

# 25 Leadership and languages: inspiring young linguists

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## Abstract

The Language Leader Award, created by Rachel Hawkes and run by Routes into Languages East “helps pupils learn to lead, using language teaching as the medium. Throughout the year-long programme they develop their leadership and [linguistic] skills, growing in confidence and enhancing their future careers” (Hawkes, n.d. c, p. 1). Some schools use the award as an enrichment activity and others as part of the curriculum. The development of teaching skills underpins this case study which explores general themes, such as lesson planning, as well as more specific ones, such as micro-teaching and peer and teacher feedback (Hawkes, n.d. a). The students, in pairs or trios, prepare and teach at least three one-hour sessions to pupils, usually at their feeder primary schools. So far this year there are 745 students (mostly, though not exclusively, Year 9s) from 39 schools on the award programme.

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**Keywords:** leadership, teaching, training, vocational, aspirational, reflection, practice, teamwork.

## 1. Context and rationale

The project was conceived and developed in response to a perceived need to develop students’ leadership skills, whilst improving their language skills. It

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**How to cite this chapter:** Hawkes, R., & Schechter, S. (2016). Leadership and languages: inspiring young linguists. In E. Corradini, K. Borthwick and A. Gallagher-Brett (Eds), *Employability for languages: a handbook* (pp. 171-180). Dublin: Research-publishing.net. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2016.cbg2016.480>

contextualises learning by motivating students and giving them confidence and satisfaction from sharing their knowledge with others. Moreover, research has shown that knowledge is deeper when active learning occurs and is subsequently analysed, reflected upon and applied (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

## **2. Aims and objectives**

The main aim was to provide a model within which students would develop their generic communication and leadership skills and their language learning would be rewarded, given a purpose and contextualised. Whilst developing a better understanding of the role of the teacher, they would gain a better understanding of themselves as learners. This in turn would enhance their self-esteem and confidence, improve their evaluative and analytical skills and increase their personal attainment in the target language (Hawkes, n.d. a). Reflective practice is a core aspect of the course and students record their experiences, reflections and reactions together with details of leadership activity in the school-specific logbook produced by Routes into Languages East.

## **3. What we did**


The project was first run on a very small scale, by its creator and developer, Rachel Hawkes, at Comberton Village College and has since grown to this year involve 745 students in 39 schools around the country. The project was set up to replicate as far as possible an authentic vocational setting, and students begin the process by completing an application form (see Figure 1).

The teacher selects the cohort and notifies Routes East so that logbooks can be provided.

Learners develop their teaching skills and prepare lessons to teach to younger learners through a series of sessions that occur during a suggested period from September to May in the academic year.

Figure 1. Language Leader application form

**Application Form for Language Leaders Award 2015/6**



*Please complete this form using black ink*

Name	Tutor Group	
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To apply for this position, you must have 2 people nominate you: one pupil and one member of staff

	Name	Signature	Date
1.			
2.			

Explain why you would like a place on this leadership award

Explain why you think you will succeed and achieve this award at the end of the year

Signature	Date	
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PLEASE STATE WHICH LANGUAGE:.....

The course begins with a series of sessions offering support with lesson plans and preparation to students. This is usually – though not exclusively – carried out in the school’s feeder primary schools, thus providing a valuable transition link

between the two levels for both staff and students. The sessions especially focus on micro-teaching and teacher feedback. Students enrolled on the Language Leader Award course are expected to spend 25-30 hours on the course. During this time, students are offered progressive feedback and assessment, one hour of delivery with a class of younger school pupils, and the expert advice of Modern Foreign Language (MFL) teachers on various aspects of pedagogy (i.e. initial teacher training mentor). This latter phase usually takes the structure of three 20 minute sessions delivered in groups of three students, or alternatively two 20 minute sessions in pairs.

The course is delivered by teachers in schools and while they have their own schedules, they are required to include the key elements of the Award outlined in the Award Course Overview (see below [Appendix 1](#)), for example, lesson preparation, delivery, teacher body language, reflection and discussion of language and teaching issues.

The logbook is individualised for each school and is a key part of the process, with students recording their reflections and self-evaluation of each individual lesson delivered in response to directed open questions:

- How well do you feel that the lesson objective was fulfilled?
- What went well in the lesson?
- What will you do differently next time?
- How well did you work together as a team?

They chronicle their language commitment in terms of language leader activities undertaken and record supervisor feedback, and on completion of the award, they reflect on what skills they have developed as Language Leaders, what they enjoyed most and what they found most challenging. Following valuable feedback from a local teacher, Jen Turner, the logbook was updated to its present form.

