What are the most effective ways in which to teach MFL to students with SEN?

A Masters level PGCE curriculum assignment by

Rachel HAIGH

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**Introduction**

As a PGCE student in school X, a comprehensive school in an ex-mining town in South Yorkshire, I have been teaching ‘Nurture group’ – a class of year 7 students who have special needs. They are so far below the average National Curriculum levels for children their age, and many have such low confidence and resilience, that they are taught on an adjusted timetable with extra lessons in English and Maths but no consistent languages teaching. Beveridge (1999) writes that in the past, “pupils with special educational needs who attended ordinary schools ... were often assigned to a more restricted set of experiences than other pupils in the school ... to follow separate syllabuses”, (p. 63), but as we can see in school X this kind of system is still very much alive.

The school has a theoretical policy of ‘languages for all’, and since the introduction of the first Nurture group in 2009, the faculty of Modern Foreign Languages has sent a PGCE student on their second placement to provide some of the languages education they are missing from their adjusted timetable (Interview with SENCO, appendix). As an ITT student who believes that all students should have some form of access to languages education, I was interested to see whether there were any skills which language learning could help children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) develop, and if so how this could be accomplished. From the beginning, I had decided to split the ten lessons I would have with these students into three: two sets of four week periods on French and Spanish, and two weeks on another language. This was in recognition that in ten hours I could not make up the two terms of work they had not had in the school curriculum, but I could give them access to three sets of very basic language and cultural understanding. This also lent itself well to adapting my practice, as I could compare the success of the new types of lesson I was teaching in Spanish with those in the previous French lessons.

I will therefore begin by exploring the arguments for and against teaching MFL to students with SEN, followed by own research and teaching experience, considering the variables and limitations in this class, before concluding about whether my changes seemed to have any positive effect on students, and therefore the implications of teaching languages to SEN students.

**Why, or why not, teach MFL to students with SEN?**

There have been many reasons given as to why students with Special Educational Needs should not, and do not need to, study Foreign Languages. Although they emphasise the importance of ‘curricular balance’, Hodgson et al (1984) give several examples of students with special needs who had languages cut from their timetable in order to free up more time for activities such as “typing lessons”, “catch[ing] up on other subjects” (p. 54) and “training in mobility and daily living skills” (p. 58). The assumption often seems to be, “If they cannot master their own language, why should they learn a new one?” or, “They are never going to use languages, so what is the use?”. To this Beveridge replies that “no area of the curriculum should automatically be regarded as being of little
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relevance to a pupil with particular special educational needs” (p. 74). Unless students are given an opportunity, they will never know whether they enjoy, are good at, or would like to use foreign languages, whatever level of competence they are able to achieve.

The basic assumption underlying the argument against teaching MFL to students with SEN is that all other students are all capable of, and willing to, reach fluency in a foreign language. If this had any basis in truth, take-up for GCSE languages would be much higher. There are many other factors at play in language learning than the special needs or ability of a student. Assuming that most – although by no means all – students with special needs will not be able to achieve fluency in a foreign language, what skills does every person who attempts to learn a foreign language develop?

As well as language teaching being a legal entitlement, Sayer argues that it is counterproductive to concentrate on literacy and numeracy “at the expense of other learning” as this “does not as manifestly lead to progress in transferring skills to the activities that have been missed”; in fact “the boredom of repetition, the frustration of failure, and the loss of common ground with peers lead to a lowering of morale and achievement” (p. 86, 1994). The National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages acknowledges that “The development of communication skills, together with understanding of the structure of language, ... support the development of literacy skills in a pupil's own language.” (QCA). Researchers have also discovered the benefits to literacy in the first language through learning even a small amount of target language; Yelland et al's study involving teaching children one hour per week of Italian found that they “developed a greater proficiency in written word recognition than children who received no such training” and accelerated “the development of written word recognition – a critical component of reading acquisition” (Yelland et al, 1993).

The experience of learning about a different culture, community and way of life can be beneficial to any student. Without making mention of MFL, Seach says that in teaching students with ASD “there will need to be an emphasis on teaching communication and social skills” (2001) which many language lessons automatically provide. Stevens and Marsh (2005) passionately sum up some of these less quantifiable experiences and skills thus:

“The learning of a foreign language ... touches not only upon social interaction, but also personal development and creative exploration, as well as intellectual and skills development ... [it] opens up new worlds to learners.” (Stevens and Marsh, p. 113)

As a “process of personal development, be it within the skill development or social context” (Stevens and Marsh, p. 114), Modern Foreign Languages cover all of the QCA Personal Learning and Thinking Skills comfortably, as I will consider later.
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My own teaching practice and research

What had I done before that could be changed?

Before beginning to teach the class I had already made adjustments to my usual lesson structure to help me teach this kind of demographic of student. For example, I had been advised to use as little reading and writing as possible, since “Poor literacy presents major difficulties for all pupils with SEN and operates as a barrier to learning” (Edwards, 1998). Edwards says that “Pupils with SpLD often have excellent spoken language skills which compensate for their poor reading and writing.” Since the majority of the students in the class have Specific Learning Difficulties, I decided to teach using as little writing and reading as possible. This was also because I thought students might already have a negative attitude towards these skills as they are generally the areas with which they have the greatest difficulty. In the worksheets I used at the end of both the French and Spanish units, the writing was quite big and included visual support with modelling. They also included several different activities, including copying, which put the students on a National Curriculum level 1 in writing.

