

Curriculum Connect: Creativity and Authenticity in the Languages Classroom

Dr Charlotte Ryland and Juliette Claro
8th June 2026

Welcome

Before we begin

The ideas shared in this session are **not** AQA-endorsed and should not be taken as prescriptive guidance.

They are simply suggestions intended to support professional discussion and practice.



Curriculum Connect: GCSE and A Level Creativity and Authenticity in the Classroom

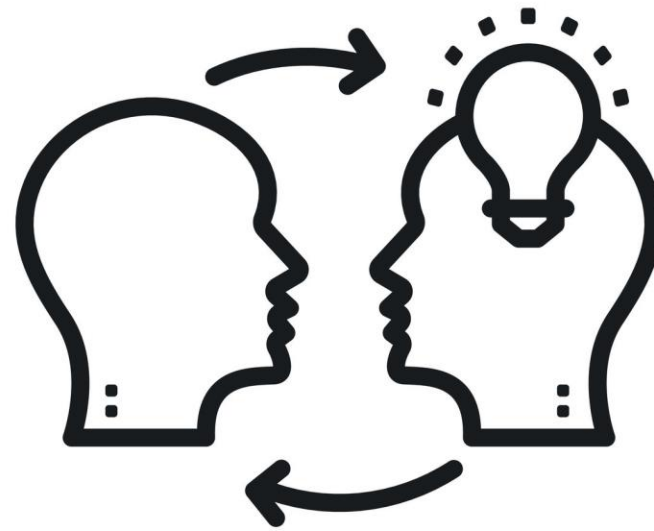


**Dr Charlotte
Ryland:**
**Queen's College
Oxford**



Juliette Claro:
**St Mary's
University
Twickenham.**

What hooked
you into
languages
when you
were young?



Special Interest Group for Creativity in MFL

What we have learned:

- This fills a gap
 - Teachers are extremely enthused by the opportunity to discuss this topic
 - There is divergence when it comes to definitions of 'creativity'. Teacher or learner creativity, or both? Using creative texts or being creative with language?
- >> we need to define 'creativity' and distinguish from 'authenticity'
- AI-generated artefacts (esp. songs) are complicating a shared understanding of 'authenticity'
 - Creativity is often perceived to be in conflict with a knowledge-rich curriculum
 - It can be challenge to incorporate creativity into a standardised curriculum



Why are we talking about creativity and authenticity in MFL right now?

- Knowledge Rich Curriculum (2010)
- Ofsted MFL Curriculum Review (2021)
- Progress 8 measures
- New GCSE reforms for MFL (first teaching 2024)
- New MFL Influencers
- Conditions of language uptake in the UK
- Curriculum and Assessment review 2025



"Authenticity" and "Creativity"

"a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (Morrow, 1977)

"the use of skill and imagination to produce something new [or a work of art]" (OED)

Creative competencies:

- exploring the imagination by **generating new ideas and content**
- constructive curiosity
- open-mindedness, flexibility and lateral thinking
- problem-solving

(Collard, 2016)

Context and purpose of the SIG



Background to the ALL Creativity SIG

The MFL Ofsted review 2021 and the recent related evidence-informed practice in Modern Foreign Languages have emphasised the importance of developing phonics, vocabulary and grammar as the ‘three pillars’ of language learning in England. The National Curriculum also reminds educators of the importance of culture in languages learning as a vector for ‘liberation from insularity’ (p. 1).

The debate on how we bring culture and authentic resources in the language classroom has grown in recent years, especially following the reforms to GCSE qualifications and the emphasis on high frequency vocabulary.

As allocated time for languages lessons reduce in school timetables, there is often a need to prioritise the 3 pillars content over culture at the expense of developing cultural capital and creative skills such as fluency, literacy, problem-solving and critical thinking through literature, songs and other authentic media.

With the growing importance of developing an inclusive and anti-racist curriculum, there are missed opportunities to explore these through authentic resources such as poetry, fiction, non-fiction texts, songs or films.

Context and purpose of the SIG



Explicit priorities in recent guidance:

- Three pillars: phonics, vocabulary, grammar
- High frequency vocabulary



Reduced curriculum time



Risk of squeezing out authentic material and creative skills

Our big question

Explicit priorities in recent guidance:

- Three pillars: phonics, vocabulary, grammar
- High frequency vocabulary



Reduced curriculum time



Risk of squeezing out authentic material and creative skills



Is it possible to teach the three pillars **through** pupils' creative engagement with authentic material?

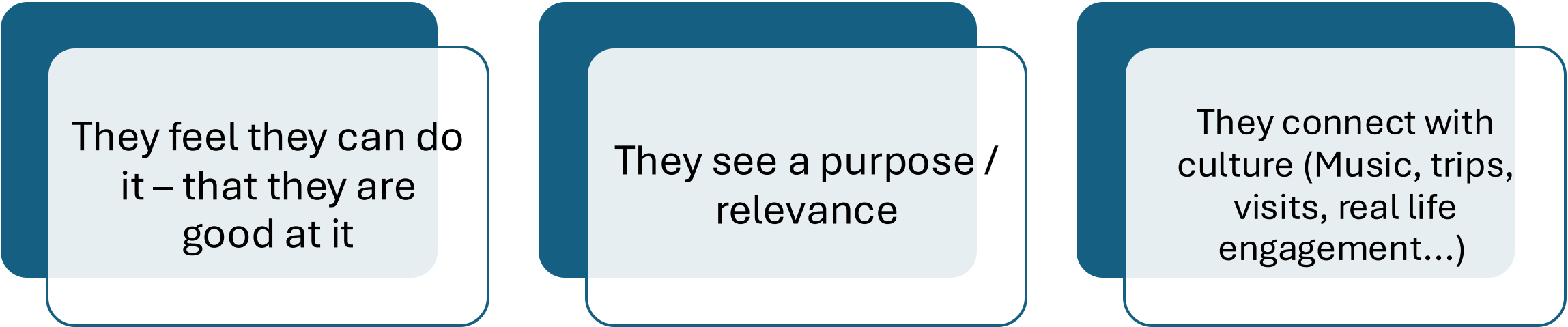


Why do authenticity &
creativity matter?