On completion of the award and the logbook, the final page, with supervisor's final summative comments and confirmation that the student has shown commitment through regular attendance at language leader sessions, has completed the logbook to a high standard and has successfully delivered at least one hour of class tuition, is signed by both the supervisor and the Head Teacher (to help raise the profile of the project, languages in general, and language activity in the school). The signed slips are sent to Routes into Languages East and all successful students receive Language Leader Award certificates and lapel pins.

#### **4. Discussion and conclusion**

The project has been extremely well received, with both teachers and students (in the primary and secondary schools) extolling its virtues. The supervisors' summative comments provide valuable insights into the process and outcomes. In giving students an insight into the pedagogic realities of teaching, they gain empathy with their teachers and, at the very least, realise the exigencies of the job and how much work goes into delivering a good lesson. On the other hand, teachers often express how much they themselves have learnt from the students and the often surprising benefits. Georgina Jackson from Tudor Grange Academy, Solihull wrote, "Emma [...] has drawn on her knowledge from other subjects and used her personal interests (history) to improve the provision of KS3 in MFL". So it is having cross-curricular benefits as well as the more obvious vocational, linguistic, aspirational and leadership ones. Although the main languages taught are French, Spanish and German (in that order), there are a range of other languages taught too, including Chinese, Russian and Welsh.

The project is growing in popularity year on year and two new projects have been developed from it and are being piloted this year. The first, Project Polyglot, by Jennifer Meechan of Hitchin Girls' School, supported by Routes into Languages East, has been awarded a British Award. It involves a cascading model, based on the Routes into Languages East Language Leader Award, with teacher training in languages for final year and second year Cambridge

University students as well as Year 12 and 10 secondary school pupils. The undergraduates and Year 12s are taught through a blended learning model with two initial input sessions together at Cambridge University and Hitchin Girls' School (with undergraduates and sixth-formers being taught together) and then with subsequent support on MOODLE. Meanwhile, the Year 10s follow the Language Leader Award. The final year undergraduates teach the Year 12s a university module topic that links to one of the A level cultural module topic areas (this will be further developed by the teacher), and the second year undergraduates teach a university module topic that can be linked to one of the five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) topic areas of the Year 10s. The Year 12s teach the Year 8s cross curricular cultural lessons of their choice in the target language. Next year the second year undergraduates will continue their involvement with the year 10s via a blog, sharing the experience with them, during their Year Abroad as part of the Routes into Languages East Adopt a Class project.

Through a combination of interactive sessions, independent work, and online support, the undergraduates will develop their teaching skills and prepare language lessons to teach to younger learners at Hitchin Girls' School in Hertfordshire. As with the Language Leader Award, the course involves micro-teaching and peer and teacher feedback. All four groups of trainees have been supplied with bespoke Routes into Languages Project Polyglot logbooks. The undergraduates will also complete a written evaluation to reflect on their experience of Project Polyglot. This will help to inform our assessment of the pilot project.

The second project to be piloted this year, the Silver Award, was developed in response to teachers in a local school whose students had completed the Language Leader Award. The project had been so successful that they – and the students – wanted to continue in some way. Usually we recommend that students progress onto the Routes into Languages South East Gold Award. However, at this particular school, they do the Language Leader Award with their Year 8s and the Gold Award includes a work placement abroad which their students are too young for, and so they required something similar and challenging, but different. Together we developed the Silver Award, which is now being piloted

with seven students at the school. It is based on the Routes into Languages East Languages Challenge, developed by Vincent Everett of Northgate High School, Dereham, but the challenges are directly linked to the students' further development and improvement of their teaching and linguistic skills and aim to equip them for a more proactive language leadership role within the school. There are 27 challenges and students need to successfully complete activities worth 100 points. Their task selection is determined by personal interest and practical constraints (see Table 1).

Table 1. Silver award challenges

TASK	POINTS
Keep your teaching from the Language Leader Award going – reflect on what you learnt from the Language Leader Award and further develop it with, for example more target language teaching.	20
Run a language festival or event in your school.	20
Investigate why languages are useful and important and run a 'Why Study Languages?' assembly for Year 9s.	20
Run a successful languages club or event or a Year 7 Spelling Bee club. Reflect as you go along on what works and what doesn't and adapt your planning accordingly.	20
Experiment with different techniques for learning vocabulary.	5
Produce a grammar guide. Use it to help other people and get feedback on how helpful it was and adapt it accordingly.	10
Create computer resources for language learning. Demonstrate them to your class.	20
Create a language-learning board/card game. Think about the target age, etc. Present the game, play it with a target age group and make sure it works. Evaluate the response.	10
Create a children's book in your target language.	10
On a trip abroad (either with the school or on a family visit) ensure you try and have as many conversations in the target language as possible and keep a record of them and the language you learn and what you notice that is different to England about the way of life and the different way of doing things.	10

Students keep evidence (photographic, videos or writing) of each task in a portfolio and then write a self-evaluation explaining what they have achieved and what they have learnt for each task. They will then choose one of their outcomes to be performed, shown or presented to parents and visitors at the

Silver Award Celebration Event at the end of the academic year. If the pilot projects are successful, they may be offered more widely as part of the Routes into Languages East standard programme.

