

Session 3: Cross-curriculum à English

1. Poetry Ideas

The best creative formats are those which encourage students to experiment and make new meanings but offer them a structure that will not lead them into translating word for word complex sentences that will end up unsuccessful and incomprehensible. Some of the simplest structures still allow abstract ideas and thoughts to be expressed as students can research many abstract nouns successfully once they are secure with gender, definite and indefinite articles and dictionary skills.

- a) Hello _____, goodbye _____
- b) (Colour) like _____
- c) (Colour) is for _____
- d) Diamond poem (noun, adjective, adjective, verb, verb, verb, adjective, adjective, noun)
- e) Who? What? Where? Why?
- f) Accrostic poems
- g) Shape to symbolise the word poems
- h) Rhythmic poems or raps

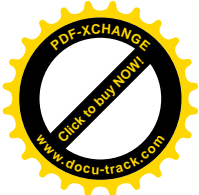


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2. Stories

Once students have begun using the past tenses, developing use of narrative texts can be very motivating. A few ideas might be:

- a) Students read a few simple children's stories in the TL (for much younger children) and then write one themselves (either produce it as an electronic 'big book' using PowerPoint OR really make it – finding them an audience for their work would assure its success).
- b) Students read a fairy tale or folk tale in the TL and then re-write the story and illustrate it but write an alternative ending.
- c) Students invent a new Mr Men (or Little Miss) character and write a story for him/her.



Session 3: Cross-curriculum à English cont'd

3. Text types

One clear link with English that makes a lot of sense for language teachers if we are to make language learning progressive and coherent is to focus explicitly on developing in students a range of text types/genres that they are also familiar with in their mother tongue. Certain content areas lend them particularly to the production of different text types. There is also a fairly natural progression in terms of linguistic difficulty, although some of the genres can be exploited differentially too. The main functions or text types that I think will work well for the KS3 languages curriculum are:

a) definition (report)

Saying what something is and giving its main features. This might be describing an insect or animal in detail, or describing a place. Although the nouns and adjectives will be different in each context, the main verbs (to be, to have, there is/are) will be the same.

In languages, I think this would work well with towns and other places, animals, flags, countries

b) questionnaire

This is a text type we use quite frequently and it is one that we can easily vary in terms of difficulty as well as content.

c) description

This is much more often use in EFL teaching than in MFL teaching in secondary schools. It has re-emerged in the ASSET speaking exams though where students have to describe what they see in a picture. I think there is a lot of scope for doing much more of this text type and it is very useful for developing students ability to narrate in the 3rd person later on.

d) Instructions

Imperatives find their ways into most SOW at some point but I'm not sure that students are explicitly encouraged to make the link between the language function of telling others what to do in the different topics when they meet them. They meet them often first in classroom instructions, then in directions, then in health and fitness routines, and sometimes in recipes (depending on language). It is often the teacher who gives the instructions too and the students respond. It seems that both making students more able to give instructions and more aware of the links between the different contexts in which they learn them would be a positive step forward.

e) Recount

This is a telling of an event in the past, such as a holiday or a day out. We typically use this as the main genre for students to write and talk in the past tenses. This is definitely the most simple genre for the past tense. If we exclusively use this text type we might be in danger of limiting students development and giving them tasks that are too monotonous?

f) Narrative

We should definitely see how much we can mirror students development of narrative technique in their own language. They know how to set the scene with description, how to have a beginning, middle and end to a story and with guidance, should also be able to produce narratives in the TL.

g) Review of book, play, person's life (biography) – different tone, register again but no reason why students couldn't also develop this text type

h) Role play (discussed elsewhere)

(i) Poetry (discussed elsewhere)