Session 8.5 Workshops

Languages for ALL:

experience of language teaching with SEN learners

Starr Green

Learning a Language *by Olivia McMahon*

Learning a language
Is like doing a jigsaw puzzle
Of a million pieces
With a picture that keeps changing
It's like getting lost in a foreign city without a map
It's like playing tennis without a ball
Like being an ant in a field of grasshoppers
It's like being an acrobat with a broken leg
An actor without a script
A carpenter without a saw
A storyteller without a middle or an end
But then gradually
It's like being out in the early morning
with the mists lifting
It's like a chink of light under a door
Like finding the glove you were looking for
Catching the train you thought you were going to miss
Getting an unlooked-for present
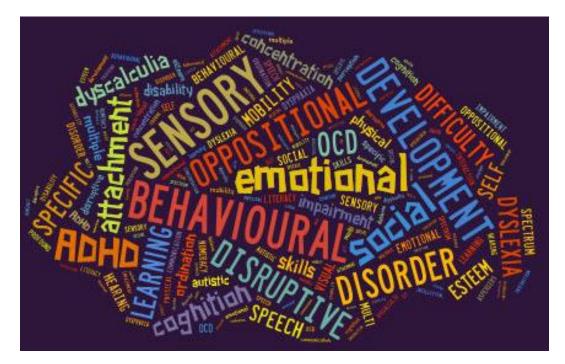Exchanging a smile
And then one day it's like riding a bicycle
Very fast downhill

Languages for all:

Experience of language teaching with SEN learners

@missgreenmfl   Starr Green   TES – rosaespanola

Starr Green

Wildly enthusiastic linguist
Accidental teacher
Unintentional specialist in behaviour management and SEN
Slightly obsessive creator of resources

Aims of this session

- Remind ourselves how it can feel to be in the early stages of learning a new language

- Recognise the positive things that SEN learners can bring to an MFL classroom

- Acknowledge the challenges in MFL for both SEN pupils and the staff who work with them

- Take away some practical ideas to try out in your lessons

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How does speaking other languages make you feel?

How long is it since you learned a new language?

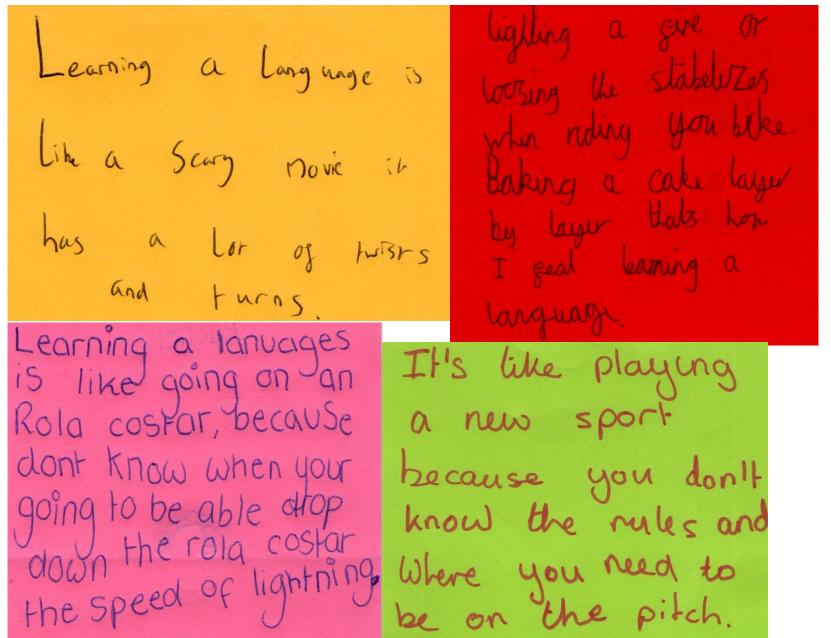*Here's what my Y7 Spanish pupils thought...*