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- Routes into Languages South Gold Award: <https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/events/gold-award-languages-2>

## Appendix 1.

Language Leader Award Course Overview <sup>3</sup>	
Week	Activity
<b>Autumn Term</b>	
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Put themselves at front of the room and address the class and introduce themselves.</li><li>2. Concentrate on eye contact, body language, movement, gestures, smiling.</li><li>3. Peer feedback and improvement the 2nd time around.</li></ol>

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3. Hawkes, n.d. b, republished with kind permission of the author.



2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students repeat Week 1's activity after having been given the week to observe their teachers closely in their lessons.</li> <li>2. Brainstorm the qualities of an excellent teacher.</li> </ol>
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss how to gain the attention of learners (in the target language).</li> <li>2. Practise this with the group and take peer feedback.</li> <li>3. Begin to brainstorm a list of classroom language needed (to be continued during the week by all leaders).</li> </ol>
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Share the lists of target language produced by all leaders.</li> <li>2. Practise in small groups using this language and other leaders responding to it.</li> <li>3. Peer feedback and improvements 2nd time around.</li> </ol>
5	Vocal workshop to focus on projection, volume, tone of voice as well as how to use your voice better and protect it.
6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to the idea of structure of a lesson.</li> <li>2. Discussion of different task types and the nature of each.</li> <li>3. Brainstorming list of essential things to consider when planning a lesson.</li> </ol>
7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tasks and activities for the introduction of new language.</li> <li>2. Teacher models some of these first (<a href="#">hyperlink List of Activities for the Introduction of new language</a>).</li> <li>3. Learners practise and receive peer feedback.</li> </ol>
8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learners select their theme (in groups of 3).</li> <li>2. Begin to plan a first 5-minute teaching slot.</li> </ol>
9	Leaders continue to plan their teaching.
10	Leaders micro-teach and receive peer feedback.
11	Leaders extend their planning to a full lesson (each leader responsible for 20 or 30 minutes independent delivery BUT the whole hour must cohere so they must plan together).
12	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
13	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
14	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
<b>Spring Term</b>	
1	Leaders teach their lessons to their peer group and receive feedback.
2	Leaders teach their lessons to their peer group and receive feedback.
3	Leaders go to primary schools and teach their lessons.
4	Leaders reflect on their Lesson 1 and write up these reflections.
5	Leaders begin to plan Lesson 2 (returning to their original notes on tasks, activities, target language lists, etc.).
6	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
7	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
8	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
9	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
10	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.

11	Leaders go to primary schools and teach their lessons.
12	Leaders reflect on their Lesson 1 and write up these reflections.
<b>Summer Term</b>	
1	Leaders begin to plan Lesson 2 (returning to their original notes on tasks, activities, target language lists, etc.).
2	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
3	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
4	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
5	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation.
6	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation & teach their lesson to their peers.
7	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation & teach their lesson to their peers.
8	Leaders continue to work on their lesson preparation & teach their lesson to their peers.
9	Leaders teach their 3rd lesson.
10	Leaders reflect on their lesson and what they have learnt during the Language Leader course and record this in their Log Book.



Published by Research-publishing.net, not-for-profit association  
Dublin, Ireland; Voillans, France, [info@research-publishing.net](mailto:info@research-publishing.net)

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**Employability for languages: a handbook**  
**Edited by Erika Corradini, Kate Borthwick, and Angela Gallagher-Brett**

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ISBN13: 978-1-908416-37-7 (Paperback - Print on demand, black and white)  
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ISBN13: 978-1-908416-38-4 (Ebook, PDF, colour)  
ISBN13: 978-1-908416-39-1 (Ebook, EPUB, colour)

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**Legal deposit, United Kingdom:** The British Library.  
British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.  
A cataloguing record for this book is available from the British Library.

**Legal deposit, France:** Bibliothèque Nationale de France - Dépôt légal: juin 2016.