

MY BEST 10 IDEAS FOR WAYS TO ...

ENGAGE AND CATER FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Children who appreciate other cultures help bring communities together. **Sarah Wiesemes** and **Sarah Barrett** share their top tips for developing multilingual citizens



PROFILE

Sarah Wiesemes

Sarah Wiesemes is a Year 6 teacher, MFL and EAL coordinator at Bramcote Hills Primary School in Nottingham. She is passionate about languages at primary school and creating an international learning environment for young people. She believes strongly in looking for opportunities for EAL children to share their home languages at school.



PROFILE

Sarah Barrett

Sarah Barrett is a multilingual mum and started her own business Lingotastic in 2014 to encourage and support family language learning. She is married to Maik and they have three multilingual children. You can read their blog on www.lingotastic.co.uk

1 Audit, audit, audit!

Know what languages are heard/spoken/understood and/or read by your pupils at home – whatever the level of understanding. Make sure you stress to all new starters how important languages are in your school, how valuable they are and get a good overview of languages they are exposed to at home. Record this information and use it to reflect which languages you choose for your Language of the month/half-term/term (see point 2).



2 Visual tools

Newbury Park School has a fantastic website: **Language of the month** (tinyurl.com/y8hq49cj). It contains video clips showing children teaching their home languages, and has lots of resources to download. The idea is for children to learn the basics in lots of different languages over the year. Choose languages which reflect your school's home languages.

4 Involve parents and community

From our audit, we have a really good overview of what is going on language-wise in our community, so we invite parents to share a dual language book with the class. The teacher reads the text in English, the parent reads in the home language. Mantra lingua (www.mantralingua.com) has over 2,000 books in 65 languages.



Invite parents into class to read in their home language

3 Translate your website

Make it possible to translate your website at the click of a button so all your school community can access the information in over 65 languages. We installed the website translator widget from Google, but it can be done via the web with a bit of HTML know-how.

5 Bilingual books

We are lucky to have a fantastic ELS (Education Library Service) in our county which has a wide range of bilingual books and books in different languages. We feel it is important to have books in different languages in every classroom and, in particular, books which reflect the languages spoken by children in that class.

6 Cultural immersion

Check out opportunities for language learning in your area. Find places to speak and hear other languages. Is there a Chinese New Year celebration nearby, a Greek restaurant, a Turkish kebab shop? As children see adults playing with languages they will be much more willing to have a go, too. We love shopping at our local Polish shop. We can buy delicious food, read and hear Polish, and speak it. We also visit family in Germany every summer. The children can see the language in action.



Visit places where other languages are spoken, such as your local Polish shop

8 Many and varied resources

The key to language acquisition is a large selection of resources. Share stories together, either in a bilingual format or simply in the target language. For total beginners, One Third Stories books are an excellent resource (Resources, page 10).



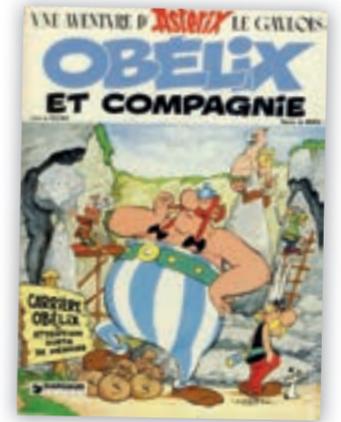
www.all-languages.org.uk

9 Have fun, don't force

Asking children to say things in their target language is a great way to involve them. Try to bring language learning into your everyday life so it is a natural thing to do. Could you bribe reluctant learners with treats? When we are in Germany, the children are allowed to have most things they like – if they ask for them in German. Family send us food parcels. The kids love German packet soups, and we make them together reading the instructions in German.



Being able to read instructions gives a purpose to learning



7 What do they love to do?

Use the target language! My son likes *Star Wars* so we got hold of some *Star Wars* books in German. As a family we love *Asterix*, and the great thing is that it is available in many languages.

10 Show them the value of the language

Language learning for the sake of it is aimless – by meeting someone who speaks the language suddenly communication is important so learning the language has a purpose for your students. Find mentors who are native speakers from your community to get involved and share their language.