

Joanne Eccleshare is ITT Manager for Primary Languages Network.

I had a 'wow' moment today: as the ITT Manager for Primary Languages Network, I am privileged to train ITTs on the Primary Languages element of their courses. During our second online session together, while sharing our recent experiences of language learning in the classroom, a trainee casually told me that since the input of our first session *'he hadn't done much'* but he had recreated a French Café in his Year 6 Classroom. *'Our English class novel is set in France, so I put on some French accordion music, a café scene on the whiteboard, we moved the tables and chairs around and I just taught them a few French foods and phrases so we could create mini conversations like in a café. They teach German at my placement school, but I thought it might help to bring book's setting alive.'*

Wow! Boy did he get the keeping the 'Primary' in Primary Languages that I had talked about in our first session together. He didn't 'just' teach his class a few phrases. He opened up a whole new world. He shared culture. He painted a French soundscape. He created a fun, memorable and cross curricular opportunity for language learners. This is Primary Languages at its finest by a non-specialist trainee teacher!

I am very lucky that I gained my PGCE at Hope University as one of the very first primary teachers with a specialism in Primary Languages. My role as a Primary Languages Teacher and Trainer enables me to bring my love of music, singing and drama to the classroom (and virtual screen!) and I can see first-hand the impact that such skills have on engaging all children in primary languages.

Music and songs are valuable tools to develop memory and recall and I love to use a variety of musical genres ranging from nursery rhymes, pop songs, raps to even sea shanties in my teaching. Having composed a sea shanty for European Day of Languages this year, I think the format lends itself beautifully to call and response and my classes are quite used to me bursting into this song, when needed, as a behaviour management tool in the classroom! The song describes items we take with us on a journey, so often I might add in surprise nouns from previous topics to focus on their listening skills, or even pass the invisible microphone so a child can creatively add in a noun of their choice.

Drama in the classroom is another way of engaging all learners and in addition to bringing scenes alive, like Carnival (create a freeze frame scene, add a repeated action and then a spoken sentence), I love introducing and embedding our understanding of verbs through drama. An example of this is acting out the verb 'To be' in the style of a pantomime. We assign different characters to be different parts of the verb (I am Cinderella, You are Prince Charming etc) and this usually involves much heated debate over who gets to be the Ugly Sisters. Oh yes it does! We voice our verb parts in the style of the characters and then, with the added motivation of filming our performance, we practise and get our panto verb performance ready.

Activities that involve children up and out of their seats and physically moving around the classroom can be particularly engaging to boys, and games like 'Quiz Quiz Swap' allow this. Less confident children feel more reassured and on board

with speaking, as this game involves holding a prompt for support. They meet a pupil moving round, ask each other their key questions, answer them, and then swap their cards over and move on to another person. Usually, at some point in this activity, I will shout 'freeze' and turn my imaginary volume control up somewhere in the classroom, and that particular pair will start to share their conversation out loud.

Introducing apps and IT into the language classroom is certainly another way of making language learning appealing to all learners. Recording speaking on Video apps such as Chatterpix, is a regular part of my teaching; this supports less confident children because it is a focussed task and they are permitted to record and re-record.

Underpinning all my language teaching though is creating a safe classroom where all learners are praised (in the target language!) and encouraged to take risks with their language, experiment, make mistakes, make connections and most importantly, celebrate all those WOW moments.