

Area of Study

Local and global citizenship.

Overview

This transition unit seeks to open up students' awareness about and respect for diversity. Students will have the opportunity to further their European language skills. They can also explore the diverse histories and cultures in the various countries under investigation.

They will explore the diversity of religious beliefs and practices, which are part of Ireland now.

In addition teachers can expose students to a wide range of diverse foods and meals from other cultures.

By studying people, beliefs and cultures, locally and globally, students can come to value and celebrate the richness of people from a diversity of cultural, ethnic, social and religious backgrounds.

Related learning

This provides interesting opportunities for cross-curricular work with Modern Languages, Religious Education, Geography, Home Economics and History.

Outline of the unit

The Transition Unit is broken into four parts.

Part 1. Modern Languages/Linguistics

1. Students will research the extent of language diversity that is part of Ireland today, beginning with a survey of the number of languages spoken by students and staff within the school. They can also check out the latest statistics for languages spoken in Ireland on www.cso.ie.
2. Students will learn useful expressions and vocabulary in four European languages – Irish, French, German and Italian (the languages chosen depends on the teachers involved). Students can also learn a number of useful expressions and phrases in other languages from other students in the school. For example, Polish, Lithuanian, etc. Some students could use a tape-recorder to record these phrases and then use the tape in class to teach different greetings, etc.

4. Students will look at the origin of three European languages and map out where in the world these languages are now spoken. It is important that this exercise is used to show the impact of both colonialism and globalisation and how languages change and move over time. Students can debate whether it is possible today to talk about 'the English speaking world' or 'the Spanish speaking world' when in fact more people living in New York speak Spanish than English.

Part 2. Exploring religious diversity in my local area

1. Students will explore the different religions practiced in their local area/city. They might use a variety of sources to complete this task – maps, directories, local library, the internet, compile a survey for their class/school. Then in small groups they can select one religious group and examine it under agreed headings such as – origin, place of worship, number of followers, times of significance, how the group organises itself, main beliefs, etc.
2. They might invite guest speakers who would represent a variety of religious traditions or it might be possible to visit places of worship or gathering within their area. With sensitive handling some students might also like the opportunity to talk about their own religious traditions and beliefs.
3. They can also research the different religions present in Ireland today. (See web resources)

Part 3. An introduction to the new European Member States

1. Students will work in pairs to do a case study of a new European member state.
2. Students will investigate the history of these countries and also build up a profile of the country today under agreed headings. As part of their research, students might be able to interview someone in their neighbourhood or a fellow student to find out what life is like today in their chosen country.
3. Students will present their findings orally to the class.
4. To help students gain an understanding of what life is like for someone arriving in Ireland for the first time they could watch the short film 'Yu Ming is aimn dom'.

Part 4. Culinary experiences of European countries

1. Students will research the main culinary specialities from various European countries.
2. Students will work in pairs to prepare a dish from another country.
3. Students will present these dishes to the class for sample tasting.

Breakdown of the unit

The most effective way of running this TU is with the four different parts of the unit running simultaneously for approximately 8 weeks. This would require 4 teachers to be timetabled for a double class period per week for an 8 week period.

Alternatively, the TU could run for one double class for one year. In this case the TU could be

Term 1 – (Sept – mid-term)	Modern Languages
Term 2 – (midterm – Christmas)	Religious Studies
Term 3 – (January – Easter)	History and Geography
Term 4 – (Easter - End of May)	Cookery

Class contact time - approx. 40 hours.

Out of school independent research - 5 hours.

Aims

This transition unit aims to:

- develop students' knowledge and appreciation of the cultural diversity that is a part of Ireland today
- contribute to students' understanding and appreciation of the religious values, beliefs and practices that are part of Ireland
- provide students with an appreciation of the diversity of languages spoken in Ireland today and the richness that this diversity can contribute to Ireland.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- show respect and appreciation for a diversity of cultures and beliefs
- demonstrate a knowledge of useful expressions in a number of European and non-European languages
- research and present a project on a European country of their choice
- plan and present a speciality dish of another country
- work cooperatively and effectively
- research information from a range of sources
- summarize and present findings
- compile interview questions and conduct an interview.

Key skills

How evidenced

information processing

Evidenced by sourcing, reading and selecting the information for the project, and choosing which way to present their information.

critical and creative thinking

Students' perceptions will be challenged as they discover the diversity of languages, cultures and religious traditions that are a part of Ireland today. They will critically evaluate how this has influenced and enriched their lives.

They will use their creativity and imaginations in discussing how Ireland might continue to benefit from and celebrate this growing diversity.

communicating

Evidenced by giving an oral presentation on a European country in front of the class.

By listening respectfully to others points of view and expressing opinions in small groups and class discussions.

By conducting an interview.

By providing constructive feedback

working with others

Evidenced by working with a partner to research and present the project.

In addition working with a partner in the kitchen in the preparation of a meal.

By taking responsibilities for sharing the work and completing it to the agreed timeframe

being personally effective

Learning to be more confident and assertive when presenting to a group. Selecting and planning topics for research and being able to follow through on achieving goals and deadlines.

Learning approaches

Project work, teacher-led discussion and debate, pair work, oral presentations, internet research, practical cookery, interviews, guest speakers.

Assessment approaches

- Each student will produce a portfolio at the end of the year, containing evidence of all the work completed.
- The oral presentation made to the class will be assessed by peers
- Effort and performance in the preparation and presentation of a meal is may also be the basis for a combined student-teacher assessment.

Evaluation methods

Students will complete an evaluation sheet and discuss with teacher. Key questions will include: What parts of the course they felt were interesting or beneficial? What skills they have learned? What skills need to be improved and how will they do this? What parts of the unit were least enjoyable? How would they like to see the unit developed or changed for future class groups?

Teacher should also draw up an evaluation questionnaire for other members of the teaching team.

Resources

Useful websites:

- www.cso.ie
- http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/schools_page/index_en.htm
- www.nccri.ie
- www.religioustolerance.org
- www.adherents.com
- www.interfaithcalendar.org
- www.local.ie
- www.bbc.co.uk/education
- Local Town Library
- Cookery books
- Geography books
- "Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School", Guidelines for Post Primary Schools, downloadable on www.ncca.ie/action
- Newspaper cuttings
- Yu Ming is ainm dom film
- www.slss.ie (The TY Support Service website has lots of sample evaluation sheets which can be adapted)