

Spring Into World Language Week!

As spring quickly approaches, world language teachers are starting to plan activities for World Language Week. This article is a brief outline of some of the possible activities that you may be interested in to maximize your celebration, and to make your language program more visible within your school and community.

First and foremost, be sure to plan well for your celebration. This may be your first time organizing a World Language Week celebration, or it may be your 20th year putting together a celebration. Regardless of the number of times that you have done this, a little bit of planning goes a long way. The more thought that you put into your activities, and the more collaboratively you plan, the more comprehensive your activities will be. Be sure to involve as many people as possible in the brainstorming and planning stage so that the work is not overwhelming, and you can plan activities that appeal to all audiences. Even if you have not been able to plan very far in advance this year, do not worry! You can always start off with a couple of well-organized activities and events, and then plan earlier for next year in order to make your celebration more elaborate!

This brings us to the kinds of activities that you may want to include in your celebration. Some examples of popular World Language Week activities are as follows:

- Decorate your school lobby
- Decorate hallway display cases
- Hold an international themed breakfast
- Host an international banquet
- Hire an international music or dance group
- Participate in the MaFLA poster, essay and podcast contests

All of the activities mentioned above are collaborative, and would work well if you involved various language classes, teachers and clubs within the school. However, do not limit your celebration to only members of the school. Be sure to invite community members to participate as well. There are often untapped resources within the community and people that would love to be involved in the festivities. For example, you may have people who have returned from the Army or the Peace Corps that would be willing to present on their experiences. Another possibility would be to have someone come in and teach students how to make food from their culture, like sushi or fresh pasta. A similar hands-on experience for students would be to have someone come in and teach them how to write Chinese characters or Arabic calligraphy. Students love being able to participate in hands-on activities, and these types of activities often give them opportunities to engage in authentic cultural experiences that they may not have in the classroom.

As you organize your activities for World Language Week, be sure to contact your local newspaper and cable stations to showcase the work that you and your students have done. You can find more information on planning a World Language Week celebration at www.mafla.org under the Everyday Advocacy section.

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