Adopt a Class Warwick Handbook

Teacher
requests
resource

You find or
make
resource

You send
resource

You see
activity
and get
inspired!
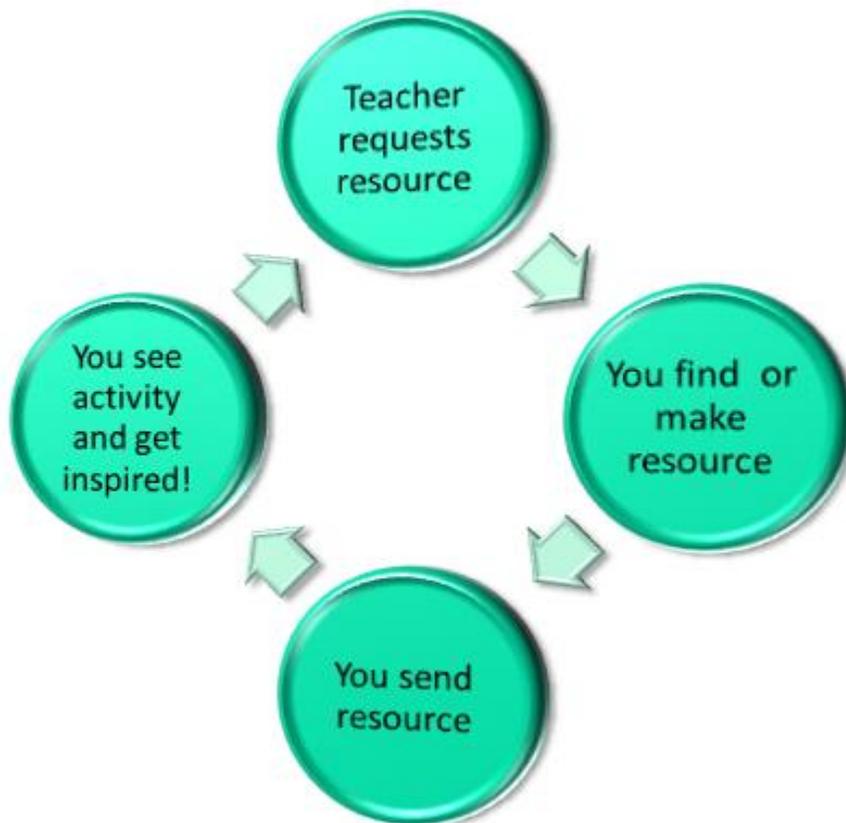
Contents:

Introduction to *Adopt a Class*

Adopt a Class is a scheme that has run for a number of years linking classes of pupils in primary and secondary schools with university students whilst they are on their year abroad via electronic media such as blogs, skype and emails. It also offers the possibility of creative collaboration between schools and students, leading to the co-creation of bespoke resources for particular classes within a school. The aim of *Adopt a Class* is to highlight the opportunities that are available for study and work abroad and to increase pupils' exposure to the joys and challenges of language learning experienced 'live' in the host country.

The project has been developed in response to a marked decrease in the number of school trips and exchanges abroad, as well as the decrease in the number of Foreign Language Assistants coming to the UK. We feel school pupils are missing out on some of the key benefits language skills can bring – travelling and meeting people from other countries.

The project here at Warwick has benefited from the involvement of the Warwick Centre for Teacher Education (CTE), and communication between our students and MFL PGCE students is envisaged in the course of the academic year. We are always seeking to enhance our links with local schools and those schools with whom our students have contacts.

Below, you will find suggestions on defining a programme to suit your school, your pupils and your own vision for the project. Whilst the activity is clearly linked to language studies, it is also suitable to be used as part of the citizenship curriculum and there are many opportunities for cross-curricular activities. Suggestions for links to the curriculum and possible themes are based on information from the National Curriculum website[1].

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[1] http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/index.aspx

Objectives

It is important to be clear about what you are trying to achieve.

