

Nineteenth-Century Business, Labour, Temperance, & Trade PERIODICALS

BLT19 Schools Pilot Project

April – June 2016

To develop teaching materials suitable for keystages 3, 4 and 5 students, the BLT19 project team collaborated with highly experienced education practitioners including Sue Gyde, the School Improvement Adviser in English and Literacy for the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Sue reviewed the draft teaching materials drawn from the *British Workman*, and provided guidance to assist the project. She organised for two local community secondary schools to take part in the project: Thomas Tallis, a mixed comprehensive in Kidbrooke and Eltham Hill an all girls school in Eltham.

The school teaching materials developed by the BLT19 project team are primarily focused on the themes of industrialisation; temperance; gender; and colonialism. The materials were initially identified as suitable for a range of school curriculum subjects including: English language; English literature; social/history; media studies; and geography. The teachers who volunteered to take part in the BLT19 teaching trial from both schools are English teachers. They were provided with the materials approximately a month prior to the lessons to allow them time to adapt them if required. They were also provided with details of the project and a link to the [BLT19](#) website. The teachers were agreeable for one of the BLT19 team to observe the lessons.

New syllabuses were introduced for English language and English literature for all secondary schools in September 2015. Both schools involved in the trial have chosen the AQA exam board for GCSE and A level English Language and English Literature. The AQA [advise](#) that the English Language specification 'is fully co-teachable with GCSE English Literature. Students who choose to study both will benefit from the transferable skills developed across the two subjects'. This is the approach both schools adopt. There is an integrated curriculum to enable both elements of English to be taught simultaneously in years 7-10. At year 11 the lessons gradually become more distinct.

The AQA GCSE paper for English Literature requires the inclusion of a nineteenth-century novel from a choice of seven including Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

The AQA GCSE paper for English Language anticipates that students are familiar with and able to assess

high-quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The texts must include literary non-fiction, essays, reviews and journalism. An AQA example paper asks students to consider two samples of text: a twenty-first century non-fiction newspaper article and two letters from the 1820s. In addition to asking students to understand the style of language used in both examples, it requires students to compare how the writers convey different attitudes to parenting and education.

The BLT19 teaching materials includes: teacher's notes; student background information; and sets of suggested activities. They were developed taking into account the AQA's teaching objectives and methods of assessment. Early meetings with Sue Gyde enabled us to fully appreciate the timeliness and significance of the BLT19 project. Sue considered that nineteenth-century non-fiction texts such as the *British Workman* provide the social historical context students require, as well as a primary source to enable them to become familiar with and accustomed to the style and complexity of nineteenth-century language. All teachers involved in the project reiterated the value of the teaching material in addressing the requirements of the new English curricula.

Individual reports detailing the observations, interviews and recommendations arising from each lesson trialling the use of BLT19 teaching materials are appended to this summary report.



Eltham Hill School

Eltham Hill is an all girl secondary school in Eltham, Greenwich. Ofsted rated the school as 'outstanding' in 2014, in respect of achievement of pupils as well as the quality of the teaching. Two key stage 3 classes were involved in the project to evaluate the use of the BLT19 teaching materials.

Key Stage 3 English, Year 7 - English teacher Richard Luke

Lesson one 24 June 2016 - Industrialisation and the *British Workman*

This year seven class was involved in two lessons. The first, a general lesson on Industrialisation and the *British Workman*. Richard adapted the teaching material so that questions were more suitable for students of mixed abilities; added additional questions e.g. Maths patterns; and placed more emphasis on images.

Feedback from the student questionnaires indicates that they had enjoyed using the materials. However a significant number had found the material confusing. Richard's feedback confirmed that he felt there were too many activities. However he thought the materials had very much related to the general aims of what he taught as they encourage deeper discussion and independent thinking. He felt the educational purpose of each activity was very clear and relevant to the curriculum as there is so much nineteenth-century literature taught through key stage 3 and 4. Interestingly he also commented that Images were his favourite material because of their accessibility.

Key Stage 3 English, Year 7 English teacher Richard Luke

Lesson two 27 June 2016 - Industrialisation and the *British Workman* - Child Labour

The students were much more engaged than in the previous lesson. Richard felt that this was due to the subject matter, which the students found more interesting; the focus on one specific area of industrialisation; and the plenary format, which encouraged more discussion. Richard had modified the teaching material so that students could focus on smaller amounts of information as easier to digest. He had noted the students' interest in 'child labour' at the previous industrialisation lesson and decided to focus the discussion on this theme. He had produced some Powerpoint slides and raised some questions for discussion.

