent many of their transition year Irish classes working with the researcher in the school's computer room and "Mac Lab" on activities such as blogging, emailing and creating MS Word and MS PowerPoint document and many more I.T based through collaborative learning activities.

#### 4.5 RESEARCH METHODS

An exploratory case study was chosen as the research method in this study and this informed the data collection and preparation techniques used in developing this learning experience (Yin, 2002). (Creswell, 2008) explains exploratory case studies as examining what people do, and how they use artefacts within a particular setting. (Yin, 2002) describes how exploratory case studies can delineate the factors associated with how and why particular phenomena occur and collect data and contextualize the position of research within a process. Exploratory case studies can therefore examine the "how" or "why", thus enabling an understanding of complex social phenomena (Yin, 1994). An examination of how why these participants needed to improve their oral Irish skills coupled with how they interacted with both the blogs and each other through collaborative learning activities such as pair and group work therefore seemed to appropriately match the research method of an exploratory case study.

This study was comprised of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. A more in-depth examination of the research question providing a greater understanding of the participants' interaction with the artefact was facilitated through the use of Quantitative data collection methods. Qualitative data has been recognised in the literature to form an integral part of educational research and thus was an essential part of data collection in this study. According to (Creswell, 2008) qualitative data provides a clearer understanding of the participants' views of the experience compared with quantitative data alone making qualitative data an invaluable tool in educational research (Creswell, 2011).

Two clear reasons highlighting the importance of using exploratory case study methodology in this study could be identified from the outset. First, it would have proven too difficult to create the technology for a larger sample of students within the time limitations of this study. Second, the boundary between the reason for motivation of students to learn a second language (the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination) and the context in which they learn (the classroom) can be difficult to decipher. It was thought that an exploratory case study would aid a more in-depth understanding

of the participants' level of motivation and perceived Irish language oral production ability than a broader, less detailed approach.

Single case studies have been described as being flawed or limited in their inability to generalise conclusions by some authors. (Zainal, 2007) suggests that triangulating the study through using a selection of instruments to collect data can assist in overcoming the inherent weaknesses of an exploratory case study.

#### 4.6 DATA COLLECTION

Multiple sources were used for the collection of data in this study (Table 4). This gives validity to the study's findings as stated by (Yin, 2003).

**TABLE 4: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

<b>Data Collection Tools</b>	<b>Data Sets</b>
Pre & Post Motivation Questionnaire	Completed Questionnaires
Pre & Post Oral Irish ability Questionnaire	Completed Questionnaires
Observations	Data collected from in class observation
Web-text Chats & Voice-thread conversations	Data on individual users
Wordpress.com Site Statistics	Wordpress.com Site Statistics
Semi-structured group interview	A Priori & Emergent coding & theming of semi-
Pre & Post Motivation Questionnaire	structured group interviews

#### 4.7 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The researcher collected all data necessary for the overall analysis of this learning experience. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected using a multiple source approach.

##### 4.7.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

Two Likert Scale questionnaires were administered to the students both before and after the learning experience. The objective of Likert scale questionnaires is to measure to what degree participants agree or disagree with a statement. It is not individual responses to particular statements that are of concern here, but rather attitude scores gathered from said questionnaires. Likert scale questionnaires have been shown to be a valuable tool within exploratory case studies and are often used in tandem with interviews as part of educational research (McNabb, 2013).

These questionnaires were anonymised and their function was to ascertain if the participants' perceived if their own motivation and confidence in their ability to prepare for the Leaving Certificate oral Irish examination had changed.

The first was used to ascertain what type of motivation the students held towards learning to speak Irish. The questionnaire, designed by (Guay et al., 2000) contained a scale which had been validated in five independent studies. The codification key explaining the motivation type being examined in each question is outlined in (Table 5). This questionnaire and scale build on previous studies which were unable to capture extrinsic motivation and amotivation, capturing all four theorized constructs of motivation: intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, external regulation, and amotivation (Guay et al., 2000). The scale has been shown to have construct validity as well as laboratory validity and is therefore deemed a valid method for determining the motivation of the student (Guay et al., 2000).

**TABLE 5: THE SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION SCALE CODIFICATION KEY**

<b>Motivation Type</b>	<b>Question Numbers</b>
Intrinsic Motivation	1, 5, 9, 13
Identified Regulation	2, 6, 10, 14
External Regulation	3, 7, 11, 15
Amotivation	4, 8, 12, 16

The second questionnaire was created to allow students to clarify their assessment of their ability to understand spoken Irish and express themselves orally through Irish and was designed specifically for this intervention.

#### 4.7.2 OBSERVATION

Creswell observational protocol was used (Creswell, 2008), to ensure that objective observation took place during this learning experience.

#### 4.7.3 ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITY ON THE "CLEACHTADH CAINTE" BLOG

Wordpress.com data collection tools and site statistics were used to conduct an analysis of participant activity on this blog. This analysis elicited information about participant participation with web-text and voice-thread conversations including how often participants visited the site, viewed content and posted responses.



#### 4.7.4 SEMI-STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEW

A Semi-structured focus group interview took place during the final lesson of this learning experience. Creswell (2008) recommends group interviews be used when *“the interaction among the interviewees will likely yield the best information and when the interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other”* (Creswell, 2008), thus illustrating the appropriateness of a group interview for these participants.

Two systems of coding the data were used. A Priori coding, in which a predetermined set of codes were elicited from the data (B. Johnson & Christensen, 2012), and emergent coding of codes established during data analysis (Stemler, 2001). An example of the coding can be seen in (Appendix 8: A Priori and Emergent coding and theming of semi-structured group interview).

#### 4.8 DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY

The results of the questionnaires and semi-structured group interview were analysed in as part of answering of the research question.

#### 4.9 THE LIKERT SCALE ORAL IRISH ABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire which can be seen in (*Appendix 1: Student Questionnaires*) was completed by participants both pre and post this learning experience and the data from each question analysed. The Likert scale of this questionnaire ranged from “excellent” to “I have no idea”. This Likert Scale was reversed in the last two questions, and ranged from “I have a serious problem with speaking” to “doing fine, just where I should be”. According to (McNabb, 2013) a reversal of the Likert scale for part of the questionnaire is seen an integral part of the success of such questionnaires in measuring attitudinal scores with exploratory case studies and educational research.

Participants also completed the situational motivation scale questionnaire (Guay et al., 2000), which can be seen in (*Appendix 1: Student Questionnaires*) which. This also used a Likert Scale both pre and post this learning experience, which was also analysed for attitudinal scores. The Likert scale in this questionnaire ranged from 1-7 with 1 meaning “corresponds not at all” and 7 meaning “corresponds exactly”. This questionnaire uses a codification key in which set questions are used to identify different types of motivation.

The use of Likert Scales enabled the researcher to more easily understand the most relevant changes in attitudes and the tendency towards one extreme or another in each questionnaire.

A statistical analysis of user interaction with the blogs was carried out using Wordpress.com site statistics. This data was then analysed.

Observation of participants' interaction both with each other and the artefact took place throughout the learning experience. This was of great importance when examined in relation to data from other data collection instruments.

#### 4.10 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

The audio recording of the semi-structured group interview was coded and then themed for information relevant to the research question, the detail of this analysis is shown in (*Appendix 8: A Priori and Emergent coding and theming of semi-structured group interview*). This group interview was structured around six key questions (*Appendix 7: Interview questions for semi-structured group interview*), which facilitated clear and easy analysis, coding and theming of participants responses during said interview. (Gibbs, 2008) advocates coding directly from audio recordings as it allows the researcher to focus on the bigger picture rather than fixate on minor and possibly irrelevant details. While this initially appeared to be the course of action due to time constraints and expedience, it became clear, during the analysis of said interview that transcription followed by coding and theming would yield a far more accurate analysis of this data. This interview was examined for A Priori and Emergent codes, from which themes linking directly to the research question were garnered (O'Dwyer, 2004).

The sample included nineteen students from a transition year Irish Class aged between 15 and 17 years of age. This experience took place over seven 45 minute class periods.

All participants were asked to complete two Likert Scale questionnaires to investigate their type of motivation to improving their oral Irish skills and their assessment of their ability to understand spoken Irish and express themselves orally through Irish prior to beginning the learning experience.

Each participant received an email in their school Gmail account inviting them to be an author on the <http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/> blog. To accept this invitation, participants had to create a Wordpress.com account, and were asked to do so using their school computer user name and school email address. This was done to create transparency in adherence with the school I.T. "Acceptable Use Policy" and to ensure a "safe space" was created in the blogs in which only invited authors could interact with the blogs in any way.

The lessons undertaken in this learning experience have been outlined in Table 2: Outline of Learning Experience Lessons.

#### 4.11 ETHICS

Ethical approval for the study was granted by Trinity College Dublin Ethics Board (See Appendix 2: Board of Management Information & Consent Form, Appendix 3: Parent Information & Consent Form and Appendix 4: Student Information and Consent Form).

Consent was sought and obtained from the Board of Management of St. Paul's Secondary School. As the students were under 18 years of age consent from a guardian or parent was required and in each case obtained before the intervention took place.

All participants were informed about the study and asked to sign consent forms if they were willing to participate. As the participants are the students of the researcher, the message that participation was voluntary and participants could leave the study at any time without penalty, was reinforced throughout this intervention.

#### 4.12 CONCLUSION

This exploratory case study and its associated research methodology allowed the research question to be answered and this answer analysis and triangulation of data from multiple sources. The pre and post questionnaires, observation and the semi-structured group interview, as well as an analysis of participant interaction with the artefact through the data provided by Wordpress.com site statistics provided both quantitative and qualitative data. The next chapter will present an analysis of this data and discuss the findings.

## 5 FINDINGS

### 5.1 ORAL IRISH ABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 5.1.1 PERCEPTION OF ORAL IRISH ABILITY

This questionnaire was made up of ten questions designed to elicit participants' perception of their oral Irish ability before (pre) and after (post) this learning experience. Bar charts were then created to compare results for each question. The charts for comparing the results of the pre and post questionnaires and a discussion of said results are shown below.

Figure 4 shows the results of how the students rated their abilities in Irish pre and post the learning intervention. Before the learning intervention the students rated their ability in Irish with a fairly even spread across 'bad', 'not very good' 'I know a bit' and 'good', which was slightly skewed towards the more negative end of the scale. Post the learning intervention there was a positive shift of opinion to the 'good' category. None of the students said they had 'no idea' or rated their ability as 'excellent' pre or post the intervention but the post results did show an increase in many participants in their oral Irish ability.

