

- Information file on the project -

New ways of organizing modern foreign language (MFL) teaching in 7th year(scientific classes: S) organizing intensive modern languages (ML) sessions

File name : 57LBriquerie3english

NANCY-METZ ACADEMY

Upper-level secondary school (5th, 6th,7th year in secondary school)

La Briquerie

15 route de la Briquerie

F- 57100 Thionville

☎ : 333 82 53 27 60

☎ : 333 82 54 76 56

Mél : ce.0570108@ac-nancy-metz.fr

Contact person : Liliane Quitté, German teacher

Concerning pupils from a 7th form S class with two MFL

Subjects : English and German, mixing ML1 and ML2, organizing intensive 3-week MFL sessions.

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Project Summary : The continuing of the project set up in 6th form S in 2001-2002. The 7th year pupils are divided into two groups for the 2 ML: German – English, with no difference between ML1 and ML2. The different groups' teachers meet and coordinate their teaching practices and their method of evaluating the pupils. Pupils can go from one group to another during the course of the year.

Several intensive sessions take place during the year : For these three weeks pupils study only one language.

Key words : 7th form, Modern Foreign Language (MFL), English, German, evaluation, groups, skills, oral expression, written expression, oral comprehension, written comprehension, goals, pedagogical project.

	GOAL	PROCEDURES	SET UP
Upper-level secondary school technical high school. New ways of teaching foreign languages in 7 th form S.	Foreign language learning	Mixing ML1 and ML2 students Linguistic immersion	Intensive sessions

- The project -

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organizing intensive modern foreign language (MFL) sessions
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1- The reason for the setting up of the project :

We work in a technical school with technical (scientific) sections : We want to give non-technical subjects the importance they deserve and motivate pupils.

For a few years now, we've been receiving pupils from **bilingual** and **trilingual** classes. These pupils, either choose English or German as their L2, are in the same classes as real L2 pupils – though all these pupils are in reality L1 pupils with a good level – because of their study projects (engineering college, computer science studies...).

We notice :

- Great disparity between pupils,
- Demoralization among the « real » L2 pupils, even giving up,
- Between the beginning of the 5th year and the end of the 7th year the level of pupils from **bilingual** and **trilingual** classes drops,
- Boredom and lack of motivation for the pupils who succeed with little effort.

That is why we decided in 2001-2002 to : a) do away with L1 / L2

b) set up intensive 15-day sessions for a total immersion in the language .

2- Results of the experimentation in 2001-2002

The experimentation in the 6th year S during 2001-2002 proved to have more positive than negative aspects, so we decided to extend this experimentation to the 7th year S with the same pupils, and we also decided to extend the intensive sessions to 3 weeks instead of 2.

Reminder of the positive aspects :

- Total immersion in the language thanks to daily practice.
- Best memorization of vocabulary and expressions thanks to repetition (one theme studied from different angles during the session).
- More ambitious documents for a better cultural awareness (longer documents, historical backgrounds to study, specific themes involving research etc.....).
- Different working approach : classes every day so we have to vary the activities so as not to bore the pupils.
- The sessions are in line with a project.

Weaknesses :

- Some pupils think it is difficult to get back to their traditional way of functioning after a three-week session.
- Others complain about having homework from one day to the next . This is an unjustified argument because they always have homework from one day to the next but it's usually in two different languages.

For more details, consult the complete results for the 2001-2002 experimentation.

3- The 2002-2003 project

A- PRACTICAL ORGANIZATION

- Pupils concerned** :
- 1 class of 7th form S (32 pupils in English, 30 in German, L1 and L2 together),
 - 2 German teachers and 2 English teachers,

The same way of functioning was chosen for both languages.

« **Intensive session** » means teaching the same Modern Foreign Language daily for the whole MFL time schedule that is 4h / week, for 3 weeks. The German session and the English session don't follow each other directly. During the school year 2002-2003, there were two sessions in each language, one in the 1st term and one in the 2nd term.

The school administration made this MFL experimentation a priority. The teachers' and the pupils' timetables were drawn up accordingly (the 2 ML are alternate during the week and are never at the same time).

