

EMAT NEWS

Lambeth Ethnic Minority Achievement Team

Issue 18 Spring 2010

While the rest of us were enjoying a well earned Autumn break, Luisa Ribeiro led a team of Lambeth teachers to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. They stayed for two weeks, visiting different

schools and other educational providers. In this article, *Jacqui McDermid* has given her impression of the provision for children from birth until five years old.

Early Years in Rio de Janeiro

The trip to Rio de Janeiro in October was a great success for Lambeth Early Years. This exciting opportunity to visit early years settings from both the private and maintained sector was a wonderful experience that gave insight into the challenges faced in this diverse city. It also demonstrated what dedication and creativity can do to give children the best possible experiences. Practitioners working with the 0-5 age group showed real care and respect for the children they worked with, often going above and beyond their roles in ensuring children felt valued. There was a real sense of affection and high aspirations for children, which was evident in how they interacted with each other and the practitioners around them.

Although the Brazilian early years educational programme is currently under review, practitioners are already moving away from what

was a formal approach to a more play based approach. Rio de Janeiro has met similar challenges to Lambeth in implementing this approach, such as the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) focus of encouraging settings to



allow children to free flow between the indoor and outdoor environment: Unlike London practitioners, who are faced with cold, unpredictable weather, practitioners in Brazil are more

concerned with the intense heat that can reach 40°C at times.

Another priority for the Rio de Janeiro authority was encouraging parental involvement, as this, as in the UK, is seen as an important factor in how children will

achieve. Many of the projects observed promoted parental involvement, proving that parents will engage with settings when a creative approach is taken. The Brazilian parents seemed keen to engage with settings when a social event was involved: this is something we can take back to Lambeth when we are encouraging parental involvement in our own settings.

In short, the Brazilian creative and fun loving culture is something we can all learn from.

Jacqui McDermid,
Early Years Teaching and Learning Consultant

Meet the team Sema Thompson



In March 2003 I called my sister in Istanbul and told her that I had been offered a job supporting Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' children in schools. I wasn't sure whether to accept the offer. My sister said, "It sounds very interesting. You'll have a thousand stories to tell us".

I lost my sister the very week I started work. I loved talking to her and miss our chats very much.

To be able to communicate and share ideas is one of the greatest joys as well as one of the basic needs of life. There's such enjoyment to be had by just talking with friends.

Watching children saying their first words, phrases and sentences in English can be as exciting as hearing your baby's first words. It does not matter how shy or reluctant some children appear to be about talking in front of the whole class, all of them are yearning to talk to other children, especially in the playground.

I hope that over the last few years I have been one of those people who have helped the kids start talking.

Yes, I now have a thousand stories in my head to tell. Who knows, one day....

Sema Thompson



Congratulations

To staff at **Lambeth Academy**, pictured here with EAL coordinator Ann Horton, who all successfully completed a twilight course studying strategies for improving spoken and written English across the curriculum. If you would like us to organize a course in your school, please contact Amanda Gay.

Writing their troubles away

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Leaving your native country is never easy; as well as homesickness, there's the long process of adapting to a new culture and customs, especially when it involves a new language to contend with. But imagine having to go through all that during your teenage years, when you're still trying to figure out who you are. Having to abandon some of your customs and adopt others which might seem totally alien can make an already turbulent phase a whole lot harder.

In their efforts to integrate into a new community, a lot of young people give up their native language and even reject their own culture, which makes it very likely that they will lose the ties with the country of their birth. Taking all of this into account, the Arvon Foundation - which has been providing writing courses for forty years - decided to develop the (M)Other Tongues project, holding workshops for teenagers from non English-speaking communities in London.

The first course, which took place at the beginning of December, was aimed at youngsters from London's Portuguese and Brazilian communities - most of whom arrived two to four years ago. Sixteen teenagers from The Norwood

School between the ages of 12 and 16 spent five days with a pair of tutors in a Yorkshire house once owned by poet Ted Hughes, exploring new ways of dealing with their multicultural history.