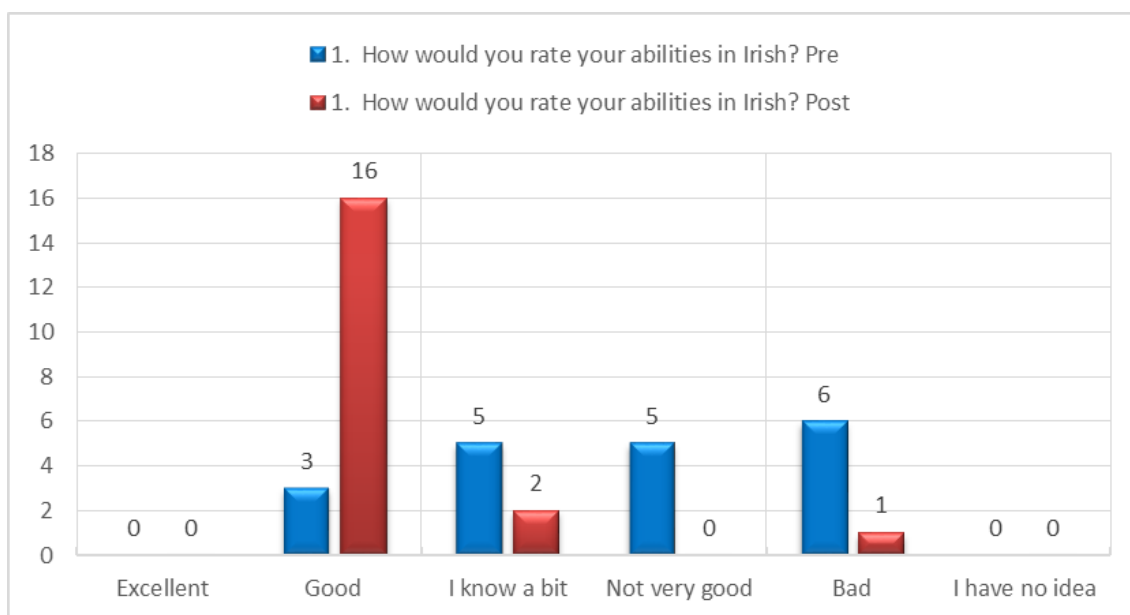
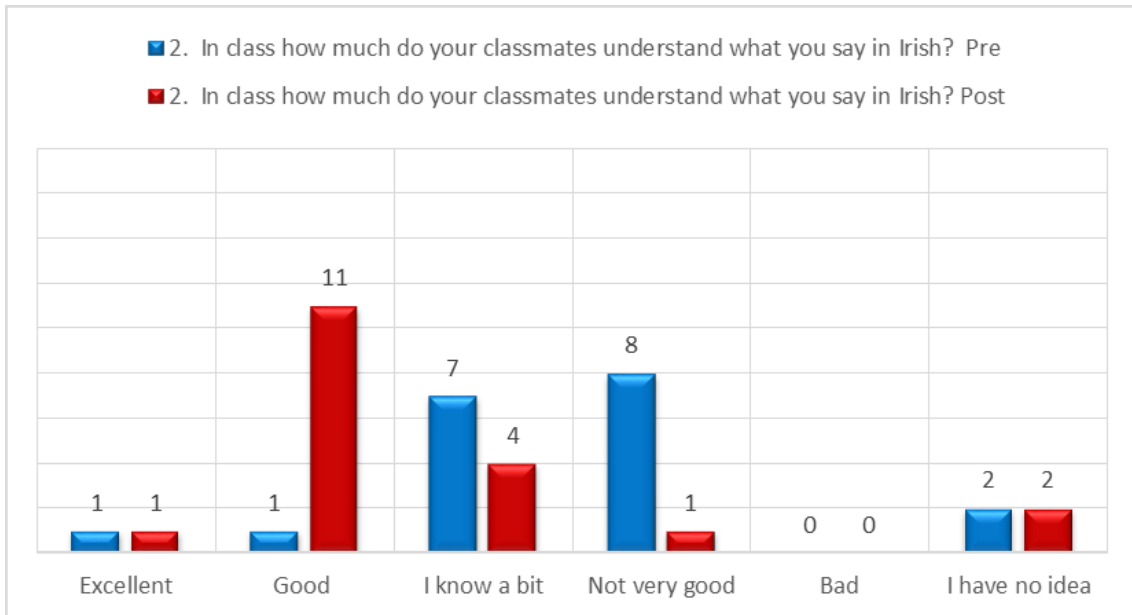


FIGURE 4: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 1 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES

Figure 5 shows the results for question 2, which investigated the ability of students' perception of their classmates to understand them when the students spoke in Irish. There was a shift from 'not very good' and 'I know a bit' to 'good' following the learning intervention. This indicates again a positive result of the learning experience on students' ability to communicate orally with their peers.

It should be noted though that two students believed they were still unable to be understood by their peers in any way following the learning intervention, hence they answered 'I have no idea'.



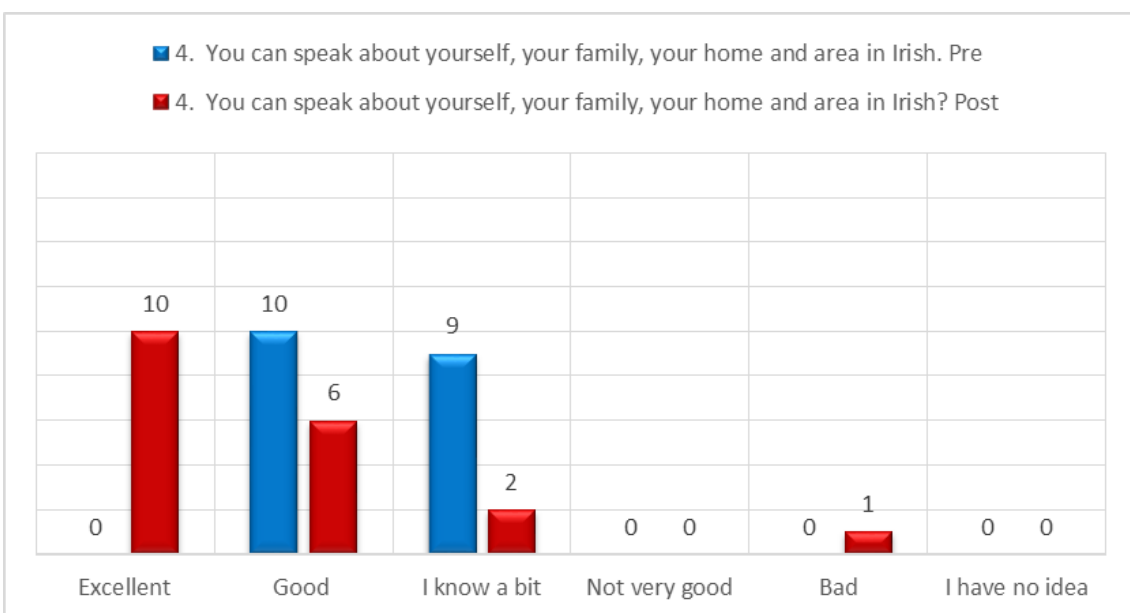
**FIGURE 5: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 2 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

Figure 6 shows the results of the how much students felt able to understand their classmates when they spoke Irish to them. There is a general shift in students' ability to understand following in the learning intervention; before the intervention 14 students rated their ability to understand their classmates as 'I know a bit' (meaning they were able to understand some, but felt their ability had not reached 'good') or was worse than this. However, following the intervention the majority (13) of students rated their ability to understand their peers as 'good' with three students believing their ability had become 'excellent'.



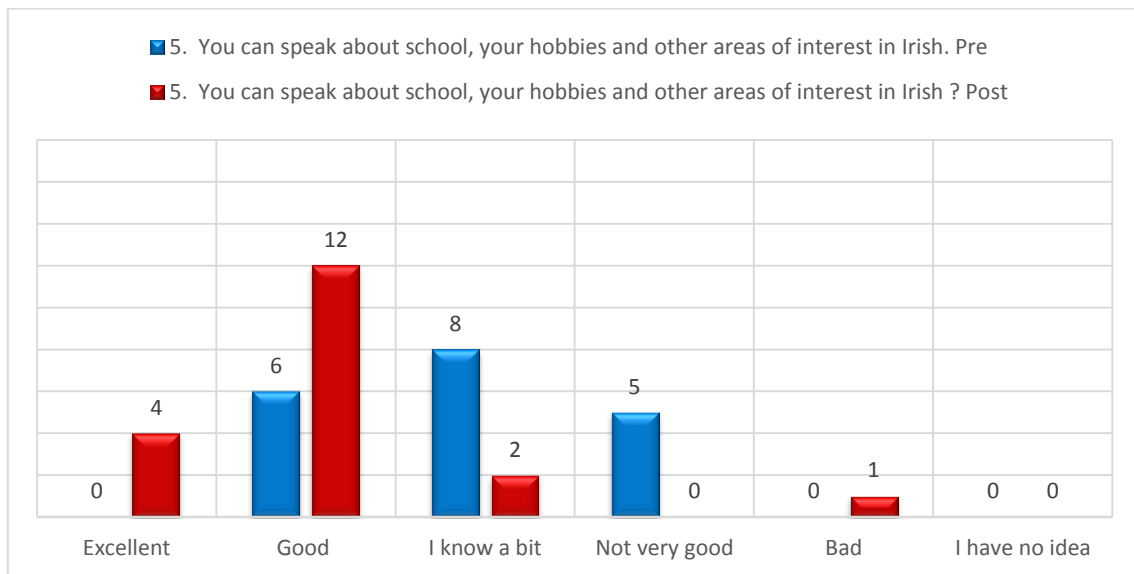
**FIGURE 6: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 3 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

Figure 7 shows the results of how well students believed they could speak about themselves, their family, their home and their area in Irish. Before the learning intervention, students were roughly split evenly between believing their ability was 'good', or that they 'knew a bit'. However, following the learning intervention, this has in the main shifted to 'excellent' or 'good' with only a few people saying they only knew 'a bit'. Despite this general positive shift, one student did rate their ability as 'bad' following the intervention, this is due to the realisation of the number of mistakes the student had previously been making, something which they acknowledged in the analysis of the semi-structured group interview found in 5.5.6.



**FIGURE 7: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 4 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

Figure 8 shows the results of asking participants if they can speak in Irish about their school, hobbies and others areas of interest in their lives. Generally speaking about these topics were perceived as more difficult than the more simple topics covered by Q4 (see Figure 7 above). However, the general trend of improvement post the learning intervention can be seen. Again one student rated themselves as ‘bad’ following the intervention and again this is due to the realisation of mistakes the student had previously been unaware of (something which this person acknowledged in the analysis of the semi-structured group interview found in section 5.5.6.).



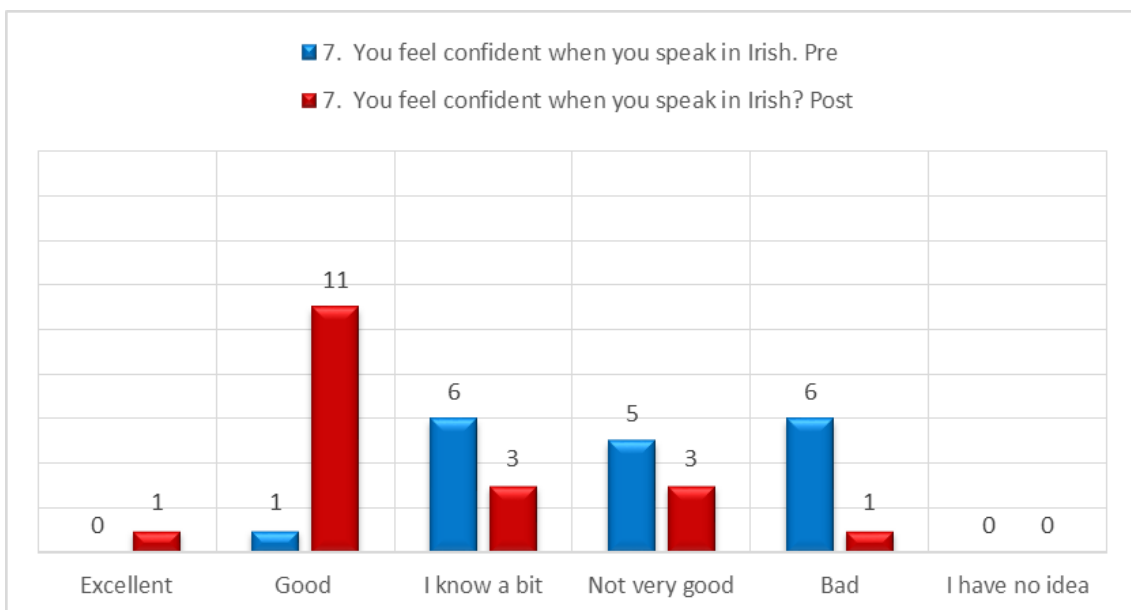
**FIGURE 8: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 5 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

Figure 9 shows the results of how well students thought they could express themselves when they didn't know all of the words they needed. Initially eight students would rate their ability as somewhat good (i.e. 'I know a bit'), six students felt their ability fell short of this mark and four felt it was better. After the learning intervention there is a shift: four students believe themselves to be 'excellent', four 'good', five believe they 'know a bit' and only one thinks they are 'not very good'. No one believes themselves to be 'bad'.



**FIGURE 9: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 6 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

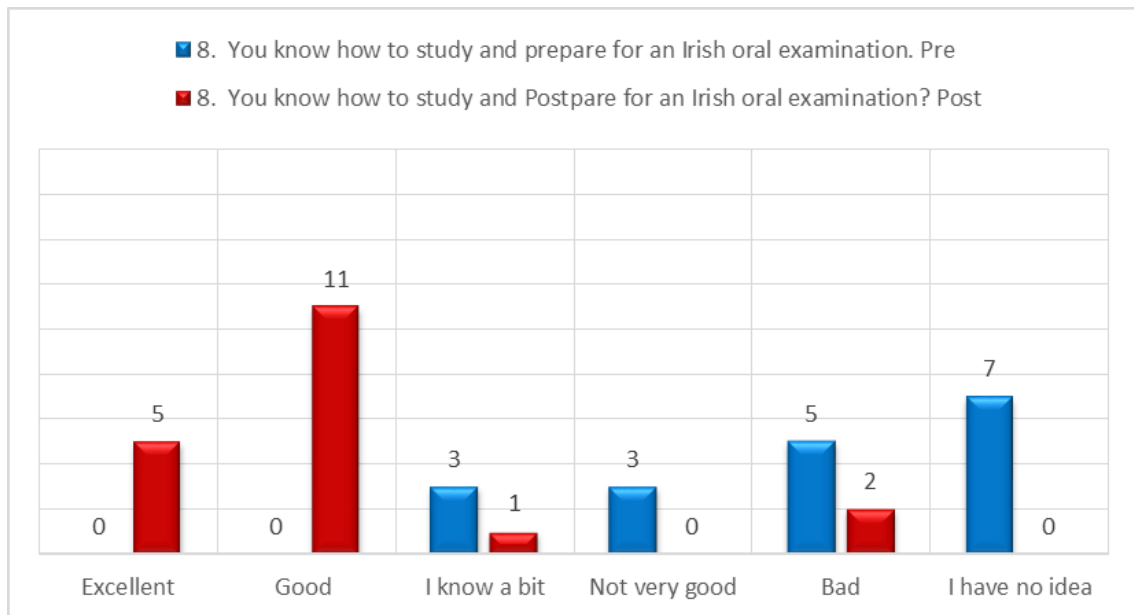
Figure 10 shows the results of how confident students felt pre and post the learning intervention in speaking Irish. Only one student ranked their confidence as ‘good’ and no one felt their confidence was ‘excellent’ prior to the learning intervention. Following the learning intervention one student believed themselves to have ‘excellent’ confidence and twelve felt their confidence was at a ‘good’ level.



