

The Navy and Brechin High School



SCILT's Business Language Champions (BLC) programme helps schools and businesses to build exciting and sustainable partnerships that equip young people with the international communication and employability skills they need for their future careers.

Background

Brechin High School

Brechin High School is a six-year, non-denominational, comprehensive secondary school, with a current roll of 525 pupils and 51 teaching staff, serving the town of Brechin and the surrounding rural district. The school also has an Integrated Special Unit.

Brechin High School offers French and Spanish from National 3 to Advanced Higher. It also offers the Languages for Life and Work award to senior pupils.

For more information about the school visit the [Brechin High School website](#)

Aims

The BLC project aims at bringing businesses and schools to work together to encourage young people to learn languages. It gives learners the opportunity to use their linguistic skills in a practical context and to think about the value of communicating in another language.



Partner

The Royal Navy

The project focusses on the humanitarian role of the Royal Navy such as search and rescue, crisis management and disaster relief.

Project

The visit from the Navy and SCILT

SCILT, The Royal Navy and the school language department worked together to create an exciting programme for S3 learners. A visit from the Royal Navy and language workshops culminated in an interdisciplinary project in which the young people had to use their language skills in humanitarian crisis scenarios.

A Warrant Officer from the Royal Navy spoke to the young people about the role the navy has in providing humanitarian aid and the importance of language skills in the work that they carry out. One of the SCILT team also spoke about the benefits of language learning and how it can enhance a CV. This interesting and grown-up context allowed the staff to deliver an active and collaborative series of workshops that practised and developed all four language skills.

Here are some of the young people's comments:

"It was good to see how we could actually use languages out in the real world."

"I got better at working with people I didn't know so well."

"I felt more confident speaking in front of other people in French."

The scenarios

The S3 learners then split into four groups and were allocated one of these two projects:

Project 1

The young people created a useful tool that could assist a Royal Navy engineer or medic to be understood in another language when operating within the challenging situation of a humanitarian crisis. The solution had to be weather proof, easy to use, durable and effective. The young people were also shown examples of what may or may not work and be asked to identify useful phrases that need to be included.

Project 2

The young people used their language skills to explore the properties needed for buildings to withstand a Tsunami. Each group was given a budget and had to design a village within these constraints. They had to use their language skills to access the information needed to complete the task. They were encouraged to present their ideas in French.

Showcase final

The top eight winning teams were selected from each project by the school staff. Then, they presented their final project to a Dragon's Den panel consisting of representatives from Angus council SCILT and the Royal Navy.

"We found the final presentation a great forum for all to participate and take responsibility for what each group had produced. The pupils who would normally shy away from public speaking really surprised themselves at how confident they could be." Principal Teacher



The judges thought the standard was incredibly high. The team work was impressive and each learner had worked hard to come up with practical solutions, whilst making sure their French speaking audience understood the message. They had studied the design briefs carefully and were judged on how well they fulfilled the criteria. The learners were encouraged to reflect on both the team building and communication skills used and how it would help them in the future.

"It has been a pleasure assisting Brechin High School pupils with their, 'Language Skills for Learning, Life and Work Project'. We would like to congratulate the winning teams and very much look forward to hosting them for a VIP tour on a built-in-Scotland Royal Navy Type 45 Destroyer; the most advanced warship in the Fleet! It should be a very exciting day." Royal Navy Officer

Impact

Both projects helped to highlight the importance of both language skills and knowledge in a real life scenario. They also allowed the learners to use transferable skills like team work, organisation, working to a deadline, applying language knowledge to a practical situation.

Here are some of the young people's comments:

"Doing the presentation was like being at a job interview so we were able to see how that felt."

"Our teachers are always going on about the importance of languages in the workplace and we got to see that it's actually true."

"I like having people from out of school coming in to judge it."

"The prizes were really cool."



Next step

Following the success of the project the language staff have adapted their planning to ensure that the project is firmly embedded in the curriculum. The team will now consider how the project could be offered to other schools in the authority and beyond.

“I’d like to add my congratulations to the winning teams and to all the pupils who took part in this creative approach to teaching young people the importance of learning languages. The world is changing rapidly and it is important that our schools prepare young people so they can flourish and succeed in the globalized, multi-lingual world we live in.” Convener of Angus Council’s Children and Learning Committee