Example : the ML teachers' timetable for a year:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8h – 9h					
9h – 10h		German (potential period on the English teachers' timetable)	English (German potential period)		1h language assistant
10h – 11h					
11h – 12h				German (English potential period)	
13h 30 – 14h 30	English (potential period for German teachers)				

N.B. « potential period » : The teachers in a MFL will have to be available during the other language periods (the language they don't teach) to teach the 4 hours during a session.

As we had already worked with the same pupils the year before, we knew their good points and their weak points, so we divided them accordingly into groups (the same groups as in June 2002). We only made 2 changes in German and 4 in English (either moving up or moving down) in September :

	English	German
group 1	18 pupils	18 pupils
group 2	14 pupils	12 pupils

B- PEDAGOGIC ORGANIZATION

The teachers of a same language agree upon a theme, but the procedure is different depending on the group. Last year we noticed it was difficult for both groups to follow the same progression because the two groups often had different needs. So we decided to progress independently.

The language assistant is essential to produce the best results. With 2 assistants the best approach would be to make them work on the 5th and the 6th day but we cannot ask them to work on a Saturday. During these « 3 week-sessions », the pupils study the same language for 15 hours instead of the usual 6 hours (9 hours if the assistant is there every week).

These sessions don't mean more language hours during the year but simply allow more efficient teaching. Splitting the class into groups is not enough. We must find the ways to increase their knowledge, to fix reflexes firmly in their minds, to get them to repeat, to interest and motivate them with different teaching methods. It is important to arouse their curiosity.

For the 2002-2003 school year, we chose the following documents :

- **German Class, for the first session :**

* German press (the election report in the daily and weekly press, in various German, Austrian, Swiss and also Luxembourg magazines: the style, the substance, the detailed study of a daily magazine, the same event presented differently according to the newspaper, the layout , contradictory debates around a theme, etc.) and the making of a newspaper in groups of 4 pupils (= project) at the end of the session *for group A*.

* Germany (History : reminder of what happened between 1945 and 1989. Politics : political institutions and elections, and a popular festival: « Oktoberfest ») videos and articles *for group B*.

- **German Class , for the second session :**

* German researchers et scientists (famous discoveries, research on the net, oral report, books extracts, debate on the scientists responsibility, etc.) *for group A*.

* Computers (Bill Gates and his information highway, the internet, exercises on the computer) *for group B*.

- **English Class, for the first session:** Black Americans' civil rights in 1950-1965 (F. Mitterrand's TV programme about Black Americans, a file: *Warm-up Racial Issues*, a *Sunday Magazine* article, « Bad night in Mississippi » (1989) and Alan Parker's film « Mississippi burning »).

- **English Class, for the second session:** George Orwell's « Animal farm », the video tape, *Nathan edition* and excerpts from the novel (the satire, the tale, the historical context, etc.).

We notice :

1. That our project makes up for the hour reduction in 7th S (officially introduced a few years ago: 1hour/week) and allows a substantial regular work.
2. The work done inside the classroom is more efficient (due to recurrence), so it compensates (even more than in 6th form) - the lack of personal work at home ("*lack of time*" as pupils say because in 7th S their only think about mathematics and physics!!!)

C- EVALUATION

There was no joint evaluation because the groups and skills were too different. This year, sporadic evaluation during the sessions was organized by the different teachers.

D- RESULTS

- A Language assistant is essential for this project.
- For the weak group, as well as the specific contents of the session we go through all the basic knowledge again (linguistic and methodological), therefore pupils are not penalized in their preparation for the "**baccalauréat**" (final exam). In the advanced group we not only prepare them for the "baccalauréat" but we also prepare them and give them tools for the "after-bac". We must not forget that these sessions need serious pedagogical thinking, varied contents and an original organization.
- The experiment is interesting in terms of pupils' motivation and knowledge (acquisition) , but we must emphasize the fact that it takes a lot of time (**a great deal of personal and common preparation for the teachers!**)
- So it's essential to work with colleagues as motivated as you are and to have the same educational goals.
- As this experiment doesn't need extra financial means or extra hours, we intend to continue it in the next few years on the following basis :
 - Mixing of L1 / L2
 - 2 language groups for each Modern Foreign Language
 - 3-week sessions.

Translation of the original document written by
Liliane Quitté, German teacher, in May 2003.