The majority of the lessons, then, needed to involve speaking and listening almost exclusively. Although Pachler et al suggest that “visual support in the form of flashcards ... can make non-abstract language more immediate and accessible” (pp.221-222, 2009), this was not always the case with this class, who on the whole were much more strongly kinaesthetic learners (Interview with SENCO, appendix). I discovered this after the first French lesson, when teaching some hobbies along with the expression J’aime (I like) was very successful.

Edwards also suggests that “reasonably frequent changes of activity harness the attention of learners” and I therefore attempted from the beginning to have a variety of games and activities for students to participate in, and to make the lessons as student-centred as possible. This was not always successful, particularly as to begin with behaviour was poor as the students adjusted to the lessons while I was presenting new vocabulary. Pachler et al suggest that maintaining a manageable number of new lexical items in each lesson is important, as “This can help them gain a sense of security and achievement as well as break down possible affective barriers towards the TL” (219, 2009), and I therefore did not introduce any more than seven new items of vocabulary in any one lesson along with one or two contextualising phrases such as J’aime (I like) or Je suis (I am).I also gave opportunity for students to practice their new language in pairs or small groups to ‘avoid feelings of insecurity about perceived incorrect TL production’ (Pachler et al, p. 219), although this was not always present due to the already small size of the class and some of the difficult relationship dynamics between certain students.

Finally, in every single lesson I established a context of using the target language for some use, although most lessons were conducted with more English than target language. This “can serve to reinforce a sense of purpose of TL use for pupils” and “provides a regular opportunity to reinforce key linguistic items and structures” (Pachler et al, p. 219) and week on week students grew in confidence in responding to my greeting of “Bonjour”.


When deciding how to adapt my lessons for the purposes of this assignment, I researched various ways of teaching students with special educational needs. For example, Stenhouse (1975) suggests that “learning activities should be designed which were of intrinsic value to pupils” (quoted in Beveridge, 1999, p. 69), hence it would seem useless to teach grammar and language detached from reality. I saw this very clearly between the first and second Spanish lesson, as in the first one (before I had chosen how to adapt the teaching) students struggled to remember how to say “My name is”, “I am from” and respond to “How are you?”, but the following week when similar questions were incorporated into a more meaningful setting of taking the register and asking students how they were, they grew in confidence and were soon able to respond.

Similarly, Pachler (2009) advises “presenting new language in different guises” (p. 222). As this was something I was already doing, I did not feel it was a great enough change to make this the focus of my research.

I considered delivering lessons almost fully in the target language, as this would give students increased familiarity with listening to Spanish, but two difficulties presented themselves. Firstly, I was concerned that even a small amount of time spent not understanding most of what was said would be demotivating for the students – and I would not have time to persevere through this demotivation. Secondly, I knew that my own language skills in Spanish were not sufficient to maintain target language in a spontaneous manner throughout an hour-long lesson. I decided to continue giving encouragements (for example, “muy bien” (very good)) and instructions (such as “escucha” (listen)) as well as greetings in Spanish.

When looking at governmental guidelines on teaching languages, I was struck by the cultural element of the curriculum, which states that “Pupils learn to appreciate different countries, cultures, communities and people” (QCA). This is further strengthened by a suggestion that language learning should include: “learning about different countries and cultures”, “comparing pupils’ own experiences and perspectives with those of people in countries and communities where the target language is spoken” and “connection[s] with topics and issues that are engaging and may be related to other areas of the curriculum”.

The idea that intercultural and cross-curricular learning can aid in language learning is supported by various academics. Indeed, McColl (2005) suggests that students with SEN “need to be taught explicitly”, ‘the relationship between communication and community” (that is, language and culture) (p. 105). She adds that “All the evidence suggests that meaningful language learning experiences are more difficult to provide when the foreign” (p. 106). I considered that the students in my ‘Nurture’ group would study languages for ten hours in this year, compared to around 114 hours in School X for other students their age, and the fact that this was because in previous years “quite a lot of them ended up being disappplied quite early on because they couldn’t cope with it” (SENCO interview, appendix). If I could not give these students with an equal amount of language teaching, I could leave them with a broader understanding of the world outside their village, and a change in attitude towards foreign languages. At the same time, tying in other subject areas such as geography and technology could benefit and consolidate their learning across the curriculum. This would also include some of the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, which “are essential to success in learning, life and work” (QCA).
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My success criteria for these new Spanish lessons, then, were: for students to enjoy the lessons, for them to have an increased understanding of Spanish culture and other related subject areas, for them to show evidence of some of the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, and for them to remember and use more accurately the language content learned in the lesson.

