



Raising the profile of languages in your school

The Post-Primary Languages Initiative in its initial form was set up in September 2000 but our remit is currently changing as we go through a process of being mainstreamed. Our new vision is to be a dedicated centre providing expertise and support for all foreign languages education at post-primary level in Ireland. We aim to promote multilingualism and support plurilingualism by continuing to support the lesser taught languages, facilitating diversification of languages in to the curriculum via new short courses for Junior Cycle, increasing support for the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in general, and conducting applied research that will inform and support policy.

As part of our work we would like to support teachers and schools in raising the profile of languages in post-primary schools. In order to do this, we have compiled a list of suggestions to help modern foreign language teachers raise the profile of languages in their school, most of which require zero budget. Begin with a few and increase the numbers of suggestions you act on over time and collaborate with colleagues across language departments. Please send us your own suggestions too and we can add them to the list.



- When you come across articles about the importance of languages in the media or on our blog/website, print them and post them in your staff room.
- Increase the visibility of languages within the school environment. Consider having a notice board for languages and increase the use of multilingual signage within the school environment.
- Use the school's website. Include clear information about Modern Languages on the school website. You could include the languages taught but also info on the wider multilingual dimension of the school. You could go one step further and include a student blog and student videos in the target languages. You could also use the website as a digital notice board.
- Consider integrating the new technologies which are part of your students' life into MFLs. Texting in the MFL and social media (Edmodo, Facebook group, wiki,...). Set this up as a partnership with pupils who may be able to help you on the technical side if necessary.
- Enter competitions. They offer an opportunity to focus on language and make all members of staff aware of the vibrant language environment in the school. Competitions also promote excellence. Consider applying for the European Language Label (see [Leargas](#) website)
- Encourage your students to use the target language when talking to you also outside of class time
- Use the target language in the staff room with your colleagues

- MFL newsletter, as a TY module or other works well with the integration of IT skills (use of digital comics software etc....) This may develop into an ML blog on the school website or remain in its printed version.
- Consider joining a Comenius School Project (see [Leargas](#) website)
- Consider hosting Language Assistants (see [Leargas](#) website or contact the relevant embassies for information)
- Engage in cross-curricular integration and application in collaboration with colleagues, particularly MFL with ICT or/and business, geography, visual arts.... Consider also linking the Modern Foreign Language with the European dimension of curriculum.
- Celebrate and increase the visibility of multilingualism in the school. This may be linked to [EU mother tongue day](#), [European Day of Languages](#) or a UN day. Celebrate not just the languages taught in the school but other languages known by students or staff.



- In the canteen or in other social areas: reserve one table for conversation in a particular language once a month, or more? A language assistant could be in charge of this if you have one or some of the 5th or 6th years.



- Have a Target Language Day for each MFL in the school.
- Display a book of the month in various MFLs taught in the school in the library. Build up a collection of suitable books and DVDs in the different languages taught. Look at the possibility of sponsorship or parents' involvement.
- Consider inviting and interviewing guest speakers from the target language community in Ireland or visiting them in the locality. Students could record the interviews and post them up on the website.
- Develop special links with local businesses, including cafes or restaurants that are linked to the ML taught in the school. Explore sponsorship opportunities.



<http://languagesinitiative.ie/>

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