

High expectations

- A Process Oriented Approach to Student Achievement and Inclusion

At Henriette Hørlücks School students, teachers and parents have high expectations for English as a subject and a communication tool. This is partly due to the school's international profile and the fact that we offer English from year 0. The presence of international families and an international school, as well as an international department, allows for opportunities to collaborate and socialise in English outside the classroom. We would like to offer an insight into our approach to delivering an English programme which meets the above mentioned high expectations and which facilitates an including and stimulating learning environment.

Background

Henriette Hørlücks school has offered early language learning since the 1960s. Our students learn English from year 0, French from year 4 and German from year 6. Spanish is offered as an elective from year 8. Due to the many English speaking families connected to our school, we introduced a first language English offer in 2000. The international department was accredited by Cambridge International Examinations in 2009 and we have since then been able to offer an internationally recognised first language exam for English (IGCSE). The French department followed suit not long after and was accredited to offer the DELF exam.

We soon came to the realisation that many of our non-native speakers of English developed skills in their second language English classroom which could match the demands of the first language English programme. A screening process in year 5 and 6 is now in place to ensure a

positive transition of a limited number of highly talented students from the second language programme into the first language programme. The English teachers are becoming more and more aware of the expectations for the first language programme and are able to take many of the skills into account when planning for and delivering their second



Talented students who have been moved to the international department are extremely pleased with and proud of the more demanding coursework they have to do.

language English programme. Top end students are also offered extension work which can facilitate a transition to the international department.

Our experiences with delivering IGCSE First language English and the FSA second language English from age six are very positive. We feel that the double offer has forced us to be critical of the materials we choose for our English courses. Consequently, communication surrounding the skills we should be able to develop in our students has become more targeted. Moreover, talented students who have been moved to the international department are extremely pleased with and proud of the more demanding coursework they have to do. Finally, moving some of the talent from the second language classroom has not resulted in a drop in results. On the contrary, there is more teacher time for each student and quieter students now have more room to shine. We believe our results overall have improved. With strategic



Af Chris Allo

English and
French Teacher,
Henriette Hørlücks Skole
chris_allo@hotmail.com



**og Johanne
Skaanes-Allo**

Head of the International
Department,
English Teacher,
Henriette Hørlücks skole
js@hhscole.dk

communication one can avoid creating the feeling of an A and B team, too. The first language students are still linked to their second language class as they, too, will take the FSA exam in English. We never want to lose sight of our main aim which is to provide an including and stimulating learning environment. The next few paragraphs will be an attempt to offer some insight into how we work to achieve this target. We have chosen to offer examples from our 'Beauty and the Arts' unit in a year 9 English as a second language class.

Materials

As we offer English from year 0 we have not been able to find suitable teaching materials published in Denmark. We have still chosen book systems as the backbone of our second language English programme. Most teachers add to the programme with materials from other sources or materials they produce themselves. However, we have all felt it useful to select book systems which are designed around the principle of scaffolding. This is very helpful when we give extension work to students who are faster or slower learners. We don't believe that students should be asked to wait if they work fast nor that it is always beneficial to give them work to do at the same level as the rest of the class. Our workbooks/powerbooks facilitate giving extension work which is easier or tougher than the average level of the class.

In year 0-3 we use *Incredible English* published by Oxford. In year 4-6 we base the programme around *Project* published by Oxford. Finally, our year 7-9 (and year 10) use *New Opportunities* published by Pearson & Longman. As additional material we also use the series *Test Your Vocabulary* published by Penguin and *Essential Articles* (tailored for IGCSE use) published by Caryl Press. Most teachers supplement their topics with documentaries, video clips, songs, artwork, letters to the editor, etc.

'Beauty and the Arts' Unit Materials list:

American Graffiti (New Opportunity)

'Rapper's Delight' by the Sugar Hill Gang (hip hop song)

Examples of Banksy's work (Banksy, Wall and Piece)

What is the Point? (piercing) (New Opportunity)

I Hate my Lizard! (tattoos) (Essential Articles 12)

Think before you ink? (body image) (Essential Articles 12)

Body Blues (radio survey on the Brits' perception of their own body) (Essential Articles 10)

'Dedicated Follower of Fashion' by The Kinks (music video and text)

BBC Three Documentary- Secrets of the Superbrands (Fashion) (youtube.com)

'A Wall Poem' by Dannie Abse (New Opportunities)

Wrapped Up (art installations in public spaces) (New opportunities)

Test Your Vocabulary 4 (parts of the body, parts of the body expressions, the art world, at the cinema, the press, musical instruments)

New Opportunity Powerbook (vocabulary, grammar and writing techniques)

Structure of the Unit and Working Methods

Main aims of this particular unit include exploring various art forms and their purpose as well as the notion of beauty in our modern society. Students need to produce language to inform, describe, explain and express opinion. Vocabulary and gram-

mar work is integrated into a topic centred approach to learning. Therefore, in order to broaden our students' opportunities to expand their vocabulary, strengthen their grammar and practice their oral and written skills, we have chosen a variety of materials in terms of level of difficulty as well as subtopics. This variety gives all students a chance to participate, formulate opinions in writing as well as speech at their own level. We believe that active students are able to effectively build skills and confidence. The work structures in our lessons are predictable and so are our expectations for positive communication among students.