Methodology and limitations

Adding a cultural and cross-curricular element into my lessons with the group seemed practical given the constraints. The first Spanish lesson was taught in a similar way to the previous set of French lessons, as outlined above in the Variables section. At the beginning of the first 'new-style' Spanish lesson, which would be on the topic of Spanish speaking countries and incorporate some physical geography, I would ask the students a few simple questions about their language learning experiences to see how they felt they learned best. I would also interview the school SENCO about her views on how SEN children learn, and why languages might be useful to them. The next Spanish lesson would involve food, and tasting a typical Spanish food (gazpacho), and during the last Spanish lesson I would briefly question students on their views on Spanish and French, do some recapping activities on the Spanish we had learned and provide information about Spanish festivals which I hoped would stimulate discussion.

Limitations included problems such as working with a Teaching Assistant I did not know, and who did not speak any Spanish, as well as being unfamiliar with the classroom and having no curriculum to follow. The latter of course was also an advantage, as it has allowed me to develop an alternative approach towards language teaching to SEN students. The fact that the students were very resistant to change – one of the reasons many of them are in the Nurture group – would also be a factor against me as I tried to get to know them and to try to enthuse them in a new language, so the challenge would be to bring Spanish to life through the lessons that I taught in order to engage the students.

Research outcomes

My first questionnaire, before the Spanish lessons began, found that on a scale of one to five, the overall enjoyment of having learned French ranged mostly from three and a half to four and a half (where five equated to “I enjoyed French a lot”). Therefore I could see that although students enjoyed the subject somewhat, they were not especially enthusiastic about it. Nine out of ten had learned some French at primary school, and this was evident by their familiarity with greetings and numbers – none had studied any Spanish at primary school, which immediately meant that some lacked confidence.

When asked about learning actions with new words in French, nine out of ten students said this had been helpful, and indeed my own observations bear this out. In one French lesson where students had been struggling to learn new words, we played Jacques a dit (Simon Says) with the vocabulary they had learned with actions, where I did not model the actions, and they were able to remember them autonomously and also offer examples. However, only six out of ten students felt it had helped them to learn new words by seeing pictures. This is also backed up by my observations from a lesson when
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I attempted this, as students were confused by my using Mr Men characters, and associated them with English – rather than French – words. Although some students did retain one or two of these in the final French lesson, it was very little compared to the hobbies which had been learned with actions. The SENCO also agreed that the ‘kinaesthetic approach’ was usually more successful with this group.

Finally, only four of the ten responding students had travelled abroad, and one of them told me, “We always go abroad on holiday,” but could not tell me to which countries, therefore I concluded that cultural understanding was low. This was one of the main reasons the SENCO gave me for the Nurture group needing to do some foreign language study:

“... It opens their eyes to other things, other parts of the world... a lot of the kids ... never go out of [the village]... B yesterday was a prime example: his mum’s told him he’s gonna be in [the village] for the rest of his life, but then when I ... explained that when he’s earning money he'll be able to go abroad... he saw the importance and relevance of it.”

I could also see the progression of positive behaviour as I continued to teach Spanish. The students responded really well to activities allowing them to move around and touch things, particularly when tasting gazpacho in the third lesson. Some of this was to do with familiarity; by the end of my eighth lesson with them they seemed to have adapted to the new structure, and although there was still some chatty behaviour the students were clearly familiar with my expectations and would be quiet for instructions and attempt the activities with some enthusiasm.

Returning to my original success criteria, how do they show how effective the change in teaching was? The first criteria point was that students enjoy the lessons. It seemed that students enjoyed some lessons very much, particularly the one involving gazpacho, as even after the Easter holiday a student asked me if I had brought it again, and another asked for the recipe. Even the two students who had had a negative attitude to the lessons had seemed to accept it and became involved, and all the students voted enthusiastically at the end of the last Spanish lesson for which language we would sample together next, and therefore are exhibiting a willingness to ‘learn to learn’ languages. However, on asking the students whether they agreed with some statements at the end of the final Spanish lesson, six of the nine present said they preferred French to Spanish, with the other three preferring Spanish to French. One student suggested that this was “because we did some French at primary”, hence familiarity again played a large part in their response. A next research step could involve questioning year 7 students in mainstream language lessons which language they preferred of the two, and why this was. Three of the nine said they enjoyed learning about Spanish culture, food and geography, and five said they enjoyed learning Spanish words – so interestingly, the students appeared to enjoy the language content of the lessons more than the extracurricular aspects. It would also be interesting to find out why that is, as perhaps they dislike the mixing of different subjects together and believed they would be more manageable studied separately.

The next success criteria point was for students to have an increased understanding of Spanish culture and other related subject areas. I had no formal method of assessing this, which was a drawback of my research, but from some questioning during lessons it was clear that students had remembered something of the cultural aspect of what we
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had learned. The gazpacho lesson drew in some aspects of food technology as it broke down the recipe into its component parts and involved watching a video of a Spanish person making it. Another subject area used was geography in the lesson on Spanish speaking countries and types of countryside. After we had learned some country names and environments, students were given a small card with a flag of a Spanish speaking country and three pictures of terrain in that country, and had to remember the words together feedback. The students did a good job of retaining that language short-term but were also able to see where Spanish is spoken throughout the world, and in some cases learnt a new country name in English too.