Evidence of the need for creativity
and authenticity

competence – relevance – culture



They feel they can do it – that they are good at it

They see a purpose / relevance

They connect with culture (Music, trips, visits, real life engagement...)

Source: Languages for All roundtable (2025)
Kings College London Year 12 voice

What Key Stage 3 students tell us:

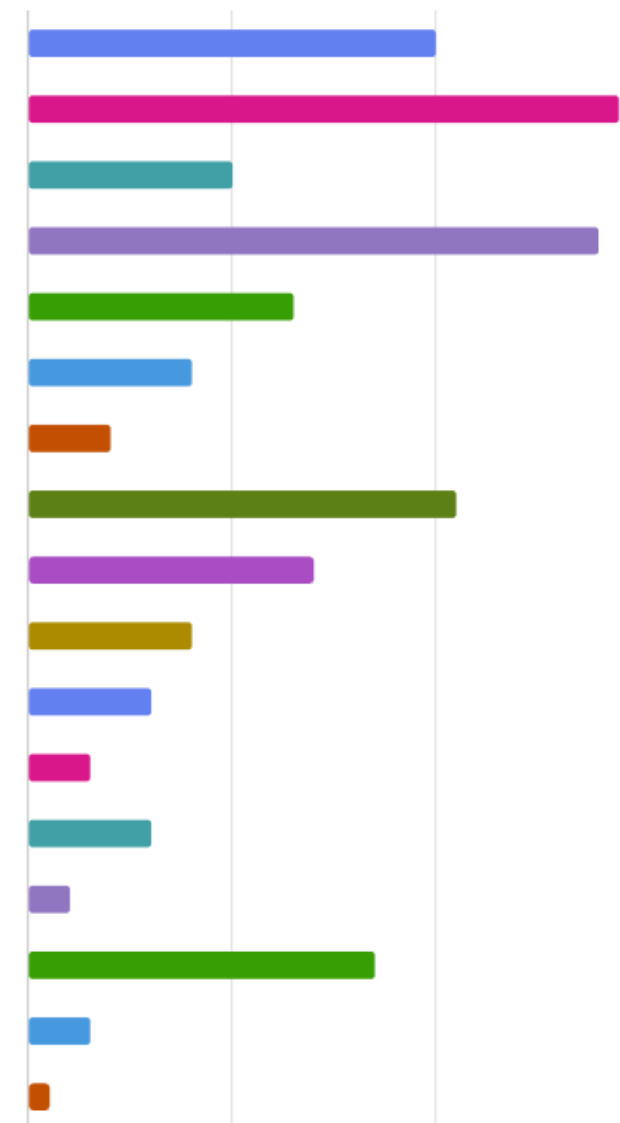
Top 3 most engaging ways to learn more and remember more:

1. Games where they can create
2. Songs
3. Chorus repetitions
4. Online platforms
5. Films, TV series

93 responses year 7, 8 and 9 (2025)

10. What helps you learn more and remember more words or expressions in the language?

chorus repetitions in class	20
games	29
using sentence builders	10
songs	28
creative translations	13
role plays	8
story telling in the language (reading a story in the language and in English)	4
Online platforms (quizlet, kahoot, blookit..)	21
listening activities	14
Using the textbooks or glossary or knowledge organisers (list of words printed)	8
Making up stories or sentences with new words	6
performing/ saying out loud a pre-learnt passage in the language	3
textbook or worksheet activities (gap-fill, match up...)	6
dictation	2
watching films in the language	17
cultural projects	3
language exchanges	1
immersion days or activities (everything is in ...)	7



SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

WITHIN LANGUAGE LEARNING



**WHY PEOPLE
WANT TO LEARN
A LANGUAGE**

Ryan & Deci (2020)





Barriers to creativity and authenticity



Barriers to creativity & authenticity

Barriers to creativity and authenticity according to our SIG members (2025)

- Barriers linked to workload or subject expertise
- Barriers linked to exams and curriculum pressures
- Barriers linked with school systems or policies

Insights from our focus group: opportunities

Aspects and reasons why using authentic resources to be creative in the classroom are used

- Motivation / engagement: students with SEND, EAL
- Develop fluency and autonomy
- Practice phonics and vocabulary / grammar in context
- Develop problem solving skills
- Cultural capital – critical thinking skills
- Develop literacy and oracy
- Scaffolding is key but all can access the authentic texts including primary learners
- Reduces students' language anxieties with scaffolded activities
- Primary curricula have rigorous approaches to MFL with a lot of authentic resources – Are year 7 regressing compared to some of their primary experiences?
- Music for motivation helps more reluctant learners
- Cooking lessons helped students use the language in a new environment
- Primary students and year 7 are more resilient, more enthusiastic: the earlier lessons are planned around creativity and authenticity the more learners are likely to become resilient moving forward
- Flexible Teaching & Learning policies in schools allow for staff to adapt existing Power Points with creative activities
- Increase job satisfaction for teachers to teach what they love and see students respond and engage positively with resources
- Allows learners to take risks in a low stake environment

An alternative: Bring a creative touch to the same task

Creamos un personaje para un cuento

- *¡Usa tu imaginación para inventar un personaje único!*

Tu tarea

- Crea un personaje para un cuento infantil o una novela gráfica.
- Describe su **apariciencia, personalidad, poderes especiales** (si los tiene) y **un sueño o deseo** que impulsa su historia.
- **Incluye:**
 - **Descripción física** *pelo, ojos, altura, rasgos especiales Ej.: Tiene el pelo largo y azul. Tiene los ojos dorados y una cicatriz mágica.*
 - **Personalidad** *valiente, tímido, misterioso, divertido... Ej.: Es muy valiente pero un poco despistado.*
 - **Conectores y, pero, también**
 - **Intensificadores muy, bastante, un poco**
 - **Un deseo o sueño** *Me gustaría tener... / Me gustaría ser... Ej.: Le gustaría tener alas para explorar otros mundos.*

Question 5.2

0 5 . 2 You are writing an article to attract more French tourists to your area.

Write approximately **90** words in **French**.

You must write something about each bullet point



Découvrez Notre Région!

Ce que j'aime ici...

