

Languages Beyond University

A degree course in community outreach, experiential and reflective learning

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Introduction

- 2nd year 20-credit course based on the SLICC (Student Led Individually Created Courses) framework.
- Students design, develop and deliver a **cultural project** in local schools.
- They are allocated to a **school mentor** and attend **9 workshops** and peer-led feedback sessions at university.
- Students **present a poster** of their school project and evidence completion of five Learning Outcomes in a **reflective e-portfolio**:

LO1: analysis
LO2: application
LO3: skills
LO4: mindsets
LO5: evaluation



Key Drivers

Improving collaboration across the educational sector

School pupils:

- Near-peer model boosts **positive attitudes** towards language learning
- Encourages **uptake** into senior phase

University students:

- **Agency:** shifting from knowledge-centric learning to students at the centre of experiential learning and co-creators of the curriculum
- **Reflection:** Supporting literacy in learning and assessment
- **Employability:** Greater integration of life skills
- Underpins UoE **Widening Participation Strategy**



Challenges

- Police disclosures
- External partners: expectation management
- Students' autonomy
- Working with different academic calendars
- Sourcing suitable partners for languages outside the curriculum
- Students: Navigating complexity of dual role as learner and teacher
- Commitment, mid-course drop-out
- Varying degree of school mentor support



Conclusions

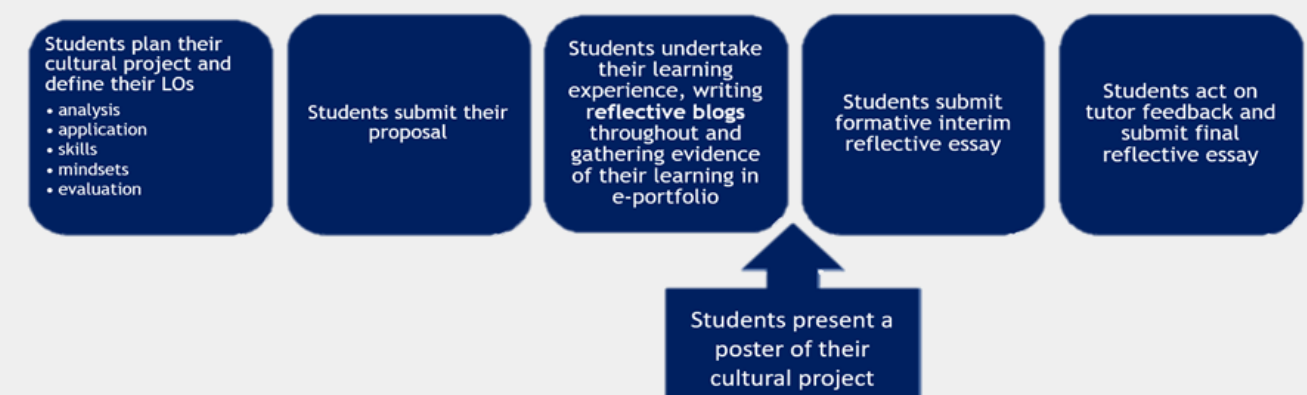
- Continuous school **engagement beyond the course**
- Enhance **graduate skills:** self-confidence, communication, reflection and acting on feedback
- Number of **WP students** enrolled (2024-25 -36%. 2025-26 - 27%)
- Increase in **interest:** doubled number of school partners but no data yet on uptake into senior phase
- Promoting University as a **real possibility** for WP pupils

Looking Forward

- Flexibility and scalability of the course (use in the YA - Asian studies)
- AI proof



