

Incognito

Lead institution: Leek High Specialist Technology School

An essential weapon in any good spy's armoury must surely be the ability to speak a number of foreign languages. And that idea has been cleverly adopted for a LinkedUp project in Staffordshire which has created a board game to help pupils make the languages transition from middle to high school. The project, entitled Incognito, was initially developed to provide improved links and cohesion between Leek High Specialist Technology School and the nearby Churnet View Middle School.

Project leader Alan Greene, Leek High's Head of Languages, said: "The aim was to develop and produce a language game which allows students to work their way through various countries whilst travelling incognito as spies. I have had this idea brewing for many years and initially thought about doing it commercially. But then I thought with the Links funding that this was something we could do at school. The main reason for the project is that pupils at Churnet View only do one hour of French a week, and when they come to Leek High they have access to French, German, Spanish and Italian in Year 9. So we wanted to introduce them to and familiarise them with different languages to help them with their transition."

Students go round the board game in the guise of a spy

The project began with Alan visiting Churnet View to work with a Year 7 class of just under 30 pupils. That was followed by pupils using the BBC's Language Steps programme to research and learn a variety of messages to be used by the 'spies' in the game, ranging from ordering a meal in a restaurant to booking a room in a hotel. Added Alan: "The game takes them around France, Germany, Spain and Italy and enables them to access phrases in the native languages as they go round the board in the guise of a spy. If they get a phrase correct, they win 20 Euros and the player with the most money wins. The pupils worked in pairs and really enjoyed it. It was fun and I'm hoping it's got them interested in different languages." The project was launched at Churnet View in January 2011 when pupils played the game in front of an invited audience.

The project has resulted in 15 board games which other schools can now use, although Alan holds the intellectual rights to the game. It has also generated other materials, including phrase cards in each of the four languages. There is a codebook which has all the messages in French, German, Spanish and Italian, as well as English, with the foreign language phrases also written phonetically.



You can download resources from this project by visiting the LinkedUp resource finder and searching for West Midlands under 'regions'. Please note that resources may not be online until late spring 2011.

www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk/linkedup

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