Y7 Spanish – Learning a language is like…

Learling a launguage is like writing a son but you dont know wh it will be about

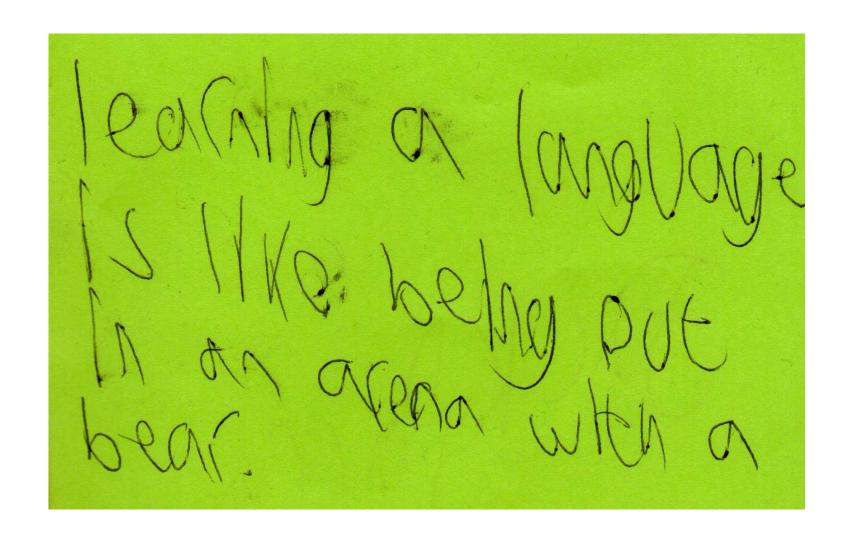Learning a language is like... being at a shop not knowing what you want.

The big bang because to start with you have no clue what you're doing and then one day boom! You know what you're doing.

A Flower growing.

Baking a cake because you start off with something flat, then it slowly rises.

learning a new lang is like eating big moves in a second

Y7 Spanish – Learning a language is like...

Learning a language is like...
Starting a youtube channel, you start of with nothing and gradually get better and better.

It feels like eating a ten course meal its extremly hard at first but if you take your time.

It's like chilling and waching telly.

being put on the dance stage and not knowing anything.

Learning a new language is like being a really lazy cat person and then someone getting you a very playful, excited dog!

Learning a language is like breaking your hand and having to use one hand.

Y7 Spanish – Learning a language is like…

Learning a language is Like a scary movie it has a lot of twists and turns.

lighting a gire or loosing the stabelizes when riding you bike. Baking a cake layer by layer thats how I feel learning a language.

Learning a lanuages is like going on an Rola costar, because dont know when your going to be able drop down the rola costar the speed of lightning.

It's like playing a new sport because you don't know the rules and where you need to be on the pitch.

Y7 Spanish – Learning a language is like…

learning a language is like being put in an arena with a bear.

What do you find most rewarding or enjoyable about teaching SEN pupils?

A few quotes that have stayed with me...

French is my favourite subject because none of us have done it before, so the others aren't all way better than me.
I don't feel like I'm thick in French lessons.

I'm better at spelling in Spanish than I am in English!

Bethany, Y9 pupil with severe dyslexia

Reece, Y7 pupil with moderate learning difficulty

French is hard, but I'm used to having to really concentrate in lessons.
I don't think other people are!

Isobel, Y8 pupil with profound deafness

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What challenges can learners with low levels of literacy in their mother tongue face in MFL?

Retention

Lack of confidence

Poor memory skills

Lack of resilience

Previous negative experience with MFL

Spelling difficulties

Pronunciation difficulties

Being withdrawn from MFL for extra literacy/numeracy

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What are the challenges for the teacher?
Are they different in primary and secondary?

- Not enough time in lesson to both stretch most able & help SEN pupils

- Additional planning time required for differentiation

- Building resilience and confidence

- Adapting expectations so SEN pupils have a positive experience in MFL

- Limited or no TA provision / Lack of TA subject knowledge

- Pupils being temporarily withdrawn from MFL for extra literacy etc

- The need to support literacy in English

- Showing progress over time for SEN pupils

- Lack of parental support

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STARR'S TOP 10 THINGS TO IMPROVE CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE & MOTIVATION…

Humour   Competition   Positivity

Accessibility   Empathy

Inclusion   Knowledge   Respect

Achievement   "The Point"

Rule #1:

Be guided by the pupils themselves – SEN pupils all have different needs, and they are the experts in knowing what does and doesn't work for them

Talk to the pupils, their parents, TAs who support them and staff who teach them in other lessons or have previously taught them in MFL. The fact that you've taken the time to do this will go a long way to establishing a positive relationship.