**FIGURE 10: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 7 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**



Figure 11 shows the amount to which students felt able to study and prepare for an Irish oral examination. Before the learning outcome not a single student rated their ability to know how they should study for the examination as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ with the majority of students stating they had either ‘no idea’ or a ‘bad’ idea of how to prepare. Following the learning intervention the vast majority of students believed they had a ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ knowledge of how to study and prepare for the Irish oral examination.



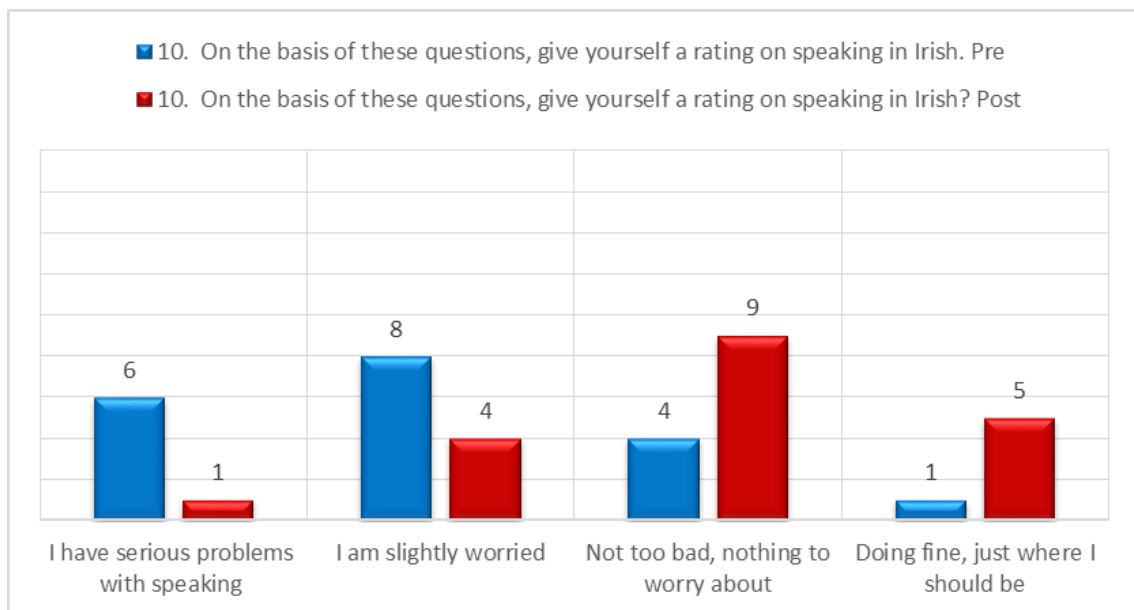
**FIGURE 11: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 8 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

Figure 12 shows the results of the question ‘has your speaking in Irish improved this year’? Before the learning intervention, students were roughly equally split between having ‘serious problems’ (7 people) being ‘slightly worried’ (6 people) and feeling ‘not too bad’ (6 people), with not a single student feeling their spoken Irish had improved to a level where they were ‘doing fine’. Post the learning intervention the majority of students felt they were ‘doing fine’ (8 students), 7 students had ‘nothing to worry about’ and only 4 were ‘slightly worried; none thought they had ‘serious problems’.



**FIGURE 12: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 9 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

Figure 13 shows the results of asking students to think about the previous questions and rate their ability to speak Irish. Before the learning intervention, the majority of the students felt they had ‘serious problems’ (6 people) or were ‘slightly worried’ (8 people) with a few feeling ‘not too bad’ (4 people) and a single student felt their spoken Irish had improved to a level where they were ‘doing fine’. Post the learning intervention the majority of students felt they were ‘not too bad’ (9 students) with 5 students saying they were ‘doing fine’, 4 students were still slightly worried while one continued to have ‘serious problems’ speaking Irish.



**FIGURE 13: RESULTS FOR QUESTION 10 FROM PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRES**

### 5.1.2 KEY FINDING

The results of each of these questions show a significant increase in the participants' confidence in their oral Irish ability and their ability to improve beyond this learning experience. It was noted however, that one participant did not seem to engage with this learning intervention or feel an increase in motivation or confidence and this can be seen throughout the results above.

## 5.2 THE SITUATIONAL MOTIVATION SCALE QUESTIONNAIRE

### 5.2.1 TYPES OF MOTIVATION

The bar charts below illustrate the differing levels of each motivation type participants perceived themselves to have with regard to improving their oral Irish ability and partaking in this learning experience in accordance with the results gathered from the pre and post Situational Motivation Scale questionnaires.

In Figure 14, the four scores for each question pertaining to intrinsic motivation have been averaged. When the average was equal to 1 the student strongly disagreed with the questions, therefore meaning they were not intrinsic motivated. When the average was 7 they agreed exactly, meaning they were intrinsically motivated.

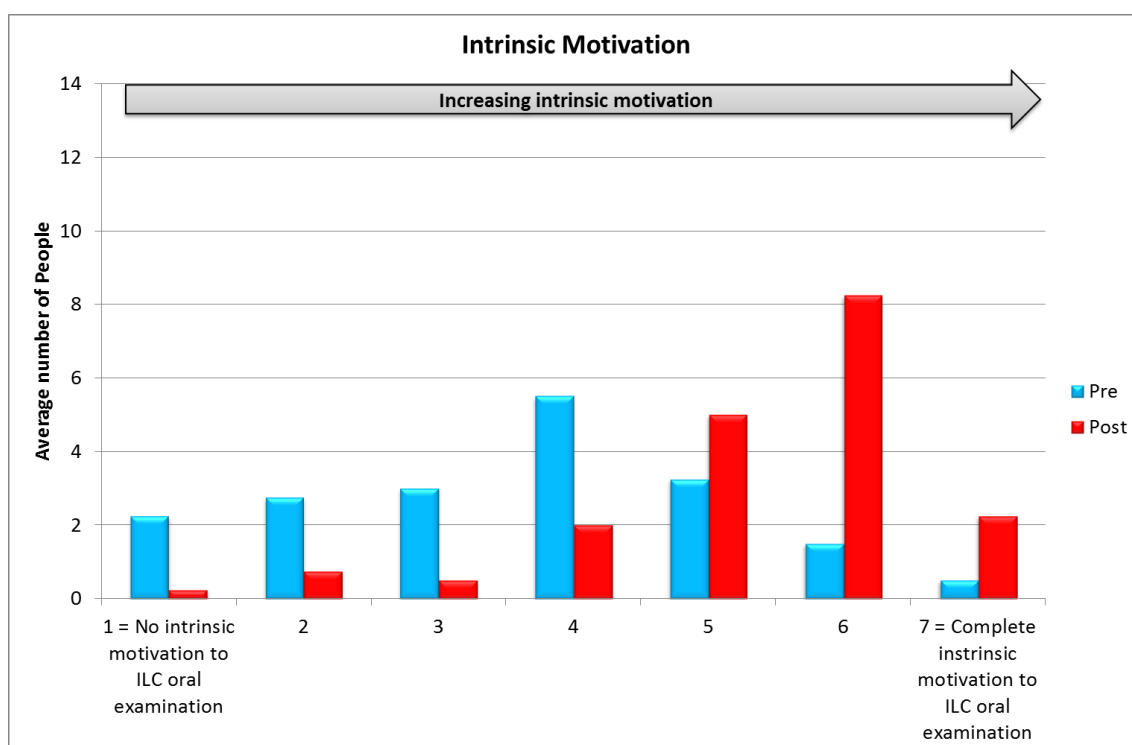


FIGURE 14: FIGURE SHOWING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION PRE AND POST.

In Figure 15 the four scores for each question pertaining to identified regulation have been averaged. When the average was equal to 1 the student strongly disagreed with the questions, therefore meaning they were not influenced by identified regulation. When the average was 7 they agreed exactly, meaning their type of motivation was identified regulation.

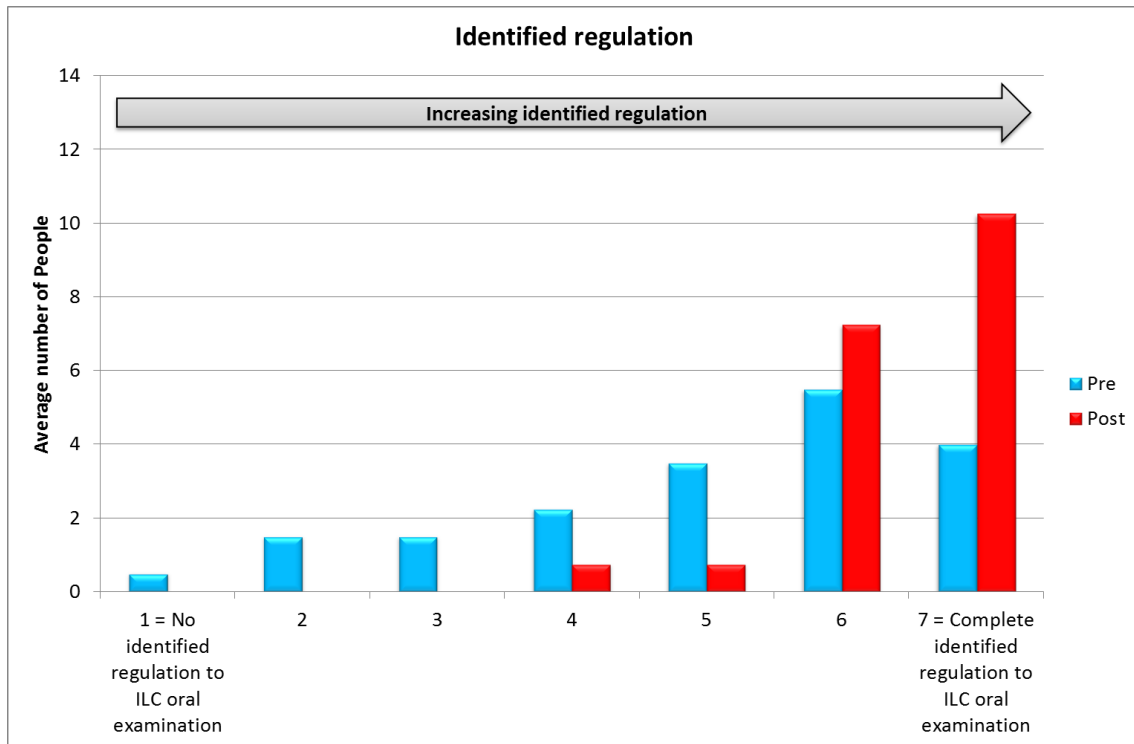


FIGURE 15: FIGURE SHOWING IDENTIFIED REGULATION PRE AND POST.

In Figure 16 the four scores for each question pertaining to external regulation have been averaged. When the average was equal to 1 the student strongly disagreed with the questions, therefore meaning they were not influenced by external regulation. When the average was 7 they agreed exactly, meaning they were externally regulated.