Please see below some suggested aims for schools:

- Enhance pupils' language learning through appreciation of other cultures;
- Increase language up-take in GCSE, A-level and University;
- Provide authentic material;
- Raise pupils' awareness of our changing world, our place in it and how others live;
- Provide pupils with first-hand information on student mobility schemes;
- Investigate identity, diversity and personal histories

These are some of the reasons that have inspired students in previous projects of this kind:

- Inspire the next generation of language learners;
- Raise awareness amongst young people of student mobility opportunities;
- Bring a flavour of your host country into the classroom;
- Reflect on your experience abroad and your language learning;
- Support teachers in promoting MFL as an option in from KS2 to KS5;
- Gain experience of project management in education

How the scheme works

The scheme takes place over two school years, starting in the Spring term of the student's second year, spanning the Year Abroad, and ending in the Autumn term of their final year.

Student ambassadors and school classes are matched by the University of Warwick in the Spring term and, where possible, each ambassador will visit their school class for an introductory presentation. If a face-to-face meeting cannot be arranged, it is important to try and make contact via phone or Skype as an alternative.

They then depart on their year abroad and stay in close contact with the teacher, corresponding at least once a month. The year abroad project can take a number of different forms (please see chapter on strands).

Adopt a Class strands

Adopt a Class offers three possible strands for the year abroad in order to best make use of the student ambassador's experience and their contacts in the target country and back home.

Ambassadors and schools can choose to collaborate on one or more of the following strands:

Strand 1: Year abroad blog / skype

Student ambassadors stay in contact with their school class by sending updates of their experiences on their year abroad. This communication will take the form of a regular blog or skype conversation that can be shared with the teacher / school. The student ambassador also has the option to send back authentic resources such as train tickets or menus for use in the classroom.

Strand 2: Virtual school exchange

Student ambassadors undertaking a Foreign Language Assistant role in the target language country act as a central point of contact between their local school and their partner school. They facilitate communication between the school teachers and pupils on a range of subjects relevant to the curriculum.

Strand 3: Authentic Teaching Resources

Student ambassadors spend their year abroad collecting ideas and *realia*. In doing this, they consider how their material might be used as a learning resource. They do this in by liaising with their partner school. The materials they collect can include videos, photos, maps, magazines or books. Students are encouraged to make videos for use in the classroom during their stay.

Linking to the Curriculum

Evidence from previous schemes suggest that the Adopt-a-class project is more successful when supported by a pre-defined programme of activities aimed at embedding the university student's emails, blogs or teaching resources into the class's academic programme.

Linking the activity to the MFL or other subjects' curriculum will ensure it remains relevant throughout the academic year. Here are some suggestions:

Modern Foreign Languages

Intercultural understanding:
This project will enhance pupils' appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures. It will allow pupils to learn about different aspects of other cultures, such as everyday life, social customs, education, festivals and events of national importance. It will also highlight different ways of seeing the world, the religious beliefs of other people, their traditions, values and attitudes.

Curriculum opportunities:
- Through the student blog and the information shared, pupils at schools will have the opportunity to use a range of resources, including ICT, for accessing information in the target language and potentially to read, hear, speak, and write in the target language

- Pupils will have access to authentic material and will be able to fulfil new language curriculum requirements as well as gain a realistic view of the target language and culture's dynamics

- Pupils will have the opportunity to make links with English at word, sentence and text level

Citizenship

- School pupils will gain further understanding of the legal, moral, economic, environmental, historical and social dimensions of the destination country. They will have the opportunity to discuss topical issues and make comparisons between the British system and that of the host country.

- The project provides opportunities to explore issues around the global community, rights and responsibilities, social and cultural identities.

There are other possibilities to link the activity to other subjects such as Economics, Geography, History, Art, Music, etc.

Shared Themes:

The project provides ample opportunity to learn about several areas of the primary and secondary MFL curriculum. Below there is a short list of suggestions to help obtain the maximum benefit from the project. You can pick several of these to provide a broad picture of the destination country, or you may choose to focus on one particular aspect to gain a more in-depth knowledge and/or work across the curriculum with another subject, including:

- Localities, building a portrait through geography, industry, community
- Natural landscape features or heritage sites (Geography)
- Local cuisine - recipes, local produce, nutritional content, traditional dishes (DT)
- Transport
- Sports (PE)
- Families & friends - traditions, children, marriage (PHSE)
- Festivals
- Plays and books
- Artists, architecture, historical and modern
- Tourism - marketing, sustainable development, valuing traditions and monuments
- History
- Geography through students' eyes such as guides for international 'virtual' visitors
- Fashion and fabrics – what people wear
- Environmental issues, pollution, alternative energy (Science)
- Biodiversity, endangered species, poaching, reducing habitats (Science)
- Songs, dances, traditional or popular
- A period of history in each of the countries, and the inter-relationship of histories

