Developing trainers – moving from teacher to trainer (MTT1)

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Who might use these materials?

These materials are intended to be used as flexibly as possible to suit the varied circumstances of secondary languages teachers across the country. They are there to help people who lead on languages to be able to provide professional development for those within their own school or college or in a cluster of local institutions. They are designed to support language teachers to:

* develop their training skills
* reflect on their own practice and share this with colleagues
* learn from colleagues
* nurture and support teachers in their departments to develop their training skills.

In some places, languages departments may consist of just one or two teachers who may still find value in using the stimuli provided to stimulate discussion and reflection and enhance enjoyment and achievement in language learning in their particular setting.

When might these materials be used?

Flexibility is essential. Time for professional development is often at a premium in the busy lives of teachers. Most modules cover a general theme from most angles and could take anything up to a day of professional development time. However, modules are split into smaller sub-sections or themes which could provoke thought and discussion in a slot of 15–20 minutes in a meeting and would still be useful in stimulating new thinking or refreshing old ideas to help teachers to teach languages. They could be used in small chunks in departmental meetings or cluster twilight meetings over a period of time with possible gap tasks in between, or pre-session tasks could be issued beforehand to make the most of the limited time available. Equally, a trainer could plan to use a whole module in a one-day session. Planning and preparation time for the trainer are crucial to the success of these modules. All modules come with a pre-module task for participants to help them engage with the module through their own professional context and situation.

Why use the materials?

We can all benefit from meeting new ideas or returning to old ideas which worked in the past, in order to help learners to make good progress and enjoy their language learning. Working in a large, busy department may mean there is little time for professional reflection or working in a small, rural school may mean little chance to share in the stimulation available from others.

Established departments may be doing a good job but could benefit from sharing expertise with other neighbouring schools in e.g. a borough, large town or city, and enjoy the chance to see language teaching in a different light. Good training should increase job satisfaction and enhance prospects for professional development. Equally, more isolated languages teachers need stimulation to offer the best to their learners.

How are the materials designed?

They are for use

* by teachers for teachers
* for in-school training
* for in-cluster training
* to provide professional development for a wide range of teacher experience and expertise
* to allow teachers and trainers to model their own resources on a transparent easy-to-use formula.

Using the training activities and resources

Leading a training session may present challenges which are different from those in the classroom when teaching languages to youngsters, although many principles still hold.

* Do a web search for Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and then check that there are basic food /drink treats as appropriate for the session and that there is decent air, lighting, conducive seating etc. in the room. Plan in breaks where needed – for the benefit of your colleagues as well as for yourself!
* Thinking of AfL, establish and recognise prior experience of work on this theme amongst the group of colleagues; some may have more ideas or expertise than you. That is fine as long as that is accepted; make the most of that luxury and draw on colleagues’ strengths!
* Have a clear focus on the intended outcome for the session. This should be based on what you know about your setting(s). What do students most need to improve? What do they tell you through any existing channels of student voice? What do attainment and achievement data tell you? Where do colleagues feel least confident? What do any work scrutinies show you about language learning?
* Keep the session as (inter)active as possible. Extended multimedia presentations, which merely support the session leader as newsreader looking at a tele-prompt, may lead to colleagues switching off or becoming annoyed. Instead, make use of a blend of stirring images, telling data, video clips, interesting new ideas and the interactive materials provided here. We all learn best when we are actively engaged in creating our own meanings and thinking rather than receiving instructions.
* To make best use of the face-to-face contact time in the session, think about how to provide a pre-session task for staff to research in their own classes or a follow-up task after the session which will be picked up at the next session.
* Acknowledge any difficulties which may be potential barriers but try to remain positive in the sessions about improving language learning for your youngsters.
* When using the materials here, think of customising them for your colleagues with your own local examples.
* Maintain a sense of humour and balance in trying to push things on.
* Plan the session carefully, note down all that you will need beforehand and prepare any linked resources (ideally with any support from support staff who can help out).
* Think of the mantra used by many English teachers:

Purpose + Audience Form.

* Bear in mind the staff you are working with, what the intended outcome is for the session and then choose a form of training which will best suit those two factors.

The resources cover what *you* will need to consider when planning the session as the *trainer* or *facilitator*.

Where the notes for trainers/facilitators suggest materials, these are hyper-linked via **highlighted** text.

More detailed advice can be found in the Teacher to Trainer module, MTT1.