Pupils from The Norwood School



According to Emma Johnson, development manager at Arvon, "When we spoke to people from the Portuguese community, we saw that many of them chose only to speak English when they came here. We want to help them reconnect with their original culture and integrate it into their daily lives."

The project, which was financed by the Gulbenkian Foundation, was completely free for the youngsters, and included two bilingual tutors, accommodation and the help of two teachers to supervise.

The focus of the exercises was to recall their arrival in England, and put it down on paper through essays, poems and short stories, creating an anthology of their experiences and sharing them with other teenagers in the same situation. They were encouraged to use their creativity and write in whichever language they preferred. One of the tutors, Portuguese journalist Susana Moreira, underlines the importance of the work that's being done by Arvon with the project. "These students can gain a lot from this experience: as well as increasing their confidence during this stage of their lives, they can also learn that this mixed cultural baggage they carry has the potential to be useful in the future, or even in their careers,

for example in translation."

The Arvon Foundation intends to create a collected volume of the works produced, which will be given to the participants and used as reference for future projects which they hope to hold with other communities, giving them the chance to connect with their native languages and English. JD

Ana Brasil, [JungleDrums](#) magazine issue no. 76 – pp 46-47

The Arvon Foundation, founded 40 years ago, provides residential courses which aim to challenge, inspire and transform not only peoples' writing but also their lives. The week-long courses are held all over the UK, from Devon to Scotland, with all age groups and with people at every stage in their writing lives. Arvon also provides grants to those on low or no income to give everyone the chance to improve their writing. arvonfoundation.org

Supplementary schools update

It has been a busy term for supplementary schools in Lambeth. On November 17th, representatives from five schools successfully completed a one day course on effective lesson planning and recording pupil progress jointly organised by the EMA team and the National Resource Centre for supplementary schools.

On December 17th, representatives from several schools also completed an extended course on safeguarding.

Congratulations also to Lambeth Somali Community Association and Ebony Saturday school who received their Bronze award under the National Resource Centre's quality framework scheme. The Bronze Award covers sound practice in record keeping, safeguarding, health and safety and financial procedures.

In October the updated directory of supplementary schools and classes in the Lambeth area was sent out to all schools. There are a growing number of supplementary schools supporting Lambeth school students and we hope



mainstream schools will draw on this valuable resource in the borough.

Clare Warner

Clare is now on maternity leave. Please send all enquiries about supplementary schooling to Mus Bagum, ed.

Supporting EAL learners with reading

Recently, there has been a renewed emphasis on the use of phonics as the main tool for reading. Although undoubtedly an essential tool, it is recognised that EAL learners often master word recognition skills ahead of language comprehension. A recent research report¹ would appear to add further support, finding that the EAL children developed strong word recognition and decoding skills and that any lower levels of reading attainment were attributed to lack of understanding, particularly related to limited vocabulary knowledge, rather than decoding difficulties. Furthermore, they found that their strong decoding enabled them to progress further through reading comprehension passages in tests and achieve good raw scores, thus masking any reading comprehension difficulties. The authors conclude that there is a 'clear need to extend vocabulary learning in the classroom' and that 'a focus on learning decoding when reading contributes to comprehension difficulties. Children learning EAL need a greater emphasis on reading for meaning, brought about through discussion of text....and a focus on meaning could be integrated into reading practices earlier than Year 3.'

This resonates with my recent experiences when reading with children across schools. I consistently met children who decoded fluently, but with superficial understanding and for whom the restricted vocabulary was proving a barrier to understanding. If this is also your experience, consider whether there is a need to specifically focus on developing reading for meaning with the EAL learners in your school. Excellent advice and strategies are outlined in the PNS materials: 'Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years' - pp 29 - 47 of Unit 2 (Creating the learning culture: making it work in the classroom) and vocabulary development on pages 67 -75. I am of course available to support you with developing this or



Rudi and Eva Domange reading together

delivering training in your schools.