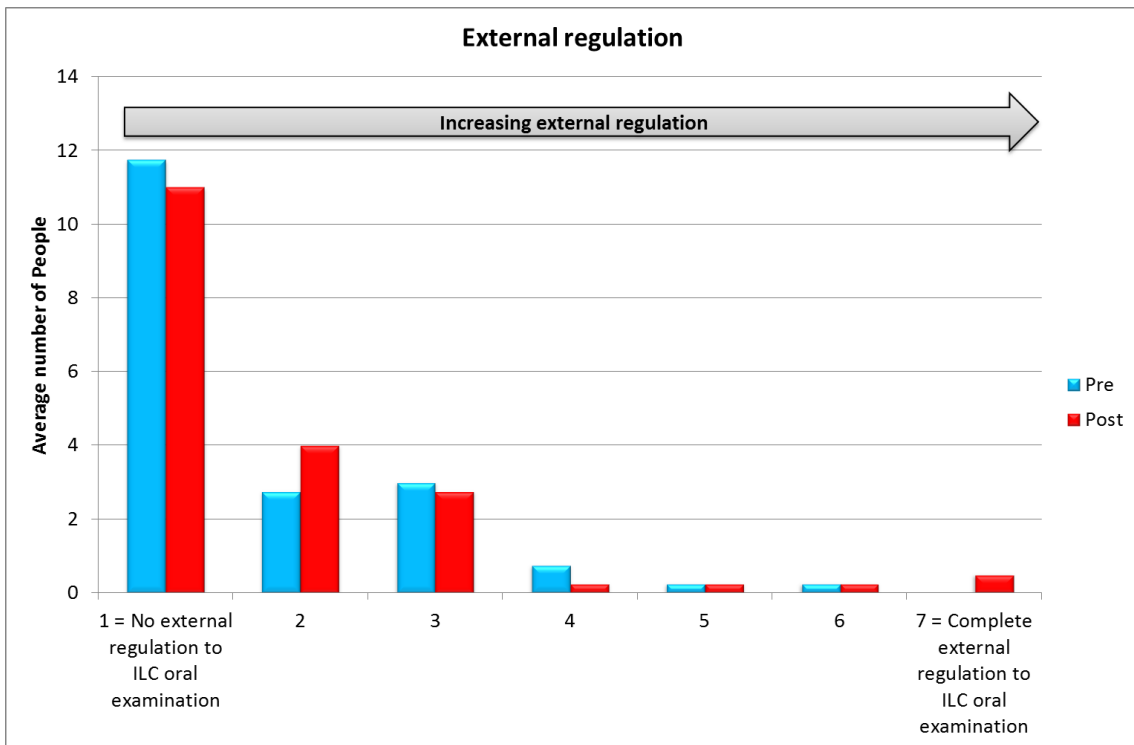


FIGURE 16: FIGURE SHOWING EXTERNAL REGULATION PRE AND POST

In Figure 17 the four scores for each question pertaining to amotivation have been averaged. When the average was equal to 1 the student strongly disagreed with the questions, therefore meaning they were not amotivated. When the average was 7 they agreed exactly, meaning they were amotivated.

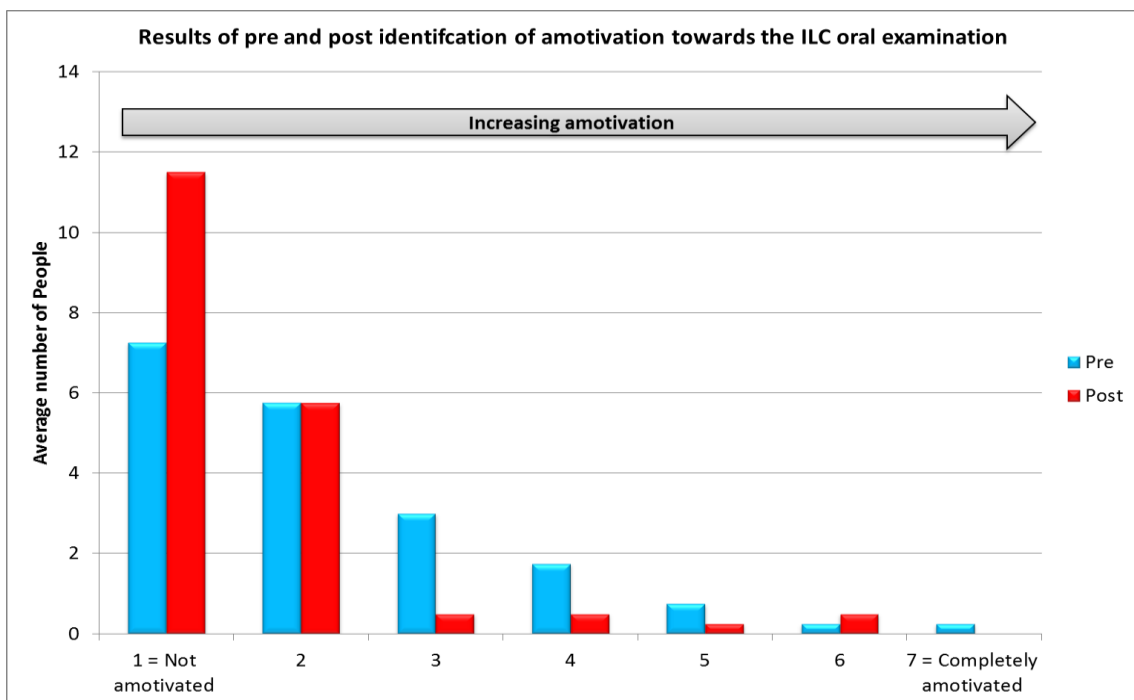


FIGURE 17: FIGURE SHOWING AMOTIVATION PRE AND POST.

### 5.2.2 KEY FINDING

These graphs illustrate an increase in levels of intrinsic motivation and identified regulation (extrinsic motivation) post this learning intervention. The number of participants who strongly disagreed with having external regulation showed a dramatic decrease between the pre and post questionnaires. The data gathered from the motivation questionnaires filled in prior to partaking in this intervention showed these participants did not identify with being amotivated and this significantly increased after this learning intervention. The artefact and pedagogies used in this learning intervention enabled these participants to see how to be successful, thus increasing their levels of intrinsic motivation and further increasing their disagreement with amotivation in preparing for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination.

### 5.3 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BLOGS

#### 5.3.1 USE OF SUPPORTIVE NOTES ([HTTP://GAELCHAT.WORDPRESS.COM/](http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/))

As can be seen from Figure 18, the Gaelchat blog was used throughout the week: the use of these supportive notes by participants increased steadily throughout the learning experience as participants became increasingly comfortable with the technology.

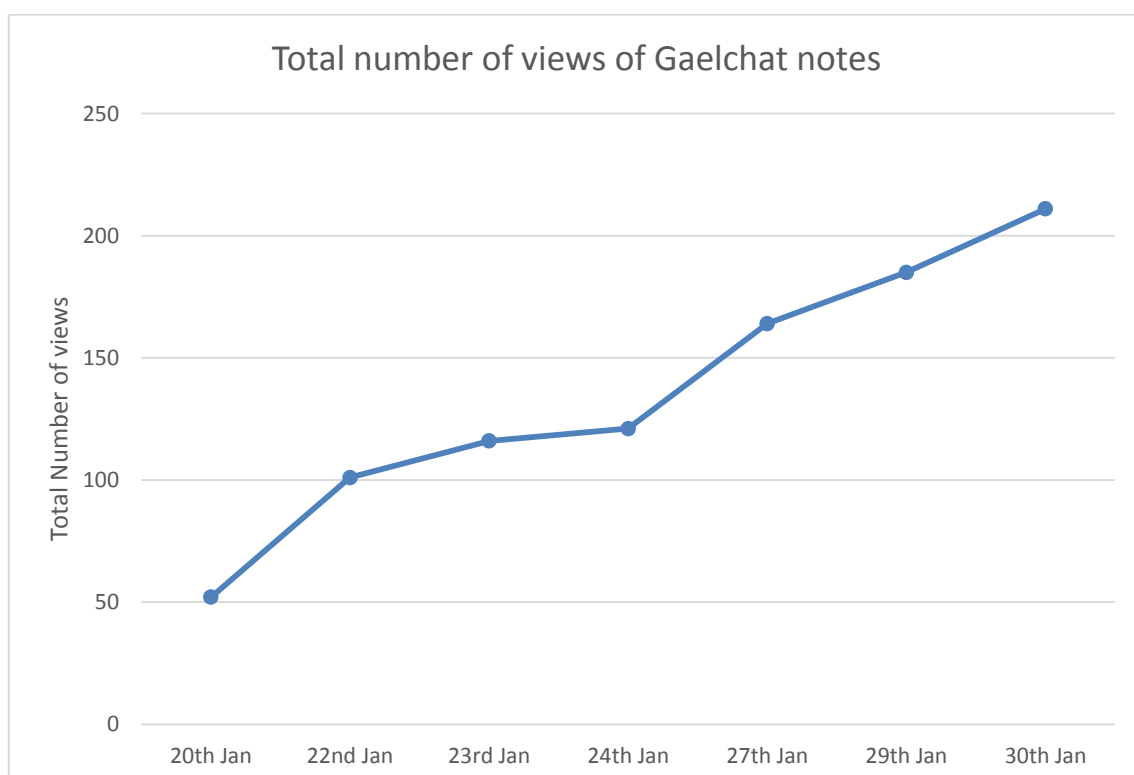


FIGURE 18: THE NUMBER OF TIME THE NOTES WERE VIEWED EACH DAY

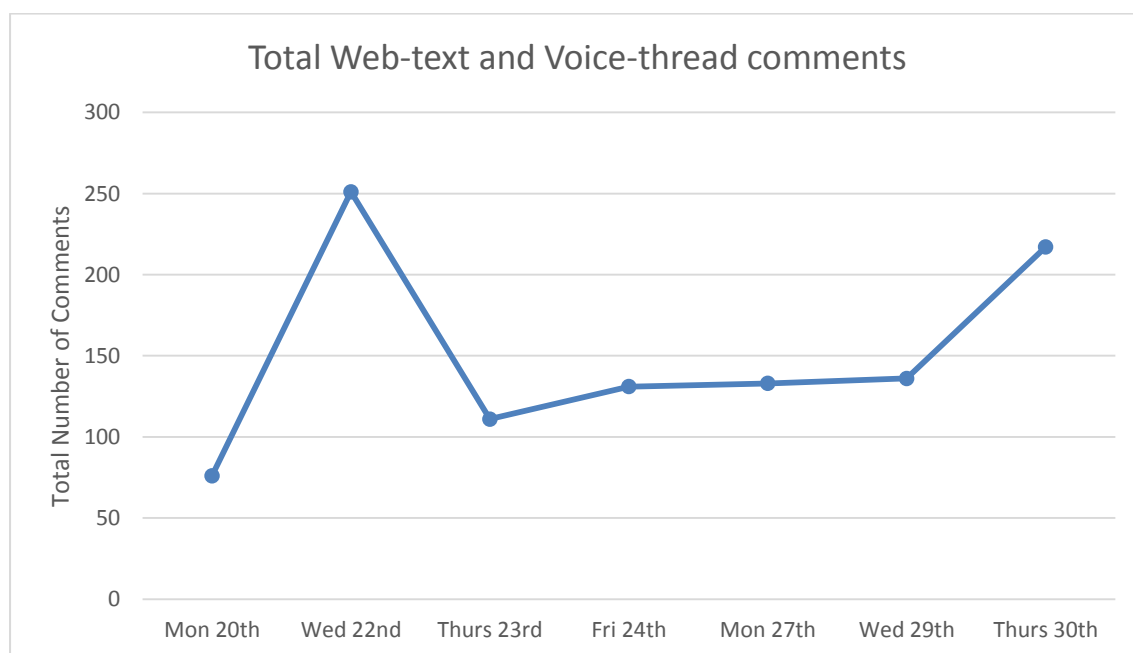
### 5.3.2 KEY FINDING

The notes were most often consulted in the final lesson. Participants took part in a collaborative reflective exercise in which they needed to correct a pre-typed chat prepared by the researcher and incorporating the most common mistakes made during the other lessons.

### 5.3.3 WEB-TEXT AND VOICE-THREAD COMMENTS

([HTTP://CLEACHTADHCAINTE.WORDPRESS.COM/](http://cleachtadhcainte.wordpress.com/))

Figure 19 shows that at least 90 comments per day were made on the Cleachtadh Cainte blog during this learning experience.



**FIGURE 19: TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANT COMMENTS EACH DAY**

There was a difference in the number of comments written by each participant each day in the web-text chats, which can be seen in Table 6. The productivity of each participant varied greatly and a notable dip can be seen in Figure 19 when voice-thread conversations were incorporated into the lessons. As participants became more familiar with the technology, an increase in productivity can be seen again.

