

News Release

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NEW SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGE OF MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DOCKLANDS

The first report to look at modern foreign language teaching since the introduction of the National Curriculum two years ago is launched today (12 April 1994) at a seminar held at London City Airport.

The report, on foreign language teaching in East London secondary schools in the Docklands area, was commissioned by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) which since 1988 has invested over £40 million in education and training as part of its programme of physical and economic regeneration of the Urban Development Area. This programme has coincided with the emergence of east London as the Capital's gateway to Europe.

The survey examines practices in an area where performance levels in schools have not been impressive in the past and where the developments linked to the National Curriculum combined with the inner city dimension make for a highly complex picture.

UK training company, Cambridge Training and Development Ltd (CTAD) compiled the report which is the result of extensive local research. Thirty-seven secondary schools were consulted for the survey. The three key issues highlighted by the report are:

- * The challenge the National Curriculum presents for modern foreign language teaching.

More/...

- * The identification of successful language teaching methods found within the schools surveyed.
- * The advantages and disadvantages of teaching modern foreign languages in an area with significant numbers of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) pupils.

At today's seminar, attended by representatives of the local education authorities, delegates from the London and Brussels offices of LINGUA, Departments for Education and the Environment as well as local teachers and educationalists, CTAD Director, Simon Shaw, commented:

"In an area like East London with a changing economy and growing links to mainland Europe provided by London City Airport and the new road and rail connections, the ability to speak a European language is one of the key skills for young people coming out of school into the employment market."

The keynote speaker at the seminar was MEP, Carol Tongue, who stressed the increasing importance of European language competence for the area's economy.

Recommendations for improving foreign language output in Docklands schools include:

- * Better networking between schools to develop an integrated coherent approach to language development throughout the area and a "pooling" of good teaching practices.
- * More investment in language teaching resources, both in premises and equipment.
- * The feasibility of a modern equipped language resource centre for use by local schools.

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Bob Pringle, the LDDC's Executive Director for Community Infrastructure, said: "For many local pupils, Europe has never been on the agenda in terms of presenting an opportunity for employment. The area's developing orientation towards Europe will change this. The Corporation is keen to support initiatives which will raise performance levels in our schools and open new horizons for its pupils."

The Corporation intends to allocate funding to develop projects in collaboration with other bodies (the local education authorities, the TECs, City Challenge, etc). It also aims to build upon its recent "European Awareness" programme which arranged study visits to the Continent for schools and colleges. It plans to forge further links between local educational establishments and international companies operating in both Docklands and Europe.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

1. For a copy of the report "**A Survey of European Language Teaching in London Docklands**", please call the LDDC Press Office (see above).
2. The percentages of ESOL pupils in the three Docklands boroughs are:

Tower Hamlets	64%
Newham	35%
Southwark	21%