A second recent study² has focused on the strategies used by young bilingual children learning to read at home in their home language, using dual language books supplied by the school, thus learning to read simultaneously in two languages. Its findings highlighted the 'positive impact on children's confidence, on their personal identity as bilinguals in a multicultural British society, on their achievement in English literacy as well as the involvement of their parents in schools.'

In addition, observations were made on the role of the teacher, the school and the development of the children's metalinguistic understanding. If you believe that a similar project would benefit the children you work with, then please do read the abstract or contact me for further discussion.

Finally, two Lambeth schools are involved in a

year long research project 'Building Communities of Readers', led by a researcher who is both an early years and EAL specialist.

The project aims to:

- extend understanding about 21st century reading identities, habits and cultures;

- identify effective and sustainable ways of building on children's out-of-school reading experiences;

- create innovative classroom approaches that genuinely engage with the diversity of children's lives;

It connects to the unfolding primary agenda, the scope for schools to develop localised curricula and the continued need to widen family and community involvement. One of these schools has a very large number of EAL learners and thus this will also be a focus of the research. Hopefully this work will ultimately benefit all our learners, so watch this space.....

¹ **The comprehension skills of children learning English as an additional language**, Burgoyne, K, Kelly, J, Whiteley, H & Spooner, A *British Journal of Educational Psychology*: Vol.79, No.4, Dec '09. pp735 - 747

² **Young children learning to read with dual language books**, Raymonde Sneddon *English Teaching: practice and critique*: Vol.7, No.2, September '07. pp71-84

<http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/2008v7n2art4.pdf>

Amanda Bellsham—Revell



Meet the team - Arabella Yapp



In January I started work as the teaching and learning consultant for gifted and talented education as part of the EMA team. I will be picking up on the work of Rosemary Butcher, who left Lambeth last July. I have worked in Lambeth since 1994 in a variety of roles, all of which have involved working in the boroughs' schools. I am excited to take on this new job and work more closely with the EMA team.

The focus of my work will be supporting schools with the 'narrowing the gap' agenda. This work will involve supporting coordination work between schools, disseminating best practice guidance on G and T

and working with individual schools to audit their current G and T provision and develop school improvement plans to increase support offered to able, gifted and talented pupils. I am sure this list will grow as I become more acquainted with the needs of schools in this area.

Arabella Yapp

Ann Horton goes online

Regular readers of this newsletter over the past couple of years may recall an earlier issue in which I detailed some of the work I had been doing in providing resources in various subjects for EAL students.

Time has moved on, but the need for materials to help EAL students (and others!) access the curriculum is as great as ever. Of course all teachers are used to having to differentiate their materials to ensure that every child can make progress. However, having a student with very little English in a class can create extra problems of differentiation.

An additional problem is that of finding suitable support materials. There are many EFL / ESL sites online, which may help with English learning, but these do not address the problem of, for example, GCSE science.

One useful website which is trying to fill this gap is that of EMAonline

(<http://www.emaonline.org.uk/ema/>), which, as its name suggests, endeavours to provide online support for ethnic minority attainment. You do not have to register in order to be able to search for and download resources, but registering will mean that you get regular e-mail updates and newsletters. The site also acts as a channel for general information of interest to those involved in EMA / EAL matters, such as news items of relevance, or professional development opportunities.

Anyone can submit a resource to the site. As I write this, one of my GCSE science resources is currently being highlighted in the **EAL & Bilingual Resources** section on the homepage, along with links to a publisher, a couple of general educational websites and the English Schools Induction Service. Of course, by the time you read this, that may have changed (!), but it does give you an idea of the range of resources available.

If you click on the **EAL and Bilingual Resources** heading, you can access an easy-to-use search facility, which enables you to search by key stage, subject and/or language. Although a few of the links to interactive resources or websites are a little unreliable at times, generally this is a really useful site for resources in a specific language, as well as resources aimed at EAL students in general.

Maybe you won't find *exactly* what you are looking for there, but you may be inspired to adapt one of the resources. And if you have developed something you think may be of use to other EAL / EMA teachers and coordinators, why not submit it to the site for inclusion in their resources? The more people who use the site and contribute to it, the better we should be able to help our students not just with English per se, but with a range of subjects.

