



Planning course content over a three-week period

- This example of planning content of language support classes is based on a three-week period
- It includes a session during which one or more new students arrive in the class and are integrated into the existing group
- Most of the activities are at A1 or A2 level
- The design of the activities allows for two separate groups working at these two levels in the same classroom. This approach will allow the language support teacher to timetable maximum contact with the language support students in the school.
- All activities are based on collaborative group activity to maximize communication and exploration of new concepts.
- It is assumed that the classroom is equipped with a number of good learners' dictionaries so that students refer to them as they carry out the tasks.
- The approach is broadly subject-based but includes, at regular intervals, activities to develop student's learning skills (Learning to Learn) and cultural awareness. Other general modules e.g. Classroom Interaction, Cross-curricular learning and Developing Writing Skills are consciously included in the learning activities.
- It is assumed that following the three-week period there is a week of observation and assessment during which teachers and students examine what has been learnt effectively and what needs to be revisited in the next cycle.
- When group-based activities are taking place, the teacher is moving from group to group, observing the activities that are taking place and, when appropriate, providing suggestions, pointers etc.
- These suggestions are based on the inclusion of subject-based activities in the course (see sample set of subject-based materials produced by IILT)

Possible range of activities for 3 week programme

<p>General points</p>	<p>Every day use a greeting formula and encourage students to respond in the same way. Don't forget to teach students how to ask to go to the toilet and show them where to go. Write and say the date at the start of every class. This task can be given over to students as they become more confident. Use body language and words together when giving instructions e.g. let's put that on the wall, get into pairs, get into groups, sit down etc. Emphasize key words, if possible have them at the end of sentences. e.g. Is this Mahmoud's PEN? You will find that many resources already exist in the school which will meet different teaching needs. Classroom and school rules should be introduced in context as the situation arises.</p>	<p>Have blank charts ready that can be made up in class to highlight particular points – e.g. themes, items of vocabulary etc. Leave chart on wall until no longer necessary.</p>
<p>Warm-up/review activity 5 minutes</p>	<p>Using a soft child's ball, the ball is thrown from one member of the class to another. Each student calls the name of the person that he/she is throwing to. Each person has to provide a word beginning with the 'next' letter of the alphabet. When a student cannot find a word others help. Start with A, then stop after everybody has had a turn and start at that point in the alphabet the next time. Tell students to think about more vocabulary for the next day. Teacher can pick up on vocabulary items as appropriate afterwards. This activity could also be based on a particular theme, e.g. the words we know about geography, science etc.</p>	<p>A ball</p>

Module as defined in Language Proficiency Benchmarks	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
Personal Identification	<p>Working in groups students tell: Name, country of origin, family details, where he/she is living in Ireland, what he/she likes and dislikes e.g. cold, food in Ireland etc. Students repeat the basic information to whole class.</p> <p><i>Writing exercise:</i> Students work together to make up a 'form' in which they can fill in the information above. Teacher provides example of simple form Name: Address: Age: Name of school: etc.</p>	<p>Instead of telling, students interview one another. They should move around to do this and make notes on the information they receive. Each member of group interviews each other member.</p> <p>Students report to class on the information that they have discovered about one another.</p> <p>Note: This activity can be adjusted if students are given a form with a set of questions. They must find out, for example: How many other students watch TV in English; like particular fruits, vegetables, go to activities outside school, can swim, etc.</p> <p><i>Writing exercise:</i> Students work together to write a report on their findings when interviewing one another.</p>	<p>List of items for eliciting information at A1 level e.g. name, age, sisters and brothers, A2 level – grid with questions for interview</p>
Subject-based learning (Geography, English, History etc.)	<p>Teacher distributes a piece of text that is short, simple and contains obviously specific information – dates, numbers, placenames etc. Text of this type may be found in newspapers, reporting an incident, for example. <i>(See example of text 'The mystery of Easter Island' in subject-based materials pack.)</i> Students work in pairs or groups of three. They</p>	<p>The activity proceeds to follow the pattern provided in the subject-based materials pack.</p>	<p>Copies of pre-selected text – from a subject textbook if possible. Highlighting pens Enough learners' dictionaries so that there is one per group.</p>

