

Recognising Pattern

Context

In this teaching sequence a visiting teacher presents new sentences about colour of eyes using flashcards. He also uses rhythm, song and a game in a short, 2 minute sequence.

Exploration

An important aim of language learning in KS2 is to familiarise children with strategies which they can apply to the learning of any language. The Framework sets out examples of learning strategies and ways of teaching them. Over the four years of KS2 children should have regular opportunities to identify and apply a range of language learning strategies. By selecting and using different strategies, children develop awareness of how they learn and the ability to plan to use specific strategies for particular tasks. Strategies explored in language lessons can also be used for learning in other subjects. Notice how the teacher breaks down the sentence he wishes to introduce into small parts. Ich...Ich...Ich habe...Ich habe grüne Augen. When he presents the word Ich he points at himself, reinforcing the meaning, I. He also repeats the word Ich using a different tone of voice and rhythm. He repeats over and over the important part of the sentence, the verb and subject Ich habe...Children copy him. He also uses rhythm and song, a familiar tune, 'Clementine', to sing the sentences, and a guessing game to elicit the whole sentence from the class. To check that children are learning the new sentences the teacher gets children to say the sentences in an enjoyable, non-threatening way by playing a game. He hides the pictures and they must guess which picture he is holding by saying the German sentence. The motivational and pedagogical benefits of this approach are clear to see. Children are bursting to challenge the teacher and guess which card he is holding. From the children's standpoint, the emphasis is not on whether the children can say the sentences correctly but on whether they are guessing correctly. They are very happy with this activity. The whole teaching sequence takes no more than two minutes from beginning to end.

Links to the KS2 Framework

The children:

- listen and respond to simple rhymes, stories and songs
- recognise and respond to sound patterns and words
- perform simple communicative tasks using single words, phrases and short sentences
- listen attentively and understand instructions, everyday classroom language and praise words
- listen for specific words and phrases
- listen for sounds, rhyme and rhythm

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- identify specific sounds, phonemes and words
- recognise commonly use rhyming sounds
- imitate pronunciation
- develop accuracy in pronunciation and intonation

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- look at the face of the person speaking and listen attentively
- play games to help to remember
- remember rhyming words
- use context and previous knowledge to determine meaning and pronunciation

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Next steps

This activity paves the way for children to:

- recognise some familiar words in written form
- make links between some phonemes, rhymes and spellings, and read aloud familiar words
- experiment with the writing of simple words
- make simple sentences and short texts

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- recognise how spellings are represented in written form
- recognise patterns in simple sentences
- apply phonic knowledge of the foreign language in order to decode text
- apply phonic knowledge to write simple words and phrases

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Development

- Read the list of Language learning strategies on pages 84 – 90 of the Framework then consider which Language Learning Strategies you and your class use most frequently.

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- Note those which you would like to encourage children to use more frequently and plan to incorporate them into your lessons.

Some ideas for developing children's use of Language Learning Strategies

- Regularly transfer the teaching role from the teacher to children in the class. As children take on the role of teacher they become more aware of how they and others learn most effectively.
- Systematically draw children's attention to the ways in which they are learning a language and encourage them to list and to re-use successful strategies.
- Point out that individuals have different learning styles and preferences – what works for one person will not necessarily work for another.
- Experiment by trying out different methods of learning with the class. They can evaluate the success of e.g. communicating using some gestures; different methods of memorising words and phrases using rhythm, rhyme, blocking out words; understanding by interpreting gestures, asking someone to repeat something or speak more slowly.
- Build up a wall poster of effective language learning strategies and refer to them frequently.

How to help children to reflect on their learning skills and strategies

- Ask children what they want to learn in the new language. This supports reflection on their existing knowledge and their learning needs. In a simple way it passes some of the responsibility for decision making to the child.
- Encourage children to note down or draw what they have learned in a word list or vocabulary book e.g. list 'Now I can talk about'; list 'My new words'. This encourages reflection on learning and the articulation of newly learned items. It also supports the development of personal strategies for collecting and organising new words and phrases.
- Regularly ask children questions along these lines:
 - What have you done?
 - For what reason?
 - Did it work?
 - How do you know?
 - Was it hard or easy? If hard, what would make it easier?
 - What have you learned from this activity?
 - What have you learned about your learning and how to make it more effective?