

## Why Study Languages presentations

University staff and undergraduates from participating Routes into Languages institutions have been visiting schools and colleges across the West Midlands as part of the national "Why Study Languages" scheme. Visits are tailored to the needs of the school and include a presentation on studying languages including input from a current undergraduate student. We have also taken part in a number of language days in schools delivering taster sessions in new languages to small (and large!) groups of students, quizzes and presentations. Since the beginning of the project we have visited over 50 schools and reached thousands of pupils. We intend to do even more next year; if you'd like us to visit your school to deliver a special assembly presentation, take part in a language day or any other input you think we could provide please book through the Events tab on the Routes into Languages West Midlands website.

## Sixth Form conference

In June the consortium welcomed over 120 Sixth Form students to a joint conference hosted by Aston University. The day began with an introductory address educating students on the options available should they wish to continue with language studies in the future, followed by a question and answer session featuring our very own Language Ambassadors. Students then attended a choice of lectures and seminars delivered by academic staff from each of our six partner institutes, and had the chance to try their hand at some translation and interpreting exercises thanks to input from the National Networks for Translation and Interpreting.

The day also incorporated a small information market during lunch featuring manned stands from each Routes institution. Sixth Formers were able to speak to staff and current students, pick up a prospectus and learn more about the wide range of opportunities for studying languages available to them right on their doorstep.

We plan to hold similar events around the region in the coming year; sign up for our e-bulletin to keep up to date with developments. Keep reading to discover new projects and resources for Sixth Form students available from autumn 2009.

## Active Languages

Combining languages and sport is a particularly popular means of motivating learners, and West Midlands universities have long explored this approach, for example through the Aston versus Birmingham Sauerkraut football cup.



For reasons of sustainability, it makes sense to support schools to adopt this approach themselves, so the West Midlands consortium is now working closely with the Youth Sport Trust on a project called Active Languages. A member of P.E. staff and a language teacher from 10 participating schools attended a one-day training session led by Routes into Languages and the Youth Sport Trust, during which they took part in practical sessions delivered by schools already engaged in similar projects. Trying out karate in Japanese and handball in Spanish gave teachers an insight into the student experience, and helped generate and develop new ideas. The consortium then funded ten schools to pilot their own projects combining sports and languages in the curriculum. Plans currently underway include teaching orienteering in German, real tennis in French, and an annual, week-long sports and languages festival. The schools have worked hard over recent months to turn their plans into reality, and many launched their activities in the summer term. They have kept the Routes team up to date with their progress, and will provide an evaluative summary on completion of the pilot. With the support of the schools, we intend to produce a booklet for circulation to schools across the West Midlands, showing how the projects have worked from beginning to end, and how every school can "DIY". After the initial pilot, Active Languages activities will become an integral part of the school curriculum. The hope is that, in the longer term, each success will encourage others in the local area to become involved and take the project from strength to strength.

These are just a sample of some of our achievements this year. To read more about events and activities which have taken place this year, please see the News section of the Routes West Midlands website: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/news](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/news)

As well as a full diary of existing activities taking place throughout the year, we are also developing some new initiatives - read on to find out more.

## Language Shadow scheme for students and teachers

Brand new for this academic year, a shadow scheme will be available for Sixth Form students and staff across the region in one of our 6 Routes into Languages partner institutes. Participants will be able to spend a morning, afternoon or whole day with a current language undergraduate or academic, attending lectures and finding out more about university life.

The aim of the scheme is to improve understanding and better transition between A-Level and university study for students and staff in both sectors, all of whom can benefit from the discussions, the links and the up-to-date understanding of standards, practices and issues.

Students and teaching staff can apply individually or in small groups of no more than 2 – 3 to take part in the scheme and a shadow will be arranged for them at their nearest Routes University at mutually convenient dates and times.

The scheme will start in October 2009 and run until the end of April 2010 during University term time.

## Resources

We have been working hard to produce resources which to respond to what teachers have been telling us they need. Currently you will find resource packs to help you plan your own themed events with everything from vocabulary lists and flashcards to quizzes and printable flags. We have also worked with the West Midlands Languages Project and locally based Foreign Language Assistants to produce recordings with transcriptions and activities which tie into the A-level curriculum. These recordings are not scripted and present students with the opportunity to experience a conversation between natives on a topic relevant to their studies.

