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LANGUAGES

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Teaching Character Through Subjects – MFL Suite 2 Key Information

Teacher	Julia Goode	School	Kings Leadership Academy, Warrington
Overview			
Curriculum Area	French		
Subject Focus	<p>This series of lessons focused on being a good speaker and listener in a language classroom. Although the topic that it linked with was that of “food”, which is a part of the new GCSE curriculum, and specifically tailored to a year 8 cohort, it could be easily adapted to link to any topic that is being learned in most language classrooms.</p>		
Identified Key Character Qualities	<p>Courage and Confidence from the performance domain, and Kindness and Respect from the Moral domain.</p>		
Character Focus	<p>Each lesson tries to integrate one or two of the caterpillar processes, where the first lesson is to think about what issues might come up as a language learner and discuss the areas of language that are affected by character virtues, and considering what character traits they might consider to be important to a language learner.</p> <p>Lesson two allows the students to consider the implications of not being a good language learner and to think of their own reactions to being in a cross-cultural situation with little understanding of the language or culture. They look at a culture clash role-play as both a tourist and as a native person and how it can affect both sides.</p> <p>Lesson three gives the students the opportunity to apply their understanding of character to being an active and respectful listener and how that relates back to being a good language learner.</p> <p>Lessons four and five allow the students to consolidate their learning and apply the previous three lessons to a productive task of a presentation. This allows them to think of the virtues they must apply as both a listener and a speaker when presenting in class.</p>		
Differentiation	<p>The language content of the lessons was personalized to each student, depending upon their language level and their target for the end of the learning cycle. The presentations are naturally differentiated by the language the students have learned over the five-week learning period. Vocabulary lists are extended for students that are aiming higher.</p>		
Adaptability	<p>The lessons are easily adaptable, as the focus on speaking and listening, the short character activities in lessons 2 and 3 are appropriate to a range of ages and abilities. Lesson 1 and the character discussions in the other lessons can be applied to most classes merely by slight changes to the questions asked and how much scaffolding is given to the students as they come up with their own answers and viewpoints on the character discussion.</p> <p>The practical, language aspect of the series of lessons is currently about food and restaurants as a topic, but could be changed to most other language topics</p>		

	<p>as appropriate, provided there is scope for the practice of spoken language and conversation.</p> <p>The final piece which the series of lessons leads up to – the presentation in front of the class - is easily done not only for any topic in a language and based upon each individual’s grade points and target, but could also be easily adapted to any subject outside of MFL. The purpose of the lessons is to improve the students’ confidence as speakers and compassion as listeners, which is something that is useful in more than just language learning. Students of a higher level of learning can take the discussion further and compare their own learning in these skills to other situations outside the classroom, while those at the beginning of their language-learning journey can focus on the practical aspects of listening and speaking.</p>
<p>Affect on School Priorities</p>	<p>While students at King’s are already encouraged to view the world with a character based attitude, it can often be that these character traits taught in school are not specifically applied to individual subject areas. Being taught to aspire, respect, be self-aware, etc. are positive steps for the student as whole but the series of lessons have helped the class to consider very specifically the aspects of their character development that are necessary as language learners. Students in the class have expressed carefully considered ideas surrounding language learning and empathy with other cultures. Some students have expressed an interest in learning more about the culture of the languages they are studying and others have come to understand some more about themselves as learners of a subject, which they often struggle to understand. It has been a useful tool in improving participation and confidence in speaking tasks as it can be referred to in consequent lessons when students can be reluctant to speak in front of others. The atmosphere in the class during speaking exercises improved marginally as the course progressed and a very few students expressed a slight decrease in anxiety, and others a greater willingness to participate.</p>
<p>Things That Worked Well</p>	<p>The role-play game with the groups of students in lesson 2 was a strong element, the students enjoyed participating and the discussion following was very productive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The class as a whole took to the discussions of the activities very well with some very intuitive reasoning. * When it came to creating presentations in the later lessons, many students were able to recognise the target virtues in others and understand how they must attempt to act to improve their own and others’ performances. This understanding of what was needed was the real aim of the lesson series and I was pleased with their self-reflection after each attempt at spoken language. I feel that attempting to improve their actual attitude to speaking and listening in another language is something that will take more time and be a long process that will refer back to the early building blocks of these lessons.
<p>Things That Might Be Improved</p>	<p>While the speaking exercise at the end of lesson 1 was intended to “shock” the students and to remind them of the anxiety they often feel when faced with a speaking task, it may have been too soon to introduce the task so early in the teaching of the topic. It might have been better left to the opening of lesson 2 a week later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * While King’s requires a hypothesis evaluation at the end of each lesson, the lessons could be equally served by a more active plenary and reflection at the end of the lessons. * Possibly too many keywords have been used for each lesson, and by cutting these down the lesson could have been more precise and targeted. At the time