**TABLE 6: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANT COMMENTS PER DAY**

	Mon 20th	Wed 22nd	Thurs 23rd	Fri 24th	Mon 27th	Wed 29th	Thurs 30th	Total
Student 1	4	14	3	-	-	-	12	33
Student 2	9	24	6	-	2	2	12	55
Student 3	7	16	5	-	-	-	10	39
Student 4	-	-	-	-	3	4	12	19
Student 5	11	29	11	-	23	8	14	96
Student 6	9	29	17	-	24	16	-	95
Student 7	3	-	3	-	6	-	11	23
Student 8	-	8	12	-	8	33	15	78
Student 9	-	-	3	10	-	2	13	28
Student 10	1	20	7	6	6	13	13	66
Student 11	1	22	12	-	17	21	13	86
Student 12	9	8	-	9	2	1	11	40
Student 13	5	16	8	4	5	15	12	65
Student 14	14	23	8	-	-	4	13	62
Student 15	-	13	-	17	17	-	9	56
Student 16	2	12	9	-	2	5	12	42
Student 17	-	-	-	-	1	9	13	23
Student 18	1	7	-	18	14	2	10	52
Student 19	-	10	7	-	3	1	12	33
<b>Total Comments</b>	76	251	111	64	133	136	217	991
<b>Average comments per participant (adjusted for absentees)</b>	5.85	16.73	7.93	9.14	8.87	90.7	12.06	52.16
<b>Average comments per participant</b>	5.85	16.73	7.93	10.77	8.87	9.07	12.06	52.16



### 5.3.4 BLOG ACTIVITY OUTSIDE CLASS TIME

Participants were not required to conduct web-text or voice-thread conversations outside class time as part of this learning intervention. However when participants found that they were unable to complete conversations within 40 minutes allotted to a lesson, they chose to complete these tasks outside class time. Web-text and voice-thread conversations were continued on mobile devices personal computers and laptops from participants' homes and supportive database of notes provided on the <http://gaelchat.wordpress.com/> blog continued to be used to support these conversations. This was observed in "real-time" on the researcher's handheld device through the Wordpress.com App and through Wordpress.com site statistics.

Both the design of the artefacts used and the social constructivist pedagogies used in this learning intervention encourage learner autonomy and this was highlighted by the amount of activity that occurred between participants outside class time. Figure 20 shows a comparison of the in-class and outside class time activity that occurred. A total number of 268 comments were made outside class time, thus further reinforcing the ability of ALMS to promote learner autonomy and independence.

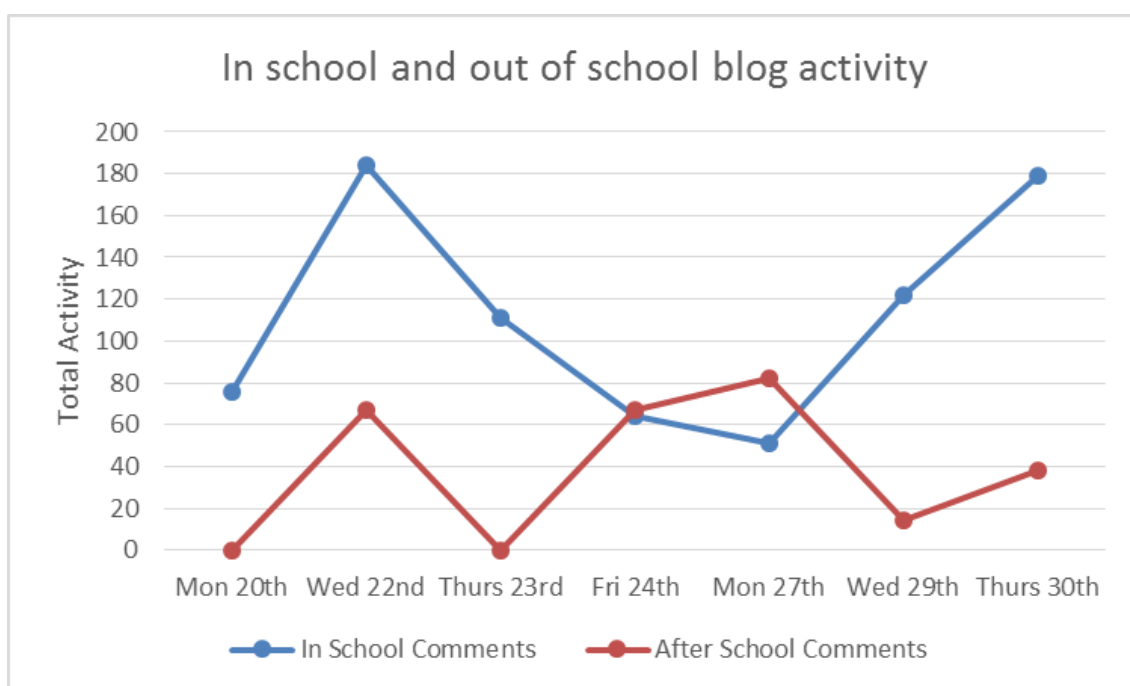


FIGURE 20: TOTAL COMMENTS MADE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

### 5.3.5 KEY FINDING

The differing total number of comments for participants seen in Figure 20 above can be linked to two factors. Firstly, learners with more experience with technology and computers were more competent with the technology, and could find relevant notes and reply in web-text chats more

quickly. This said, a dip in the number of comments can be seen on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> of January when participants were asked to begin incorporating voice-thread comments into their conversations. As participants' confidence grew, the number of comments increased again. Secondly, learners with less language knowledge in Irish needed longer to find the relevant notes and prepare answers before replying to learner ability in Irish. Any day learners found themselves unable to complete conversations in class, an increase in productivity and comments' being made outside class time was noted. As learners became more competent, they were better able to complete tasks within the allotted 40 minutes and out of class activity decreased. The increase in intrinsic motivation shown in the results from the pre and post questionnaires is further reinforced by the amount of activity that occurred on the blogs outside class time and shows that this ALMS artefact can increase learner motivation independence and autonomy in preparing for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination.

#### 5.4 OBSERVATION

While a lack of experience in the technology initially acted as a barrier for some participants at the very beginning of this learning experience, all participants showed a very high level of positive engagement from the offset. Participants quickly spotted that using the back and forth function of the link between the two blogs as a hindrance to using the notes while engaging in web-text chatting and voice-thread conversations and so created a solution. Opening two separate windows with one blog beside the other ensured notes could be correctly copied, thus improving the standard of their communication. This solution was quickly adopted by all. Many participants opened a third window in which they typed out the notes most relevant to themselves, thus creating a personal script to support their web-text and voice-thread conversations. A number of participants also chose to structure their conversations by inserting topic related questions and then adding their answers as replies to each individual question. It was also observed that participants readily self-reflect and corrected their work, and sought peer cooperation, assistance and advice through this learning experience.

#### 5.5 SEMI-STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEW

Subsequent to this learning experience, a semi-structured group interview was undertaken with the participants as part of answering the research question. This interview focused on six key questions:

1. Has using this technology improved your motivation?
2. Has this improved your confidence?
3. What do you think about integrating this technology into Irish classes?
4. Did you feel more or less in control of how you were learning?

5. How likely are you to continue using this?
6. Are you better than you were?

These questions, which thematically subdivided the semi-formal recorded group interview, were predetermined as recommended by (B. Johnson & Christensen, 2012). These a-priori codes were selected upon reflection on the overall learning experience and prior to examining the interview transcript (O'Dwyer, 2004). While the first five questions are reflective of the original research question and sub-questions addressed in the literature review and design chapters, the final question asking if participants deemed their Irish oral ability to have improved during the analysis of the post questionnaires and web-text chats and voice-thread conversations (Stemler, 2001).

#### 5.5.1 HAS USING THIS TECHNOLOGY IMPROVED YOUR MOTIVATION?

Participants expressed improved motivation throughout this interview. References to motivation were made time and again as the group discussed all six of the questions underpinning this group discussion. Statements such as *“we actually wanted to do this homework”, “we felt motivated”, “we wanted to learn”* and *“it would help our results”* were further explained when participants linked their increased motivation with the importance of this learning experience being learner centred rather than teacher centred.

*“In class when you don’t understand something and you just wait for the teacher to answer, and you don’t understand, you could find out yourself. I liked that”.*

#### 5.5.2 HAS THIS IMPROVED YOUR CONFIDENCE?

The importance of this being a learner centred learning experience was also linked to participants strongly voicing an increase in their confidence in their ability both in their own oral Irish communicative ability and their ability to further improve. This increase in confidence was singularly linked to the major traits of ALMS and asynchronous conversations which cause learners less stress than real-time conversations in SLMS through allowing learners work at their own pace and prepare answers before replying (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012).

*“I wouldn’t pick talking in class ‘cos it actually goes out of your head five minutes later.”*

*“You’re scared to talk in class.”*

*“When they’re asking you right there on the spot, you have to answer them straight away. But when you’re on the computer, you can think about what they said and record it.”*

*“We got to speak, but not in-front of everyone so you weren’t embarrassed.”*

*“I think it’s good like for kids that are shy.”*

A further essential element of ALMS is and asynchronous conversations, is their ability to lower learner anxiety through allowing learners control the pace of their learning and responses within conversations. No anxiety was observed by the researcher in participants during any part of this intervention. Furthermore, participants expressed the anxiety they feel during, what they described as ‘usual’ in-class spoken activities and their appreciation for this artefacts provision of an anxiety free learning environment.

*“You’re scared to talk in class.” “Yea, ‘cos everybody’s staring at you and you’re trying to figure out the answer in your head.”*

*“When they’re asking you right there on the spot, you have to answer them straight away. But when you’re on the computer, you can think about what they said and record it.” “You can listen back over your answer to make sure it’s right.”*

### 5.5.3 WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT INTEGRATING THIS TECHNOLOGY INTO IRISH CLASSES?

During this group interview, participants unanimously expressed their enthusiasm for integrating this technology into their oral Irish classes. While recognising that there were some teething issues in getting all participants signed up to both the WordPress blogs and Soundcloud, the artefact itself was declared to be very user friendly, far more so than the Irish language textbooks these participants had been using over many years.

*“It would be hard for people who aren’t good with technology, but they would get used to it.”*

*“You didn’t have to flick through the book, you just clicked on the notes on the computer.”*

*“It was much easier use than I thought it would be.”*

*“It was easy to find what you wanted and easy to find out what everything meant.”*

*“It was easy to slot your answers into the chats as well.”*

Participants also valued the ‘safe space’ created through using Wordpress security features. Each participant was invited by the administrator to be an author on the blog, using the school Gmail system for identification and transparency. This ensured that only members of this cohort were able to reply or comment on any of the blog web-text or voice-thread threads.

*“You were making sure no one said anything rude.”*

*“Making sure it was only our class.”*

*“I liked that it was all protected .”*

#### 5.5.4 DID YOU FEEL MORE OR LESS IN CONTROL OF HOW YOU WERE LEARNING?

A fundamental element of both ALMS and social constructivist pedagogies is the control given to the learner of their own learning. This sense of control is essential in fostering an increase in confidence and motivation in said learners. The participants of this learning experience clearly expressed their enjoyment and appreciation towards feeling in control during this entire experience. The traditional Irish secondary school classroom was described by these participants as being teacher centred and one in which learners follow endless instructions.

*“We have nine classes a day and in the other eight classes we were being told what to do. You listen more to your friends than you do in class.”*

*“...’cos we were working with our friends that were helping us out instead of you telling us what to do.”*

The ability to control both when learning occurred and the pace at which it occurred was a key factor in the success of this learning experience. It facilitated an increase in motivation and confidence in these participants as well as a notable measure of pride in their work.

*“...we didn’t feel pressured and we could do it in our own time.”*

*“When you’re given then answer it just goes out of your head, but when you had to look for it you learned more.”*

*“You can listen back over your answer to make sure it’s right.” “And if it’s not you can fix it.”*

*“You were doing it all yourself. You were finding the information and getting the right answers with a teacher in class helping you. So it was all you own.”*

#### 5.5.5 HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO CONTINUE USING THIS?

This interview showed very clearly that these participants do not like using ICT as part of learning. They see it as an inconvenience and a hindrance. They further explained that they believe ICT can make learning more stressful and they do not believe it makes them more successful. This group of participants held a very negative attitude towards IT in the classroom and ICT based learning activities.

*“I was worried about taking part at the start”...*

*“At the start I was very negative about the whole thing and it took me a while to get into the technology.”*

*“Yea, I don’t like technology, but once you got signed up to the whole thing, then it was great..”*

The participants unanimously voiced their desire to continue using such technology in their preparation for the Leaving Certificate Irish language oral examination both through in-class activities and at home. They explained that they were confident that the artefact provided them with a way of improving their oral Irish ability and therefore their grades. They again reiterated their increased motivation and confidence and also explained that that the divergence from what they expressed as traditional Irish language classroom text-book based activities was a welcome change for the better.