I also wanted the students to show evidence of some of the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS), of which I take an example for each skill to show how they were developed. Firstly, as ‘Independent enquirers’, the students “explore[d] issues, events or problems from different perspectives” by discussing why people speak different languages after a good question from a fellow student (Lesson Evaluation 4, appendix). As ‘Creative Thinkers’ they “connect[ed] their own and others’ ideas and experiences in inventive ways” by comparing British and Spanish-speaking country landscapes, and discussing Spanish festivals, and how they might be like or unlike British festivals. As ‘Reflective Learners’ they “deal[t] positively with praise, setbacks and criticism”, offering answers even if they were unsure.

The students “collaborate[d] with others to work towards common goals” as ‘Team Workers’ by discussing unusual food items, and deducing meaning from sets of pictures about Spanish festivals. During these lessons they were particularly good ‘Self Managers’, by “respond[ing] positively to change”, as having a new teacher and new subjects so late in the year was a shock to some at first, although their attitudes noticeably improved over the course of the Spanish sessions. Finally, as ‘Effective participators’ they “act[ed] as an advocate for views and beliefs that may differ from their own” by discussing festivals in Spain and thus how Spanish and British culture differ from one another, while being respectful. However, the students were not capable of meeting some of the descriptions under each skill in these lessons, partly due to time, partly to what I was trying to achieve, and partly because of their limited abilities in basic literacy skills.

Finally, I wanted the students to remember and use accurately the language content learned in the lesson. In the main, students would attain National Curriculum level 1 in Spanish across the skills board, which is still good progress considering they had only 4 hours’ teaching in the subject. They “understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases”, “say single words and short, simple phrases in response to what they see and hear”, “recognise and read out a few familiar words and phrases” and “write or copy simple words or symbols correctly”. Despite the lessons using minimal reading and writing skills, there was a small amount of writing at the end of the course of Spanish to allow students to have a written record of their learning. In the final Spanish lesson each previous lesson was briefly revised through a short activity before the students were asked to attempt the written activity. However I discovered that even a short written activity as copying a sentence in Spanish into the correct place was too complex for some of the students with their level of literacy. This is something I should perhaps have considered before, or would have known had I observed them in an English lesson. Despite this, students did well on the other written activities, notably on those
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recapping geographical environments where they were able to recognise cognates (they had struggled with this when we first learned the words) and recall the majority of the gazpacho ingredients without me having to remind them or give the English words.

Conclusions

I found that in some cases my research was limited by myself more than by my students, as I at times did not quite gauge their literacy levels appropriately, or did not give them all the opportunities they needed to exercise PLTS. In retrospect I would also plan the questions I wanted students to answer both before and after the series of lessons, as I have some gaps in my knowledge because of this. In general, considering the students had not previously studied any Spanish, I was impressed by the speed with which they picked up the vocabulary, particularly that from the geographical environments and Spanish food lessons. I believe this success is mainly to do with the kinaesthetic approach to those topics – via actions and touching the fruit – but a growing interest in the country and culture of Spain was also a factor in this. At the end of the series of lessons, five out of nine students said they would like to visit Spain one day, and three out of nine said they would like to visit France. Considering that only four students had ever travelled abroad before, we can assume at least one student has been inspired to travel abroad by these lessons. This increased openness to the ‘foreign’ seems to me to be a great enough justification for teaching MFL to students with SEN.

Overall I found that by the end of this series of Spanish lessons, my students were better behaved, more confident, more motivated, more open to new cultures and experiences and more ready to risk failure. Although some of this may be due to increasing familiarity with me as a teacher, and some of it may be due to the changes I made in increasing focus onto Spanish culture, on the whole it is a clear example of the short term benefits of language learning on students with SEN. It would be interesting to continue this programme further and for a significant amount of time to see what the long term effects could be for these students, not only on MFL lessons but across the curriculum. Although looking at target culture could be part of this, there are clearly many other factors which affect their learning and which could open new doors to this demographic of student.
A Lesson plans and evaluations

Lesson Plan 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 14/03/12</th>
<th>Class: Y7 Nurture</th>
<th>Ability:</th>
<th>SEN/G&amp;T: 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Learning Objective (WALT):** Introducing ourselves in Spanish

**Learning Outcomes (WILF)(Link to NC Levels/KS4 grades):**

- All students will be able to: Remember individual words such as Hola, bien etc.
- Most students will be able to: Respond to a question about their name, how they are, where they live.
- Some students will be able to: Ask others questions as well as responding to them.

**Starter**

Hola! Ask if anyone already knows any Spanish? Do register answering Hola.

**1st activity:** Me llamo Senorita Haigh ¿Cómo te llamas? Ask everyone.

¿Qué tal? Fenomenal (two thumbs up), bien (one thumb up), regular (thumbs sideways), fatal (both thumbs down). Ask everyone, via lollipop sticks.

La profesora dice... do actions.

