

Slough Grammar School

Linguistics Toolset

Slough Grammar School and Brunel University Knowledge Transfer Partnership received Economic & Social Research Council funding to research and develop a commercially viable teaching toolkit. The development of materials, handbooks and training programmes create a comprehensive and cohesive package to teach and learn linguistics.



Established in 1912, Slough Grammar School provides a teaching and learning environment for 1,140 students from 11 – 18 years of age. It has opted for Foundation Status [managed by a Board of Governors] and is totally autonomous in financial terms.

As a school with Language College status, Slough Grammar School teaches more languages than most. As well as the languages defined by the National Curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese, Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic and Italian. Year 13 students can learn Portuguese and Russian. The school hopes to add Japanese to the languages taught soon. Specialist teachers are supported by native speaking Foreign Language Assistants from France, Germany, Spain and China.

The project is academically led by Professor Taeko Wydell, Co-Director of the Centre for Cognition and Neuroimaging (CCNI), Institute of Psychology.

Taeko's research interests include:

- Cognitive and neural processes involved in language, in particular, reading.
- Literacy Acquisition, and Developmental dyslexia/acquired dyslexia (with neurological patients).
- Bilinguals' reading processes using behavioural data as well as brain imaging data

Taeko is supported by Professor Zahir Irani, the Head of Information Systems & Computing. Zahir will be supervising the conversion of the research activities and the design and content of the teaching tools into marketable teaching packages based on web access or in CD Rom format.

The school recruits from a catchment area of various ethnic backgrounds. The opportunity to build on its Language College status and use this rich source of different languages, customs, and cultures to reflect the principles of inclusive education and current approaches to applied linguistics and language education will be invaluable. The project will build on the school's areas of linguistic excellence to research and develop language course content, delivery, materials and activities. Through the sales of linguistics toolkits, course materials using the latest IT technology and media, the school will be disseminating good practice to other schools, training organisations and individuals as learners and teachers.

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