*“I liked everything ‘cos it was different. Since junior infants we’ve been doing the same thing in every class. We just did every out of the book. It was good to do something different.”*

The ease of access to the notes and the idea that these notes could not be misplaced or lost were also seen as valid and valuable advantages.

*“So instead of writing all our homework we could record it. That would be good... Copies get lost.”*

#### 5.5.6 ARE YOU BETTER THAN YOU WERE?

This question was following an examination of the data derived from the post motivational and Irish ability questionnaires and the blog activity. As the Irish language teacher of this cohort I could see a clear improvement between the very first “chats” and the last activity in which participants corrected the “Comhrá Lochtach”. This improvement featured very strongly in the semi-formal group interview. Participants commented many times on their improved understanding of questions asked in this examination, common answers, pronunciation and their ability to reflect and self-correct.

*“I liked that I could pronounce the words better, cos when we were working we were telling each other how to pronounce the words right.”*

*“And then if you get it wrong they can say it to you.” “They’ll give you feedback.”*

*“When you listen to your own recordings you hear your mistakes.”*

Improving the oral Irish ability of these participants was never the aim of this learning experience and would not have seemed possible using textbook based in-class spoken activities.

*“In class, you’re just reading off notes, but in this you had to know what you were saying.”*

Self-reflection and correction, collaboration and peer assessment and feedback, provided through the use of ALMS (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012) and the use of social constructivist pedagogies (Vygotsky, 1978) such as cooperative learning (D.W. Johnson & Johnson, 1990) facilitated this significant and noticeable improvement in oral Irish ability seen by both the participants and the researcher.

*“We decided who we would work with ourselves.”*

*“Because we saw we were doing so much wrong in every sentence.”*

*“At the end of the week we could see how bad the stuff at the start was.” “You ended up thinking why was I getting that wrong? Why was I making that mistake?”*

*“It was the first time I actually knew what I was saying.” “I could see it and hear it, so I know what to say.”*

#### 5.5.7 ARCS MOTIVATIONAL MODEL

The importance of the presence of each of the four key elements comprising ARCS Motivational Model for instructional design (J. Keller, 2010) in this artefact and learning experience could be identified through participants’ answers in this interview. This model underpinned the design of both this artefact and learning experience. The elements of “Attention”, “Relevance”, “Confidence” and “Satisfaction” permeated through the discussions of each interview question, illustrating the success of founding this entire intervention upon this design model.

#### 5.5.8 KEY FINDING

This semi-formal group interview clearly expressed the participants understanding of the aim of the intervention. It further highlights the participants’ enjoyment of this intervention, which was based solely on the success of this learning experience. This group of participants clearly described their general dislike for ICT based class activities. Yet as they could readily identify the benefits of this learning experience they were ready to continue using this artefact.

Increased learner confidence and motivation in preparing for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination through asynchronous web-text and voice-thread conversations occurring with social constructivist and collaborative activities are clearly shown to have occurred in this intervention

through the a-priori coding and subsequent theming of data garnered from the recording and transcription of this semi-formal group interview.

## 5.6 UNEXPECTED RESULTS

The level of improvement in each participants oral Irish ability with such a short time frame was very unexpected by both the researcher and the participants themselves. This highlighted the need for such resources within the teaching of this language to improve both learners attitude towards the Leaving Certificate examination they must sit and the language itself. The fact that participants readily and willingly used the blogs at home shows further evidence of this ALMS promoting learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

## 5.7 SUMMARY

The triangulation of data collected from the questionnaires, Wordpress.com site statistics, observation and the coding and theming of the semi-formal group interview clarifies that ALMS with a supportive database of notes within a social constructivist learning experience can facilitate an increase in motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students preparing for their Irish oral examination.



## 6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to answer the research question: Can Asynchronous Learning Management Systems facilitate an increase in motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination? As part of answering this question, this study also sought answers to the following sub questions.

- Will participants find this ALMS artefact to be more accessible and more beneficial to them than previously used methods in assisting them improve their oral Irish language skills?
- Will participants see this ALMS artefact as providing them with the ability to improve their oral Irish language skills for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination?
- Will this learning experience increase participants confidence and motivation and change the type of motivation they have towards preparing for the Leaving Certificate oral Irish language examination.
- Will using this ALMS artefact in conjunction with social constructivist pedagogies cause these participants to feel more in-control of their learning and preparation for the Leaving Certificate Irish language oral examination.

This research question and its subsequent sub questions were answered through the investigation of an exploratory case study.

### 6.1 ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

The participants of this learning intervention expressed themselves as having little experience in preparing for an oral examination in the Irish language prior to this intervention. While the pre questionnaires highlighted a lack of confidence in their communicative ability in the Irish language, they also illustrated that these participants were moderately motivated to prepare for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination. Their level of motivated being more extrinsic, (identified regulation) (Guay et al., 2000) than intrinsic.

The participants of this study also expressed in class a clear dislike for using ICT as part of study and preparation for examinations during this learning intervention. While maintaining this clearly negative attitude towards ICT based in-class activities, said participants repeatedly articulated that they would happily continue using this ALMS as part of their preparations for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination. The ease of use and user-friendly design was also mentioned numerous times. Every features of ARCS Motivational Model of Instructional Design outlined in Table 1 were discussed by the participants during said interview.

## 6.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The semi structured group interview clearly showed that participants found this ALMS artefact to be more accessible and beneficial in improving their oral Irish ability and preparing for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination than previously used methods. They commented on the ease of access to information and the advantages of accessibility to the ALMS artefact both within the classroom and outside school. They pointed out the benefits of communication and collaboration with their peers, peer-correction, self-correction and self-reflection. The autonomy and independence they experienced while using this ALMS was another positive feature which they expressed as leading to a perceived increase in confidence in their ability to prepare for the aforementioned examination. The increase in confidence stated in the group interviews was also confirmed by the data derived from the post Irish ability questionnaires.

It is very clearly shown through a triangulation all the data gathered through this exploratory case study that these participants believe that continued use of this ALMS will certainly provide them with the ability to improve their oral Irish language skills for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination?

A comparison of the pre and post Irish ability questionnaires clearly highlights a significant increase in participants' confidence in their own communicative ability in Irish having partaken in this learning intervention and a clear increase in their confidence in their ability to prepare for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination. A further, and unexpected finding within such limited time constraints, was a notable improvement in the accuracy and fluency of these participants in their Irish oral communicative ability. This was observed by both the researcher and the participants and noted within activity on the blog and during the semi structured group interview.

The pre and post questionnaires on motivation also showed a significant increase in the level motivation in these participants to prepare for said examination through using this ALMS.

ALMS by their very nature are said to allow learners feel more in-control of their learning as they do not need to immediately reply when communicating, but can do so when they feel they have fully prepared their response. ALMS tools such as the web-text chat and voice-thread conversation tools used in this learning intervention strongly promoted learner autonomy, control and independence. This was unmistakably expressed both through the semi structured group interviews and the significant amount of activity that took place on the blogs outside class time. Social constructivist and collaborative pedagogies used during this learning intervention further reinforced participants feeling of control over their own learning by allowing them chose who they worked with, when they did so and how they worked. Peer collaboration and assessment, self-assessment, self-correction

and self-reflection featured very strongly through in-class and out of class communication within this ALMS, thus further highlighting the importance of learner autonomy as a key feature of this artefact and learning intervention.

### 6.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

This learning intervention was conducted within very limited time constraints, thus preventing an examination of the long term effects of using such a tool in preparation for the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination.

### 6.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

A broader exploratory case study examining the advantages and disadvantages of such a learning intervention in numerous and varied second level schools using participants of varied age and with varied motivation, confidence and oral Irish ability would be an area of further study and interest to the researcher.

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## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 APPENDIX 1: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

#### Student Questionnaires

##### Motivation Questionnaire:

Directions: Please read each item carefully. Using the scale below, please circle the number that best describes the reason why you are taking part in this activity.

Answer each item according to the following scale and how much it corresponds in your opinion.

*Each question is optional. Feel free to omit a response to any question; however the researcher would be grateful if all questions are responded to.*

Why are you engaging in this activity?	1:Corresponds not at all	2:Corresponds very little	3:Corresponds a little	4:Corresponds moderately	5:Corresponds enough	6:Corresponds a lot	7:Corresponds exactly
1. Because I think this activity is interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Because I am doing it for my own good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Because I am supposed to do it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. There may be good reasons to do this activity, but personally I don't see any	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Because I think the activity is fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Because I think this activity is good for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Because it is something I have to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am doing this activity, but I'm not sure if it's worth it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Because this activity is fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. By personal decision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Student Questionnaires

Why are you engaging in this activity?	1:Corresponds not at all	2:Corresponds very little	3:Corresponds a little	4:Corresponds moderately	5:Corresponds enough	6:Corresponds a lot	7:Corresponds exactly
11. Because I don't have any choice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I don't know; I don't know what this activity brings me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Because I feel good when doing this activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Because I believe that this activity is important for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Because I feel I have to do it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I do this activity but I am not sure it is a good thing to pursue it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



## Student Questionnaires

### Oral Irish ability Questionnaire:

Directions: Please read each item carefully. Using the scale below, please circle the number that best describes the reason why you are taking part in this activity.

Answer each item according to the following scale and how much it corresponds in your opinion.

*Each question is optional. Feel free to omit a response to any question; however the researcher would be grateful if all questions are responded to.*

#### How do you feel about your spoken Irish

1. How would you rate your abilities in Irish	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
2. In class how much do your classmates understand what you say in Irish	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
3. In class how much do you understand your classmates when they speak Irish	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
4. You can speak about yourself, your family, your home and area in Irish	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
5. You can speak about school, your hobbies and other areas of interest in Irish	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
6. You find ways of expressing yourself orally when you don't know all the words	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
7. You feel confident when you speak in Irish	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
8. You know how to study and prepare for an Irish oral examination	Excellent	Good	I know a bit	Not very good	bad	I have no idea
9. Has your speaking in Irish improved this year	I have serious problems with speaking	I am slightly worried	Not too bad, nothing to worry about	Doing fine, just where I should be		
10. On the basis of these questions, give yourself a rating on speaking in Irish	I have serious problems with speaking	I am slightly worried	Not too bad, nothing to worry about	Doing fine, just where I should be		

## 7.2 APPENDIX 2: BOARD OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM

### Project

Can Asynchronous Learning Management Systems facilitate an increase motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

### Board of Management Information Sheet

Students are invited to take part in a session of computer based activities with the aim of developing students' oral Irish skills. This is part of a project led by Nina Bresnihan and conducted by Eleanor Moloney, student from MSc Technology and Learning in Trinity College Dublin, and teacher in St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills, D.12.

The aim of this research project is to oral Irish language production both within a class setting, and outside the classroom, thus providing a means for students to practice and improve their Irish language oral skills. Students will develop their Irish oral skills through asynchronous conversations based on relevant topics from the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination. These conversations will take place between students, in the form of web-text chats and voice-thread conversations, and will be supported by a database of searchable relevant notes. These oral Irish activities will be hosted on a Wordpress blog, and students will be facilitated in developing their Irish oral skills at their own pace, thus increasing their confidence both in their oral skills in Irish and their motivation to further improve. Student collaboration and cooperation will be an essential in order to successfully complete the proposed activities.

Prior and following the activities, an anonymised questionnaire will be asked to be completed in order to gather opinion from participants. During the activities, observation will take place and after the activities, all the participants will be asked to take part in a short interview with the researcher. The interview will be audio recorded and all audio recordings will be anonymised when transcribed. Student participation in this voluntary and they may choose to withdraw from such recordings without penalty if they wish.

All information that is collected by the researchers will be anonymised and stored for a period of ten years, in accordance with the Data Protection Act at Trinity College, Dublin. All data and recordings

will be available only to the researcher and the research supervisor and will not be rebroadcast in any other context for any larger groups. All data and recordings gathered will be destroyed after the period of time outlined in the Data Protection Act has passed. In the unlikely event that information about illegal activities should emerge during the study, the researchers will follow the school's child protection policy and inform the relevant authorities.

Your permission for the learning activities and research to take place is requested. All participants will also require their own and, parental consent to take part in the research. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw the institution from the project at any time for any reason without penalty and any information already recorded from the school will be removed.

If you have any questions before, during or after the project, please do not hesitate to contact Eleanor Moloney at: St Paul's Secondary School: [emoloney@stpaulsg.ie](mailto:emoloney@stpaulsg.ie) or Trinity College: [emolone@tcd.ie](mailto:emolone@tcd.ie)

## Project

Can Asynchronous Learning Management Systems facilitate an increase motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

## Board of Management Consent Sheet

The board has been provided with an information sheet which outlines the activities that students will take part in, how data will be collected and stored and how it can contact the research team.

