

INSPIRATION THROUGH EXCELLENCE

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When I created a lesson plan on the Paralympics for my job interview at the British Council, I had no inkling that it would be adopted as a flagship workshop that would reach over 5000 learners in schools across Israel. Looking back, I am proud to have reached out to so many teachers and pupils with the Inspiration through Excellence workshop, which I find such an exhilarating subject.

Do you have a topic that excites you? Why not create a lesson that shares your passion with your pupils? There are a number of elements of the workshop that can be adapted for use in all lessons. The following are my suggestions for creating a lesson plan that integrates technology and engages learners of all ages.

- **Include images**

The Inspiration through Excellence workshop opens with five images of athletes. What the pupils don't know is that the pictures of the Paralympic athletes are cropped so that their disabilities are "out of the picture". I ask the students to describe the pictures. Most use words like athletic, strong, determined, etc. Then I switch the slide to the "full picture" and get their impressions. Would they have described the picture the same way?

It's easy to take this idea and apply it to other topics. Teachers can show pupils part of a picture and have them guess what it is, ask them to describe the picture or ask them to write what they think will happen next.

Be sure that you choose an image on www.flickr.com from Creative Commons. From the Flickr home page, click on "Search" and then "Advanced Search". Look for the option at the bottom of the page that says "Creative Commons". Another option is to search the eltpics' photostream (www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/). These are pictures (all licensed as Creative Commons) uploaded by other teachers for educational use. Choosing a Creative Commons picture and attributing it correctly, models good online behaviour for pupils. How often do teachers get frustrated when pupils copy and paste text from the Internet? Taking a copyrighted picture and not attributing it amounts to the same thing – a violation of copyright.

- **Incorporate video**

Another part of Inspiration through Excellence includes showing learners a video on the history of the Paralympics (<http://youtu.be/w6VbjFZ6yBs>) and asking them to write down the sports and cities that they see in the video. Videos are a great way to bring current events into the classroom; incorporating videos, exposes learners to the world and shows them different types of people, places and perspectives. During or after viewing, learners can answer yes/no questions, categorise lexical

items or count how many times they hear something.

- **Allow for pair-work and group-work**

Both of the activities above – describing pictures, filling in a table while watching a video – can be done by the pupils in pairs or in groups. The pupils learn from each other and enjoy completing the tasks with their peers. It may be a little noisier but it's worth it if they're communicating and motivating one another.

- **Practise skimming and scanning**

Reading a text and answering questions can often take a whole lesson. Why not have the pupils practise their skimming and scanning skills to find information? In Inspiration through Excellence, pupils are given a short text on the Paralympics and asked to circle the numbers and underline the capital letters in the text. Pupils then compete to find answers as quickly as possible to questions on PowerPoint slides. I use a timer and give pupils 30 seconds to find the right answer. Pupils love the challenge of finding the information before the time runs out. This activity is easy to duplicate with a text on any topic, especially one with many names and dates.

- **Adapt online material**

The last part of the workshop includes a game called Oscar's Games Challenge (<http://tinyurl.com/8w62gu7>). The language of the game is a bit difficult for pupils, but they love jumping over and rolling under obstacles. Therefore, I created an accompanying worksheet that was adapted to their level. It includes questions about what Oscar is wearing, what he jumps over or rolls under, places in London that he passes, etc. If you see something online related to your lesson but the level isn't exactly suitable, it doesn't mean you can't use it. Allow your pupils to benefit from it by adapting it.

- **Share, share, share!**

I have received constructive feedback and gained many insights from presenting this workshop at ETAI conferences and in schools. If you create a lesson that garners positive responses, share it!

If you would like a copy of the PowerPoint for "Inspiration through Excellence", please e-mail me at elana.salomon@britishcouncil.org.il.



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