

## Role of the Mentor

Mentors are an integral part of the Language Futures approach. Mentors are volunteers from the local community who are expert linguists in the target languages that students are studying. They may be native speakers or people who are fluent due to an extended period of study, or time spent abroad. Mentors are usually asked to attend Language Futures lessons at least once a fortnight, for at least a term, and ideally for the length of the school year.

*“The success of the programme has been the introduction of the mentors. I have three mentors who are enthusiastic and very supportive of their students. All three mentors have marked work, set challenges and chivvied them all along as well as researching websites, creating games and giving rewards.”* (Teacher at pilot school).

### Role in lessons

Mentors come into Language Futures lessons to work alongside the students, helping with language investigation, tasks, projects, pronunciation and role plays. At the start of each lesson a mentor is given guidance by the teacher about the ways in which they can support the key objectives for the lesson. There will be at least two students studying each language so a mentor may be asked to support a pair or small group of students.

### Assessment

Under the guidance of the teacher, mentors assist with assessments in the four key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. These assessments take place during the Language Futures lessons. A mentor may be asked to help prepare materials for assessment – for example, translating a short standard piece of text into the language for the students to read – and may also be asked to assess the accuracy of a student’s reading, comprehension, speaking or writing against some given criteria.

### Email

Mentors and students are encouraged to email each other or keep in touch using an online educational platform which helps to immerse the learners in their target language, as well as giving them an opportunity to ask questions and explore issues independently with their mentor. This is an important way in which learning continues beyond the classroom.

### Clubs

Some mentors may also run lunchtime clubs in their target language, bringing a cultural and fun element to language learning. The clubs also increase students’ exposure to their target language. Clubs could be run on a weekly or fortnightly basis and shared amongst the mentors.

*[Language Futures](#) was originally developed by Linton Village College as part of a [Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#) initiative. Management of the initiative passed to the [Association for Language Learning](#) in summer 2015. When using and/or adapting resources, we would ask you to acknowledge the Language Futures initiative and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as the original publishers of the material.*



Language**Futures**

Mentoring is a highly rewarding experience for both the mentors and the students. Students greatly appreciate the more personal and flexible support that a mentor provides, while mentors experience at first hand the satisfaction of seeing young people develop their skills and confidence as a direct result of their support.

### **What students have said about mentoring:**

*“I think the thing I like best about Language Futures is the mentors. They are great advisors, they help us to learn about the culture and the pronunciation. It is nice to have a change in the style of teaching because mentors are more relaxed and informal.”*

*“The mentors are very helpful in lessons. They are the main source of info that we have. They are good because you can email them any work you have done and they’ll reply with any mistakes you’ve made and how to fix them. We have a club every Tuesday lunchtime and you can get extra one-to-one tuition with them and can learn some vocabulary.”*

*“In other lessons it is hard for the teacher to get round everyone who needs help. In LF lessons the mentors help a lot and I don’t feel shy about asking too many questions.”*

*“What I like most about LF lessons is having the mentors. It is inspiring to be helped by people who have an insight into the culture of the language and the countries where it’s spoken.”*

*“The mentors are fantastic! I feel comfortable asking any question, even if it might sound silly.”*

*“Mentoring was the best aspect of language futures for me, because I got to meet and spend time with people who had experienced life in Spain and Latin America, which motivated me to learn faster and more thoroughly.”*

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