Ann Horton
Lambeth Academy



The benefits of learning Portuguese

Hello! My name is Ana and I am a Foreign Language Assistant for Portuguese. In October 2008, I started the challenge of teaching Portuguese to 4-10 year olds in various Lambeth schools: St Anne's RC primary school; St Bede's RC infant school; Glenbrook primary school; and Crown Lane primary school.

I find it extremely rewarding to teach the Portuguese language to students with multiple nationalities. The combination of students from Portuguese speaking countries and from other countries together creates significant positive learning synergies. Students from Portuguese speaking countries are endowed with strong foundational speaking skills which provide them with self confidence and consequently, better ability to learn new skills. At the same time, those strengths create positive spillovers for the rest of the children as they



share their knowledge and support their learning progress.

An equally rewarding aspect of my work is the fact that I am currently supervising a Portuguese club for students of non-Portuguese speaking parents, who received with enthusiasm the plan proposed by St Bede's RC infant school to create a Portuguese club dedicated to their children. Moreover, the

success of this initiative is mirrored by the exponential growth of the number of children of Portuguese speaking parents who are also attending Portuguese clubs created especially for them.

As a teacher, I am benefiting a lot from this experience since it has enabled me to experiment with various innovative teaching methods such as PowerPoint

presentations, songs, games, flashcards, puppet theatre and stories.

I am deeply satisfied with the impressive impact that the combination of these methods is producing on the cognitive and social processes within the classroom.

Ana Freitas

Imagine Theatre workshop at Sunnyhill Primary School November 2009

Mus Bagum from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team arranged for Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre (GLYPT) to work with the whole of Year 5 and 6 for one day in November. The actors gave us an excellent performance and workshop called **Imagine** focusing on issues concerning Child Soldiers. Pupils were asked to imagine a future Britain in which the North and South of England were at war with each other. The main character, Caleb, is forced to become a child soldier.

The performance covered multi-layered issues with which many of our children were familiar: war, being a refugee, lack of choices, emotional trauma, loss of family and home. However, by setting the play in an abstract time and place, discussions in class became more manageable. The play was very thought provoking and the children were talking about it for days afterwards.

"It made me realise that some people just don't have choices."

The theatre group gave us an excellent resource pack which was very useful for follow up work during Literacy time. In the first instance the children were encouraged to write in role as Caleb, recreating Caleb's notebook of poetry, a central theme in the story and just one of the ways that Caleb was encouraged to express and deal with his emotions.

The children were asked to anonymously evaluate the drama workshop.

Below are some quotes:

"It taught me that we have the opportunity to live a happy life but other children do not have that opportunity." (Y6)

"Holding the fake gun made me realise how a child would feel holding a real gun, how scary that would be." (Y5)

"It made me realise that some people just don't have choices." (Y6)

"It made me feel very sad for refugees who have to leave their country. I would like to stay near my family during a war, whatever happened." (Y6)

"The best thing about seeing this performance is seeing how people do live around the world. Makes me think how lucky I am to live in London." (Y5)

Andi Vowers
EMAG Coordinator, Sunnyhill Primary School



Actors from GLYPT at Sunnyhill primary school



L'Ouverture
inspire • create • achieve

3 December 2009

Dear Amanda

L'Ouverture have been working with Nerea Olano, Lambeth Traveller Education Service, on two school drama projects for children aged 5-12 years - specifically aimed at developing speaking and listening abilities. The drama and performance skills support their personal development and are delivered to small groups of up to 10.

In addition to primary/lower secondary projects, L'Ouverture also have Business Enterprise and Visual Arts clubs running in several Lambeth secondary schools that are aimed at 14-19 year olds. As part of this programme young people plan, create and manage an art/photography exhibition. This develops students' creative skills as well as their media, business and communication skills.

Our funding allows some of these projects to be delivered free in schools.