Students ask me: ¿Qué tal? I do thumbs up/down etc and they tell me how I feel in Spanish. ¿Dondé vives? Vivo en Sheffield. Ask everyone via lollipop sticks.

Have pictures of various cities around the room. Students ask ¿Dondé vives? and I answer with ‘Vivo en...’ plus one of the cities. They have to get to which one I said first.
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**Model/scaffold:** Phrase by phrase, everyone gets an opportunity to speak, using lots of physical activity.

**Review Learning:** Assessment strategies/ Formative and summative Throughout activity.

How confident do we feel with these new words? (Fenomenal, bien, regular, fatal - with actions). Those who are fenomenal/bien can continue to next exercise.

**2nd activity:** 'Speed' speaking: Use celebrities pictures (write a place on the back). Students stand in double circle and have to ask each other: ¿Cómo te llamas?, ¿Qué tal?, ¿Dondé vives? and answer questions. If you don't think you can ask questions, point to the person and whoever's speaking tells the other person those things. Work round circle.

Those who still don't feel confident, small group, run over again by saying statement and question (e.g. Me llamo Senorita Haigh. ¿Cómo te llamas?) and getting them to ask each other, gradually building in idea of using celebrity cards.

**Model/Scaffold:** Do an example with a student who seems quite confident (e.g. Matthew?). Add in 'Adíos' if they are getting it.

**Review Learning:** Assessment strategies/ Formative and summative Ongoing

**3rd activity:** Guess who activity. Famous people on the board with sad/happy faces. Students can ask ¿Dondé vives? and ¿Qué tal? but not names. Aim is to be the first person to know (with hand up) and to be able to give a reason why.

**Model/scaffold:** Example game.

**Review Learning:** Assessment strategies/ Formative and summative Ongoing.

**Final Review of Learning and Progress to identify next steps** (including students feeding back:)

6 pictures on board of places/feelings/celebrities. Throw dice, whichever you land on you say as much as you can/ a sentence relating to it.

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**Evaluation:**

This lesson was quite a struggle, and ended up being very teacher-oriented. The change of language seemed to unsettle some students, and they struggled to concentrate as well as they had in French. There was not enough time for the second activity and the plenary, although everything else was covered. Students really struggled with the new language, and working out the difference between a question and a statement, even with actions, tone and a lot of modelling.

They enjoyed running around the room to various cities, but could not remember the question they were supposed to ask – I prompted every time. Despite struggling with it at first, most students could remember **Fenomenal** by the end of the lesson.

One or two boys were very disruptive and clearly did not enjoy the lesson. They were taken out by the TA and spoke with the SENCO, who later told me she had explained to them the importance of learning a language, giving them some of the reasons she gave me in the interview (see transcript).
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### Lesson Plan 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 21/02/12</th>
<th>Class: Y7 Nurture</th>
<th>Ability:</th>
<th>SEN/G&amp;T:</th>
<th>Boys/Girls: 8/4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Learning Objective (WALT):** Spanish-speaking countries

**Other skills:** map work, physical geography, cultural awareness, listening, speaking.

**PLTS:** independent enquirers, team workers, effective participators

**Learning Outcomes (WILF)(Link to NC Levels/KS4 grades):**
- All students will be able to: Give some facts about one Spanish-speaking country, and remember one type of countryside
- Most students will be able to: Give facts about two or more countries, and remember 2-3 types of countryside.
- Some students will be able to: Give facts about several countries, use the words for countryside in a sentence.

**Literacy - this lesson supports literacy by:**

**Differentiation / Targeted use of support staff:**

**Starter** Answer the register with hola, and if possible ask students ¿Qué tal? Keep a tally of good answers on chart on board.

Do questionnaire

**1st activity:** What do you know about Spain? Where is Spain on a European map? Discuss together and in group.


5 Spanish-speaking countries: introduce where they are and their flags along with something memorable about them. (Some TL: Es en sud-america, habla espanol etc)

**Review Learning:** Assessment strategies/Formative and summative

Flags: is it a, b, or c? What do you remember about that country?

**2nd activity:** Geography link: introduce words for types of countryside with actions. La profesora dice...

What types of countryside do we have in England? En Ingleterra hay...

Give each group a country and some pictures of that country. ¿Qué hay en el país? If words are needed will be put on board, with pictures. What is that country like? (Single words/phrases)

**Review Learning:** Assessment strategies/Formative and summative

Students tell everyone about their country - can pick out the flag from the board.
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Final Review of Learning and Progress to identify next steps (including students feeding back:)
Quiz in teams about what we have learned.

Evaluation
After a brief reminder of possible responses to the question ¿Qué tal?, the majority of the students were quickly able to respond during the register. The quiz engaged the students and gave them chance to think about what they already knew and gave some new cultural knowledge without them noticing it. Students remarked that they didn’t know some of the countries in Spanish (Spain, Cuba, Chile, Mexico and Peru), or where they were found on a world map. Behaviour was better than the previous week, though still not fully helpful to learning, but students quickly got the hang of the landscape words, despite struggling to hear the cognates at first. This is probably because Spanish is such an unusual language to many of them that they don’t know how cognates sound. Students did a really good job of remembering the country names and landscapes short-term in order to do the main activity.