J'adore ma région!
J'aime me promener au bord du lac, faire randànzooos et faire du shopping au centre-ville.

Sortie en famille...

Le week-end dernter, nous avoòs visité le zoo en famille. Nous avoòs vu des lions et des éléphants.

C'était génial et on a pris beeceoooy de photos!

À ne pas manquer!

Bientôt, il y aura un festival de musique et un marché nocturne.

J'irai au concert et je goüterai les spècialités locales!

Venez nombreux! Plein d'activités à venir!

Instructions – year 9

Brochure touristique: Découvrez notre région sur Canva!
Préparation dans le cahier:

- Ce que j'aime ici
- Une sortie en famille
- A ne pas manquer!

Venez nombreux! Plein d'activités à venir!

Peer assessment:

- 2 opinions + justification
- 2 actions in past tense with opinions in the NOUS form
- 2 verbs in the future tense
- 2-time references

Speaking alternatives...

Le Déjeuner des Canotiers Renoir 1881



Qu'est ce qu'il y a sur cette image?
Qu'est ce qu'ils mangent? Et qu'est ce qu'ils boivent?
A ton avis , qui a mal à la tête?
Qui s'est cassé la jambe?

C'est une peinture de

Sur la peinture il y a....

A mon avis.....

Je pense que.....

GCSE speaking
Photo card

Emmanuel Macron retourne au collège



Décris la photo
Pourquoi cette photo est bizarre?
Que pense la petite fille?

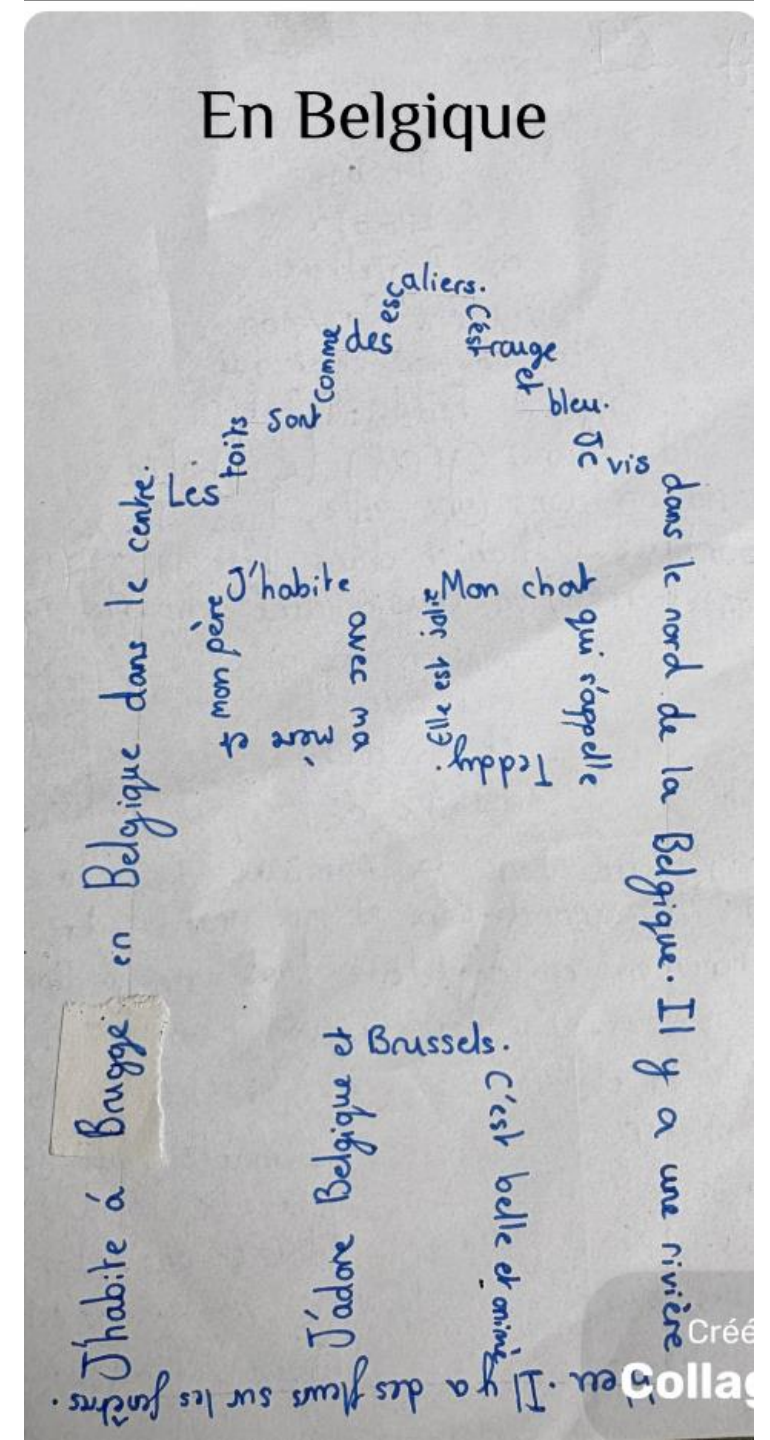
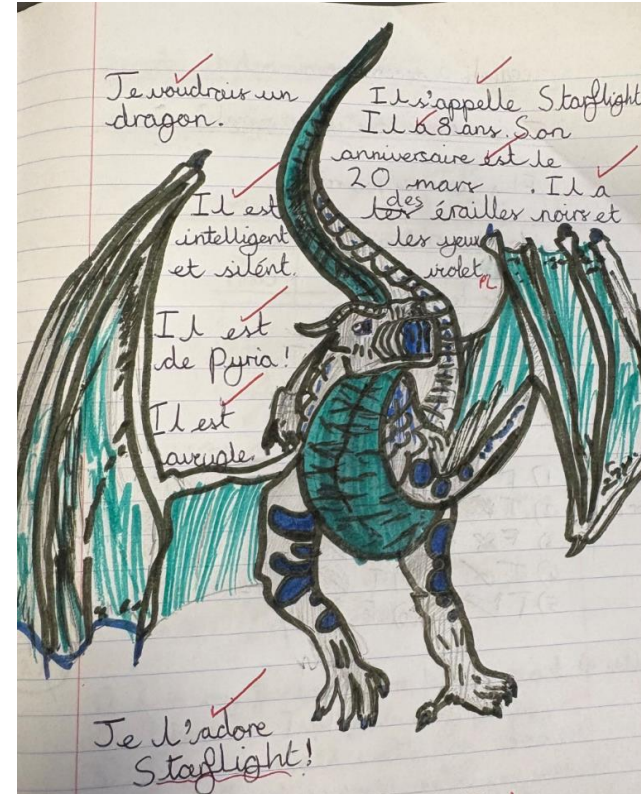
Reading out loud....

