

Authority: Aberdeenshire

Case Study Focus: Developing Intercultural Awareness and Multilingualism through a Festival of Languages

Establishments: Learners' stage/s: S1-6

Practitioner/Staff role: French, German and Spanish Foreign Language Assistants

This Case Study illustrates how Foreign Language Assistants organised and supported pupils in years 1-6 in eight Aberdeenshire schools, in the creation and presentation of a variety of performances (drama, dance, music) to display aspects of each country's (France, Spain and Germany) culture to pupils and staff in a 'Festival of Languages' organised at Meldrum Academy.

Within this project, the following aspects of CfE were explored:

This case study exemplifies how all three of the Introductory Statements from the CfE Modern Languages Framework can be achieved through creative and cultural activities involving a range of languages:

'I gain a deeper understanding of my first language and appreciate the richness and interconnected nature of languages.'

'I develop skills that I can use and enjoy in work and leisure throughout my life.'

'I enhance my understanding and enjoyment of other cultures and of my own and gain insights into other ways of thinking and other views of the world.'

By engaging the pupils in a wide range of collaborative activities culminating in a professional performance to an audience, the project develops the four capacities that underpin CfE in the following ways:

Successful Learners with enthusiasm and motivation for learning and with determination to reach high standards of achievement and able to think creatively and to learn independently and as part of a group.

Confident Individuals with a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being and able to relate to others and manage themselves.

Responsible Citizens with respect for others and able to understand different beliefs and cultures.

Effective Contributors with an enterprising attitude and with resilience and able to work in partnership and in teams.

Background

About the educational establishment and the learners: This project involved eight schools in the Aberdeenshire local authority, but was the brainchild of two Principal Teachers, one in Turriff Academy, who is responsible for the induction and support of FLAs in the authority and the other in Meldrum Academy, who was enthused by the idea of organising an event to celebrate the work of the FLAs and offered support. The number of pupils involved in the Festival of Languages project was limited to approximately 10-15 pupils per school owing to restrictions on numbers which could be accommodated in Meldrum Academy assembly hall.

Project aims

The main objectives of this project:

It was envisaged that the pupils would:

- plan, prepare, practise and perform cultural activities in the foreign language they are learning.
- experience enjoyment through using the foreign language to communicate to an audience which included their peers, teachers and native speakers.
- gain understanding of aspects of different cultures through appreciation of other schools' performances in languages with which they were not familiar as well as ones that they understood.
- gain some understanding of unfamiliar languages through their knowledge of English and their first taught foreign language.
- develop collaborative skills through working with others on the planning and production of the performance and costumes.
- reinforce and develop certain aspects of the foreign language they are learning e.g. pronunciation.

Learning experiences:

It was envisaged that through this project learners would experience:

- enjoyment of using the foreign language to communicate meaningfully with others.

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- **greater understanding of aspects of other cultures and of other languages including some they had not learned.**
- **enjoyment through collaborating as part of a 'team' in the planning and production of an event for others to enjoy.**
- **enjoyable physical exercise which challenged them to learn steps and sequences of dance or formation movement.**
- **increased confidence in performing before a large audience which included their peers, teachers and native speakers.**

Process

Preparation and Planning

The two principal teachers conceived the idea of a 'Festival of Languages' as a celebratory event at the end of the FLAs' stay in Scotland which would also showcase the valuable work that FLAs can achieve with their pupils. Having gained permission from the Head Teacher at Meldrum Academy to host the event, the organising PTs then mailed all the other secondary schools in the local authority to ask if their assistants would be interested in creating a short performance which demonstrated an aspect of the culture of their respective countries. To encourage participation, it was decided that all participating pupils would receive a certificate and the best performance would receive a special certificate of distinction. Not all schools were able to take part, but *check number* responded positively. The organising PTs then drew up the programme for the day, prepared information letters for parents and arranged for buses to pick up pupils to bring them to and from Meldrum Academy on the day of the event.

The Role of the Foreign Language Assistant

Once schools had agreed to participate in the Festival of Languages, the FLAs in these schools were then given full responsibility to create and plan each school's contribution. The FLAs each decided which cultural aspect of their country they would present to the other schools and they liaised among themselves to ensure that there were no duplications. They then asked for volunteer pupils and in the spirit of CfE, proceeded to involve the pupils actively in all stages of the process.

In collaboration with the FLA, the pupils were involved in planning how they could best convey their cultural activity in an entertaining and interesting way. The pupils and FLA worked over lunchtimes to make costumes and props and to prepare, practise and rehearse the 'script'. Many FLAs also involved the pupils in self and peer assessing their contribution and in identifying aspects for improvement (in particular pronunciation).