If you think L'Ouverture could support the work you're doing in schools via the above projects, or you would like to discuss other ways of working together then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Noel

Project Co-ordinator
Tel: 020 7919 7989

www.louverture.co.uk



Lambeth Ethnic Minority Achievement Team Contact Details

Name	Job Title	E-mail	Telephone 0207 92
Amanda Bellsham-Revell	Primary EMA Consultant	abellsham-reve@lambeth.gov.uk	69356
Amanda Gay	Secondary EAL Consultant	agay@lambeth.gov.uk	66348
Annie Wong	Interpreting and Translation Service Coordinator	awong@lambeth.gov.uk	69688
Arabella Yapp	Teaching and learning Consultant for Gifted and Talented pupils	ayapp@lambeth.gov.uk	07908809733
Brian Netto	School Improvement Adviser	bnetto@lambeth.gov.uk	69689
Clare Warner	Secondary Black Achievement Consultant (Maternity Leave)	cwarner2@lambeth.gov.uk	66349
Darrol Blake	Secondary Transfer Support Officer	dblake@lambeth.gov.uk	69827
Luisa Ribeiro	Advisory Teacher for Portuguese Pupil Achievement	lribeiro@lambeth.gov.uk	65988
Marjorie Domange	Project Support Assistant	mdomange@lambeth.gov.uk	69352
Mick Martell	Secondary Behaviour Consultant	mmartell@lambeth.gov.uk	69417
Mira Lobo	Project Support Officer	mlobo@lambeth.gov.uk	69850
Mus Bagum	Secondary Consultant	mbagum@lambeth.gov.uk	69350
Nerea Olano	Advisory Teacher (TES)	nolano@lambeth.gov.uk	69680
Sema Thompson	Teaching Assistant (TES)	sthompson5@lambeth.gov.uk	69680
Yusuf Farah	Somali Bilingual Assistant / Community Education Officer	fyusuf@lambeth.gov.uk	69364



Brian Netto - An update on EMA issues

The most recent language census of schools in Lambeth shows that recent trends are continuing - Portuguese is the most widely spoken language aside from English, and Somali is one of the fastest growing languages. By contrast, French and Spanish are by far the most popular languages taught in our secondary schools- a recent audit shows that community languages are not being assessed via Asset Languages as much as might be expected in a borough like ours where 46% of pupils speak or understand a language other than English at home, and where 141 languages are spoken. Only two of the secondary schools surveyed have more

than 50% of pupils at KS4 studying a Modern Foreign Language, so there is capacity for improvement in this area [50% is the Government's recommended base line].

No announcement has been made about the future of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant- given the language and ethnic minority profile of the borough [83% of pupils in Lambeth schools are from ethnic minority backgrounds], it is a particular worry. I would be interested to hear from schools what steps are being taken in preparation for March 2011, with the possible ending of the grant.

Brian Netto, January 2010.

Notice board

NALDIC is releasing an edited version on YouTube of a talk by Professor Ofelia Garcia of City University New York (CUNY), given at the recent NALDIC conference. Entitled 'Reimagining bilingualism in education for the 21st century' she introduces the notion of 'translanguaging', which offers a radical re-conceptualisation of bilingualism with major implications for classroom practice. There will be five parts in all and they will be released on a (roughly) weekly basis. The first part is now available www.youtube.com search: NALDIC

Publications

Two new reports from **MIND** on the mental health of Refugees and Asylum Seekers may be of interest:
www.mind.org.uk/

Meeting Dates

Primary EMA Network - 4 February

Secondary EMA Network - 3 March

The **EMAT News** is designed and edited by Amanda Gay.

Contributors: Mus Bagum, Amanda Bellsham-Revell, Ana Brasil, Marjorie Domange, Ana Freitas, Ann Horton, Mira Lobo, Jacqui McDermid, Brian Netto, Oliver Noel, Sema Thompson, Andi Vowers, Clare Warner and Arabella Yapp. Thanks to Sarah Newman, Nalini Ramanah and Richard Gibbons for design advice.



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