

## **TEN TOP TIPS**

### **General Organisation:**

Find a partner to share running the Hub.

Ring local schools to get the name/email address of MFL lead.

Promote on all media (LIPS Facebook, email, twitter etc) and consider using Eventbrite or similar for bookings.

### **Running a meeting**

Rotate host school amongst members.

4pm to 6pm seems to work well for most people.

Allow 20-30 mins at start and end for coffee, networking and to allow for late arrivals/early departures.

### **Ideas for Content**

Less is more: approach max. three teachers to deliver short 'presentations' around a theme (e.g. assessment, games, speaking activities...) or run as an informal 'Show and Tell' (any practical lesson idea).

Base meeting on ALL Roadshow ppt.

Involve local secondary teachers to attend and possibly help.

### **Finally**

Look forward to meeting the friendliest teachers in your town!

### **Hannah White and Sarah Cartlidge have been running the Bristol area ALL Primary Languages Hub since 2014.**

We initially decided to set it up because, despite a number of years teaching languages at secondary level, we quickly realised that subject knowledge and enthusiasm alone are not enough to be successful in the primary classroom. We saw that we had a lot to learn from our primary colleagues.

Here is our advice for setting up a Hub in your own area.

### **Setting up a Primary Hub**

- 1) First of all, check ALL Primary Section <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/primary-2/> for help, information and support. You can also find out where your nearest Hub is. In more rural areas, people may be willing to travel further to meet up for CPD but in a city, you might want to link with an existing group to maximise attendance, rather than creating a new one.

- 2) If there isn't a local Hub, have confidence that you can find a willing membership: language teachers in primary schools tend to work alone and will really appreciate the chance to meet up with like-minded people.
- 3) Try to find a friend or colleague to help run the Hub - you can support each other with ideas and balance organisation with the varying demands of your 'day job' more easily.
- 4) Invest time in contacting local schools by telephone - get the name of the MFL lead if possible, as in our experience many generic emails never reach the intended recipient.
- 5) Use a google doc or eventbrite to make bookings: we used to receive individual emails and cut and paste everyone's details into a spreadsheet ourselves but nowadays being more tech savvy saves a lot of time!
- 6) When taking bookings, you need to know name, school, email address and whether they are happy for you to keep their details and/or send them updates about future events and relevant info – usual GDPR things. You might also want to know the language(s) people teach (useful when ensuring you have a spread of relevant speakers/topics/examples) age range of pupils, twitter handle (good for promoting your events via a variety of methods!)
- 7) Ensure that you keep this database safe on a password-protected device in order to comply with GDPR, and remove any details of individuals if they ask you to do so.

## **Running a meeting**

- 8) **Promote promote promote!**  
Use Facebook, Twitter and direct emails to get people attending - this is especially important in the early days while you get established. Six weeks before the event, we send a big group email (bcc for privacy), as well as following up with some individual named email invites a week or two later to get the group established. We still use the personal email route (splitting the list between the two of us) to increase numbers if they are low and it usually works a treat.
- 9) We have found that three meetings a year works well, each one from 4pm to 6pm, hosted in rotation by one of our members' schools.
- 10) **Less is more!**  
In the early days we made the mistake of over-filling the agenda with speakers. We found that it left people feeling rushed and we risked over-running which many people dislike. So we moved to a 2 hour session with 20-30 minutes for arriving/networking/tea and coffee, two presentations (max 3 if shorter) and then

some time for others to talk/share ideas, and have another tea and network. Feedback told us that the networking opportunity was really valued and it pays to allow time for this as people leave feeling they really made some useful connections.

- 11) Contact your local secondary school as they may want to support/host/get involved with topics such as transition. They may be able to send staff to speak to you about relevant topics.
- 12) Don't hesitate to approach teachers to ask for contributions: many gifted teachers are extraordinarily shy about putting themselves forward, but will respond positively to a direct request.
- 13) The 'Roadshows' on the Primary Section of the ALL website (see above) come out at half-term holidays and are always goldmines of ideas and news. You can easily base a whole meeting on one of these Powerpoints.
- 14) When the event is running it is a good idea to display a poster with the relevant twitter handles (eg: @ALL4language #ALLprimary #mfltwitterati as well as your own twitter handle if you have one) This encourages tech-savvy participants to tweet about the event and raise your profile. You don't even need to be on twitter yourself to take advantage of this type of promotion, but it helps.
- 15) **Feedback is fabulous:** It's worth asking participants to complete a quick feedback form before they leave because you will realise just how valuable people find the sessions, you can get to know what works well and you can get requests and volunteers for future hub topics/speakers/venues too.
- 16) Now in its 6th year we have a core group of around 6 dedicated colleagues who make it every time alongside many others who come as and when they can make it, so we usually have between 10-20 people at each meeting. We still give out name labels so that old and new members get to know each other quickly while they network!

The most enjoyable thing about being part of a Primary Hub is the friendship and support of so many talented colleagues, and the feeling that we are part of a wider team with a common goal of instilling a love of languages early on in children's lives. It is such a great job! We all face similar challenges and can help each other become the best we can be.

Hannah White & Sarah Cartlidge  
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