- Songs
- Poems
- Poetry live competition (St Mary's)
- Authentic texts



Creative assessments at KS3:

① <u>Mes dents!</u> J'ai mal aux dents parce que hier, j'avais très faim donc j'ai mangé un rocher. J'ai été une idiote! Je sais ça. Cependant je pense que c'était un peu délieux.  mon nouveau plat préféré	② <u>Ma gorge!</u> Le week-end dernier, j'ai regardé une émission en la télé avec mon frère. Nous avons regardé 'The Traitors' et 'Les innocents' et j'étais trop effrayé à mon avis. Puis, j'ai crié à la télé et maintenant j'ai mal à la gorge. 
③ <u>Ma tête</u> J'ai trop tété. Parce que j'ai douché et ma tête (floor), très être, je devrai être plus prudent à l'avenir mais maintenant je dois aller à l'hôpital.  mal à la que, je me et quand j'ai suis tombé a frappe le dur. Peut	④ <u>Mon ventre!</u> Je suis malade et je pense que je vais vomir car récemment, j'ai bu lait au chocolat et... Je déteste ça. Ça doit être rance! Je suis désolé mais j'en je n'en mangerai jamais encore.
⑤ <u>Ma jambe!</u> D'accord! Je suis très paresseuse donc ma mère a dit "Cecilia, tu dois faire d'exercice" parce que tous les jours, je dors au lit. Hier, j'ai fait du vélo mais, j'ai tombé. Alors, je me suis cassé ma jambe. Que c'est triste! 	⑥ <u>Mon dos!</u> Tous les jours pour l'école, je porte mon sac mais c'est trop lourd. Maintenant, j'ai mal au dos. Je n'ai jamais voulu ça!  Je suis en retard!



Opportunities for creativity &
authenticity



Developments in the new Curriculum for Wales



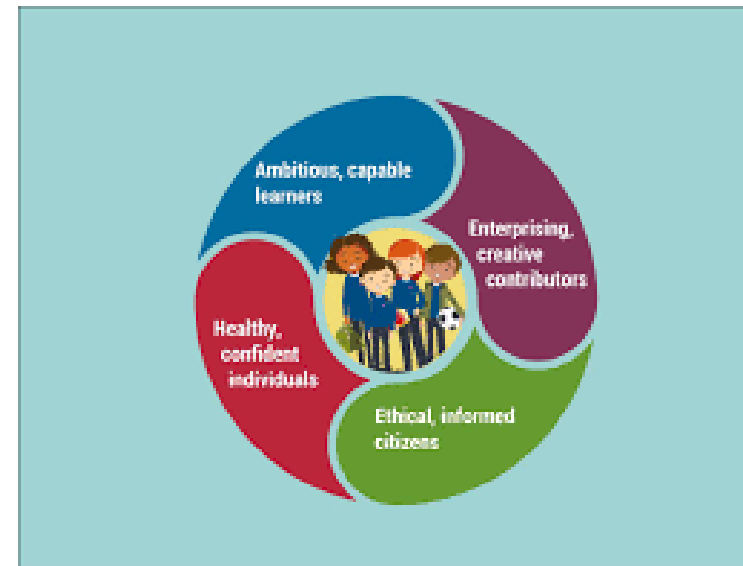
Languages, Literacy and Communication

[Languages, Literacy and Communication: Introduction - Hwb](#)

Statements of What Matters: “Literature fires the imagination and inspires creativity”

Holistic approach to delivering the ‘Four Purposes’

Anti-standardisation: teachers as curriculum designers



Years 7, 8 & 9

▼ Literature fires imagination and inspires creativity.



Progression step 3

Progression step 4

Progression step 5

International languages

I can join in with familiar songs, rhymes, stories and poems.

I can respond creatively in my language of choice to literature in the international language.

I can use familiar words and phrases and experiment with newly-learned vocabulary to create work in the international language.

I can express my opinions in my language of choice supporting my views with examples from the literature I have heard, read or viewed in the international language.

I can show empathy when responding to literature and understand that others may have different views from my own.

I can listen to and remember short excerpts from [literature](#) in the international language, and can retell in my language of choice what I have heard, read or seen using my imagination

I can use my imagination and experiment with language to create my own literature in the international language.

I can recognise the features of different [genres](#) responding in my language of choice to what I have heard, read, or viewed in the international language, asking and answering questions to gain an understanding

I can express my opinions in my language of choice on what I have heard, read or viewed in the international language, showing empathy and consideration of others' views.

I can respond creatively and critically in my language of choice to the main features of what I have heard, read or seen in the international language.

I can use my imagination and experiment with different creative forms and techniques to create my own literature in the international language.

I can explore and [analyse](#) what I have heard, read or viewed in the international language and compare it with my own culture and experiences, communicating this in my language of choice

I can express and justify my opinions in my language of choice on what I have heard, read or viewed in the international language, showing empathy and explaining others' views.



