

“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 with input from a current undergraduate. 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 can also attend Parents’ Evenings, Careers Fairs and Options Evenings to help make the case for languages.



“Why study languages?” website launch
As follow up to a school visit from a Routes into Languages representative, have a look at our new website created to promote languages to KS3, KS4 and Post-16 pupils. It has been written by teachers and undergraduate students, and contains a wealth of shocking facts, videos, quizzes and exam and course work tips.

The site aims to promote language learning and encourage take up at GCSE and beyond. We hope that it will also help address difficult transition points such as GCSE – A-level and help teachers make the case for languages to head teachers and parents

To learn more visit: www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk

There’s a BUZZ about languages!
From September, Routes into Languages will be running a national Spelling Bee in French, Spanish and German. The competition aims to support young language learners as they are introduced to new languages by helping them build up a bank of useful vocabulary.



The Spelling Bee was devised by Jane Driver of Comberton Village College in Cambridgeshire and has caught the imagination of nearly 3,000 pupils during its pilot in the East region last year. It involves the year 7 pupils in learning and practising the alphabet in the foreign language, paying attention to describing letters with accents and Spelling Bee terminology (‘pass’, ‘space’ etc), with

50 words in each round. All vocabulary is relevant to the curriculum and the final round will relate to the 2012 Olympics and is recognised by the Inspire mark. A Teachers’ Pack including vocabulary lists can be downloaded from our website (see below).

Winners in each round will receive certificates with the four finalists in each language also winning a trophy. A cup is awarded to each winning school.

The qualifying rounds will take place throughout the year with a regional final to be held in March 2011 at Aston University and the national final will be held in Cambridge in July 2011.

Student mentors and tutors
We are pleased to continue to offer our popular tutoring and mentoring schemes via University of Warwick and University of Wolverhampton focussing on Key Stage 3 and 4.

Current undergraduate language students from Warwick and Wolverhampton will act as mentors and tutors going into secondary schools to provide one-to-one or small group languages support either during class time or at after-school language clubs. The aim of the mentors and tutors is to help pupils to improve oral language skills, stimulate interest in language and culture, and act as role models. They are also able to provide support in exam preparation.

Students will receive initial training on their role, their responsibilities and ideas for classroom activities. Schools will be matched with students based on their requirements and students will usually visit once or twice a week for one term.

The mentoring and tutoring schemes have a strong track record of successfully engaging with school pupils and use an established formula to improve language skills and provide pupils with student role models to raise aspirations. Schools who have benefitted from a Routes into Languages mentor or tutor have reported an increase in motivation and in the proportion of pupils expressing the intention to continue study of MFL. This scheme is particularly useful to schools who do not have access to a dedicated Foreign Language Assistant.

To find out more about any of these activities, to register to take part and to discover what else is happening this year, please see the Events section of the Routes West Midlands website www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands/events

Free foreign languages newspaper available!
Are you looking for ways to encourage your pupils to read more foreign language materials? Are you trying to find authentic resources without spending a fortune?

The School of Languages and Social Sciences at Aston University currently subscribes to major foreign language newspapers such as El Pais, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Le Monde which are made available for undergraduate students in the Learning Resource Centre. New editions of the newspapers are received regularly and only the latest editions stay in the Resource Centre with older papers placed in recycling after use.

Many of us use online resources and of course all of the newspapers have websites, but some schools may find having the papers useful. They can be made available for Sixth Form or Gifted and Talented pupils to read or take away, some articles may even be useful in class and could be used for years to come. Even younger students could benefit from seeing what really appears on the news stands in foreign countries.

Routes into Languages is offering these newspapers free of charge to schools and colleges in the West Midlands. This is a popular scheme and as such we can deliver newspapers a maximum of once or twice per term per school / college. The newspapers we send will be slightly out of date but once you receive them, they are yours to keep and use as you wish.

If you would be interested in receiving free newspapers, please contact us at routes@aston.ac.uk letting us know your name, school address and which languages you teach.