Module as defined in Language Proficiency Benchmarks	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
Learning to Learn	<p>go through the text and underline or highlight the words etc. that are known to any or the entire group. If all students don't understand the vocabulary item, the other(s) explain. Vocabulary is categorized and listed in student's Dossier for future use. A monolingual learner's dictionary is used to define the vocabulary accurately. Students find examples of further use of the term or expression.</p>		
Integrating newly-arrived students (10 minutes)	<p>All members of class sit in a circle, teacher should also take part. The 'talking stick' is passed around. Students only speak when they have the stick. Teacher can model the activity by taking the stick and saying, for example, 'My name is ****. When I was in school (with gesture to indicate the past), I liked History and P.E. now I like to read books, play tennis etc.' Then passes the stick to a student with the instruction 'Tell us about what you do/like etc.' Any topics can be used for this activity. New students may pass the stick on if they don't feel confident about speaking. Teacher makes notes about vocabulary, grammatical problems that arise, for example the use of different tenses, and provides feedback after the session. This activity can be repeated at regular intervals with different topics. As students become familiar with the activity they will become involved immediately.</p>		A 'talking stick', microphone etc.

Module as defined in Language Proficiency Benchmarks	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
Geography Classroom Interaction	Introduction to the local area. Working in groups, students formulate questions about the area in which they are living. The lower-level students prepare to pose these questions to the higher level group.	Higher-level group use map of the area, or local information to formulate questions and answers. They write these in the form of a simple guide to the area/town etc. If they have access to IT facilities, material of this sort can be printed out and put on wall of language-support room etc.	Map of area Information about local facilities, services etc. Photographs of places in the area
	This introductory activity leads naturally into a geographical topic see .e.g Geography units in subject-based materials pack.		
History	See History activities in set of subject-based materials. Lower level learners work to their appropriate level. They should be encouraged to work with pictures, graphs etc. to support comprehension.	Higher-level learners complete the entire set of activities based on one unit.	Text-books used in the school. Blank grids for organizing vocabulary etc. Copies of portions of the text for focused study, as appropriate. Copies of pictures, diagrams etc. with labels blanked.
Developing learning skills	All students should gather categorized vocabulary, examples etc. and should use the monolingual dictionary throughout to support their learning. All students should be encouraged to write as much as possible throughout all activities. Lower level learners can copy relevant vocabulary, expressions or chunks of language and use this to assemble short pieces of text. All writing activities should be set up collaboratively on the basis of pairs or small groups.		

Module as defined in Language Proficiency Benchmarks	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
Cultural awareness	<p>Whole class works on brainstorming values, habits, important aspects of cultural or social life.</p> <p>Students working in pairs list the parts of their life that are important e.g. family, religion, education etc. and compare with other pairs.</p>	<p>Having done the activities for A1, students work in pairs or small group to compare their impressions of their own set of values with that of Irish teenagers. They could organize their thoughts on a blank grid under the appropriate headings.</p>	<p>A set of keyword prompts which may be elicited during a brainstorming session on the topic.</p> <p>A blank grid with two columns for A2 students.</p>

Module as defined in Language Proficiency Benchmarks	Activity at A1 level	Additional activity at A2 level	Resources required
<p>Developing writing skills</p> <p>English Language</p>	<p>Creating a story (This could be an on-going activity which is continued over a number of sessions, not necessarily consecutive sessions.) Take a single theme, for example describing people. Brainstorm personality traits and physical descriptions. Read a short piece of text to the students that includes a vivid description of a person.</p> <p>Students work in pairs 1 identify a range of characters that could appear in a story 2 assemble a range of descriptions that could be used for each character 3 create a sentence or two based on each character to describe something what they are doing/thinking/feeling etc. When the activity has been finished, the sentences are read aloud to the whole class</p>	<p>Having identified the characters and categorized them descriptively, the A2 level students continue to work in pairs creating a story that includes each of these characters. Text is edited as it is developed with help and pointers from teacher.</p> <p>Students read their short stories to the class when finished.</p>	<p>Brainstorming on board at the beginning Empty grid with a number of columns to categorise different traits. Monolingual dictionaries Grammar reference book A short piece of text to introduce the topic</p>

By the end of Week 3, in addition to subject-based learning, students have learnt:

Language

- Exchanging greetings
- How to ask to be excused
- Some classroom/school rules
- How to talk about themselves
- How to ask other students some basic questions about themselves
- Vocabulary for describing people
- The main features of their local area

Skills

- Understanding and responding to teacher's instructions
- Understanding items of vocabulary spoken by teacher
- Providing, categorizing and listing items of vocabulary
- Asking questions of and responding to a partner
- How to construct text
- Responding spontaneously

Students can mark off their achievements in their copies of the *European Language Portfolio* under the following module headings:

- **Personal identification**
- **Cultural awareness**
- **Learning to learn**
- **Cross-curricular learning**
- **Classroom interaction**
- **Developing writing skills**
- **English language**
- **History and geography**