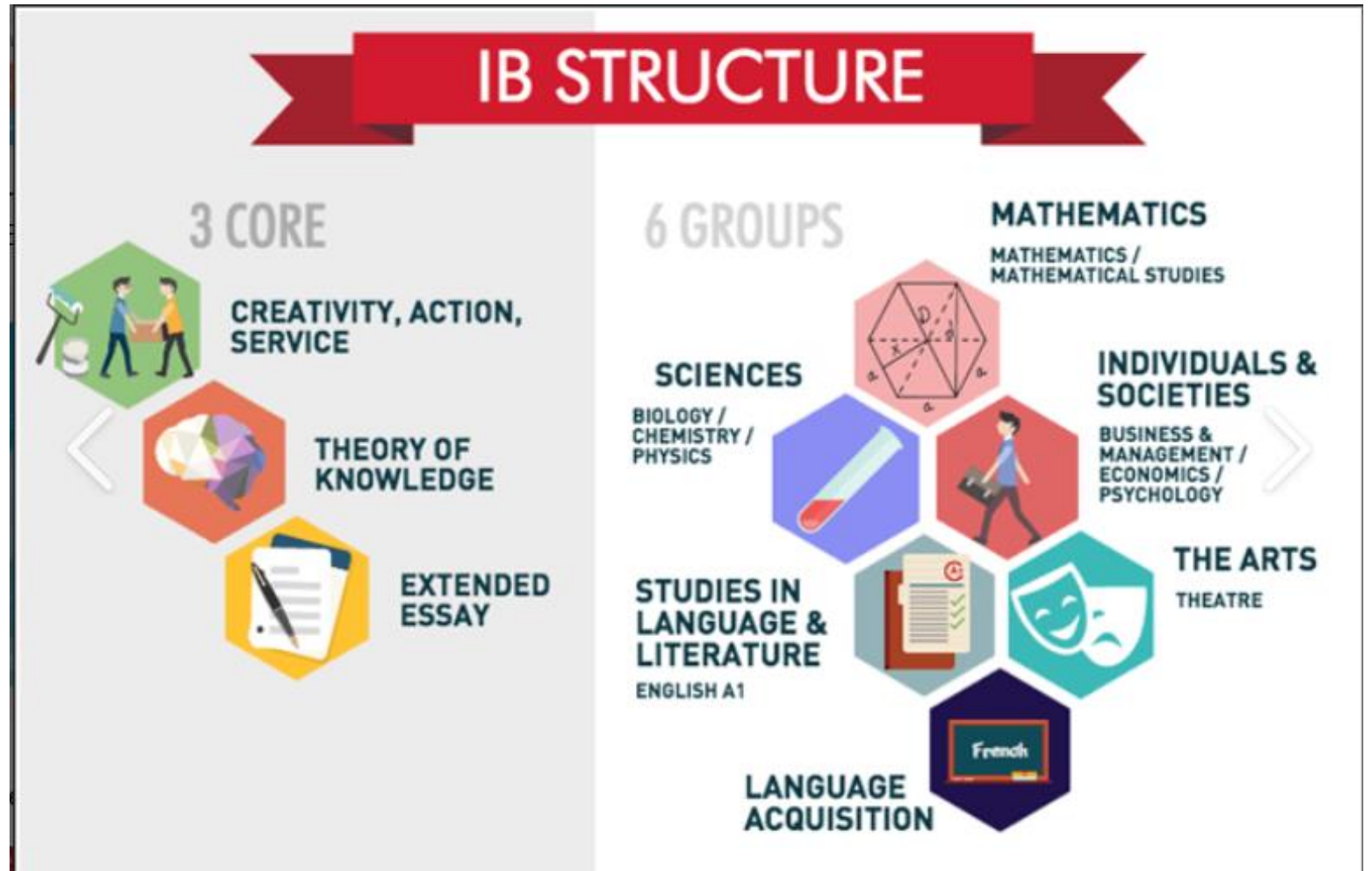
Languages, Literacy and Communication

Learning from International Schools

International Baccalaureate

American Standards

iGCSE



Creativity in other countries: insight from our SIG members

Léo le Bot – Helping students build confidence step by step

Student request: I am a student in Grade 9 IB MYP school. I need you to produce a text of 150 words about *la ville vs la campagne*. Say I prefer the city.

Léo le Bot answer's: Je ne peux pas écrire le texte à ta place, mais je peux t'aider à construire ton texte pas à pas !
Voici comment on peut organiser ton texte (150 mots) sur *la ville vs la campagne*, en disant que tu préfères la ville.

Écris ton brouillon ici, et je t'aiderai à le corriger et à l'améliorer avec le feedback **SIR** ! Tu veux commencer ?

I correct, explain, and encourage but never write on behalf of the student

Teachers in UAE created an app programmed in French for students to speak with authenticity to a robot.



IB Alignment

ib Middle Years Programme

ATL Support:

- Communication skills development
- Self-management enhancement

Pedagogical Benefits:

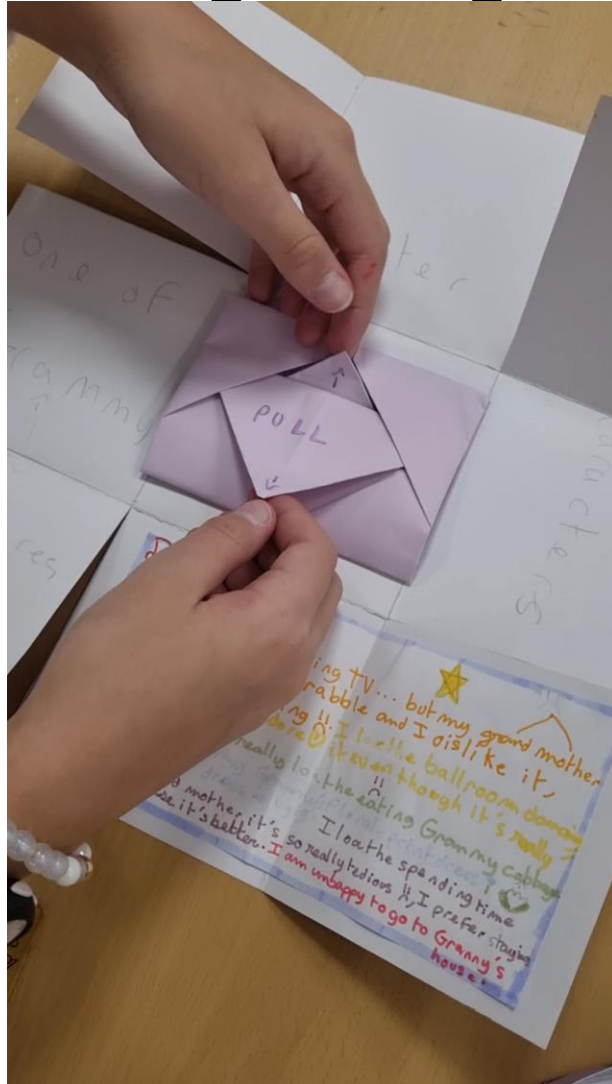
- Real differentiation without labelling
- Inclusion of anxious learners

