



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

JUNIOR CYCLE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES



Rationale:

The study of modern foreign languages enables students to build on their language learning in English and Irish in primary school and further develops their skills in and enjoyment of using languages. Language learning is accessible to all students and contributes to their cognitive, personal and social growth by enhancing their communicative and thinking skills, as well as their participation in a global society. Being able to communicate in the mother tongue and in foreign languages are also among the eight key competencies for lifelong learning identified by the European Union and European Council in 2006.

Language learning develops students' general language awareness. It enhances their ability to analyse how language works, to compare languages, and to reflect on how they learn languages. This has a positive effect on their first language skills and on future language learning.

In learning foreign languages, students are actively engaged in activities and tasks which integrate the five language skills of listening, reading, spoken production, spoken interaction, and writing. As a result, they communicate with increasing independence, confidence, and creativity. As learning is a social activity as well as a personal one and as communication is central to language, learning languages offers students ample opportunities to work with others to develop their language skills and achieve appropriate goals.

A fundamental feature of languages is that they give students access to new worlds and different ways of thinking. The resulting development of socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness also enhances students' cognitive development. By reflecting on other cultures and making comparisons they develop a deeper understanding of their own while appreciating diversity.

Language learning also broadens students' horizons and enables them to develop lifelong learning skills for education, leisure, and work; and to develop a positive attitude towards other languages and cultures.

Modern technologies play a key role in making language learning and language use increasingly more accessible and enjoyable for learners, by facilitating access to information and communication with people at a global level.

The society we live in has become multilingual. Ireland needs to increase its language capacity and to foster plurilingualism (a person's ability to communicate in more than one language). While English is an international language, knowledge of other languages gives us cultural and competitive advantages.

Many studies attest to the benefits of bilingualism and plurilingualism. Students who have been exposed to language learning from an early age perform better than those who have not; not only in verbal skills, but also in mathematics. They display enhanced abilities in areas such as problem solving, multi-tasking, creativity and pattern recognition.

Aim

The Specification for Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages aims to develop communicative language skills broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, basic user) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)³ and its descriptors. It also aims to enable students to explore the interdependence between language and culture, to develop their appreciation of the relevance of languages to their lives for personal, social, educational, vocational, and leisure purposes, and to derive enjoyment from language learning. More specifically it encourages all students to:

- Actively engage in language activities and tasks, developing the capacity to understand written and spoken language
- Communicate effectively and confidently in the target language in familiar contexts through a range of media
- Develop their capacity to use appropriate structures and vocabulary for the purposes of communication, both written and oral
- Enjoy a language-learning experience that will facilitate and encourage them to continue learning languages in future
- Be reflective and autonomous in their language learning, and become actively involved in monitoring and assessing their progress
- Appreciate their own and other cultures
- Develop skills that they can apply to other areas of study and to their lives.

Structure

Learning outcomes in the junior cycle Modern Foreign Languages specification are organized into three strands, each with its own strand elements.

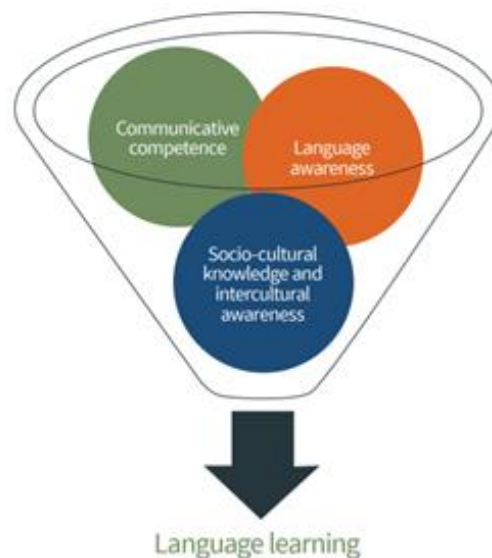


Figure 1: The three strands in junior cycle Modern Foreign Languages

There is potential for teachers to include LGBTQ+ content and perspectives into their teaching and assessment of learning outcomes in junior cycle Modern Foreign Languages. Sample learning outcomes with scope for inclusion of LGBTQ+ content and perspectives include:

Strand 1: Communicative competence

ELEMENT: Writing

1.19 Create texts about aspects of their lives and topics that interest them such as family and friends, school, holidays, leisure activities, fashion, sport, celebrities

Strand 2: Language awareness

ELEMENT: Reflecting on how the target language works

2.3 Recognise how gender and social conventions influence target language usage

Strand 3: Socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness

ELEMENT: Learning about relevant facts, people, places and history about the country/ countries related to the target language

3.2 Discover and use facts and figures related to the target country/countries such as statistical data, festivals, inventions, famous people

ELEMENT: Learning about traditions, customs and behaviours

3.4 Identify and explain some aspects of the target language country/countries in areas such as everyday living, interpersonal relations, customs and behaviours, social conventions

ELEMENT: Comparing their culture with that of the country/countries related to the target language

3.7 Analyse similarities and differences in relation to their peers' lives in the target language country/countries in areas of daily life such as school, socialising, sport, eating habits

3.8 Compare and contrast aspects of personal interest in the target language country/countries with those in their own country and present them using a range of media

Ideas for Teaching and Learning:

Facilitate your students to:

- Profile famous LGBTQ+ people and LGBTQ+ festivals from their target country
- Hear and practice vocabulary relating to same-sex couples, gender and LGBTQ+ people when covering topics such as daily life (for example 'my two mothers/fathers'), relationships, friendships and identity.
- Consider the implications of gendered grammatical constructs and terms such as, binary, non-binary and gender neutral
- Engage with excerpts from films in the target language that feature LGBTQ+ characters or themes, books that deal with LGBTQ+ topics, or work by LGBTQ+ authors. For example, *Ma Vie en Rose* for French, or *A Love to Hide* in German
- Engage with case studies profiling the lives of LGBTQ+ peers or peers with a diversity of family types in target language countries
- Discuss topics such as equal marriage, same-sex adoption and legislation around gender identity in the target language
- Write captions in their target language to go with photographs of Pride events in countries where the target language is spoken
- Produce slogans in their target language focused on supporting inclusion in the school and local community

- Produce MFL awareness-raising posters to encourage the school community to stand in solidarity with anyone experiencing hate speech



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Belong To is a national organisation supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

Since 2003, we have worked with LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland offering safety and support through our services. Let your students and youth groups know about Belong To and what supports are available for them including LGBTQ+ youth groups, crisis counselling with Pieta and digital support services.

For educators, we offer online training, support and initiatives such as the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark. For youth workers, we support a National Network of LGBTQ+ youth groups and run the Rainbow Award – an action-focused accreditation programme that supports a whole-organisation approach to safe and supportive services for LGBTQ+ youth.

Learn more at www.belongto.org



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