The board understands that it may withdraw the institution from the project at any time should it wish to do so for any reason and without penalty.

Signature of chair of Board of Management ..... Date:.....

Name of institution.....

Signature of Project Leader (TCD) ..... Date:.....

**Please note:** If any student has history of epilepsy, and having read and signed the Student and Parent / Guardian information and consent forms, choose to partake in this study, they will proceed at my their risk

For any further questions please contact Eleanor Moloney [emolone@tcd.ie](mailto:emolone@tcd.ie)

## 7.3 APPENDIX 3: PARENT INFORMATION & CONSENT FORM

### Project

Can Asynchronous Learning Management Systems facilitate an increase motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

### Parent Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your daughter has the opportunity to take part in a research project, led by Nina Bresnihan and conducted by Eleanor Moloney, student from MSc Technology and Learning in Trinity College Dublin.

The aim of this research project is to oral Irish language production both within a class setting, and outside the classroom, thus providing a means for students to practice and improve their Irish language oral skills. Students will develop their Irish oral skills through asynchronous conversations based on relevant topics from the Leaving Certificate Irish oral examination. These conversations will take place between students, in the form of web-text chats and voice-thread conversations using the support a searchable database of relevant notes. These oral Irish activities will be hosted on a Wordpress blog, and students will be facilitated in developing their Irish oral skills at their own pace, thus increasing their confidence both in their oral skills in Irish and their motivation to further improve. Student collaboration and cooperation will be an essential in order to successfully complete the proposed activities.

Prior and following the activities, an anonymised questionnaire will be asked to be completed in order to gather opinion from participants. During the activities, observation will take place and after the activities, all the participants will be asked to take part in a short interview with the researcher. The interview will be audio recorded and all audio recordings will be anonymised when transcribed. Students participation in this voluntary and they may choose to withdraw from such recordings without penalty if they wish.

All information that is collected by the researchers will be anonymised and stored for a period of ten years, in accordance with the Data Protection Act at Trinity College, Dublin. All data and recordings will be available only to the researcher and the research supervisor and will not be rebroadcast in any other context for any larger groups. All data and recordings gathered will be destroyed after the period of time outlined in the Data Protection Act has passed. In the unlikely event that information

about illegal activities should emerge during the study, the researchers will follow the school's child protection policy and inform the relevant authorities.

St Paul's secondary School Board of Management will be given a similar Consent Form in order to give permission for the project described here to take place in its context. However, for the research part of the project, information about your child can only be recorded and used with your permission. This will include their actions recorded during the activity, web-text chat and voice-thread conversations, questionnaire and interview.

Participation in the research part of the project is voluntary and you may remove your child from the project at any time, for any reason, without penalty and any information already recorded about your child will not be used, or your child may elect to withdraw from this study.

If you have any questions before, during or after the project, please do not hesitate to contact Eleanor Moloney at St Paul's Secondary School: [emoloney@stpaulsg.ie](mailto:emoloney@stpaulsg.ie) or 01-4505682

# Project

Can scaffolded Asynchronous Learning Management Systems increase motivation and confidence of Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

## Parent Consent Form

I..... (name of parent/guardian) consent to  
..... (name of child) taking part in this research project.

I have been provided with an information letter which outlines the activities my child will take part in, how research data will be collected and stored and how I can contact the research team. I understand that I may withdraw my child from the research project at any time should I wish to do so for any reason and without penalty. Additionally, I am aware that my child's consent will also be required in order for them to take part in the study.

Data Protection: I agree to Trinity College, University of Dublin storing of any personal data relating to my child, which results from this project. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the research project as outlined to me.

Debriefing of participants and / or their guardians will be available during school hours, in St. Paul's Secondary School, Greenhills, D.12

Signature of parent/guardian ..... Date:.....

Signature of Project Leader (TCD):..... Date:.....

**Please note:** I understand that if I or anyone in my family has a history of epilepsy then I am proceeding at my own risk. For any further questions please contact Eleanor Moloney at St Paul's Secondary School (01-4505682)

## 7.4 APPENDIX 4: STUDENT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

### Project

Can Asynchronous Learning Management Systems facilitate an increase motivation and confidence in Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

### Student Information Sheet

You will be part of a computer activity with your classmates, in which you will be focusing on your oral Irish skills. You will be using a Wordpress blog for all of the Irish language activities in which you will partake as part of this project.

If you agree to participate in research about this activity, then while you do the activities the researcher will observe your group work. You will also complete a questionnaire about what you think about your own oral Irish skills, before and after this project. At the end of the activities you will take part in a short interview in a group with Eleanor Moloney which will be recorded with a voice recorder.

If you agree to participate, this information will be used in the research, stored at Trinity College and will be anonymised (all names will be removed so no one will know who said what). If the researchers find out about any illegal activities during the study they will have to tell the school authorities.

If you don't want to take part in the research project you don't have to. You can still take part in the activities but none of your information will be recorded and will not be used in the research. There is no problem if you choose to take part now but change your mind later, just tells Eleanor.



# Project

Can scaffolded Asynchronous Learning Management Systems increase motivation and confidence of weak ordinary level Leaving Certificate students in preparation for their Irish language oral examination?

## Student Consent Form

I .....agree to take part in this research project.

I have read, or had read to me, information about the project and know how information will be collected and stored. I understand that I can choose not to take part in the research at any time. Also, I know that my parents will be also given a consent form in order for me to take part in this study.

Data Protection: I agree to Trinity College, University of Dublin storing and using my information from this project.

Date:.....

Signature of Project Leader (TCD):.....

Date:.....

**Please note:** For any further questions please contact Eleanor Moloney at either: [emoloney@stpaulsg.ie](mailto:emoloney@stpaulsg.ie), or 01-4505682

## 7.5 APPENDIX 5: EMAIL OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM SCSS ETHICS COMMITTEE

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 **Tricia Fowler** <Tricia.Fowler@scss.tcd.ie> 19/12/2013 ☆  
to me, Research ▾

Hi Eleanor

Many thanks for this revision. You may now proceed with this study.

We wish you success in your research.

Kind Regards  
Tricia

Tricia Fowler  
Executive Officer – Research Unit  
School of Computer Science & Statistics  
O’Reilly Institute  
Trinity College  
Dublin 2

Tel: [+ 353 1 896 1445](tel:+35318961445)

**From:** Eleanor Moloney [mailto:[emolone@tcd.ie](mailto:emolone@tcd.ie)]  
**Sent:** 19 December 2013 14:29

## 7.6 APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEW



1. Has using this technology improved your motivation?
2. Has this improved your confidence?
3. What do you think about integrating this technology into Irish classes?
4. Did you feel more or less in control of how you were learning?
5. How likely are you to continue using this?
6. Are you better than you were?



STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEW

**Q1. Has using this technology improved your motivation?**

Teacher Motivation is the desire to work, would you agree. With regard to Irish and the oral Irish exam, did playing on the chat-room over the last two weeks make you want to work harder at it and do better at it?

EVERYONE – Yes

Teacher Why?

Student Cos it was fun.

Student It was colourful

Student In class when you don't understand something and you just wait for the teacher to answer, and you don't understand, you could find out yourself. I liked that.

Student You didn't have to flick through books, you just clicked on the notes on the computer.

Student We got to speak, but not in-front of everyone so you weren't embarrassed

Teacher Does anyone have anything else they would like to say? Do does anyone want to say something different to what has been said? It's ok to be negative, just say what you really think.

Students (SILENCE)

Teacher So we all agree with what has been said and felt more motivated?

EVERYONE YES

A Priori Coding Key

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Learner Autonomy / control
- Future Use / ease of use
- Improvement in oral Irish
- Social constructivism

ARCS -  
Attention

ARCS -  
Confidence

## Q2. Has this improved your confidence?

EVERYONE	YES	A Priori Coding Key
Teacher	Ok, why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivation</li> </ul>
Student	Just the recording, you can listen back, and the more you listen back to your mistakes, you can correct them yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confidence</li> <li>Learner Autonomy / control</li> <li>Future Use / ease of use</li> <li>Improvement in oral Irish</li> <li>Social constructivism</li> </ul>
Teacher	Cool, anyone else?	
Student	I kind 'a felt that, like the way we were mixed with different people with a better ability, I felt that I wasn't confident talking to them. I felt I didn't know as much Irish as them.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           ARCS – confidence &amp; Satisfaction         </div>
Teacher	So you didn't like when you paired with one of them? So you didn't like it when higher and ordinary level students mixed?	
EVERYONE	No	
Teacher	Great, thanks for saying that.	
Student	I liked that I could pronounce the words better, cos when we were working we were telling each other how to pronounce the words right.	
Teacher	So you liked that once you had posted a recording, someone else could listen?	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           ARCS – confidence &amp; Satisfaction         </div>
EVERYONE	Ye	
Teacher	So when you're normally in Irish class, do people, not the teacher, people correct your pronunciation?	
Student	No, cos if they did you would think like they think they're better. But on the computer, its' alright.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           ARCS – confidence         </div>
EVERYONE	YEA	
Student	They're helping you	
Student	In class it would feel like they're picking on you	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           ARCS – confidence         </div>
Teacher	Because there's other people watching or listening? And did it feel constructive when it happened with the blog?	
Student	People won't embarrass you in class. They won't correct you	

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Student Yes

Student it was ok with this 'cos they were genuinely to help

Teacher So in conclusion, question number 2, has this improved your confidence?

EVERYONE YES

Teacher Nobody wants to say anything else or anything different?

EVERYONE NO

---

### Q3. What do you think about integrating this technology into Irish classes?

Teacher What would you think about integrating or bringing this technology into Irish classes in general?

EVERYONE

YEA

ARCS – Attention

Student It would help

Student Would we be able to use it from our own computers?

Teacher From home?

Student Yes

Teacher Yes, I see nothing wrong with using this for homework

Student So instead of writing all our homework we could record it. That would be good.

Student I think it's good like for kids that are shy

Teacher Ok, so you think it would be good for confidence?

Student Yea

Student We could type in our notes instead of writing them lots of times

Student Copies (copy books) get lost

Student Or say them out loud with the blog if you don't like speaking in-front of others

Student Yea

Student You can't lose your work or notes

Student It would be hard for people who aren't good with technology, but they would get used to it.

Teacher How was the design of this? Was it easy use, hard to use or awful?

Student It was easy use

Student It was very easy

Student It was much easier use than I thought it would be

Student It was much easier than anything else you made us do

A Priori Coding Key

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Learner Autonomy / control
- Future Use / ease of use
- Improvement in oral Irish
- Social constructivism

ARCS – Attention & Confidence

ARCS –Attention & Confidence

Student It was hard to set-up at the start, but after that it got easy

Student Yes it was easy use

Student Easy

Teacher Do you understand why it was hard to use at the start? Why I was insisting you sign up using your school Gmail and why I had approve your comments the first few times you posted?

Student Yes

EVERYONE YES

Student You were making sure no one said anything rude

Student Making sure it was only our class

Student Yes

Teacher Did you like that it could only be you that posted?

EVERYONE YES

Teacher So you liked that it was a "safe space"

Student Confidentiality

Student I liked that it was all protected

Student I liked everything 'cos it was different. Since junior infants we've been doing the same thing in every class. We just did every out of the book. It was good to do something different

Student I liked doing the typing 'cos I think that helped me learn a lot. When I type things out, or when I write things out, things go into my head more easily. But not when I say things, so I didn't feel the recording helped me as much. But I definitely feel the typing helped me learn.

Teacher But you know why I put the recording in?

Student Yea, I know you need to put it in for the oral, but the typing helped me learn more.

Teacher Ok so if you had to choose between talking in Irish in small groups in class and doing the online recordings, which would you pick?

Student I wouldn't pick talking in class 'cos it doesn't

School  
AUP  
Policy

School  
AUP  
Policy

ARCS –  
Attention

ARCS –Satisfaction



---

work.

Student it doesn't help (talking in class)

Student I wouldn't pick talking in class 'cos it actually goes out of your head five minutes later.

Student When you listen to the recording on the computer you have the question and you can find out what they are saying

ARCS –Confidence

Student You're scared to talk in class

Student Yea, 'cos everybody's staring at you and you're trying to figure out the answer in your head

Student When they're asking you right there on the spot, you have to answer them straight away. But when you're on the computer, you can think about what they said and record it.

ARCS –Confidence

Student You can listen back over your answer to make sure it's right.

Student And if it's not you can fix it.

Student You're more likely to get it right.

ARCS –Confidence

Teacher How did you feel about being able to reply when you felt like it?