Lesson Plan 3
Date: 21/02/12  
Period: 3  
Class: Y7 Nurture  
Ability: SEN/G&T:  
Boys/Girls: 8/4

Learning Objective (WALT): about Spanish food, and the names of some of the popular ingredients.  
Other skills: food technology, cultural understanding, resilience and openness to new experiences.  
PLTS: independent enquirers, creative thinkers, team workers, effective participators

Learning Outcomes (WILF)(Link to NC Levels/KS4 grades):
All students will be able to: Recognise a Spanish dish, remember a fact about Spanish eating culture and one or two ingredients.  
Most students will be able to: Recognise several dishes, remember several facts and more ingredients, and say 'Me gusta'  
Some students will be able to: Remember all the new words today, including 'No me gusta', adding an ingredient or dish at the end to form a sentence.

Literacy – this lesson supports literacy by:

Differentiation / Targeted use of support staff:

Starter Answer the register with a country that speaks Spanish, ask students ¿Qué tal?  
Keep a tally of good answers on chart on board.

1st activity: Which food is Spanish? Have various pictures on tables: sort into Spanish/not Spanish. Say some names of some of the dishes and what it means: which do you think is which? (3 - not gazpacho)  
Model/scaffold: Vocab for dishes.

Review Learning: Assessment strategies/ Formative and summative  
Sort Spanish foods into what meal you would eat it for.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd activity: Real ingredients from gazpacho: pass round the room for each student to practice saying word. Various people hold the ingredients in different parts of the room and everyone runs to the one I say (repetition of game from first week). Model/Scaffold: Vocab for food, lots of repetition.</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Learning: Assessment strategies/Formative and summative Repeat if true game.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd activity: What could you make from the ingredients we have learned? Bring out gazpacho - show on a map where it's from and how/when it's eaten etc/fields of tomatoes etc. “De gazpacho no hay empacho”. YouTube video of how to make gazpacho - and taste! Me gusta/No me gusta. Me gusta jumbo de naraja song - teach that phrase and sing/say every time you see oranges! Model/scaffold: Teach phrase Me gusta/No me gusta in response to an experience: ¿Te gusta gazpacho?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Learning: Assessment strategies/ Formative and summative Questioning about the video.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Review of Learning and Progress to identify next steps (including students feeding back:) Roll dice, pictures on board correlating. Can you remember the Spanish word for that food? (Dishes and ingredients)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation

Almost all the students were able to respond to my question of ¿Qué tal? during the register without too much hesitation. The lesson seemed to go really well, and despite it being the last week of term the students were well-behaved and seemed motivated – even the two who usually have trouble being motivated. In fact, one of them knew something already about Spanish food and was able to share it with the rest of the class. Teaching the ingredient words by passing round the vegetables seemed to work well as all the students wanted to touch them and say the word, although they needed some of them repeating several times. ‘Tomate’, ‘vinaigre’ and ‘pan’ were learnt most quickly as they sounded closest to the English, or to another English word.

Students had some good guesses about what could be made from the ingredients, and were interested about gazpacho. Ten out of the eleven present tasted it, and two quite enjoyed it, but no one made a big fuss and this led to genuine understanding of the phrases ‘Me gusta’ and ‘No me gusta’! The students enjoyed the song and recognised a couple of the ingredients, as well as the ‘Me gusta’ and ‘No me gusta’ phrases. They seemed to enjoy the plenary dice game, and although some students had to be reminded of one or two words (such as ‘cebolla’ and ‘pimiento’), I heard others correcting each other on ingredients such as ‘ajo’. Towards the beginning of the lesson, one of the students commented, “Your lessons are always fun, Miss.”

Students began to ask what they would be doing after Spanish, and there were some requests for Italian. This had not previously happened in the French lessons. In contrast to previous lessons, when students had asked me unrelated questions to the topic, in this lesson one of the usually unmotivated students asked me about mother tongues and how they are acquired (he had assumed that everyone was born with the ability to speak English). I – with the help of the TA, who also speaks Punjabi – was able to explain how children learn languages from those around them. This appeared to be something he had not considered before, and he appeared to grasp the concept well.
What are the most effective ways in which to teach MFL to students with SEN?  

Rachel HAIGH, 2012

Lesson Plan 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 21/02/12</th>
<th>Class: Y7 Nurture</th>
<th>Ability:</th>
<th>SEN/G&amp;T:</th>
<th>Boys/Girls: 8/4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Learning Objective (WALT): To revise all the Spanish work we have done so far. To find out about some Spanish festivals.

