**Creative Multilingualism Programme: Session 1**

**Multilingualism in the Classroom**

* **Introduction (10 minutes):** Session leaders introduce the programme. Explain why multilingualism is being celebrated, and what we mean by ‘creative multilingualism’.
* There’s a strange incongruity: not enough students choosing to learn languages. But, many already speak another language. We want to think about how to connect these issues, to celebrate and discover the creativity in multilingualism.
* We think it’s actually through the meeting of cultures and languages that we get new ideas, new ways of seeing the world, new ways of thinking.
* Salman Rushdie – said, ‘*Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is *how newness enters the world*. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it.’ (Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991)

We think it’s not being embraced enough, and it’s also not being encouraged through creative language learning.

* Also, we want to think in particular about how languages interact. You may be encouraged to learn in the target language, but that might not be how you think. Allowing languages to become intermingled with one another might help you explore what you know and might help you come up with new ideas.
* Discuss how this question will be explored in the current session and in later sessions. Aim both to explore how students who already speak more than one language can draw on these to come up with new ways of thinking and to show how learning a language can open up creative possibilities.
* **Icebreaker (5 minutes):** Address as many people as you can, and say: ‘Hello, my name is…’ in another language.
* Make sure you speak to at least 5 people that you have never met.
* Write this on your name cards. You could ask the people you’re speaking to to write it in their languages on your name card too.
* **Have you ever? (15 minutes):** Stand up if you answer yes to any of the questions.

Have you ever:

* been to another country?
* spoken to someone whose mother tongue wasn’t English?
* been asked ‘Do you feel ‘British?’
* been asked ‘What language do you dream in?’
* spoken in your mother tongue so someone wouldn’t understand you?
* spoken English to your parents when they address you in another language?
* thought of a word in one language and couldn’t remember what it was in the other?
* thought of a word in one language and not been able to find an equivalent in the other?
* felt that your personality changes when you speak a different language?

Discuss the questions in turn.

* **Broader discussion (10 minutes):** Why might multilingualism, or linguistic diversity, be worth preserving?

Possible reasons:

* Social cohesion. anti-racism, xenophobia, hierarchy
* Local knowledge – words tell us about particular environment or community we live in
* Cultural diversity
* More ways of thinking about the world
* Creativity
* **Discussion of poems about language and multilingualism. (20-30 minutes):** Poems to be displayed by Powerpoint

***Brave New Voices*** *–* this is a volume produced by English PEN, with poems written by young people from around the world, living in London. None of them are poets! They were part of a creative writing project in which young refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in Greater London worked together in writing groups to create these poems and stories about their experience and view of the world – and in particular of language. <https://www.englishpen.org/outreach/brave-new-voices-2-0-year-one/#read-bnv>

Short video of *Brave New Voices: A city imagined – the launch!* Featuring performances by selected poets can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwUDg7CN_-o>

**Poem: ‘My Language’, by Kumari Tarapatla**

* Teacher to insert poem here. Can be found in: *Brave New Voices*, A city imagined.

<https://www.englishpen.org/outreach/brave-new-voices-2-0-year-one/#read-bnv>

* Discuss responses to this poem? Go through each verse and ask if they agree with the sentiments there.
* Discuss the effects of repetition?

**Poem: ‘My Language’, by Ola Ololade**

* Teacher to insert poem here. Can be found in: *Brave New Voices*, A city imagined.

<https://www.englishpen.org/outreach/brave-new-voices-2-0-year-one/#read-bnv>

- Work in pairs or groups, thinking about your response to each verse. (Depending on time).

* **How do these poems make us think about language in different ways?**
* **How does their poetic form make us read them differently?**

**Poem - ‘I Speak (Eu Falo)’, by Samira Beatriz Fidelis, translated by Constance Forrest**

* Teacher to insert poem here. Can be found in: *Brave New Voices*, A city imagined.

<https://www.englishpen.org/outreach/brave-new-voices-2-0-year-one/#read-bnv>

* Discuss the two versions. How similar or different do they seem?
* Translate the poem into as many different languages as we can and discuss.
* You might be able to translate it orally, but not in written form. That’s fine! We can think about the significance of this.
* **Published examples to discuss at the end**

**Benjamin Zephaniah** – a British writer, poet and Rastafarian. Born and raised in Birmingham, of a Barbadian father and Jamaican mother.

* **Poem: ‘The British’**

Teacher to insert poem here.

Can be found at: <https://benjaminzephaniah.com/rhymin/the-british-serves-60-million/>

**Edward Kamau Brathwaite** – a Barbadian poet and academic. Studied in Cambridge, worked around the world including in Ghana, and lived in Barbados.

* **Poem: ‘The Awakening’**

Teacher to insert poem here. Can be found in: The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy. Edward K Braithwaite. Published by OUP Oxford, 1981, ISBN: 9780199111039

**Daljit Nagra** – a British writer and schoolteacher living in London. His parents were Sikh Punjabis who came to Britain in the 1950s.

* **Poem: ‘Rapinder slips into tongue’**

Teacher to insert poem. Can be found at: <https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poem/19356/auto/0/0/Daljit-Nagra/RAPINDER-SLIPS-INTO-TONGUE/en/nocache>

Video Version: (Intro – until 00:38)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBGYSchCfII>