

CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

A regional event promoting confidence in speaking skills

Thursday 4th July 2013 at RAF Cranwell

The Confidence Booster idea was born out of our observation that many GCSE students were lacking in confidence to use their language skills, which would impact on their ability to do well in their GCSE oral. This event was therefore constructed for Year 10 students and contained a number of team games aimed at getting them to use straightforward GCSE vocabulary with confidence. A secondary benefit was of course the ability to improve their team working skills.

We were lucky enough to be invited to pilot our Confidence Booster at Stamford Queen Eleanor's School with their Year 10 French and Italian groups. Following that we made a few adjustments and prepared to accommodate French, German and Spanish groups in our regional event.

Whilst we expected schools to send teams working in one language, this proved difficult to arrange and we subsequently accepted mixed language groups in odd numbers from Boston High School, Kesteven and Sleaford High School, St. George's Academy, Ratcliffe College, Groby Community College and the Brunts Academy. From the students we then organised mixed school teams with a common language for each team, which gave us 6 teams of French, 3 teams of Spanish and one team of German. Once they had got over the initial shock of being separated from their friends, the teams soon started working well together and the fact that they had to work with people they didn't know, also contributed to the overall boost in confidence. All the teams were given names of RAF bases in honour of our hosts, RAF Cranwell.



The event took place in the fabulous Daedalus Mess at Cranwell, a perfect venue for the team games. We started with an ice breaker and then went into a keynote talk from Tim Smith, an RAF linguist who talked about his career, the languages he had learned with the RAF and how he had gained confidence in speaking. He led a short little game in using numbers – one of the first things we learn in another language yet something we rarely achieve the same facility with as in our mother tongue.



The first activity was inspired by the RAF as it was a code breaker game. Using blindfolds to simulate restricted night time vision, half the team had to guide the blindfolded members to hang washing on a line in a correct sequence with the right colour pegs to crack a code. The second activity was a human ludo, involving dice, forfeits and opportunities via simple questions to gain materials to make a model. The third activity involved a version of Chinese whispers using food vocabulary to build a pizza. The final game involved writing and delivering orally mad sentences with random objects.

In the afternoon the students were set a different type of challenge. They were asked to put together a presentation that had to be delivered to our judges. Whilst we know that the students mostly hate doing this sort of thing, surprisingly many of them afterwards say that it was the best bit of the day and helped them overcome their fear of speaking. The fact that they did this in another language also helps to boost their confidence.



Teacher comments included:

'Many thanks for such an enjoyable day last Thursday. Although my pupils were very nervous to begin with, the feedback on the journey home was all very positive and they thoroughly enjoyed it. I look forward to attending more events in the future.'

Claire Vaughan, Boston High School

We would like to thank the following Business Language Champions for supporting this event:

- Tim Smith from the RAF
- Brigitte Peach from Languages for Life
- Helen Fagan – Viticulture graduate

We would particularly like to thank Squadron Leader Tamzin Keenlyside at RAF Cranwell for all her help in arranging the day and of course RAF Cranwell for offering their facilities.

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