

SELSTON EUROPEAN CHALLENGE MASTERCLASS

Wednesday 3rd February 2010
at Selston Arts and Community College

The Selston European Challenge Masterclass is a great example of Business Language Champions working in partnership with Young Enterprise. Young Enterprise is well known for its promotion of enterprise skills in schools through set programmes. Perhaps less well known is its willingness to put together specialist Masterclasses on any topic of the school's choosing. The combination therefore of Young Enterprise's expertise in constructing day-long seminars and its resources together with the language and export trade knowledge of Business Language Champions made it the perfect partnership to answer Selston's request for a seminar day to promote languages and enterprise.

Sixty of Selston's Year 9 students, who were all studying German, gathered in the smart conference room of the school building ready for their challenge, together with David Greenwood of Young Enterprise, Sally Fagan, manager of Business Language Champions in the East Midlands and four more Business Language Champions who were recruited to act as business advisers.



After an icebreaker in German, during which the students got to know more about their advisers, the students were introduced to their challenges for the day. In their teams they were to take on a very English product, and imagine they had to introduce their product to the European market at the German Food Trade Fair Inuga. Half the teams were to promote Thorntons' chocolate and the other half English cheese produced by The Cheese Company Tuxford and Tebbutt of Melton Mowbray (Stilton, Leicester Gold, Shropshire Blue). Before starting on their challenges, they reflected on student visits to a German Christmas

Market and the types of food they saw there, and one of our BLCs, Adrian Bates, gave a short talk about things you have to take into consideration about a product when taking it to a different culture and in a different language.

Their challenges included making a model of their trade stand, researching and writing emails in German to confirm hotel reservations for their stand personnel, and creating a radio advert in German. Perhaps their biggest challenge was sampling the cheese and the chocolate! During the day they also heard about the careers of our four business advisers: Trevor Lane, an export consultant, Paul Carney who works for PIKON UK, Mark Wingfield who runs MW Sigma and Adrian Bates, retired export manager for Speedo.

The day was designed to highlight the importance of languages in business, particularly with reference to German. German is unfortunately dropping in popularity



as a school subject. It remains, however, an important language for business, in spite of the fact that many German business people speak good English.

Comments from the students included:

- 'Much better than I thought it would be!'
- 'Awesome!'
- 'Had a great time, as we used German AND had fun!'
- 'I realise that having a language gives me greater chance of getting a job.'
- 'I think it was the best day I have had in school!'

Stef Smith, an MFL teacher from Selston, thought that the structure of the day worked well as the activities were short, varied and manageable. She liked the fact that the advisers had appropriate experience and knowledge, and appreciated that the products were recognisable and relevant. Above all, Stef thought that CHOCOLATE worked extremely well!

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