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Some things to consider

Clear expectations

→ pupils know what's expected of them, and that this is realistic

→ aspirational extras – "this is the minimum I'm looking for, but if you can then you could also add…"

Recognition of all pupils' individual progress and achievement

→ focus on personal progress rather than "who got the most correct?"

→ reward effort and attitude to learning, not just achievement

Seating plans

→ does your classroom work better with pupils grouped by ability, or with less able pupils supported by those who are more able?

→ would this vary depending on the task?

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Some things to consider

Support materials – learning mats, help booklets, vocab lists, displays

→ aim to give most able pupils access to more advanced grammar and vocab that they can use independently, and to support less able pupils with the basics so they need less teacher input

Search "rosaespanola helpsheet" / "rosaespanola help booklet" on TES

Quick differentiation

→ Writing and speaking – differentiated expectations and varied support materials

→ Listening & reading – use the same text/recording, but differentiate the task and vary the support materials available

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Differentiated speaking/writing

¿Cómo te llamas? What's your name?
- Say what your name is.
⭐ *Give extra details about yourself like your age or where you live.*

¿Qué haces en tu tiempo libre? What do you do in your free time?
- Say at least 3 activities that you do.
⭐ *Give extra details like when, where or who with*
⭐ *Say why you like these activities*
⭐ *Say what you do in different types of weather*

¿Qué no te gusta hacer? What don't you like doing?
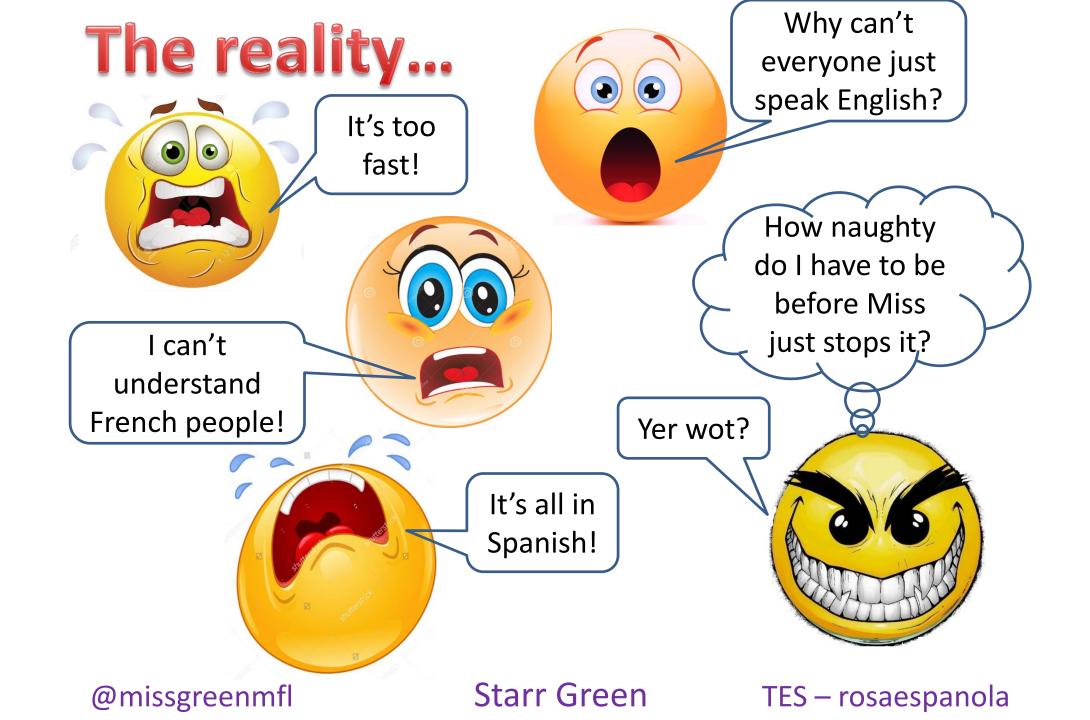- Give at least 2 activities you don't like.
⭐ *Say why you don't like them*

