



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

What are universities doing to support the transition of KS5 linguists into Higher Education? – A case study

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Educational Engagement



- Schools and universities together play a vital role in the nurturing of linguists, and universities need to be active in facilitating transition
- We recognise that we need to ‘join the dots’ for students between what they are studying NOW and their next steps





- Constantly evolving programme of activities in languages aimed at supporting teaching and **learning** of MFLs in schools
- Facilitating valuable interactions between linguists at all levels: teachers and academics; **undergraduates and school students**
- Encouraging a culture of sharing experience and knowledge, and celebrating the study and languages and cultures



Activities for languages students

All funded in part by *Routes Into Languages*



(routesintolanguages.ac.uk)

Activities for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 aimed at:

- 3 – Capturing interest
- 4 - Maintaining momentum
- 5 – Informing next steps**



Key Stage 5 (1)

○ Leeds Loves Languages (in school)

Assemblies by final year undergraduate linguists on why languages are valuable, related career options and information on opportunities to study languages at university

○ Languages conferences (on campus)

University campus experience of studying languages, including sessions in target languages already studied, taster language workshops, talks by language students, and talks by external/internal organisations about the longer term benefits of language study

○ Cultural events (on campus)

On an ad hoc basis, French/Spanish language plays (eg *Les Femmes Savantes*, *Bodas de Sangre*), Spanish rapper (El Chojin) and French music group (Pendentif)





Key Stage 5 (2)

○ Academic taster sessions (in school)

Academic workshops on content in A-Level curricula (largely film but also translation), aimed at giving students a taste of university-style teaching while also usefully and relevantly contributing to their current studies

○ A-Level Film Days (on campus)

Academic study days based on one or more films from the A-Level curricula for French and German, with workshops on key themes in films, activities bringing film and language together (eg. subtitling) and talks on studying German at university

○ Linguastars (on campus)

Two-day residential university campus experience of studying languages, including series of workshops in A-Level language or ab initio language, taster language/area studies workshops, talks by language students, and talks by external/internal organisations about benefits of language study, evening entertainments





What is Linguastars?

- Two-day residential summer school for Year 12 students of French, Spanish and German (and now others who have a GCSE language and an interest in picking languages back up after A-Level) aiming to give students an experience of studying languages at university
- Annually at the end of June/beginning of July
- Focus on both academic and social aspects of moving to university
- Day and overnight places



Who comes?

- Open to students from all over the country, from all backgrounds and all types of schools
- Short, simple application process (students need to show an interest in finding out more about languages at university)
- Students from London to Dumfries – and everywhere in between!
- 80 places



Our aims

- Give Year 12s an authentic experience of several aspects of university life
- Help them imagine their career pathway from Year 12, into university and beyond
- Enhance their language curriculum learning
- Help them think more widely about the options available to study languages at university (eg. ab initio languages)
- Provide a safe space for them to explore and ask questions about studying languages and experiences abroad
- Provide valuable interaction with 'real life' languages students and staff
- Increase their confidence about going to university to study languages
- Inform them about all aspects of language degree programmes
- Inspire young linguists

What do they do?



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PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Day 1 Tuesday 28th June 2016

- 09:30 Registration
- 10:00 **Welcome and Ice Breakers**
- 11:00 **French / Spanish / German / Italian / Russian**
- 12:00 Break
- 12:15 **Taster Language Session / Linguistics**
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 **World Cinemas / Interpreting**
- 15:00 Break
- 15:15 **French / Spanish / German / Italian / Russian**
- 16:15 **Workshop**
- 17:00 Day delegates leave. Overnight delegates transfer to halls followed by evening meal and social programme

Day 2 Wednesday 29th June 2016

- 08:30 Breakfast in refectory for overnight delegates
- 09:15 **Pack up**
- 09:30 **Day delegates arrive**
- 10:30 **French / Spanish / German / Italian / Russian**
- 11:30 Break
- 11:45 **Taster Language Session / Linguistics**
- 12:30 Lunch Refectory
- 13:30 **French / Spanish / German / Italian / Russian**
- 15:30 Break
- 15:45 **Presentations**
- 16:30 End



What's good?

