

London Association for the Teaching of English

Incorrigibly plural

A conference to celebrate Morlette Lindsay's contribution to English teaching and to share ways of continuing her work



Saturday, 11 March, 9.30 – 2.30

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL

Morlette was at the heart of LATE. She brought to all her work commitment, an openness to experiences and a willingness to try things out. Most of all she brought people together and fostered a sense of purpose about our work – and, it needs to be said, a sense of enjoyment. She spurred us on to organise and plan and stay true to our core convictions about the value of English and of English teachers and their work in schools.

There have been times over recent years when this ‘staying true’ has seemed very difficult indeed in the face of ever-more reductive versions of English and of learning. But Morlette was optimistic about what could be achieved if we worked collaboratively. She was also completely committed to what learners of all ages could do and why they mattered. She could be sharply critical of yet another initiative thrust on schools and usually aimed at testing or ‘raising standards’ or ‘stretching’, ‘challenging’ and ‘skilling’. The truth is she had no time for this kind of educational doublespeak. At the same time, it’s important to say that she was extremely deft at working within a system that she was also subverting – subverting in the way she organised her classroom, established relationships with pupils and in the ways she worked with colleagues.

This conference is dedicated to her memory. In it, we want to celebrate her work and to share ways of ensuring that this work lives on. The keynotes and the workshops have been put together with these aims in mind.

Conference Programme

9.30: coffee and registration

10.00: **Keynote: Guerrilla Teaching**

Anne Turvey & John Yandell

10.50: **Workshop 1**

(Conference participants to choose two workshops and a reserve option – see following pages.)

11.45: coffee break

12.00: **Workshop 2**

1.00 pm: **Keynote: Spoken Word: Performing Poetry**

Lisa Moore, Klara Bernatt and pupils from Alexandra Park School

1.50 pm: lunch

Keynote 1: Guerrilla Teaching

Anne Turvey and John Yandell

In an educational landscape that has become shaped by high-stakes tests and Ofsted judgements, where the work of English teachers is ever more closely scrutinised and constrained, what scope is there for other – more creative and collegial – approaches?

What are the resources on which we can draw to sustain less reductive and impoverished versions of English as a school subject? What might we learn from Morlette’s example – and what were the principles that informed her practice, as a teacher and as a teacher educator?

Keynote 2: Spoken Word: Performing Poetry

Lisa Moore, Klara Bernatt and pupils from Alexandra Park School

This final session of the conference celebrates poetry in performance. The Spoken Word lunchtime group was initiated by Lisa at her school, Alexandra Park. It has flourished and grown over the past few years and is now run by the pupils themselves. The club offers a space for students across the year groups to write and perform their own work and to offer feedback to each other – about the poems and about being a ‘poet’. The students will speak about what the group means to them and most of all, they will ‘perform’!

WORKSHOPS

1. London as a Resource

Bethan Marshall, Senior Lecturer in Education, King's College London, with her **PGCE students**

Like Dr Johnson, Morlette never tired of London. For her, it was a constant inspiration. She delighted in exploring it herself and with students of all ages. This workshop takes up the idea of seeing the city as a huge learning resource with its museums, galleries and spaces. It will introduce a range of places that explore the city's culture in some form and it will suggest activities and resources that can be undertaken in them.

2. Writing together

Simon Wrigley, National Writing Project, Outreach Director

Teachers of writing should write themselves. So, in this workshop we will all write together, and share what we wish. And we will reflect on what more writing might do for us and our pupils. Writing generates thought and other people's ideas broaden our understandings. This workshop will share practical approaches which boost writers' confidence. The workshop will explore the authority of the writer, the responsibility of the listener and the potential of writing groups. All participants will be invited to join or start an NWP writing group: www.nwp.org.uk

3. Drama and Film-making

Theo Bryer, Lecturer in English with Drama, Institute of Education

This workshop will draw on Morlette’s creativity, specifically her enthusiasm for what we used to call ‘making a film in a day’ but we honed this to ‘film in a lesson’.

It involves drama, shooting and editing a film on iPads, in order to explore different readings of a text that might be studied at KS3 or KS4 in English – perhaps a Gothic or dystopian one. Or a collection of short stories? Come along, be creative and make something!

4. Igniting the flame: how can museums inspire outstanding creative writing?

Joanna Brown, Education Programme Manager, *Africa Writes*
& **Jen Wilkinson**, Northumberland Park School

Join Joanna and Jen as they step you through the creative writing journey taken with English students at the South Africa: Art of a Nation exhibition at the British Museum. This practical workshop will explore innovative approaches to successful engagement with museum collections and develop ideas for working with pupils to transform their personal responses into writing of different kinds.

5. *Discovering Literature: bringing 20th century literature to life*

Katie Adams, Digital Learning Content Manager, British Library

In this workshop, the British Library Learning team will introduce you to *Discovering Literature: 20th century*, a website aimed primarily at A Level students and teachers. The site brings together digitised original sources (including manuscript drafts, letters, photographs, and more) with expert articles and film content. With this material the Library hopes to illuminate the social, political and cultural context in which key 20th century writers were working, as well as bring to life the writing process behind their innovative – and often challenging – works.

Focussing on *Discovering Literature's* materials surrounding a range of novels, we will all take part in a range of short, practical activities using the website to spark ideas and open up ways for embedding the resource in your teaching. We will end with a Q&A session, during which there may be opportunities to explore the resource more widely.

6. *Exploring Cultural Identity through Poetry*

Lindsay Home, Parliament Hill School

How many languages are spoken in your classroom? Poetry's status as part of the oral and aural traditions makes it the ideal medium to explore the wealth of cultures found in London's schools, and to celebrate the identities of all students. This workshop offers some suggestions on how to approach this through a student-led project. Please feel free to bring a poem in another language to share with the group!

7. Making Words Work

Jacob Sam-La Rose

Poet, Educator and Artistic Director of: Barbican Young Poets, Spoken Word Education Programme, Shot from the Lip

Even for English teachers, poetry can be a challenging subject to engage with. Join Jacob Sam-La Rose for practical activities and ways to make poetry dynamic and accessible for all, through writing that is meaningful and rewarding. Jacob will also offer thoughts on ways into poetry – the power of the youth slam and spoken word clubs – and recommendations for resources.

