

Transcription: How can we encourage cross-curricular collaboration?

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Firstly, teachers can work in collaboration to support learning by agreeing that there is a clear need to develop language awareness, and also to agree that they need to support their learners. Once that has been achieved, and established, then obviously they can move on, share resources, share good practice and communicate. But, the basis for everything is understanding the need to be aware of your language, and also to support your learners in slightly different ways than other learners, who are taught in their first language.

So, a great way for teachers to work together is, perhaps, for English teachers to plan delivery together with subject teachers. For example, in history you would need past tense, and you would need to make sure that past verbs are used for past events, which can be addressed in English lessons. That way, identifying the language, and combining delivery, will obviously ensure that those skills are encouraged and developed, and our learners will benefit then.

Another example of working in collaboration, to support learners, is perhaps cross subject planning. So, the first thing that needs to be done is to identify an overlap between subjects, for example, between economics and maths, or between accounting and maths. Subjects like maths cover statistics, mean, median, extrapolation, and all those would be useful within marketing or economics. So, once you've established the overlap, you can then decide whether resources can be produced together, or whether resources can be shared, or perhaps a joint glossary can be produced for the benefit of the learners. And, that would make delivery, easier for learners, and more effective overall.

Another way to work in collaboration to support our learners, is perhaps to make sure that time is allocated to discussing different strategies in team meetings. And also, to make sure that good practice is shared. This, coupled with peer observation, is obviously a very effective way of improving support for learners. We've found that perhaps peer observations are one of the best ways to extend your range of strategies, and learn something that perhaps you may not try yourself, however, seen and delivered successfully by another teacher, may encourage you to do it in your own classroom as well.

Simon Armitage

Geography teacher

One way in which teachers can work collaboratively across departments is simply by having conversations, that's how schools work generally, just about what types of language approaches have been covered so far in different subjects. So, has the history department, for example, done work on the evaluation of certain resources? Has the science department done work on how to write up methodologies for experiments?

Another way to work across departments is by showcasing some of the work that your students have been producing. Because, this is one of the most challenging things in a school, how can I, as a geography teacher, actually know and see the work that my students have been doing, perhaps in biology, or in English, or in Italian lessons. So, this could be done simply by wall displays of work in very prominent places, perhaps in a school reception area, or a main corridor, rather than just contained within the classroom itself.

There are lots of other ways of doing this though digitally. And, as publishing digitally is now so easy, and as long as you have the basic technology resources to start with, potentially, this is completely free to do, there is no reason why many schools can't be showcasing their students work online. That way, departments can learn from each other, we can see, perhaps not necessarily the difficulties that students have had in the process of the use of that language, but we can certainly see the outcomes that they have.