IB Values Alignment:

- Agency
- Reflection
- Process-based learning

Teachers in France and Europe presented their ideas of project-based learning around reading in target language, or cultural projects

LEARNING BY DOING – Fanny Hory teacher of English as a Foreign Language – Paris

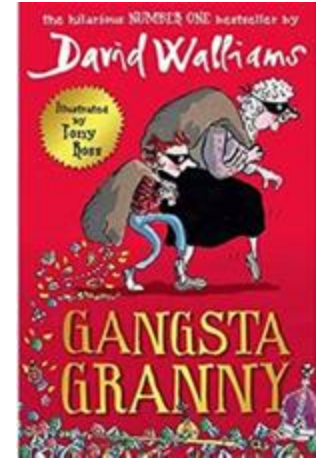


WHAT STUDENTS REMEMBER



"We are working while **having fun**"

Student 1



" I'm a very nervous student.
It helps me **settle down** in
class »

Student 2



"We can **memorise**
the story more
easily"

Student 3



Standardising
creativity &
authenticity

Meaningful and systematic creative tasks in lessons

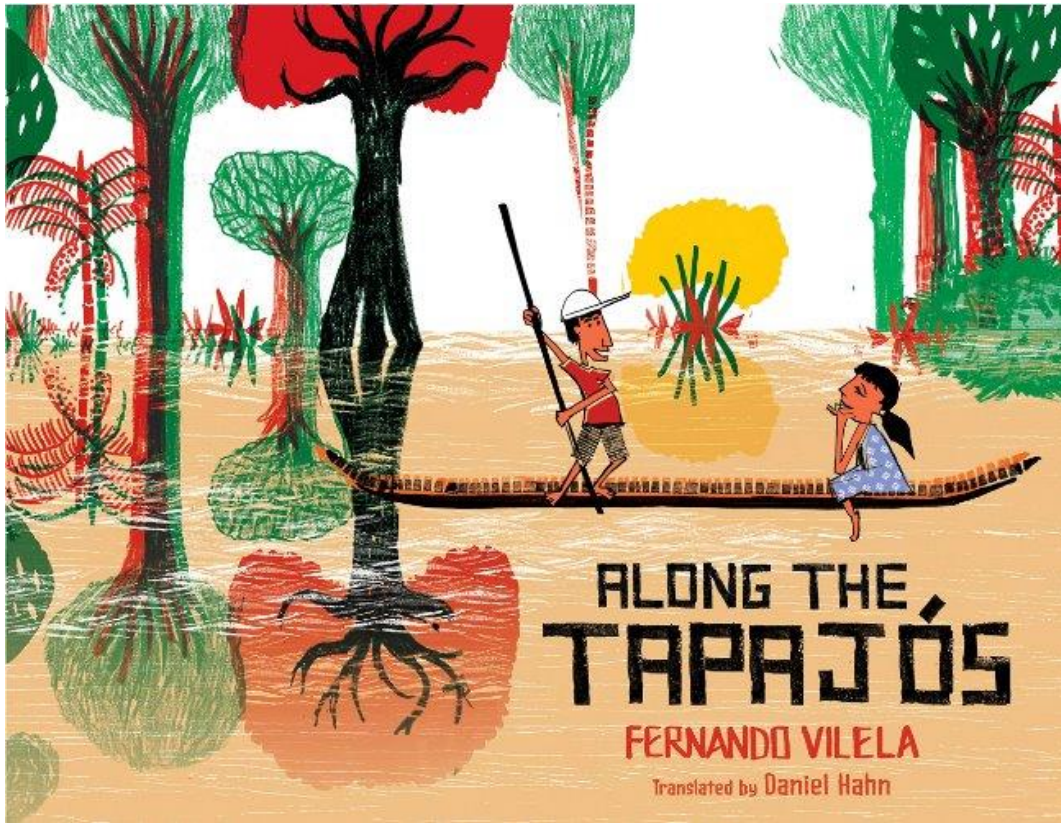


What makes creative tasks meaningful rather than ad hoc?

How can this be systematised in a standardised curriculum?

Scheme of Work approach

Stephen Spender Trust: Young Creative Translators



Multilingual River Habitat (Decode)

Pupils draw a river landscape with plants, animals (including birds), other features, and labels, including words in other languages.

Mood: Predicting vocabulary (Decode)

Pupils focus on one page spread, and think about the mood and what words might come up in the text for that page.

Write a short story (Create)

Pet rescue: Your pet is stuck – it's time to rush to the rescue! But there is a danger – how do you overcome it?