Other skills: cultural understanding, memory, resilience, copying, reading for gist in English and Spanish

PLTS: independent enquirers, team workers, effective participators, reflective learners, self-managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes (WILF)(Link to NC Levels/KS4 grades):</th>
<th>Literacy – this lesson supports literacy by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students will be able to: fill in the revision sheets and remember a few words by heart from them.</td>
<td>Involving reading for gist, as well as picking out individual words students understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most students will be able to: remember a full phrase or question in Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students will be able to: think about why they learn in certain ways, remember words/phrases from all three lessons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differentiation / Targeted use of support staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starter</th>
<th>Answer the register with hola, and if possible ask students ¿Qué tal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What have we done in Spanish? What Spanish words can you remember?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st activity: Introductions: Listening – give 3 options of answers on board. Which would you reply if I asked this question? (e.g. a) Torres, b) Madrid, c) fenomenal – “Qué tal?”

fill in conversation bubbles

Countries: map of world. Link countries and draw flag. Use powerpoint slide.

La profesora dice with countryside actions.

Types of countryside – which ones can you work out without help?

Food: gazpacho, write the correct Spanish next to English word (and write a sentence about if you liked it or not.)

Model/scaffold: Throughout

Review Learning:  Assessment strategies/ Formative and summative

If a student has finished

2nd activity: Spanish festivals: give students in small groups some pictures of the event, along with its name in Spanish. What do you think it is? What do the words mean? Present back to class. Show videos.

Model/Scaffold: 2

Review Learning: Assessment strategies/Formative and summative
Final Review of Learning and Progress to identify next steps (including students feeding back:)

Bomb with all Spanish words.

Ask if students have a language preference for next: more French/Spanish, some German/Italian/Japanese?

Evaluation

Behaviour was not as good in this lesson as the previous one, but students were still engaged on the whole. One student was removed from the lesson for rudeness to the TA. All the activities were done except for playing bomb at the end. Although students did quite well with linking introducing questions and answers orally, most of them struggled with the first page of the worksheet, which involved finding and writing in an entire correct sentence. In retrospect this probably wasn’t the best way to revise this part of what we had learned given the low reading ages of the students to begin with, but I think this is partly because the students struggled to learn this vocabulary originally. The final sheet of the revision – on geographical landscapes and gazpacho ingredients – worked really well and students were able to recognise the cognates well, and remember what most of the ingredients were without me reminding them, although some confused ‘pepino’ and ‘pimiento’ which is perhaps understandable.

Students appeared fascinated by the videos of the Spanish festivals and had strong opinions about which they would go to if they could. During the register the majority of students remembered how to say what they wanted to in response to the question “¿Qué tal?”. 
What are the most effective ways in which to teach MFL to students with SEN? Rachel Haight, 2012

B  Student Questionnaires
   i.  Outcomes of first questionnaire

Question 1: On a scale of 1-5, how much did you enjoy doing French? (1 = not at all, 5 = a lot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>3 1/2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4 1/2</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2: Did you learn any French at primary school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3: Did you find it helpful to learn new words by doing actions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4: Did you find it helpful to learn new words by seeing pictures?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5: Did you learn any Spanish at primary school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 6: Have you ever travelled abroad before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii  Outcomes of second questionnaire

Students who agreed with the following statements (out of 9 present):

1. I preferred French to Spanish – 6
2. I preferred Spanish to French – 3
3. I enjoyed learning about Spain – 3
4. I enjoyed learning Spanish words – 5
5. I found Spanish easier than French – 1
6. I would like to go to Spain one day – 5
7. I would like to go to France one day – 3

Which language would you like to sample next? (unlimited responses allowed):

More French: 4
More Spanish: 3
Italian: 8
Japanese: 8
German: 6
C  Interview with SENCO of School X

Transcript of interview with SENCO, 23/03/12

RH: Right, so, I was just wondering, because I'd asked V [the AUM] about this: whose idea was it to get an ITT student in coming to teach languages to the Nurture group, do you know?
SENCO: Yes, it was instigated by the Modern Foreign Languages department, uh, the first year we ran a Nurture group, which was three years ago, they asked whether there would be any mileage in offering them some, and we took them... bit their hand off right away! So, yeah, it came from Foreign Languages.
RH: Ok great, um, is it a conscious school thing to have a policy of languages for everybody?
SENCO: Yes.
RH: Yeah?
SENCO: Yes, as far as I'm aware, it is.
RH: So, yeah, obviously before that, the children with special needs were just in mainstream languages classrooms anyway?
SENCO: Yes.
RH: OK right.
SENCO: But we found a lot of them couldn't cope with English language, and in Modern Foreign Languages lessons were just... quite a lot of them ended up being disapplied quite early on because they couldn't cope with it.
RH: OK, right, yeah. So, what do you feel the year sevens gain from having somebody, a student, come in and teach them...
SENCO: A language?
RH: A language, yeah.
SENCO: Um, I think if it's done in the right way, and you've done it in the right way, without asking for too much written stuff, and a lot of it oral and visual and all the rest of it, it's fantastic, 'cos it opens their eyes to other things, other parts of the world. I mean, a lot of the kids that are in Nurture group never go out of [the village], and literally that's true. Um, so they have no concept... I mean B yesterday was a prime example: his mum's told him he's gonna be in [the village] for the rest of his life, but then when I talked to him and explained that when he's earning money he'll be able to go abroad, and he'll be able... possibly he'll want to go to Euro Disney, you know, and there'll be other languages... he saw the importance and relevance of it.
RH: OK, great, that's really good. What do you think... is that what you ideally think they should ideally get out of it, just a broadened awareness of the world around them?
SENCO: Yeah, and key vocabulary, you know, basic vocabulary, so that if they did end up on a package holiday to Spain, or going to Euro Disney, cos they're... you know, they're not gonna go far, but those are the two countries I'd probably say they'll most likely end up in, so I think it's important that they could go to those countries, and recognise a word when it's said, or they can see it, yeah.
RH: Yeah. Do you think just the experience, as well, of maybe not understanding what someone's saying could be quite helpful as well?
SENCO: Yeah, yeah.
RH: Yeah, 'cos I've found that sometimes kids don't hear enough foreign languages in the languages lesson, and then they get to the country, and they're like, “Oh, everyone speaks this language!”
SENCO: Yeah, so fast, yeah.
What are the most effective ways in which to teach MFL to students with SEN?

