

Water Theme – Africa

Context

In this lesson children compare aspects of daily life in Cameroon and in England. The teacher presents the lesson completely in French.

Exploration

This class is studying parts of their curriculum through the medium of French. The teacher has planned a series of practical activities around the theme of water in Africa and England, ensuring that children focus on the National Curriculum (NC) objectives. To support children's comprehension of the new language, she employs various strategies, including the use of:

- ICT, whiteboard and PowerPoint presentation
- words similar to English words
- actions, gestures, emphasis
- props, eg the buckets
- photographs and drawings
- clear, large text

It is interesting to note that while the teacher talks in French all the time, it is natural for children to use French as much as they can but also to discuss and answer in English. As children learn new vocabulary and gain confidence, their use of French will increase. By studying a real topic of relevance to their lives and the rest of curriculum, children are motivated to speak as much as possible in French, drawing on previously learnt language. They are clearly concentrating hard on meaning. This type of work provides a degree of maturity and realism which is sometimes hard to fit in to early language learning and is highly motivating. Cross-curricular work can be introduced at different levels and can be a gradual process, depending on level of confidence in the language and resources available: At a basic level you can integrate aspects of the languages programme into daily routines, e.g. greetings, praise, register, date, weather, familiar work in literacy and maths, ICT, PE and music. At a higher level you might teach aspects of the curriculum using the language, e.g. internet use and email in ICT, a dance in PE, a song or musical appreciation in music, a picture in art, instructions for making things in D&T, a new concept in maths, aspects of a country in geography, grammatical knowledge in Literacy, a topic in science. At an even higher level some schools such as this one have developed immersion programmes, teaching a subject using a language other than English, with a good deal of success. This approach is known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). You can find further guidance and case studies of cross curricular links and integrated work in PART 3 of the Framework, pages 33 – 45.



Learning Outcomes

The children:

- listen for specific words and phrases understand and express simple opinions
- listen attentively and understand more complex phrases and sentences understand longer and more complex phrases and sentences
- read and understand a range of familiar written phrases
- follow a short familiar text, listening and reading at the same time
- read and understand the main points and some detail from a short written passage
- recognise question forms hear main word classes
- notice different text types and deal with authentic texts
- use context and previous knowledge to help understanding look and listen for visual and aural clues
- use language known in one context or topic in another context or topic listen for clues to meaning e.g. tone of voice, key words
- make predictions based on existing knowledge

Next steps

Children will be able to increase their participation and discussion in French.

- ask and answer questions on several topics
- use spoken language confidently to initiate and sustain conversations and to tell stories

They can also discuss their work with their class teacher during Geography lessons to clarify any queries and to reinforce their knowledge and understanding.

Development

- Are there any aspects of the school curriculum which you could teach through the medium of the foreign language? What support might you need? Is there anyone in the school or area which might support you?