- Academic content (what they're already studying and new areas)
- Applicable talks about where languages can take you
- On-campus – imagining their future
- Meeting current students – role models
- Meeting others who love languages – feeling of being part of something bigger
- Confidence-boosting

Stephen is from Sheffield and came to Linguastars in 2010



“The staff were really enthusiastic and they probably had the biggest impact on me”

“(the languages ambassadors) gave probably the most genuine and honest answers to our questions because they weren’t overtly ‘selling’ the university like at open days”

“I left the residential feeling a lot more confident in my linguistic abilities, comforted by the fact that there were plenty of other people out there studying languages (!), and extremely mature and grown-up after spending two days at a university!”

“(Linguastars) was probably the most important factor of them all (in all honesty)!”

“It was something that was completely out of my comfort zone and I was initially against going ... So I was really impressed that it only took two days to turn me from a nervous Y12 to a more confident linguist who was seriously considering studying at Leeds.”

Stephen went on to become a languages ambassador as part of our outreach programme, most notably working as part of the Linguastars 2015 team!

“(Applying to work as a languages ambassador was) definitely connected to my experience at Linguastars. I felt it would be a nice way to bookend my time at Leeds.”

“I enjoyed **acting as a role model** for people visiting...”

Now Stephen is back in Sheffield doing his PGCE in secondary languages


“(Working as an ambassador) confirmed that **I wanted to work with young people as a teacher**”

He cited the following as skills he developed as a languages ambassador which he now uses in his training role in the classroom:

- 1) Leadership
- 2) Being a positive role model
- 3) Inspiring young people to consider (continuing) studying languages



Chloe is from Huddersfield and came to Linguastars in 2011



“I enjoyed looking around the campus because I was able to compare it with other universities that I had visited”

“I also enjoyed the opportunity to meet other likeminded people”

“I feel that having spent two days there it gave me more confidence in applying to Leeds because I knew that when I started I would have more knowledge about what to expect...”

“It was definitely less daunting because I had already attended classes/sessions there and seen the campus from a more internal point of view”

Chloe then went on to become a languages ambassador as part of our outreach programme



“having attended Linguastars it is nice to encourage other young people to follow in my footsteps”

“I particularly enjoy speaking to individual students and putting their minds at ease about what it’s like to study languages at university and feeling like I’ve made a difference”

“...it is definitely through speaking to older students myself when I was younger that I could gain an authentic outlook on ... what it meant to go to university and to study languages”



“I am definitely now more confident in talking in front of a group of people from...my work as a languages ambassador”

“I think my year abroad has made me confident in my own abilities and my interpersonal skills have developed as a result”

“I really enjoy speaking to prospective students and encouraging them in their decisions and this is something I will consider when applying for jobs”

“I definitely intend to refer to this work when applying for jobs because I feel that it is really important, and that it has developed my public speaking skills”



What do they say? (1)

- Linguastars works – here's how we know (2015):

“We can't thank you enough for having given Kirsty this opportunity – she will certainly be marching ahead with plans for studying modern foreign languages at University!”

“...the whole experience has definitely confirmed my desire to study languages at uni, as from start to finish, I utterly loved the whole experience which has really given me a flavour of university life for a languages student”

“...she came back absolutely buzzing and determined that she wants a life as an interpreter”



What do they say? (2)

“It was a truly brilliant course - I particularly enjoyed the interpreting and Arabic taster sessions as they were unlike anything I have ever done before - and I definitely want to apply to Leeds to study French and Spanish, as you have such a brilliant languages department!”

“With Linguastars, I was able to decide that I would definitely like to study French at university, along with another subject”

“Thank you #linguastars2014 for opening my eyes to languages (including Arabic!) and making me face my fears and present in Spanish! Gracias!”



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