Assessment

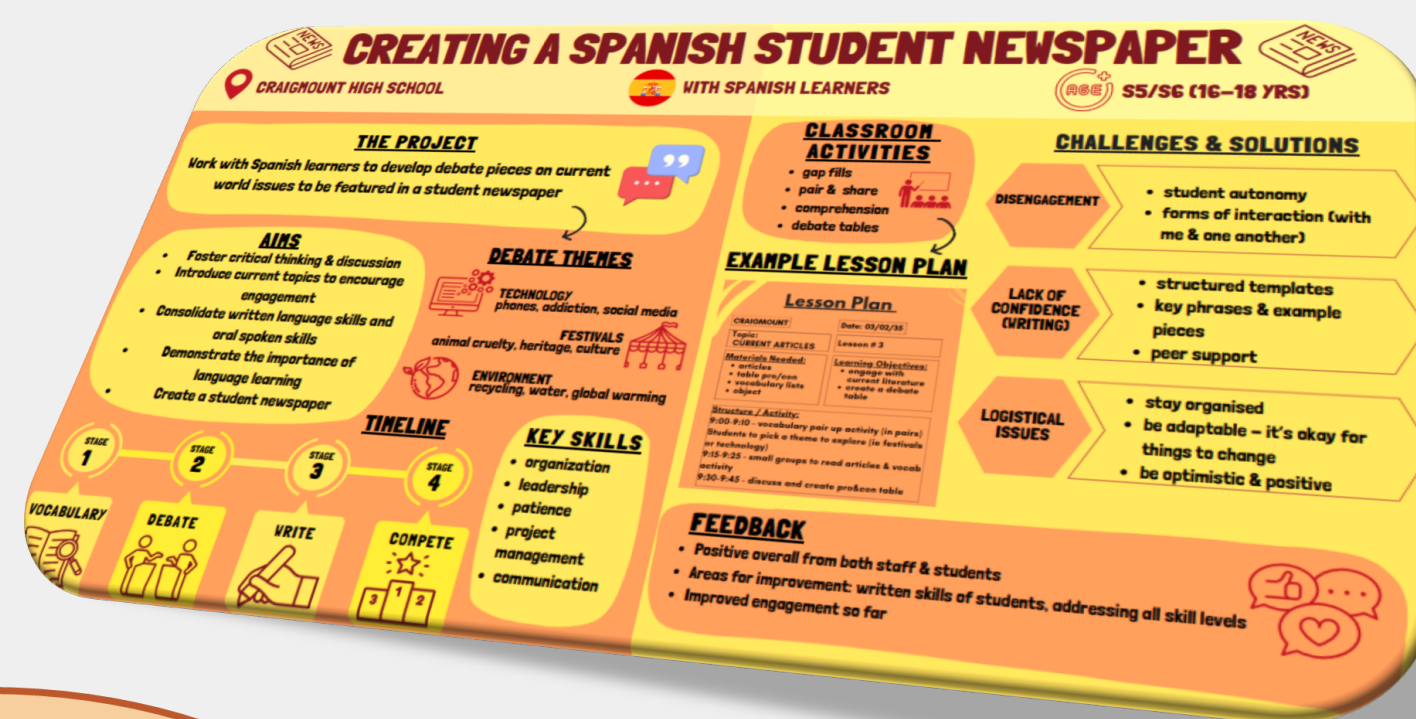


Use critical thinking to develop arguments, draw conclusions, make inferences and identify implications.			JusYtify
Transfer the understanding you have gained from your critical evaluation and use in response to questions, assignments and projects.			Apply
Assess the worth of an idea in terms of relevance to your needs, the evidence on which it is based and how it relates to other pertinent ideas.			Evaluate
Bring together different sources to serve an argument or idea. Make logical connections between the different sources that help shape and support your ideas.			Synthesize
Explore the similarities and differences between the ideas you are reading about.			Compare
			Analyse
			Examine how the key components fit together and relate to each other.
START HERE	Understand	Comprehend the key points, assumptions, arguments and evidence presented.	
Process	Take information i.e What you have read, heard, seen or done.		



Student Voice: Acting on feedback

- Awarding credits for outreach work
- Enabling participation of WP students
- Support: introducing pedagogical workshops
- Highlighting school projects: poster presentation as part of assessment
- Increase in-class peer activities



Students at the centre of experiential learning

LO1: Analysis: Critical thinking and challenging their own preconceptions

I have challenged them with analytical questions - relating to the cultural and historical significance of celebrations - and have been surprised by the level of insight they offer at times. I have learnt that children can be stretched and challenged far more than I anticipated.. (Abigail)

LO2: Application: Confidence as a tutor

[...] allowed space for me to accept that I still had a lot to learn which I found a hard but beautiful sensation at the same time as this meant I could come out with a new level of growth.. (Christina)

LO3: Develop skills: Autonomy

Confidence
I initially thought confidence would come from watching skilled teachers. But I learned it comes from **facing real situations**, even when they feel overwhelming. (Georga)

Leadership
I have grown more comfortable seeing myself as someone who belongs in the classroom in a leadership capacity - not just as a visitor, but as an **active and contributing figure**. (Alice)

Class management and authority
Authority doesn't require being strict or distant - it requires **calm, consistency, and confidence** in how I present myself. (Lily)

LO4: Mindset: Outlook and engagement

Different teaching angles - Puzzle solving

I used exercises in which I encouraged the children to try and figure out word meanings on their own **based on previous knowledge and logic**. [...] I learnt how showing them the puzzle of solving the nature of language learning can be an excellent tool to create a sense of accomplishment and to approach language learning from a different angle. [...] As someone who always struggled with languages in school, and benefitted from teachers who showed me **new ways of thinking**, being able to do the same for others was an incredible thing. (Imogen)

Decolonising the curriculum

[...] In Ivory Coast, uniforms are compulsory in schools, whereas in Belgium and France they are not [...] I have a clearer understanding of how **cultural representation is important** and plays a role in shaping learning. (Martha)

I feel **learning about the impact of colonialism**, especially given Britain's role in the past, should be more a part of the Spanish curriculum. (Letty)

LO5: Evaluation: Contribution to cultural education and community outreach

As someone who found the transition from school to university isolating at times, I have felt a personal drive to bridge that gap. By introducing the students to themes which have been relevant to me at university, I hoped to **demystify the idea of higher education**, and showing that **university is not out of reach**. This allowed me to find a passion in languages in a new way, as I reflected on in reshaping attitudes. (Alice)

References



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