**The Making of: Learning Languages through Art and Objects in 5 Steps**

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**Transcript**

**Slide 1**

Hello everyone and welcome to our ‘the making of’ video! My name is Elettra Carbone and I am currently Widening Participation and Outreach Tutor for SELCS.

In this video I am going to share with you how we went about making the language tasters and resources featured in our Language and Culture Show and Tell series. We hope this will inspire you to explore the benefits of learning languages through objects and art and maybe even to create your own Show and Tell, featuring objects from UCL’s Collections or any other collection for that matter.

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The aim of this series is to explore the benefits of learning languages through objects and artworks and, at UCL, like in many higher education institutions, we have lots of them. There are in fact roughly 400 higher education museums, galleries and collections in the UK alone (Arnold-Forster and Mirchandani 2001: 47). Many of these were created from the eighteenth century onwards specifically to support teaching and research (Ludwig and Weber 2013: 652-653) so, we thought, why not keep making use of these resources today and maybe be a bit creative in the process?

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Many scholars have pointed out that (1) museums and collections are places where we can explore the complex connections between ‘culture, communication, learning and identity’ in new creative ways – they are places that can arouse curiosity and inspire new ideas; (2) they have also observed that learning occurs in many more locations than those of formal instruction, and learning in museums can often be ‘more open-ended, more individually directed, more unpredictable’ (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 4-5).

By using objects from UCL’s Art Collections as our starting point in our series, we wanted to recreate the experience of learning through objects in museum spaces digitally in order to make our collections and our approach to learning as accessible as possible. It is important to stress that our Language and Culture Show and Tell materials were originally designed with students in Y12 in mind. This means that, while they were created within a research-intensive university environment, they are tailored to be accessible to a much broader audience.

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With our Show and Tell series we specifically want to showcase not only as many languages as possible but also as many objects in our collections as possible. We decided to begin by focusing on some of the foreign languages we offer at UCL while exploring objects from one specific collection, our UCL Art Collection. For each language we then produced the following:

* a video which takes an object from the UCL Art Collections as its starting point;
* a worksheet based on the content of the video.

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If you want to create materials like the ones we made for this series, you may want to follow the same 5 steps we did:

1. Choose a topic
2. Choose an object
3. Do your research on both
4. Plan and create your video and relating materials
5. Get ready to share them

And now let’s have a look at what each step involves…

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Steps 1 and 2 are about choosing topic and object. These two steps are really interchangeable, as whether you start with an object or a specific topic might depend on what the aim of your video is as well as on your own preferred approach.

In some cases, the topic might come first. Just to give you a few examples: you might have a specific interest in nature or in a historical period, for instance, or you might want to create a session where you explore a specific linguistic topic (such as how to describe a person, how to give directions or explain what a compound word is). Well, the topic you want to explore in your session might then guide you in your choice of object. A landscape painting or a map are a great starting point to talk about words and structures used to describe places or give directions, while portraits might be just what you need if you want to talk about people.

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In other cases, however, you might not have a clear idea what the topic of your session might end up being but at the same time you might have some objects you want to use. This might be because, in some ways, they represent or are connected to the language and culture you want to showcase (so, if you have access to a map of Rome from the seventeenth century, for instance, why not use it to explore some aspects of Italian language and culture?) You might also just like an object regardless of where it comes from and what it represents. This is a good enough reason to use this in your teaching, especially if you think learners might like this too. Our Icelandic and Finnish videos are good examples of this as while the objects they feature might be associated with British culture – namely a map of sixteenth-century London and a Turner painting – they connect these to aspects of Icelandic and Finnish culture.

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Hopefully this is beginning to make you more interested in what our collections hold. And if you now want to start looking for an object, you can search our UCL Collections through this catalogue:

<https://collections.ucl.ac.uk/search/simple>

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Once you have chosen both object and topic, you can start working on step 3 as it’s now time to start doing some research on both object and topic.

Remember that our collections are open to the public and that the curators of the collections are happy to help you piece together the history of an object if you need this.

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Step 4 involves planning and creating the materials. We tried to follow a few basic guidelines to make the materials more accessible and engaging and we want to share these with you here.

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* We kept our videos relatively short, aiming for a maximum of 15 minutes.
* We made our learning outcomes for each video clear to the learners from the outset;

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* We made sure that the connection between topic and object was clear to the learner;
* We created all our materials for learners with no previous knowledge of the language and topic – whether you decide to do the same as we did or not make sure you consider the linguistic level of your materials;

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* We wanted to engage learners beyond the video and therefore prepared a worksheet per video based on the content of the video. Activities were designed to take the learner no more than 10-15 minutes and answer keys to the exercises were provided;
* Finally, we made sure to have a transcript of all the videos for accessibility reasons.

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The last step, step 5, involves getting ready to share your materials. For us, this meant creating a blurb of roughly 100-150 words summarising the content and learning outcomes of the individual videos but also getting feedback from colleagues and learners.

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So far we have 13 languages represented in this series, showcasing some of the innovative language teaching that is happening at UCL. However, we certainly hope to keep adding to this series. We also hope you found our ideas useful and, if you want to get in touch about contributing to our series or if you’re interested in teaching with museum collections yourself, please speak to a member of staff while vising the showcase or contact us at [museums@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:museums@ucl.ac.uk).

And finally, if you want to see all our language tasters so far, visit our taster library currently sitting on the Widening Participation and Outreach page for the School of European Languages, Culture and Society: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-languages-culture/language-and-culture-show-and-tell>

Thank you for listening and enjoy the showcase!