	<p>I felt that giving the students access to a glossary of terms relating to character would be beneficial to their discussions, but some terms could be easily cut from the lesson plans with no detrimental effects.</p> <p>* The picture description/drawing game from lesson 3 was altogether quite positive but some students became rather embroiled in their artistic prowess rather than the aim of the task. Possibly a different method with blocks of colours already pre-prepared (i.e. Lego blocks would be useful), or shapes cut out to be rearranged with a shorter length of time given for the task might avoid this problem (and create a wealth of others depending upon the behaviour of the class).</p> <p>* It was easy to allow the students to take the discussion further each time with such a wide scope for in depth evaluation - time had to be very closely monitored. In the future, less might be planned into some lessons to give the students time to fully explore some of the themes in the lessons.</p>
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Lessons

Subject Focus	<p>Lesson One: To get the students to begin to actively use the topic language they have learned in the week in a spoken language task and to begin to familiarise them with how the new vocabulary may be used in extended sentences. Students will begin to analyse their own feelings when speaking another language and the reasons behind their possible reluctance to do so in class.</p> <p>Lesson Two: Students will evaluate a language/cultural situation where an understanding of the culture and methods of communication in a foreign country would be advantageous. They will link this to their language learning and the reasons they should improve their language learning and endeavour to understand others.</p> <p>Lesson Three: Students will develop their listening and communication skills and link this to language learning in the classroom and out.</p> <p>Lesson Four: Students will begin to consolidate their vocabulary and grammar structures from previous weeks to create a short but coherent structure to present to the class in week five. Opinions with reasons structures, present, past and future tense can all be incorporated to the presentation dependent upon the level of the student and their target.</p> <p>Lesson Five: Students present their language pieces to the class with particular attention to their own vocabulary and pronunciation. Students listening to others' presentation practice listening and critical skills, using a rubric and own knowledge to identify structures and vocabulary while applying their character learning to their evaluation of self and others.</p>
Lesson Activities	<p>Lesson One: * Do now task - odd one out words, courage, confidence, fearlessness, etc. - This task is designed to introduce students to the key words of the lesson and make them begin to think about the connections between confidence, fear and bravery. * Introduction to the lesson series - I decided I was going to be overt in the</p>

teaching of character in these lessons. The introduction gives the students an idea of what to expect and some of the reasoning behind the lesson and those to follow.

* Trapdoor speaking exercise - by this point, students should have already had a brief introduction to the topic they will be covering with some vocabulary, however, this exercise has been used in the lesson to make them somewhat uncomfortable in speaking the language. Since it is early in the learning of a new topic, the students might be unsure and tentative in speaking extended sentences.

The nature of the task also involves some frustration and constant repetition. To complete the task, a lot of target language must be spoken and pronunciation must be sufficient for their partner to recognise what is being said.

Here they have the opportunity to analyse their own level of confidence and the courage that must be employed to continue with the task.

- Statement of intent for learning and improvement - students are being given the opportunity to consider their own personal improvement: the choices they make due to their feelings when speaking another language and how those choices can be changed in the future.

Lesson Two:

* Do now task - think about how respect and patience might be shown to people at home - Students are being introduced to the key words of the lesson and making a connection to the world outside the classroom. This gives them some context to their learning.

* Role-play task - The cultural misunderstandings role play plays with the students' feelings of frustration and patience. By playing the part of the misunderstood

Fondians or the travelling students, the students are given the opportunity to consider both sides of a situation where a lack of cultural knowledge leads to an impossible barrier.

The discussion that follows allows the students to consider their own feelings and actions in the situation and how they might be improved.

* The marketplace conversation - Based on learned language structures, students are asked to create a food marketplace conversation in the target language using cards with pre-prepared phrases and vocabulary. Students are given the opportunity to apply some of their learning from the previous task on patience, to listening and attempting to understand what is being said by their partners.

* Whole class discussion - Here students can make the connection between both tasks and consider how the second language task could have been, or were, improved by applying their previous learning from the culture clash task; avoiding frustration and attempting to understand their speaking partner better.

Lesson Three:

* Do now task - What is an act of kindness? Is it always something between friends or can you be kind to strangers? - Very brief discussion to open the lesson that introduces one of the lesson's key words. This means students can begin to explore the idea of being kind in different settings, leading to them discussing the need for a balance between kindness and criticism at the end of the lesson.

* Active listening drawing exercise - This gives the students the opportunity to consider the difference between being a passive and active listener and how

one if more conducive to language learning. It also gives them the chance to explore their feelings when they are being listened to properly as opposed to speaking to an unresponsive listener.

* Target language and active listening exercise - A simple speaking task responding to a series of questions they have prepared previously in the week, describing past meals in the target language.

The change from speaking in a pair to speaking to a small group gives allows students to explore their own reactions to speaking in different contexts. This helps to set the tone for the introduction of the presentation task in lesson four. Students can identify their own reactions to speaking and how they can improve as listeners - considering how they may have changed their listening

Lesson Four:

* Do now task - agree/disagree with the three statements -

This task helps the students to consider the importance of communication over perfection. As this is a consolidation lesson, the three statements directly relate to previous lessons and allows the students to return to the “character learning” mind frame.

* Whole class food review presentation planning - This task helps the students to consider their previous language learning and to create success criteria for their presentation. This is an opportunity for the students to consider content and language for their project, and for the teacher to pair the students by ability.

* Planning of presentation in pairs - With reference to their learning intentions in lesson one, students will plan their presentation for the next character lesson and consider the choices they are making. Students will be encouraged to consider the choices they make and the reasons behind them, whether using simpler language than they are capable of, or choosing to take a smaller role in the presentation, students will give thought to their courage and confidence in putting together and practicing their presentation.

* Self-reflection - Students will consider their strengths and weaknesses and how they will address them in the preparation for and giving of the presentation. They will also consider others’ feelings in giving a presentation in preparation for the listening they will have to do of others’ presentations. Their own behaviour will be highlighted with reference to their own and others’ achievement in language lessons.

Lesson Five:

* Do now task - complete the sentence “Hearing and listening are not the same thing because...” - This is a quick settling task to bring the students back to the mindset of being string active listeners and remind them of previous learning before a lesson that will for the greatest part involve the practice of their listening skills.

* Presentations by students - Reference made to the hypothesis before the presentations “It is my responsibility to make the classroom a better place to learn.”

Students, as they listen to the presentations, are encouraged to consider the language being used and ways it might be improved, the performance and pronunciation of the presenting students and to give short feedback at the conclusion. Feedback should be both positive and negative, with an emphasis on constructive criticism.

* Debrief of whole class after presentations - Students are given the opportunity to consider their own reaction to giving a presentation in the class and whether they or other have shown courage in giving their presentations.

* Review of learning journey for all character lessons – using previous

hypotheses and with a focus on the “most important character virtue for a language learner”, students react and debate the importance of courage and respect to the language classroom.
 * How can what we have learned be built upon to improve our language classroom and make it a better place for everyone to learn in?