Typically, a light warm-up activity from *Test Your Vocabulary* would be used to introduce or activate the basic vocabulary required to understand the material and to produce language independently on the given topic. As for the core part of the lesson, it might be worth noting that we make a conscious effort to complement most of the chosen texts with supporting visual materials to cater for different learning styles, but also to create a more dynamic classroom where all learners are engaged. Once we move on to the main activity, the students know that they score 'bonus points' for using new vocabulary and language structures introduced in the lesson. The feedback students receive during group work or after a presentation will focus on whether or not they have included these structures.

Moreover, the materials chosen for the lesson need to serve specific purposes. E.g. a documentary clip could be used as a model for the students' self-produced documentary clips, both in terms of language, content and structure. This provides the students with a model and helps to define the success criteria prior to letting them work independently.

When we plan a unit of work, we always have an end product in mind. In the 'Beauty and the Arts' unit we want the students to produce a persuasive essay. Students will have to demonstrate an ability to organise and present facts and opinions while keeping the reader interested and informed.

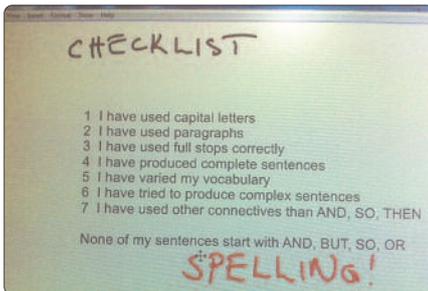


Sculpture making: using language to explain, instruct and persuade.



To facilitate success, we will have broken down and taught elements which the students need. The shorter practical tasks assigned both as classwork and as homework will be geared towards acquiring and practising the necessary skills. E.g. we can do work at word level with modal verbs and connectives which is followed up by work at sentence level putting into practice what we have just learned about modal verbs and connectives.

This naturally progresses into work at paragraph level and with shorter texts. We find that we can offer the students feedback more often if we ask them to produce and hand in shorter texts (+/- 100 words). The students enjoy process oriented approaches, as they become quite clear about the success criteria and have been given the opportunity to practice with support. Needless to say, all the oral work in class is also geared towards supporting the end assignment of the unit. We believe that language structures and formulations of



Sample checklist given with written assignment in year 7.

opinion which the students are able to produce in speech are directly transferable into their written work.

Evaluation

We believe that it is important to announce the learning objectives of each lesson to the students when we begin. The feedback which is offered by the teacher or during peer evaluation is based on the level of achievement of these objectives. When completing the lesson in dialogue with the students, it becomes easier to plan for further work. You can either move on or find a different approach to consolidate the learning targets.

The students are trained to give each other feedback on individual as well as group assignments in the target language. We use structural, content-based and linguistic success criteria in our feedback. In addition, when relevant, we focus on group dynamics and collaboration as well as



On our field trip to London the students collected photo memories for a 'Streets of London' presentation.

effective delivery (oral assignments). The teacher will always sum up and complete the feedback session.

We want to create a learning atmosphere where every participant is an active learner and active observer. There is no room for passive students in such a context. Some students will be more active than others, but everyone is expected and asked to contribute with what they are able to produce in terms of content and language.

Formal feedback on larger pieces of work such as essays or oral presentations will always reflect the learning targets selected for the specific unit of work. E.g. When giving out the topic of an essay, the teacher reminds the students of the success criteria (language, structure, content targets). Finally, when the essay is graded and handed back the comments attached reflect how the student negotiated the specific targets. E.g. You make very good use of paragraphs, but I would suggest that you spend more time on producing a clearer introduction to the topic at hand. However, you have taken advantage of the new vocabulary and link your ideas using a variation of connectives. I am impressed with how well you use modal verbs to persuade the reader.

Conclusion

When sitting down to put our thoughts on a process oriented approach to learning on paper, we quickly realised we could only ever scratch the surface of our classroom practices. In our department we do not have a prescribed approach to teaching methods either. Each teacher will make his or her own choices. However, we all share high expectations both in terms of using the target language, English, all the time, and in terms of student participation and commitment. Our choices as teachers are always aimed towards producing an including and dynamic classroom. By questioning each other, working together or sharing ideas, we hope to keep learning and moving forward to improve our practice.

Sprogbøgers interaktive programmer til engelsk på nettet

Sprogprogrammerne
indeholder bøjnings-,
indsætnings- og
oversættelsesøvelser.

Eleven kan selv
evaluere og se rigtige
løsninger i procent.

FORLAGET SPROGBØGER interaktive
sprogprogrammer FORLAGET SPROGBØGER!
ENGELSK PÅ NETTET  www.sprogboeger.dk

Klasselicens (max 30 elever):
Kr. 900,- pr. program for et år.

Fornyelse: Kr. 300,- pr. år.

Enkeltbrugerlicens:

Kr. 100,- pr. år.

Fornyelse: Kr. 50,- pr. år.

TESTprogram
er på hjemmesiden til
gratis orientering
og på: www.sprogene.dk



Se vores
hjemmeside:

www.sprogboeger.dk
og www.sprogene.dk



**FORLAGET
SPROGBØGER**

Kalundborgvej 123 · 4300 Holbæk

Tlf. 5943 5132 · Fax 5943 5026

E-mail: info@sprogboeger.dk

www.sprogboeger.dk