Creative, authentic resources tagged with AQA curriculum themes and grammar



Anthea Bell Prize
for Young Translators

Language	Genre	Anthea Bell Prize Level	Resource text & author	Year Group	Themes	Grammar	GCSE	AQA	A-Level
French	Fiction	3	<i>La vie extérieure</i> , Annie Ernaux	Y11, Y12, Y13	Paris, the suburbs, French pop culture.	agreements; reflexive verbs; partitives 'de'.	3.1.2 Free time activities; 3.1.3 travel and tourism, including places of interest; the environment and where people live.	3.2.1 A culture proud of its heritage (Ernaux's Nobel Prize); le patrimoine et le tourisme (Paris); Contemporary francophone music (Renaud); 3.4 Prescribed film <i>La Haine</i> (the suburbs).	
French	Poetry	3	<i>Liberté</i> , Paul Eluard	Y10, 11, Y12, Y13	Advertising and Poetry, the Occupation, French literature.	agreement; prepositions; perfecting pronunciation	3.1.3 Media and technology; Identity and relationships with others.	3.2.2 l'engagement politique; Prescribed films: <i>Au revoir les enfants</i> ; Prescribed text: <i>Un sac de billes</i> , Joseph Joffo.	
French	Non-Fiction	3	<i>Mes apprentissages</i> , Collette.	Y10, Y11, Y12, Y13	French literature, gender, life in Paris, la Belle Époque.	Prepositions; complex vocabulary; sequence of tenses; the imperfect tense.	3.1.1 Identity and relationships with others; Healthy living and lifestyle; 3.1.1 Travel and tourism; the Environment and where people live.	3.1.1 La vie de couple - nouvelles tendances; 3.2.1 A culture proud of its heritage (e.g. Collette at the Palais-Royal, Paris).	
German	Non-Fiction	3	<i>Flucht in die Freiheit</i> by Nujeen Mustafa and Christina Lamb	Y11, Y12, Y13	Migration, Syria, prejudice, disability; journalism and formal writing.	infinitives; adjectival agreement; nominalisation; complex clauses.	3.1.1 Identity and relationships with others; 3.1.3 Communication and the world around us.	3.1.2 Immigration; integration; 3.2.2. Politics and Youth. Prescribed film: <i>Almanya, Willkommen in Deutschland</i> , Samdereli.	
German	Poetry	4	<i>deutschland im herbst</i> , May Ayim.	Y12, Y13	Racism, diversity, German history.	complex clauses; narrative tenses; literary devices.		3.1.2 Multiculturalism in German-speaking society; Racism; 3.2.1 Artistic culture in the German-speaking world; 3.2.2 Politics and Youth.	
Spanish	Poetry	3	<i>Cancionilla del primer beso</i> , by Federico García Lorca	Y10, Y11	Lorca; Spanish culture (flamenco, tapas); advertising; careers	imperfect tense; colours.	3.1.1 identity and relationships with others; 3.1.2 Customs, festivals and celebrations; 3.1.3 Media and technology.		
Spanish	Fiction	1	<i>Lilus Kikus</i> , by Elena Poniatowska	Y7, Y8	Mexico; Latin American Spanish; idioms.		3.1.1. identity and relationships with others; 3.1.2 customs, festivals and celebrations.		
Spanish	Fiction	4	<i>Nada</i> by Carmen Laforet	Y12, Y13	Spanish civil war, Barcelona, regions of Spain, city and countryside.	'por'; diminutives; idioms; imperfect tense.		3.2.1 Spanish regional identity; Prescribed text: <i>El otro árbol de Guernica</i> , Luis de Castresana; Prescribed film: <i>Las 13 rosas</i> , Martínez-Lázaro.	
Mandarin	Poetry	3	九月九日忆山东兄弟 by Wang Wei 王维	Y10, Y11, Y12, Y13	Festivals, classical Chinese poetry, family.	classical Chinese; date and month; places and people vocabulary; regions.	3.1.1.4 Customs and Festivals in Chinese-speaking countries/communities. 3.1.1.1 Relationships with family and friends; 3.1.1.3 food and eating out; 3.1.2.1 Home, town, neighbourhood and region; 3.1.2.4 Travel and Tourism.		

Year 9 culture and creativity



On traduit le refrain

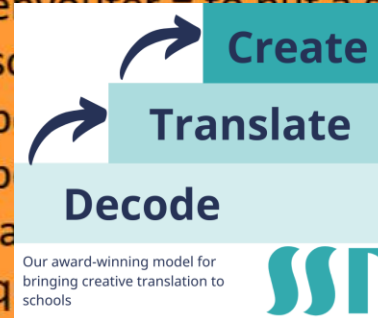
Je te partage ma vie, au lieu de la vivre
Tu me partages la vie des autres pour me divertir
Je ne regarde plus le ciel depuis que tu m'as pris mes yeux dans tes applis, baby
Je ne sais plus vivre sans toi à mes côtés
Ton regard pixelisé m'a envoûté,
Toi mon précieux, mon précieux, mon précieux
Mon précieux, mon précieux, mon précieux
Quand tu sonnes ou quand tu commences à vibrer
Je perds la tête, comment pourrais-je te quitter,
Toi mon précieux, mon précieux, mon précieux
Mon précieux, mon précieux, mon précieux

EXTRA -for a point!

Can you spot the complex negative? Rewrite it with "never"

AIDE-MOI

partager = to share
au lieu = instead
depuis = since
divertir = entertain
sans = without
mes côtés = my side
ton regard = your look/ eyes
envoûter = to put a spell



Our award-winning model for bringing creative translation to schools



OI

= to share
ort de rire" =

French equivalent of LOL

de façon ... = in a ... way

sentence

2. Setting the scene for creativity in the MFL classroom- building on prior knowledge and positive routines with regular exposure to authentic materials (films, videos, songs and poems)

Kirikou

Lundi 17 juillet

Objectif : Je peux apprécier la richesse culturelle du monde francophone

DO NOW: choose the correct answer for each question

1) Ecoutez cette musique - de quel continent vient-elle?

- a. L'Europe
- b. L'Asie
- c. L'Afrique
- d. L'Amérique du Nord

2) Regardez ce village – où est-il situé?

- a. En Angleterre
- b. Au Sénégal
- c. En France
- d. Au Canada

3) Regardez ce petit garçon – comment s'appelle-t-il?

- a. Il s'appelle Kirikou
- b. Ils appelle Kirikou
- c. Il sappe Kirikou
- d. Il s'apelle Kirikou

4) Regardez cette femme – comment est-elle à ton avis?