Good things to include:
- Full sentences
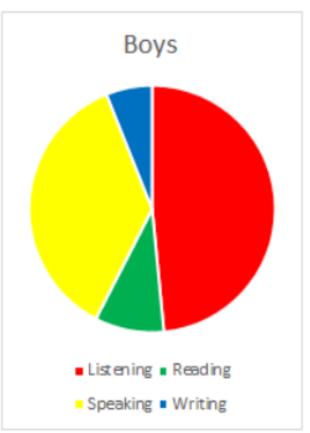- Correct pronunciation
- Extra details
- Connectives *(e.g. and, but)*
- Time phrases *(e.g. sometimes)*
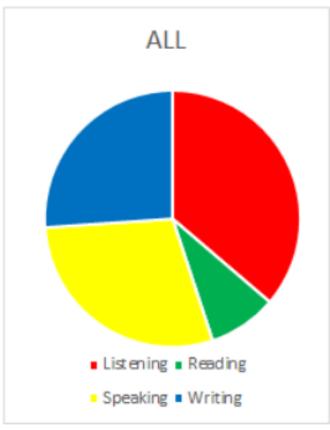- Opinions *(e.g. I like, I love)*

Mixed ability Y8 MFL pupils – which part of language lessons do you most enjoy?

Girls, Boys, ALL pie charts showing Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing

Thank you to our ITT student, Matt Sedgwick

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Differentiated listening

Warm-up

Get everyone's ears in tune by doing an easier task first

→ listen and mime what they hear

→ follow script and shout out the next word when it's paused

Recap/introduce key vocab from the recording first

→ play a game

→ do a reading or speaking activity

If main listening task is a video...

→ watch it with the sound muted and discuss what they expect to hear

→ pause it at key points and get pupils/teams to write subtitles – single words or whole sentences, according to their ability

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Differentiated listening

Main listening activity

Provide a variety of tasks that pupils either choose themselves or are directed which one to do. Allow some pupils to use support materials.

Gapfills

→ vary the difficulty level by choosing different words to blank out

    easier = words at the start or end of sentences

               = cognates or very familiar words

               = words that sound very different from one another

    harder = words in the middle of a sentence

               = less familiar words

               = words that sound similar to each other

→ challenge pupils to fill in the gaps without looking at the word list

Differentiated listening

Main listening activity

Questions

→ vary the difficulty level by using different types of questions

easier = multiple choice or true/false:
- with pictures to tick
- with target language words to tick
- that only requires recognition of key words or basic understanding of the gist

harder = multiple choice or true/false requiring a deeper understanding, e.g. recognising tenses, filtering irrelevant information
= writing answers in full
= transcription

Differentiated listening

Cool down

How do you mark it if pupils have done different tasks??

→ show the script on the screen or give pupils a copy, and get them to mark each others' work in mixed ability groups of 3-4

→ translate the script together as a class, getting pupils to mark their answers as you go

→ discuss problem areas – common misunderstandings or difficult sections. Why were these a problem? How could the same issue be avoided in future?

Improving vocab retention

Practice of revision skills in lesson time

→ carousel of different strategies for pupils to try out and see what works best for them

→ "baseline" vocab test after a lesson spent trying different revision techniques – this gives the minimum expectation for future tests

Differentiated learning homeworks

→ give different words/different number of words

→ differentiated vocab tests

- matching TL and English words

- writing English definition

- writing words in TL – varied expectations for spelling accuracy

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Improving vocab retention

Competitions and challenges

→ Quizlet/Memrise champion of the week

→ invent their own revision strategy and share with the class

→ games in class to practise new words, e.g. pick a topic, each team has to say a word related to the topic but can't repeat one that's already been said. Teams get knocked out if they can't think of a new word until only one team is left – encourages use of less common vocab. Can also be played in small groups with individual pupils competing.

→ overlapping lessons – consolidate vocab/grammar by using the first part of one lesson to revisit material covered in the previous one

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