



LANGUAGES AND SCIENCE MASTERCLASS

Wednesday 9th February 2011
at Belvoir High School, Bottesford
and
Thursday 24th March
at Castle Rock High School, Coalville

At Business Language Champions we always emphasise how language skills can enhance any other discipline and help young people go further in their career. It is easier than ever these days, and indeed encouraged, to combine languages with other subjects at A Level. In addition to that most universities offer languages as an extra-curricular subject for those who are not studying it as their primary degree.

With this in mind, we developed the Languages and Science Masterclass for Belvoir High School, a specialist science school, and repeated it at Castle Rock a few weeks later. At each school we worked with 50 – 60 of the students in the Year 9 top sets for French and science. They were divided into teams of 5 – 6 students.

The Masterclass was led by Sally Fagan, who studied sciences to O Level and languages to degree level, and Terry Young of Eminate, who studied French to O Level and then sciences at university. For both of them, the knowledge of the other discipline was to prove invaluable in the years that followed. For Sally, it helped her obtain and carry out an export sales job selling specialised raw plastic materials, negotiating with engineering professionals and advising on technical and processing matters in different languages around the world. For Terry, who continued in science-based industries, it offered the ability to travel, meet and talk with fellow scientists in other countries and present at international conferences



As a warm up exercise, the teams were each given a well known brand product (e.g. Bic razor, can of Coca Cola, Nike trainer) and asked to consider what aspects of science went into creating it and its packaging. With substantial presences in many countries, the science, research and development needs of each of these brands would have been multinational.

Terry then gave some background to his current work. Scientific research had shown that the Japanese suffered much less from bone degeneration because of eating fermented soya beans. However, the gooey mass of beans in their fermented state was not acceptable to the Western palate, and so his division VitaNat, bought the fermented beans and converted them into a health supplement in tablet form. Terry then explained the process of fermentation and each team did their own fermentation experiment with yeast.



This led into the challenge itself. Terry had successfully sold the health supplement as an own brand to supermarkets in Scandinavia, and was keen to approach the supermarkets in France. So each team was challenged to come up with a pitch, as far as possible in French, to the French supermarket Carrefour to persuade them to take VitaNat and market it under their own label. Whilst French was important for the commercial aspect as they were selling, it was also important scientifically to understand and explain the health supplement concept. To help with this, the students were also given a commercial lesson in how to promote benefits rather than features of the product. A pitch by each of the teams to the Carrefour buyers rounded off the morning.

Contacts

Sally Fagan
Business Language Champions
01949 860167 / 07967 699614
Email: sally@business-language-champions.co.uk

Rowena Allen (MFL) and Claire Price (Science)
Belvoir High School
Bottesford

Dianne Lopeman (MFL)
Castle Rock High School
Coalville