I love languages...do you? activity pack
The new I love languages...do you? activity pack is now available to order. The aim of this activity pack is to provide teachers with choice of materials that will introduce pupils to a wide range of languages including some with which they may not be familiar:

- the packs contain resources in 22 languages;
- an A2 poster
- 48 stickers
- 22 postcards (which can be used as certificates of attainment)
- 30 pin badges
- two photocopiable, pedagogic worksheets

The first 500 orders will receive a free ‘Why study languages’ classroom poster! For further information go to www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/love



Active Languages resource booklet
In last year’s newsletter we reported on our Active Languages project which saw ten schools awarded funding to pilot projects combining sports and languages in the curriculum.

The schools involved have worked hard over the last year to turn their plans into reality and to raise the profile of languages by encouraging pupils to use languages in new contexts, giving them a new purpose and meaning. Their commitment and dedication has resulted in creative and interesting projects which have produced amazing results they are now keen to share.

We are proud to present our Active Languages resource booklet which contains detailed case studies of six of the projects. The schools have provided information on the reasons for developing their projects, how they went about it and the amazing outcomes. Each school has been able to imbue their Active Languages project into the school curriculum with plans to develop further and include other subjects in coming years. If you are looking for new ways to motivate learners, we hope you will find inspiration, resources and support to get started in this booklet.



The booklet is available in hard copy or can be downloaded from the Resources tab at www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands. Accompanying resources also available online.

New Hollyoaks style DVD promoting careers with languages
University of Wolverhampton in conjunction with This Can Motion Pictures have produced a 15-minute film with 14 follow up episodes featuring a teenage boy and girl – Ben and Kalvinder – who dropped languages after GCSE but now have the chance to win a summer Work Experience placement in Paris, Barcelona or Berlin.

The message is familiar – languages are fun, they help you get a job, working at languages brings rewards – but the approach is new, and bang up-to-date. The initial film sets the scene where viewers get to know the characters and watch them interact with each other on Facebook. The follow up short films allow viewers to find out what happens next as the winner takes up their placement abroad. The short episodes can be shown during lessons or watched at home and each one has additional resources including lesson plans, vocabulary and ideas devised by local teachers.

Given the growing numbers of teens who frequently visit social networking sites and studies showing that an average teenager spends 31 hours online each week, this project aims to add some educational content and linguistic motivation to pupils’ online activities.

The DVD and accompanying resources can be downloaded from the Resources tab at www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands

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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

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.

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

www.specialistschools.org.uk

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is a leading body for secondary education, seeking to give more young people access to a good secondary education by building networks, sharing practice and supporting schools.

Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies

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

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

The Regional Language Network (RLN) provides language advice, information and resources to businesses and individuals in the West Midlands.

Language Networks for Excellence

www.language networks4excellence.org.uk

Provide a range of products and services within 4 key strands: publications; training and CPD; accreditation; dissemination and research.

The Department for Education

www.education.gov.uk

The Government department for education and children's services.

The Young Gifted and Talented Programme

www.ygt.dcsf.gov.uk

The website provides information and resources to help support gifted learners, their parents/carers, educators, governors and local authorities.

Make your voice heard with The Wall of Language

The Wall of Language was set up just before the General Election in May 2010 with the intention of raising the profile of languages amongst prospective MPs. The website was created by Nick Friend and Nick Mair with support from the Association for Language Learning (ALL), CILT, the National Centre for Languages, and two commercial sponsors (Televic and Linguascope) and is designed to be a focal point for linguists where we can find out what MPs feel about the importance of languages.

On the Wall of Language, you can email your new MPs your questions about languages and language policy, and then post their reply. You can see letters which have already been sent, MP replies and template letters at www.walloflanguage.org.uk

Help build the wall – contact your MP and encourage your friends and colleagues too!

Get set for London 2012!

