

Session 3: Cross-curriculum à Geography



1. Describing a place

The Year 7 Geography curriculum at our school begins with students developing their ability to describe a place in detail. They gave me a list of the language they give students for this and we have translated it into Spanish. We plan to use it to describe places in more detail than we would usually do. The verb structures we will practise will still be 'it has', 'it is', 'they are', 'there are' but the nouns and adjectives the students will use will be more sophisticated and age-appropriate to them. They will be able to write essentially the same level of description of a place in Spanish as they can in English. Adjective endings are an essential grammatical feature to teach through this unit. One further advantage of this is that it uses the 3rd person of verbs – a typical year 7 languages curriculum is very 1st person centred and this can limit students to being confident with just one part of the verb.

2. My world

Another thing they do in the first term in Geography at our school is trace their relationship to the wider world through the things they own and where they come from. This is an ideal focus for students to do a personal world mapping activity in Spanish, taking some of the things that are important to them in their life and writing about where they're from. This could practise 'is from' and 'are from' as well as countries, or also adjectives of countries and adjective endings.

3. Local area

Pupils also look at settlements and refer to their local area. There are lots of possibilities here but one way for possibly exploiting this in year 8 or 9 would be to compare and contrast photos of the local town 100 years ago with today and say what it was like then. They would be able to use essential verbs in present and imperfect for these comparisons.

4. Ways of working

One of the typical ways of working in Geography is to process information using a card sort or categorising strategies. One example I have of this is to set pupils the task of finding a best friend for Sophie. They have 4 different friends to choose from and they get different pieces of information about each one, which they have to compare and contrast with what Sophie says about herself. Then they have to decide who makes the best match for her and list their reasons. Another lesson uses 3 different ways of recording different information from the same text about school subjects and opinions. In each group of 3, one person does each way of noting information from the text. Then the 1s, 2s and 3s get together in groups of 3 to compare and share their answers, discussing any points of difference. Then they return to their original group and each reports back what they know about the text