

NZALT Auckland Branch Professional Learning Day for Intermediate and Primary teachers

by Rhys McDonald

On Saturday September 6 eighty-seven language teachers gathered at Glen Eden Intermediate School in Auckland to take part in a professional learning day organised by Sarah Codyre and Rhys McDonald of the NZALT Auckland branch. The idea for the day was first mooted by the Auckland committee of NZALT who wanted to offer an opportunity for professional development for teachers who were unable to attend the biennial national conference held in Wellington in the July holidays. National and Regional Advisers for learning languages were invited to present workshops for each language.

One of the objectives was to encourage the participation of Intermediate and Primary teachers who often find it difficult to attend a full day of professional learning during school time and so it was decided to go ahead with a Saturday programme. We were delighted that the number of registrations demonstrated that the need existed and indeed 80% of the participants indicated they would like further such days to be organised. Teachers were very appreciative of the workshops run by the Advisers, with feedback from evaluations showing that 95% of the participants felt the day either met or exceeded their expectations.

Participants were representative of a wide range of teachers, with six teacher trainees attending along with a mix of Primary, Intermediate, Secondary and Tertiary languages teachers. With increasing numbers of Primary students now learning a language and the expectation that all students from Years 7 to 10 ought to be offered the opportunity to learn an additional language such networking will become increasingly important.

Three workshops were held over the course of Saturday morning and early afternoon. The first sessions focused on levels 1 and 2 of the curriculum for each individual language. This was followed by generic presentations by each of the National Advisers based on intercultural language learning and teaching, which is one of the significant areas emphasised in the Learning Languages essence statement in the New Zealand Curriculum. The Advisers looked at ways in which teachers could encourage their students to take an exploratory and reflective approach to culture and culture-in-language. After lunch the final session for the day focused on Levels 3 and 4 of the curriculum.

A sample of quotes from teachers included:

- It was a very well-spent day and I got lots of good ideas from the workshops. Well done.
- Very informative and practical.
- This is the practical information teachers need.
- The ideas & resources I got from the Spanish presentation were excellent. I have even used the game Maria taught us several times in different classes already and the kids love it!
- The French session was excellent, great ideas shared. Also good to have a chance to network with other French teachers - catching up with familiar faces.
- I enjoyed the day as it was a chance to check out resources and to catch up with colleagues. It would be good to offer a similar opportunity to teachers of the higher levels - NCEA 1, 2 & 3.

One of the strengths of the day was the collaboration that occurred between different sectors of the language teaching community. The national Language Advisers employed by ILANZ for French (Ruth Bouchier), German (Bernd Schliephake), Japanese (Junko Tomooka) and Chinese (Dr Han Xi), flew in from around the country to offer specific language workshops. Spanish teachers were doubly lucky in that National Adviser for Spanish, Rosa-Maria Perez had already offered a workshop earlier in the week in Auckland for Spanish teachers and Maria Lamberto, President of STANZA, ran the workshops for Spanish teachers at Glen Eden. Learning Languages Facilitators from Team Solutions and NZALT office holders were also on hand to assist with the workshops.

Jane Lee, Team Leader for the Learning Languages Advisers at Team Solutions, said that as well as offering support for the workshops on the day, the opportunity for teachers to meet the National and Regional Advisers was invaluable.

It was a really good opportunity for the Advisers to network with teachers in a more informal setting. One of the really pleasing aspects from our point of view was that the Advisers were able to organise additional in-school support for many of the teachers they met during the course of the day.

NZALT Auckland would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the ILANZ Advisers and Regional Advisers from Team Solutions without whom this successful day could not have proceeded. In addition, we were extremely grateful to Glen Eden Intermediate School for providing the venue free of charge.

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