With the London 2012 Olympics

less than two years away, now is the

time to start creating cross curricular

projects in your school curriculum!

Get Set is the official London 2012

education programme for schools and

colleges which hosts an online library

of Olympic related learning resources.

There is a wide range of information

and ideas from games and fact sheets

to films and news articles to get you and your pupils thinking about the

Olympic and Paralympic values and the London 2012 Games.

The main aims of Get Set are to enhance young people's learning right

across the curriculum and to support them in the development of their

leadership, personal, thinking and life skills.

The website features a special Get Set for Languages area bursting with

ideas to engage your pupils and links to Let's Get Cooking featuring recipe

ideas inspired by 7 of the 205 countries taking part in the Olympic games

and translated into their native language.

To register for Get Set and have access to all the resources on the site go

to: <http://getset.london2012.com>



Links into Languages

Supporting language teachers

Links is celebrating its first year of success during which more than 600 teachers attended 52 different CPD courses across the West Midlands. While many courses were held at the regional centre at Aston University, a considerable number of courses were organised and delivered in Links' Local Centres. There are currently 13 local centres across the region who help us guarantee widespread support for language teachers across the county.

Our courses include relevant and timely themes such as innovative curriculum design in KS3, support for the new GCSE and A levels, planning for cross curricular projects and introducing CLIL, as well as global learning in secondary curriculum.

The Links website has been updated over the summer and now includes resources such as '10 minute guides', written by the Links trainers, with tips for 'Intercultural understanding in the classroom', 'Engaging with CPD' and 'Qualifications'. Over 100 new teaching resources from LinkedUp projects will also be made available from September.

Working alongside Routes, Links into Languages continues to make the case for languages and supports teachers to do the same. To find out more, visit our website www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk/westmidlands or contact us on linkswestmidlands@aston.ac.uk



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ROUTES INTO LANGUAGES

West Midlands

BETTER PROSPECTS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS



Since September 2007 when Routes into Languages West Midlands was officially launched, we have worked with passion and commitment to convince young people across the region of the importance and relevance of studying languages. We have supported schools in developing cross-curricular links focussing on business and sport, and have sent staff and students to visit over half of the schools in the region and give inspirational talks about their own experiences of where languages can take you. We are delighted that,

with further funding now received from HEFCE and BIS, we can continue to work for schools and with schools until Easter 2011. It is most encouraging to hear new Minister David Willets telling the Daily Telegraph (1 August 2010), 'Businesses say there aren't enough students with experience of languages, different cultures and the wider world... British companies want to export abroad but one of the problems they raise with us is that British students don't have foreign languages and an experience of living in another country'.

We are proud that the six West Midlands universities involved in Routes have worked so successfully together for the common cause of language promotion, and between us have developed

strong, lasting relationships with agencies such as Youth Sport Trust and the Regional Language Network. The launch at the beginning of last academic year of the Links into Languages programme, offering continuing professional development and support to teachers, has provided even more opportunities for working together.

As you read through this newsletter, you will learn of the results of successful collaborations. We are pleased to present the results of the hard work that our partner schools have put into their Active Languages projects reported on last year by making case studies and resources available to all through our Active Languages resource booklet. Again on the theme of sport, we are keen to ensure languages are given high priority as London 2012 approaches, read on to discover how you can get involved.

A CBI report published a few months ago found that almost three-quarters of companies were dissatisfied with students' language skills, and the majority were concerned about 'shortfalls in their international cultural awareness' which might jeopardise the country's prospects in international trade, and the individual's prospects of rewarding employment in a globalised economy. Maybe our voices are beginning to be heard!

Professor Pam Moores, Consortium Director, Aston University



"Through learning language, we learn about culture. Through learning about culture, we learn respect for others. Through learning respect for others, we can hope for peace." - Proverb

"If we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world." - Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Austrian philosopher

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart." - Nelson Mandela

"Any tool has multiple uses. Language, for example, can be either a bridge or a barrier." - Shane Tourtellotte, author