A level

Students in their third year abroad are experienced researchers and have undertaken in-depth study into various aspects of French culture and literature. They have the potential to provide support for the A level curriculum in the area of:

- Topic work
- Study of literature and film
- Individual research project

The Initial School-Ambassador Meeting

Visiting the Partner School

It is desirable that students visit their partner school in the spring term before they go abroad, in order to make contact with their link teacher(s) and, in some cases, with the particular classes that they will be in contact with during their time abroad (with younger pupils particularly, it can be beneficial to establish a link before the students depart and to follow them on their journey throughout the subsequent academic year.)

If it is impossible for a student to visit their partner school in person before they leave to go abroad, communication should nevertheless be established with a link teacher via email, phone and/or skype.

Planning meeting

It is crucial for all students and teachers to work together to establish a series of objectives for the year (see the Adopt a Class plan below). This plan will not rule out the possibility that students will share other ideas / resources with their adopted classes as they spot them (indeed, this serendipity is part of the 'live' nature of the project), but it will help to focus attention on staff / pupil needs at given points in the year.

The planning meeting is, then, an opportunity for the teacher and ambassador to discuss in detail how to plan the project so both sides get the most out of it. Both parties should complete the Project Plan document below during your meeting.

- Decide on whether any correspondence/blogs should be written principally in English or the target language. The student ambassador will strive to use authentic target vocabulary where appropriate even when the principal language of communication is English, under guidance from the partner school.

- Decide which format(s) to use for your correspondence (all students will blog, but in addition you might think of using video, letters, postcards). Regardless of the format(s) chosen, regular contact should be made via the Facebook group page, so that the group co-ordinator and administrator can help share good practice.

- Decide together on relevant topics to be covered throughout the year and work out a schedule you can both work to, allowing time for correspondence to be integrated into lesson plans.

- Decide how often to correspond with each other (for example, once a month).

- Plan something for September: could pupils suggest items that the student should take with him / her as examples of British culture? What should the student pack and why?

Please send the completed project plan to Cathy at
c.m.hampton@warwick.ac.uk

Communicating during the Year Abroad

Communication is crucial to the success of the project, because there are many stakeholders involved.

- The most popular format for communication between the student ambassador and the partner teacher is by email. Please ensure that you have exchanged up-to-date email addresses.
- If you are exchanging video or audio files, please discuss the best platform through which to do this: some schools do not allow access to Youtube, for instance.

Rules and guidelines

- The Adopt-a-class project is for pupils aged between 7 and 18

- All content (whether written, photos, videos, etc) must be appropriate for these age groups

- Before going abroad, student ambassadors should meet with the teacher in the partner school and to agree how much correspondence they will provide and receive guidance on what topics to base their work around

- Both the ambassador and the teacher will complete a project plan

- Both the ambassador and the teacher have responsibilities in making the scheme work

- If ambassadors/teachers fail to meet the requirements of the agreement or if there is a breakdown in communication, please contact the project organisers

  Student ambassadors should not come into direct contact with the pupils during the year abroad, unless invited to do so by the teacher (such as for a Skype meeting). The teacher will share content with the class as they wish.

- If ambassadors receive any direct contact from pupils they should not respond and instead forward this to the teacher.

Adopt a Class Project Plan

Ambassador: _____

Teacher:_____

School:

_____

Blog language: □ English   or   □ Target language:_____

Chosen format: (please tick one or more)

□ Email   □ PowerPoint   □ Blog / forum:

_____

□ Letters   □ Postcards   □ Video   □ Other: _____

 Project Schedule – Year: _____ - _____

Month	Curriculum point covered in class	Topic for Student Ambassador	Amount of portfolio pieces / correspondence
September			
October			
November			
December			
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			

Useful links and details

Adopt a Class Warwick web page :
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/modernlanguages/undergraduate/yeara
broad/yearabroad/aac

Project director's email: Cathy Hampton C.M.Hampton@warwick.ac.uk