

Identifying High Potential Learners in Modern Foreign Languages

Summary

This advice sheet contains a checklist of criteria, originally compiled by the QCDA (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency), to help with identifying learners who are demonstrating high learning potential in modern foreign languages. It is aimed at secondary school subject teachers, as well as high learning potential lead teachers.

Below is a list of the characteristics commonly shown by learners who are demonstrating high learning potential in modern foreign languages. A learner need not be showing all of these to be considered a high potential learner, but would most likely be demonstrating a majority of them.

Learners who show high learning potential in modern foreign languages:

Have a strong desire to put language together by themselves

- They apply principles from what they have learned to new situations, transforming phrases and using them in a different context, often with humour.

Show creativity and imagination when using language

- They often extend the boundaries of their knowledge and work beyond what they have learned, not wishing simply to respond and imitate, but to initiate exchanges and to create new language.

Have a natural feel for languages

- They are willing to take risks and see what works, knowing instinctively what sounds right and what looks right; they are acutely and swiftly aware of the relationship between sound and spelling.

Pick up new language and structures quickly

- They may have excellent aural and oral skills and may be able to cope with rapid streams of sound and identify key words at an early stage; they may also display outstanding powers of retention, both immediately and from one lesson to the next.

Make connections and classify words and structures to help them learn more efficiently

- They are able to evaluate new language critically, recognising the grammatical function of words.

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Seek solutions and ask further questions

- They may test out their theories and seek to solve linguistic problems, sometimes challenging the tasks set and trying to understand their relevance to the language learning process.

Have an insight into their own learning style and preference

- They may say how they like to learn vocabulary or structures; they are clear about the type of tasks they like doing; they may show or display an ability to work independently, without supervision, and to make effective use of reference material.

Show an intense interest in the cultural features of the language being studied

- They may use idiom in the language itself and explore the history and the traditions of the language; some pupils may wish to share their knowledge with their peers.

Further Information

www.languageswithoutlimits.co.uk/G%26T.html	Languages Without Limits gifted and talented webpage
www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/teaching-able-gifted-and-talented-pupils-modern-foreign-languages	Guidance on the Use of KS2 Strategy Training Materials to Support the Teaching of Gifted and Talented Pupils in Modern Foreign Languages
<i>Meeting the Needs of Your Most Able Pupils in Modern Foreign Languages</i> by Gretchen Ingram	Book published by David Fulton with guidance on identification, planning, differentiation and support.

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