As the year progresses the Resources pages will be continually developing with new material added as it is created, so do check back regularly to see what's new. If you have any suggestions or if you would like to share some of your resources with colleagues around the country, please send them to us either by email to: [routes@aston.ac.uk](mailto:routes@aston.ac.uk) or by post on CD to the address overleaf and we'll be happy to upload them with appropriate accreditation.

To see what's available, visit the website at: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/resources](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/resources).

## New soap opera style DVD

University of Wolverhampton have produced a 15-minute film which has already proven to be popular in test screenings in Year 9 to 11 classes.

The drama features a teenage boy and girl who dropped languages after GCSE but now have the chance to win a summer Work Experience placement in Paris, Barcelona or Berlin. While the message is familiar - languages are fun, they help you get a job, working at languages brings rewards - the approach is new, and bang up-to-date. There will also be

an opportunity to find out 'what happens next' and interact with the story on Facebook by viewing more episodes online at home, as the winner takes up their placement abroad.

Given the growing numbers of teens who frequently visit social networking sites, and the results from the Independent and MSN Study of 1000 teens that the average teen spends 31 hours online each week, this project aims to add some educational content and linguistic motivation to pupils' online activities.

Copies of the film on DVD and a resource pack for teachers will be sent to schools in the West Midlands and will be available for download on the website.

## 'Opportunities for Language Learning' a new guide for students and parents

Many Higher Education Institutions now offer a wide range of language learning opportunities ranging from individual modules as part of other subject awards and short courses to full degrees and extra-curricular opportunities. To ensure we do not lose potential language undergraduates, it is essential that they are aware of the opportunities available to them at HE.

To respond to this need, we are producing a booklet for sixth form students and their parents which will outline the opportunities available and will explain the importance of developing language skills. The booklet also contains examples of undergraduates who have studied languages at university in a range of different, and often less traditional, patterns and programmes.

The aim is to communicate to potential undergraduates that in many universities they will find a range of options for continuing with language study, such as starting a new language from scratch, or trying out taster courses which enable them to test their interest. These are all opportunities to be explored when choosing Universities. The booklets, along with a resource sheet for teachers and careers staff, will be sent to all schools with post-16 provision and colleges in the region during September. An electronic version of the guide will also be available on the website.

For more information and to book onto any of our activities, please visit the website at: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands). To join our mailing list and receive a monthly e-bulletin specific to the West Midlands please email: [routes@aston.ac.uk](mailto:routes@aston.ac.uk) with the title WM MAILING LIST and include your name, school, job title and email address.



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You might find some of the following links to language and education related organisations' websites useful.

**Cilt, The National Centre for Languages**  
[www.cilt.org.uk](http://www.cilt.org.uk)  
CILT, the National Centre for Languages, is the Government's recognised centre of expertise on languages. Their website contains a wide range of information, resources and networks.

**Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies**  
[www.llas.ac.uk](http://www.llas.ac.uk)  
A publicly funded service, providing UK-wide support and services for higher education in Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies. Their website contains a range of resources for schools.

**Association for Language Learning**  
[www.all-languages.org.uk](http://www.all-languages.org.uk)  
The Association for Language Learning (ALL) is the major subject association for those involved in teaching all foreign languages at all levels.

**Regional Language Network - West Midlands**  
[www.rln-westmidlands.com](http://www.rln-westmidlands.com)  
The Regional Language Network (RLN) provides language advice, information and resources to businesses and individuals in the West Midlands.

**Language Networks for Excellence**  
[www.languagenetworks4excellence.org.uk](http://www.languagenetworks4excellence.org.uk)  
Provide a range of products and services within 4 key strands: publications; training and CPD; accreditation; dissemination and research.

**Department for children, schools and families (DCSF)**  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)  
The Government department for children, schools and families.

**The Young Gifted and Talented Programme**  
[www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk)  
The website provides information and resources to help support gifted learners, their parents/carers, educators, governors and local authorities.

Forthcoming events

**Why study languages?**  
Language students and staff will be visiting schools giving talks about studying languages and related careers.