Activities: See programme below:



Foreign Languages Assistants
Litral Show 2009

MELDRUM ACADEMY

WEDNESDAY

13 MAY 2009

**Aberdeenshire
Foreign Languages Assistants
"Final Show" 2008-09**

GUEST LIST

SHIELA CARSON	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL
ALISON FRYDMAN	BRITISH COUNCIL, EDINBURGH
JULIE HENTHORN	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL
DAVID INNESS	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL
AZIZA OUARDANI	INSTITUE FRANÇAIS D'ECOSSE, EDINBURGH

10.30 -11.00	Arrival
11.00-11.15	Welcome
11.15-12.30	Show
1. Morgane Le Reste, Westhill Academy, " <i>Touristes à Paris</i> " (French)	
2. Martina Beez, Banff Academy, " <i>Die Einladung</i> " (German)	
3. Wolfgang Oesch, Mackie Academy, " <i>Mutter Erde</i> " (German)	
4. Claire Geslin, Alford Academy, " <i>French School Musical</i> " (French)	
5. Martin Mader, Fraserburgh Academy, " <i>Brüder, Schwestern</i> " (German)	
6. Marta Diaz Salado Antonio, Westhill Academy (Spanish)	
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.00	Show
7. Nathalie Guilbaud, Meldrum / Turriff Academy, " <i>A Paris</i> " (French)	
8. Wolfgang Oesch, Banchory Academy, " <i>Die Osterhasen</i> " (German)	
14.00 - 14.15	Judges' results
14.15 - 14.30	Plenary

To see the script the pupils from Meldrum Academy used and the background power point, click on the links below.

[la france.doc](#)

[diapo.ppt](#)

UN TOUR EN FRANCE



Impact

Impact on pupils

- All pupils found the project an extremely positive experience. *'The cultural activity made learning French about much more than just learning the language'* (S1 pupil). *'I was surprised I could understand most of the German even though I've never been taught it!'* (S3 pupil).
- The pupils who took part and the pupils in the audience are now more interculturally aware regarding aspects of other countries' culture and language (responsible citizens).
- The pupils who took part are now more confident as a result of performing in front of an audience of their peers, teachers and native speakers (confident individuals).
- Pupils learned how to operate collaboratively as part of a 'troupe' where the correct sequencing of performance is crucial to the success of the overall presentation, recognising their responsibility to the other performers (responsible citizens, successful learners, effective contributors).
- Pupils were made aware that there are many links among the three languages taught in the authority and that decoding skills can be transferred

from language to language to assist comprehension (successful learners, confident individuals).

Impact on staff

An inter-school project such as this demands time and commitment from the many individuals involved. The organising PTs who liaised with the other schools were delighted that the Festival was so successful. The staff from other departments in Meldrum Academy who were able to attend performances were very enthusiastic and have begun to consider how their department can make links with modern languages e.g. Expressive Arts. It has already been decided to continue and expand the Festival of Languages in 2010. The FLAs gained a great deal of confidence in their organisational and leadership skills and built a close relationship with their pupils through working as part of a team. "I was really impressed by the way the pupils responded to being given responsibility. Indeed if I did it again next year, I would give them greater responsibility in creating the script as I felt tended to lead rather than support as I thought it might be too difficult for them." The spirit of collaboration even extended among the participating schools and although the FLAs were working individually with their groups of pupils, they also provided a very good support network for each other, within the wider support offered by the PTs. "Although there was a competitive element, we all supported each other and wanted every group to do well and feel a success."

Impact on Parents and Community

Unfortunately due to restrictions on numbers, it was not possible on this occasion to invite parents and members of the community to the performances. However, parents were kept informed of the purpose of and preparations for the event and in the wider community it is hoped that the pupils will convey to family and friends the information and enjoyment they gained from participation in the event.

Next Steps

- There is another Festival planned for May 2010 and it is hoped that it will now be an annual fixture on the LA calendar.
- Talks are ongoing about the possibility of videoing the performances for parents and to have as a resource, which can be shown in other schools in the LA.
- It is hoped to get more schools involved so that it will be the norm for each school in the local authority to take part (increase in number of participating schools in 2010).

Although the Festival of Languages owed much to the initiative shown by the two organising PTs, they were adamant that it was the enthusiasm and creativity shown by the FLAs that resulted in the event being such a success. Without their willing participation and hard work in supporting their pupils this project would have remained an excellent idea but would not have come to fruition.