Rachel HAIGH, 2012

RH: Yeah. I don't know how much teaching of them you usually do yourself... do you, what kinds of things tend to work best in other subjects like English and Maths, and stuff...?

SENCO: Well, I do teach the Nurture group the two extra English lessons that they have, to their normal English lessons, um, and I concentrate purely on phonics, ‘cos there are huge gaps in their reading skills and their spelling skills, so I do two terms of phonics, they’re tested on reading when they come into the school, they’re screened, and then I’ll test them again – well, actually they had their tests yesterday actually at Easter, and usually, well I’ve only done it two years now, but the reading ages can improve from anything up to six months up to three years, four years.

RH: Wow, that’s really good.

SENCO: Yeah, it’s really good. Um, what we do is, we have a Science ARTA who teaches them three periods of science, we take out all the really wordy stuff – we tend to use a lot of Key Stage 2 resources – and we just focus on key vocabulary. Um, they have a lot of picture lessons, a lot of visual lessons, a lot of Cloze activities, you know, a lot of matching and pairing up – physically getting them doing something, but they’re still doing the learning, yeah.

RH: Do you find the majority of them learn better when they’re doing something?

SENCO: Yes.

RH: Rather than if they’re listening to something or looking at something?

SENCO: Definitely, definitely. You put a whiteboard and a pen in front of them to write answers on and show me, they’ll do that far better than write the answer down on a piece of paper. You know, they prefer that kinaesthetic approach. And we’ve got lots of activities they can do where they don’t realise they’re practising their reading or their spelling, you know, the little gamey type things that they love, absolutely love.

RH: Yeah, ‘cos I’ve found that actually, teaching them – something in French – doing some of that kinaesthetic stuff they really remembered those words, but when I just showed them a picture it was fft – over their heads.

SENCO: Yeah, it doesn’t stay.

RH: Yeah, that’s really interesting. Um, what do you think affects... uh what’s the question... What do you think motivates them to learn in a lesson?

SENCO: I think a lot of it, to be honest, is down to personalities, and the relationship that they’ve got with the member of staff. If they like the member of staff and they genuinely feel that the member of staff likes them, they will respond, and they’ll be eager to learn.

RH: So they’re doing it most for that member of staff than for themselves, almost?

SENCO: Um, at first, at first, but then gradually... I mean the ethos of us is to realise that it is all about improving themselves, and then gradually as they improve and make progress, they realise and start to feel good about themselves, ‘cos a lot of the work done with the Nurture group, and the way you teach them, centres around self-esteem, building their confidence, you know, getting them to communicate positively, because personalities clash – you’ll have realised that being in there with them!

RH: Yeah!

SENCO: You know, so it’s the whole... the holistic approach to teaching.

RH: Yeah. Um, as far as I know N [usual class teacher] usually teaches them vocational stuff, doesn’t she?

SENCO: Yeah.

RH: What does that tend to include?

SENCO: Geography and history.
What are the most effective ways in which to teach MFL to students with SEN?

Rachel HAIGH, 2012

RH: Right, OK.
SENCO: Geography and history. Um... it doesn't include RE, basically because we don't have the time with them, we focus on geography and history.
RH: OK, right.
SENCO: And it's topic-based, as opposed to, you know, sort of anything else.
RH: The last thing that I wanted to ask was: how well... how long do you think it takes them normally to retain something new? To... sort of absorb it?
SENCO: It varies. It varies from child to child, 'cos each one of their needs is so different and so specific that sometimes you can, you can revisit something every lesson for weeks and weeks and it still doesn't hit, and you can try different approaches, um, and just hope that eventually one day you'll say it in a certain way or present it in a certain way that they'll catch onto it. Some kids can take it in straight away, um, but others it can take... well, one child in particular, I don't think, hasn't made any progress so far this year, but there are other complex issues associated with him, and personally I don't think he should be at this school – he should be in a special school.
RH: OK, right. Um... that's everything I think that I wanted to ask, so thanks very much!
SENCO: Thank you very much, 'cos it's been lovely what you've done with them. Really nice.
RH: Ah, thanks.
What are the most effective ways in which to teach MFL to students with SEN?

Rachel HAIGH, 2012

D References

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Articles

Electronic resources