**Language and culture days**  
Events will be taking place around the region focussing on particular languages and cultures. Native speakers and language ambassadors will support these events.

**Community Languages revision sessions**  
GCSE and A-level revision sessions in lesser taught languages delivered by qualified practitioners.

**Options evening visits**  
Language ambassadors and university staff will attend school Options Evenings to talk to parents and pupils about the benefits of continuing with language study to GCSE and beyond.

**Sixth Form conferences**  
Cross consortium information events for Sixth Form students to take place around the region

These are just a few of the activities taking place around the region. For a complete list and to book, please visit our website: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/events](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/events). To receive our monthly WM e-bulletin please email your name, school and job title to: [routes@aston.ac.uk](mailto:routes@aston.ac.uk) with the subject title WM mailing list.

Links into Languages

Professional development for teachers

Links into Languages is a consortium led by the Subject Centre for Languages (LLAS) at the University of Southampton with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and the Association for Language Learning (ALL), and commissioned by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The project aims to build a learning community of language teachers, educators and all those working in the world of languages across primary, secondary and further education institutions. The aim is to increase access to support services, including information, advice, networking, project funding and professional development opportunities.

Links offers a nationally coordinated network of support centres based in universities in each of the 9 Routes into Languages regions. Each Links Centre will offer a training and drop-in centre for meetings, networking and access to resources. Each Centre will offer a high quality, coherent and accessible programme of professional development for all people in the world of languages. Courses are based on a common core designed to address shared national priorities, and regional programmes tailored to meet regional and local needs. Training will be delivered by a network of the most experienced trainers in the field.

The West Midlands Regional Centre is at Aston University and will feature a drop in centre for teachers with a resource library and wireless internet access.

The LinkedUp award scheme offers funding opportunities for networks and development projects carried out by the teaching community. It will fund more than 100 projects addressing issues of concern to teachers.

Working in partnership with other providers, including CILT, the National Centre for Languages and all major stakeholders, Links seeks to ensure that those working in the field of languages have clear information, advice and guidance about all the support services available.

For more information and to be added to the mailing list contact:  
[linkswestmidlands@aston.ac.uk](mailto:linkswestmidlands@aston.ac.uk) or visit: [www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands](http://www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands)



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EN ROUTE TO EVER GREATER SUCCESS

West Midlands Consortium Director,  
Professor Pam Moores, looks to the year ahead.



over the last two years we have reached thousands of students across the region, delivering more than 100 events and projects ranging from cultural days and language taster events to e-mentoring and tutoring. The programme goes from strength to strength locally and nationally, and we are immensely proud of our achievements thus far. It is only with the ongoing support of Head Teachers, teachers, university staff, undergraduates, language assistants and many more that we are able to maintain and enhance this record of success.

As we enter the third year of the programme our focus is on sustainability. Read on to find out about 10 schools which have received Routes into Languages funding to develop sports and

languages projects in conjunction with Youth Sport Trust, and for information on the work we have been doing with Foreign Language Assistants producing resources for use in the language classroom. The West Midlands Consortium will continue to run a series of events and projects throughout the year aimed at supporting and engaging learners, with an increased focus on offering advice and guidance to Sixth Formers, parents and Head Teachers. We also intend to respond more directly to the needs of students and practitioners using community and lesser taught languages, sharing ideas and good practice across all sectors of the language learning community. This year we hope to produce more resource packs for use in the classroom, and to support teachers organising their own language and culture activities in school, in order that the Routes project leaves a valuable, lasting legacy.

This newsletter will give you a flavour of some of the exciting activities taking place in schools, colleges and universities across the region, so please have a look and find out what is happening near you. Do not hesitate to contact us at any time for further information or to share new ideas!

**Professor Pam Moores**, Consortium Director, Aston University



*"The day has taught me just how significant languages are and how important the role that they play in the world today actually is."* - **Student**

*"Our intake has increased because of your valuable contribution. Some of our year 10 are talking about doing languages at college."* - **Teacher**

*"The event has definitely persuaded me to carry on studying at least one language to A Level standard."* - **Student**

*"It's so much fun studying a new language and meeting people interested in the same thing. I love it!"* - **Student**

*"The day was a wonderfully active and interesting experience for the students."* - **Teacher**