Notes on Differentiation and Adaptability

Lesson One:
 The trapdoor element of the lessons (like the generic one in the picture below), can be easily adapted to include any set of language vocabulary for any topic needing to be covered.
 The “unprepared speaking” element of the task remains unchanged, regardless of difficulty level or topic covered.
 Two or more trapdoor exercises can be prepared for the lesson for students of differing abilities, and students can be divided to work with those of similar abilities for the task.
 The discussion that precedes, and follows, is not affected by the language used in the task.

En general je joue au tennis lundi
 regarde le match le weekend
 mange des glaces à Redcar

J'adore faire un gâteau
 lire un livre d'action
 faire du vélo

Le weekend dernier J'ai joué au cartes
 Je suis allé au musée
 J'ai regardé un film au cinéma

Samedi prochain je vais faire du shopping
 je vais acheter un CD de Take That
 je vais manger au MacDo

Ça sera super!
 formidable!
 *****(own word)

Aussi J'ai fait mes devoirs
 J'ai écouté la radio
 J'ai joué du violon

Parce que j'adore ça
 c'est mon anniversaire
 j'ai de l'argent

mais je déteste le chocolat
 je suis paresseux
 je n'aime pas le ski

Lesson Two:
 The instructions for the role-play can be targeted to different classes with more or less information, simplified or reworded for students with literacy needs. The instruction to stand 8 inches from the other student when speaking to them might be removed for teachers who believe this may cause behavioural problems in a class.

	<p>Alternatively, if a TA is available in the class and students need the support, the class might be divided in half and given an explanation of their task verbally, where questions on their actions might be asked and answered.</p> <p>Lesson Three: As mentioned in the Lesson Plan, modelling of the drawing task might be necessary to prevent any misunderstandings. The shapes used in the task might be increased or lessened dependent on the needs of the class. Similarly, for high level classes, at KS4, this task might be attempted in the target language - with appropriate prepositions and imperative phrases provided to the students as well as the vocabulary necessary for the shapes, etc. In the speaking task, there is the opportunity to extend and stretch the exercise by asking students with a stronger language background or those in KS4 to produce a summary of their partner's meals from the first half of the exercise rather than their own - translating between pronouns and practicing memory skills and fluency.</p> <p>Lesson Four: When planning their presentation in the target language, students should be made aware of their own personal success criteria, particularly the language that should be used in their own presentation with their partner. For this reason, presentation pairs should be chosen with reference to target language ability - students of similar ability and targets can identify what is expected of them as a team. Students should be guided towards appropriate numbers of tense references, subject pronouns and grammar structures for their own success criteria. It might be useful to create a class success criteria list with several bands (i.e. bronze/ silver/gold, or blue/purple/green) that can be used as a guide for what each pair should be creating.</p> <p>Lesson Five: See above regarding the presentations.</p>
<p>Other Points Worth Noting</p>	<p>The nature of the presentation in lessons four and five means that the planning of the presentation could and should be set as home learning. It is also an opportunity for consolidation and revision of learning over the period as the presentation can incorporate any language structures, vocabulary or topic taught over the period of time in which the lessons are taught. While the lesson plans have been created using a hypothesis review structure for each one, the content can be taken and applied to another set structure, provided a discussion and review is incorporated into the reflection at the end of each lesson. If the hypothesis structure is employed, then it is imperative that the hypothesis is introduced at the very start of the class and the students are guided to a conclusion proving or disproving the hypothesis with the content being taught in the class. The teacher shouldn't answer the hypothesis for the students but allow them to reach their own conclusion, there is no need for the students to agree with each other provided they have reasoning behind their answers. Guiding questions can be used to tease an answer out of a reluctant class. Hypothesis responses can be verbal, written or even a show of hands in class.</p>

	There is no set structure for how a hypothesis for a lesson
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