

P Pilot training project for supplementary schools in Brent

Complementary school teachers are responsible for teaching many of the community language classes available. Training opportunities are available to these teachers, two of which are presented here.

This new and innovative training project is initiated jointly by London Metropolitan University, Resource Unit for Supplementary Schools and the Consortium of Iraqi Supplementary Schools in Brent.

It evolved through discussions on areas of training needs identified by the supplementary schools and formalised through an accredited programme. A number of meetings determined the key focus areas of the project. The meetings helped identify and address the 'how' and 'why' questions such as:

- How long should the project be?
- What would be covered as training content?

The key questions however were based on the teachers' needs and how these were to be met through the training programme. The management committees from the three supplementary schools are to be commended for their efforts in facilitating this. They consulted with their teachers and identified key areas for training. The consultation, while generating a lot of interest did not alleviate the teachers' more urgent concern: would a year programme support entry into any graduate programme at a university?

As with any other one-year course, this one-year programme will not be sufficient to guarantee an automatic entry into any undergraduate or postgraduate course at London Metropolitan University. It will, however, enable the participants to collect a number of credits which may be considered as additional points towards entry to some accredited courses. The other benefit will be for

those with existing degrees from their countries of origin wanting to pursue their teacher training in the UK. PGCE Key Stages 2/3 Languages in the Community course (currently in its second year at London Metropolitan University) will look at such applications favourably.

Entry requirements for the programme

Any teacher with a good command of English (minimum GCSE or equivalent) and a community language will qualify provided they are fully literate in both languages. The participants will need to complete two written assignments linked to the content covered at the training programme. Successful completion also requires regular attendance.

Although applicants need to meet the general requirements for entry into a postgraduate course (an Honours degree, GCSE or equivalent in English and Maths) the training course will have the following advantages:

- 1) The university will look favourably at the candidates with the certificate from the course.
- 2) The content of what is covered will be the key aspects of what is taught at most PGCE courses at present, these are:
 - the National Curriculum and the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks;
 - lesson planning, record keeping and assessment;
 - classroom management;
 - differentiation and the use of classroom resources.



Participating teachers will need to pay an annual fee £150 (to be confirmed). For those unable to pay may qualify to apply for a subsidy from a number of organisations.

The sessions will be at weekends and will run monthly. The first session will start in April 2005 and run until July. There is a wide range of interest in the programme. If successful, there are plans to extend it to other communities and LEAs. The first signs are that this is highly likely.

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