Feedback from the student questionnaire confirmed that whilst enjoyment levels were mixed the majority enjoyed the topic and the lesson.

Feedback from Richard Luke reported that he felt the activities related very well to the general aims of curriculum that Child labour very relevant to the curriculum (Victorian Literature) that he really enjoyed using the material which he felt sparked students' imaginations.

Key Stage 3 English, Year 8 English teacher Arooj Ahmad

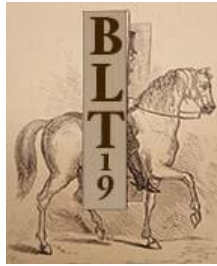
11 July 2016

Representations of Women in Victorian Periodicals

Arooj had developed a lesson plan drawn from the BLT19 teaching materials with Powerpoint slides with images of 1950 housewives linked with images of women from the *British Workman*. The learning objective of the lesson was to 'Explore the Representation of Women in Victorian Periodicals'. The students were very engaged with the lesson.

Students appeared to enjoy working with the *British Workman* material and Arooj felt the lesson went extremely well. Feedback from the students confirmed this and the majority of the class enjoyed the topic.

Arooj fed back that there were too many activities to use in the lesson. However they were very clear as was the educational purposed of each. The material were very relevant to the curriculum as 19th century texts are studied for the GCSE course, and it is important to understand the context. Her favourite topic was gender as the girls could relate to this.



Thomas Tallis Community School

Thomas Tallis is a mixed secondary school in Kidbrooke, Greenwich. Ofsted rated the school as 'good' in 2014, a special mention was made to the school's outstanding progress in English. Three lessons were trialled at the school, although a member of the BLT19 team observed only one.

Key Stage 4 English, Year 8 English teacher Hannah Davey-Smith
Lesson 14 July 2016

Students were familiar with the BLT19 materials as they had been used for two lessons with the same class over the previous couple of weeks with another teacher. No detailed feedback available other than the lessons had gone well.

Hannah had modified the 'Gender and the *British Workman*' teaching material as she felt they were too detailed to work through in one lesson. She added that they had been a very useful starting point for teachers. Hannah had prepared a set of PowerPoint slides based on the BLT19 materials provided.

This group of students were particularly interested in the original issues of the *British Workman*. The periodicals sparked off a series of questions from the students relating to temperance and Victorian life, particularly the workhouse.

Hannah felt that the class was more engaged than she had anticipated especially at this time of the school year. She considered the materials were relevant to the curriculum as they link to the correct time period and careful planning could increase their relevance. She enjoyed using the materials, the favourite was female representation because it could create interesting feedback and discussion.

The student feedback indicated that in general they enjoyed using the materials and the topic. Views on the difficulty of the class were mixed, but the majority found it relatively easy.

Key finding and recommendations:

- BLT19 teaching materials fulfils the new English language and literature GCSE requirements for students to be provided with exposure to and familiarity with nineteenth-century non-fiction literature. It also provides significant historical context.
- Images drawn from the *British Workman* proved to have particular value in generating ideas and discussions as well as an aid to creative writing amongst the younger students.
- Education practitioners advise that varied and relevant teaching materials can be drawn from digitised 19th century periodicals, particularly the *British Workman*, for use beyond English to other subject areas such as history, geography, media studies, art, maths, PSHE, humanities.
- The variety of teaching styles precludes a 'one size fits all' teaching materials package. In the trial teachers adopted a 'pick and mix' approach tailored to each specific class and style of teaching.
- For maximum impact English teachers recommend that the BLT19 teaching materials are incorporated into the syllabus from year seven, through KS3, 4 and 5. They have requested that they are involved at the early stages of the project to develop a bespoke programme tailored to the needs of their students. They have also requested the BLT19 provide an inset day on nineteenth century periodicals.
- The BLT19 materials relate to contemporary social issues: gender and identity issues; substance abuse; domestic abuse; working conditions (e.g. zero contract hrs) loss of civic amenities (e.g. libraries) legacies of colonialism; austerity; child labour (international perspective).
- There are practical difficulties for students accessing online digitised copies of BLT19 materials in lessons. This could be addressed in a variety of ways including support from the BLT19 project to provide supplementary classes at the schools or the university. This would enhance and augment the university relationship with the schools and local communities.
- Greenwich educational practitioners are particularly enthusiastic and supportive of the project. The trial lessons have demonstrated an accessible approach to non-fiction nineteenth-century material to suit each key stage of the English curriculum, which the students generally enjoyed.
- Access to the original issues of periodicals is a key aspect of the project. The majority of students were fascinated, even beguiled by the ability to touch and connect with this intriguing period of history.