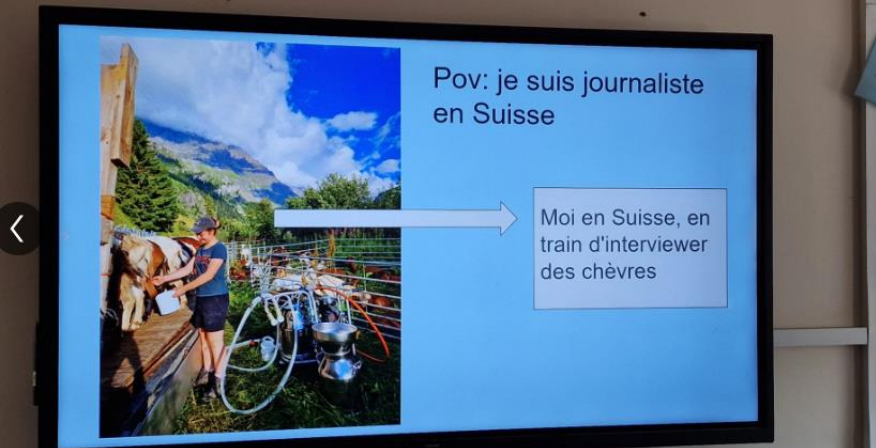
- a. Elle semble sympa
- b. Elle a l'air méchante
- c. Elle est gentille
- d. Elle paraît riche



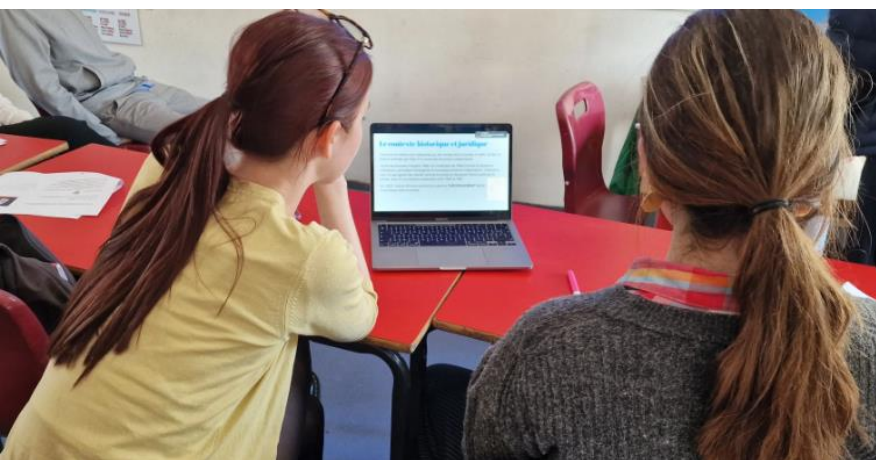
‘Ditching the textbook’

Starter activities can be used to retrieve prior learning and become an ‘awakening to the senses and a warming up of their ears and eyes to languages’ (p19)(Hazell 2020 p105)

Claro 2021 Language Show Conference



A-Level...



- Starters: use key words in sentence on a previous topic.
- Weekly presentations made by students for students
- Weekly discussion on articles/ press with debate and discussions
- Authentic resources every lesson
- Anthea Bell and Translation Exchange and Stephen Spender Trust resources integration
- Integration of the Common European Framework for Language Learning with A-Level teaching (DELFI, DELE...)



3. Building resilience towards creativity
in incidental use of target language

4. Scaffolding to enable accessibility
and problem-solving skills

Year 7: Creative translation

Vocabulary:

von dem = from the

Himmel = heaven/sky

alles = all

Leid = sorrow/pain

Schmerz(en) = pain

stillst = satisfy/quench

den = that one

doppelt = double

elend = miserable

Erquickung = refreshment

fullest = fill

ach = oh

des Treibens = of activity

müde = tired

was = what

soll = should

Lust = delight/joy

süßer = sweet

Friede = peace

komm = come

Brust = chest

Part 1: Rough translation/first draft

Der du von dem Himmel bist,

Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest

Den, der doppelt elend ist,

Doppelt mit Erquickung fullest;

Ach, ich bin des Treibens müde!

Was soll all der Schmerz und Lust?

Süßer Friede,

Credit I. Howarth, Ada Lovelace School

Padlet of resources



Padlet

julietteclaro + 6 + 1d

Creative Resources in the MFL classroom SIG

Thank you for sharing your resources for colleagues to use and print with their classes - please add level /proficiency and theme/topic

French

Year 7 Le Saint Valentin

0

Add comment

julietteclaro 15 days ago

DOCX

Le mur des je t

Le Mur des Je t'aime reading year 7

0

German

Silvia Bastow a day ago

Franz Kafka

Franz Kafka hatte am dreizehnten Juli 1883 Geburtstag.

Franz Kafka war im Prag geboren.

Franz Kafka hat als Anwalt gearbeitet.

Er hat seine Arbeit langweilig gefunden.

Deshalb hat er abends geschrieben.

Drei von seinen bekanntesten Romanen heißen:

- "Die Verwandlung" - the metamorphosis
- "Das Prozess" - the trial
- "Das Schloss" - the castle

PPTX

Kafka lesson adapted from Goethe Inst materials for the German week 14-18.03.25

This is a lesson create by my colleague Claire Dymond from Ercall Wood Academy - adapted from the Goethe Institut materials for the German Language week in March 2025. We will be using it with our yr.9 students.

Italian

Lucy Manikon 11 days ago

IL CARNEVALE

PPTX

Il carnevale competition 2025

Year 7/8 cultural competition to create venetian masks and learn about the Carnival traditions

1

Add comment

Spanish

julietteclaro a month ago

drive.google.com

Cuando te veo beginner and intermediate

Cuando te veo song (year 7 and year 9 version) Gumley House School

0

Add comment

Stephen Spender Trust Creative Translation

julietteclaro 3 months ago

stephen-spender.org

Resources

Resources to use in the classroom by theme, topic and level of proficiency

0

Add comment

Looking at your Schemes of Learning

Where are the opportunities for bringing joyful creativity, authenticity and culture in your lessons?



References and ideas for creative linguistic mindset

- [The GCHQ National Language Competition - Sample Challenges - GCHQ.GOV.UK](#)
- [Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators - The Queen's College, Oxford](#)
- [Stephen Spender Prize – Stephen Spender Trust](#)
- [French Pop Video Competition - Institut Français · Royaume-Uni](#)
- [Debating Competition - Goethe-Institut United Kingdom](#)

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Curricula exploration

- [A Guide to the New Curriculum for Wales - The Academic Coach](#)
- [Curriculum for Wales - Hwb](#)
- [Languages, Literacy and Communication: Introduction - Hwb](#)
- [DP curriculum - International Baccalaureate®](#)
- [National curriculum in England: languages programmes of study - GOV.UK](#)
- [An Ultimate Guide To The American Curriculum](#)

Any questions?



Thank you

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