Student Good

Student Yea

---

## Q4. Did you feel more or less in control of how you were learning?

EVERYONE MORE

Teacher Why did you feel more in control?

ARCS - Confidence

A Priori Coding Key

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Learner Autonomy / control
- Future Use / ease of use
- Improvement in oral Irish
- Social constructivism

Student 'Cos if you needed to know something, you had to look it up for yourself rather than someone telling you.

Student When you're given then answer it just goes out of your head, but when you had to look for it you learned more

Teacher So the information was there but you had to look for it?

ARCS - Confidence

EVERYONE YES

Teacher So why else did you feel in control?

Student 'Cos we were working with our friends that were helping us out instead of you telling us what to do.

Student We have nine classes a day and in the other eight classes we were being told what to do. You listen more to your friends than you do in class

Teacher So you liked that for two weeks I gave you almost no instructions or orders?

EVERYONE YEA

Student And we didn't just mess. We actually learned something.

Student And you kept on saying we didn't actually have to do it for homework but we wanted to.

Student We actually wanted to do this homework

Teacher Why did ye want to do it?

Student Because we didn't feel pressured and we could do it in our own time

Student Because we felt motivated

Student It would help our results

Teacher So why else did you feel you were in control of your learning?

Student You were doing it all yourself. You were finding

ARCS - Attention leading to motivation

ARCS - Relevance

ARCS - Confidence

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the information and getting the right answers with a teacher in class helping you. **So it was all you own.**

Teacher Did anyone notice anything different that we did with group-work as oppose d to how group-work is normally done in classes?

Student **We decided who we would work with ourselves.**

Student **We decided** whose **group we wanted to be in.**

EVERYONE YEA

Student I thought it was better.

Student I liked it.

Student It was better.

Student You felt more in **control.**

EVERYONE YEA

Student It was better **'cos you feel more confident**

Teacher So everyone felt more confident because you weren't put with someone, you were allowed to choose?

EVERYONE YEA

Teacher And how do normally feel when you are put with someone? Especially if you have to speak?

Student Pressure

Student Embarrassed

Student Awkward

Student If it's someone better than you, you don't want to talk 'cos you'll sound dumb

Student Weird

Teacher So you liked that there was no time limit?

EVERYONE YEA

Teacher And you liked that you could pick your partners?

EVERYONE YEA

Teacher And you liked that you could opt in and out?

EVERYONE YEA

Teacher And when you were given the choice to opt in or out, which did you chose?

EVERYONE **In**

ARCS –Confidence

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Student **In every time**

EVERYONE YEA

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## Q5. How likely are you to continue using this?

Teacher So the next time you've an oral exam would you use this? How likely are you to choose the book, or how likely are you to choose this?

Student Yea I'd go onto the website

EVERYONE YEA

Student The chat-room

Student Yea I'd go online

Student Yea I'd use it

ARCS –Relevance & Satisfaction

A Priori Coding Key

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Learner Autonomy / control
- Future Use / ease of use
- Improvement in oral Irish
- Social constructivism

Teacher Why would you choose the blogs?

Student Because we will learn.

Student Because we want to learn.

Student Because we are actually learning but it doesn't feel like we are learning.

Student You're not learning if you're reading from books and talking to yourself, but if you're using the chat-room you're sending it to someone else.

Student And then if you get it wrong they can say it to you.

Student They'll give you feedback.

Student When you listen to your own recordings you hear your mistakes

EVERYONE YEA

Student When you're talking to yourself you don't even notice your mistakes

Student I never notice

Student Yea

EVERYONE YEA

Student I would use it again to study for an exam 'cos it was good

Student It was good 'cos it wasn't embarrassing.

ARCS –confidence & Satisfaction

ARCS –Relevance & Confidence

## Q6. Are you better than you were?

Teacher This was never about making you better. Two weeks is not enough time to make you better. We only spent. We only spent six classes actually working on the blogs. It took two classes to get going. But do you feel better?

EVERYONE YEA

Student Because we saw we were doing so much wrong in every sentence.

Student At the end of the week we could see how bad the stuff at the start was.

Student You ended up thinking why was I getting that wrong? Why was I making that mistake?

Student It was the first time I actually knew what I was saying.

Student I could see it and hear it, so I know what to say.

Student In class, you're just reading off notes, but in this you had to know what you were saying.

Student You had to figure out the notes yourself.

Teacher No one has mentioned the fact that I spoke no Irish for two weeks and I refused to help you or tell you what anything meant.

Student It got better as we went along.

Student You were proud when you done it 'cos you know you done it all yourself.

Student You were happy when you could do it

Teacher So you could use this without a teacher and you'd be fine?

EVERYONE YEA

Student And you'd feel better after 'cos you did it yourself

Student And you're not just getting an opinion off you (the teacher) we're getting it off everybody else

Student So you get help off your friends

Student And you knew they were right 'cos everyone was

A Priori Coding Key

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Learner Autonomy / control
- Future Use / ease of use
- Improvement in oral Irish
- Social constructivism

ARCS – Confidence & Satisfaction

ARCS – Confidence & Satisfaction

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checking the notes.

Student You weren't depending on what they already knew, everyone was using the notes.

Teacher So did everyone feel that the database of notes was designed well enough to be easy to use and user friendly?

EVERYONE YEA

Student It was easy to find what you wanted and easy to find out what everything meant

Student It was easy to slot your answers into the chats as well

Teacher You all introduced some technology to this when you began adapting it to what suited you. What did you do and why?

Student I copied other people who were typing out their own script in Microsoft Word. It was good 'cos you could put the notes into your own words.

Student You could take out the parts of the notes that suited you before answering your partner.

Student Before you went to record, you'd go to the notes, you'd take out information, you'd write it out to suit you and then you'd read it while recording.

Student You made the notes personal to you.

Student Like making the notes even better.

Student Like a personal database

EVERYONE YEA

Student We typed out all the questions first as separate comments each and then we went back and answered each one.

Student It was easier to understand the conversation then 'cos everything was in order.

Student Yea, it made sense then.

Student I could see what my partner was trying to actually say, rather than just writing random things all over the place.

ARCS – Confidence & Satisfaction

ARCS – Relevance

ARCS – Relevance

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Student We were using the typed conversations to make study notes.

Student When we looked back we knew what we had been talking about 'cos it was very clear. The comments were in the right order.

Student We were making personalised notes like the people using Word.

Teacher Ok final thoughts?

Student I was worried about taking part at the start but I seen an improvement in my work.

Student I think it was a good idea and I liked it.

Student Successful

Teacher Why?

Student At the start I was very negative about the whole thing and it took me a while to get into the technology, but once got my head past the technology I began to learn.

Student Yea, I don't like technology, but once you got signed up to the whole thing, then it was great.

Student It was a pain to sign up, but it was worth it.

Student It thought the whole thing was good.

Student I didn't think the technology was all that bad to use.

ARCS – Confidence & Satisfaction



## 7.8 APPENDIX 9: IRISH QUESTIONS FOR STRUCTURED WEB-TEXT CHATS

### Béaltríail – Ceisteanna Samplacha

1. Dia Duit
2. Cad is ainm duit?
3. Cén aois thú?
4. Cén dáta breithe atá agat?
5. Carbh as duit?
6. Cén sórt duine tú?
7. Déan cur síos ort féin.

- 
8. Inis dom faoi do chlann
  9. Ce mhéad dearthaireacha agus deirfiúireacha atá agat?
  10. Cé hé an duine is sine agus cé hé an duine is óige?
  11. Cén sort daoine iad?
  12. Inis dom faoi do chlann.

- 
13. Cá bhfuil tú i do chónaí?
  14. Cén seoladh baile atá agat?
  15. Inis dom faoi do theach sa bhaile.
  16. An maith leat do theach?
  17. Cén sort teach atá agaibh sa bhaile?
  18. Cad é an seomra is fearr leat agus cén fáth?
  19. An ndéanann tú aon obair sa teach nó sa ghairdín?
  20. Cad atá le déanamh i do cheantar?
  21. An maith leat d'áit cónaithe? Cén fáth?
  22. An bhfuil aon áiseanna maithe i do cheantar?
  23. An dtéann tú isteach go lár na cathrach go minic?
  24. Céard a dhéanann tú nuair a bhíonn tú i lár na cathrach?
  25. An bhfuil aon fadhbanna i do cheantar?

26. Céard a cheapann tú faoi daoine ag tiomaint go ró-thapa i do cheantar?

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27. Cá bhfuil tu ag freastail ar scoil?

28. Cad iad na hábhair a thaitníonn leat?

29. Cén t-ábhar is fearr leat?

30. Cén fáth gur maith leat é / í?

31. Cad iad na hábhair nach dtaitníonn leat?

32. Cén t-ábhar is fuath leat?

33. Cén fáth nach maith leat an t-ábhar sin?

34. An maith leat an scoil seo?

35. Inis dom faoi na háiseanna sa scoil seo

36. An mbaineann tú úsáid as na háiseanna?

37. Cad a cheapann tú faoi rialacha na scoile?

38. An bhfuil aon fadhbanna sa scoil seo ( aon rud lochtach)

39. Inis dom faoi do chulaith scoile (an rud maith é?)

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40. Cad iad na caitheamh aimsire atá agat?

41. Ainmnigh an clár teilifíse is fearr leat. Inis dom faoi

42. Ainmnigh an scannán is fearr leat. Inis dom faoi

43. Cé hiad na ceoltóirí is fearr leat? Cén fáth? Cén saghas duine iad?

44. An bhfuil tú abalta ceol a chasadh? Inis dom faoi

45. An raibh tú riamh ag ceolchoirm?

46. An maith leat sport?

47. An imríonn tú aon sport?

48. Ainmnigh an fhoireann is fearr leat?

49. Ainmnigh an duine cáiliúla is fearr leat? Inis dom fúthu.

## 7.9 APPENDIX 10: COMHRÁ LOCHTACH

Conversation to be corrected through web-text chat by participants during the final lesson.

### Comhrá Lochtach

- Dia guit
  - Conas ata tú?
- Ta me go maith. Conas ata tu?
  - Cad is aimn dut?
- Máire is aimn dom, agus thusa?
  - Síle an t-ainm atá ormsa. Cen aois tu?
- Ta me se bhlian daois, agus tusa?
  - Tá mé cuig bliana d'aois. Ca bhfuil tú i do chónaí?
- Ta conaí ormsa i dTamalacht, agus thusa?
  - Tá mé I mo chónaí i Glaschnoic. Cad dath is fears leat?
- Buí, tusa?
  - Dearg. Dean cur síos ort féin?
- Ta mé gruaig dubh, agus tá mé súile glas. Agus tusa?
  - Tá dath fhionn arm o chuid gruaig agus tá súile glasa agam.
- Is dune cainteach, cinéalta agus cairdul mé. Cen sort duine tusa?
  - Tá mé greannmhar, cliste agus flaithiúil. Inis dom foai do chlann?
- Tá sé againn sa bhaile, sin iad: mo mham, mo dad, mo dhearfur, mo dheirfur agus mé féin. Mairéad is aimn do mo mham, Seán ainm mo daid, Pól mo dearthfur agus Úna mo deirfur. Is é Pól and dune is óige, ta sé ocht mblaina déag d'aois. Is mise an duine is sine, agus tá Úna seacht mbliana déag d'aois. Tusa?
  - Tá ceathrar again sa bhaile. Sin iad: me fein, mo máthair, m'athair agus mo dhearthair Liam. Is mise an dune is óige. Is é Liam an dune is oige, tá sé cúig blana d'aois. An reitíonn go maith leat le do chlann?
- Reitíonn go maith liom le mo chlann. Is cairde muidne ar an iomlán, ach bím ag troid le mo dhearthair agus mo dheirfiúir faoi rudaí amaideach cosúil leis an teilifís ó am go h-am. Ceard fútsa?
  - Bhuel, reitíonn go maith liom le gach duine seachas mo dhearthair. Ní maith liom é. Bíonn se ag scroiseadh mo cheann an t-am ar fad!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Cinnte winnte!!!!!!!!!!!!!! GOA Is maith liom gach saghas ceol, céard fútsa?

- Bhuel, is aoibhinn liom ceol RnB, go áirithe ceol Beyoncé. Chuaigh mé go dtí ceolchoirm Beyoncé anuraidh san O2. Bhí sé ar fheabhas!!!!!!! NASAA!!! Agus céard fút?
- Is bre lom ceol roc, go háirithe ceol Snow Patrol. Ní raibh mé riamh ag ceoilchoirm Snow Patrol, ach bhí mé ag ceolchoirm na High Flying Birds le Noel Gallagher ags bhi se dochreidte!!!! RTUG!!!!