

USE OF ICT IN SUBJECT TEACHING - PROPOSALS FOR KEY STAGE 3

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRICULUM (NALDIC)

NALDIC (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum) is the subject association for teachers of English as an Additional Language. It promotes the effective teaching and learning of bilingual and EAL pupils who currently comprise almost ten percent of the school population. **NALDIC** was founded in 1992 and provides a professional forum for:

- the teaching and learning of English as an additional language (EAL)
- raising the achievement of ethnic minority learners
- supporting bilingualism
- the development and understanding of this field of education

Since its inception **NALDIC** has:

- promoted the development of policy, practice and research in the area of EAL and bilingualism
- disseminated information regarding teaching and learning of EAL
- acted as a subject network for teaching, academic and research members
- advised government bodies on issues relating to EAL and bilingualism
- drawn on international perspectives
- provided a voice for the profession

The issues relating to the use of ICT in teaching and learning EAL (English as an Additional Language) are particularly complex due to the position of EAL in England. There are two crucial points in relation to EAL which need to be recognised when considering the use of ICT to transform teaching and learning in this area. Firstly it needs to be recognised that **for the learner of EAL in the mainstream classroom, the task of acquiring English and achieving academically, is a moving target: while the learner is acquiring English, the curriculum for the peer group is continually advancing** (see *'The Distinctiveness of English as an Additional Language: a cross-curriculum discipline'* 1999, **NALDIC**). To enable EAL learners to achieve in this situation educators must ensure **access to and progress through the curriculum via the integration of language and curriculum or subject content**. The particular nature of the task facing the EAL learner (and the specialist or mainstream teacher by definition) would therefore appear to be one which can very readily be made easier by use of new technologies which can 'individualise' curriculum content and support the integration of English and first language and content.

It would therefore seem unusual that the use and application of ICT in this subject has not advanced significantly in the past few years despite such obvious advantages to both teacher and learner. Research carried out in March 2003 in 32 schools in the Birmingham Leeds and Manchester areas found that only 18 used computer software with EAL pupils, all of which was purchased from third parties. None of the schools had developed their own software and none of the software was specifically designed to support EAL learning within the National Curriculum. Additionally the research study found that the schools were using only 4 out of 20 internet sites identified as containing EAL support advice and materials relating to the National Curriculum. Schools were accessing internet sites, but these contained materials either related to the National Curriculum but not EAL learners (particularly revision or special needs activities) or

related to EAL but not within the NC. No schools were using the intranet to support EAL learners.

There is a significant contrast between mainstream curriculum subjects and EAL teaching. Statutory mainstream subjects are clearly defined in terms of a nationally recognised framework of curriculum, teaching content, teacher education and assessment. ICT development in mainstream subject areas has thus been able to attract significant DfES funding and commercial interest which has stimulated the development and use of ICT in subject areas. The use and application of ICT and e-learning in the business English as a Foreign Language (EFL) sector has also benefited from significant commercial investment and growth. EAL in contrast has not, and has typically relied on localised or individual knowledge and development, an emphasis on overcoming communication problems, and locally sponsored teacher education and guidance. In order to achieve the necessary step change in the use of ICT in this area, we would argue that significant national development is required through the recognition of EAL as a distinct specialism and the provision of significant resources to stimulate the use of ICT.

In respect of the questions posed in the proposals for KS3

What gaps can you identify in your subject area with regard to advice and/or guidance, resources and training in the following areas:

LEADERSHIP

EAL is typically locally led and managed. In schools, the subject is often the responsibility of a single individual or a single teacher supported by instructors and bilingual assistants. The leadership provided at LEA level is variable and evidence from OFSTED and other bodies has demonstrated that local LEA leadership and development in this area has greatly reduced since 1999. NALDIC is increasingly providing advice, guidance, resources and training in areas where LEA level support for EAL is no longer readily available.

PEDAGOGY

Despite the fact that there is considerable body of national and international research on effective pedagogy and progression for EAL pupils, very little of this is readily available to mainstream subject classroom practitioners. Nationally available advice, guidance, resources and training is largely tied to specific subject areas (most notably English) but EAL pedagogy needs to be readily accessible to all subject teachers and disciplines. One of the major issues emerging from the TTA review of ITT was that subject and mainstream teachers were often ill-prepared during their training to work with EAL and bilingual learners. NALDIC has supported the DfES proposal to develop appropriate training for all mainstream teachers to be delivered at a local level by EAL specialists in its submission to the recent DfES consultation 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils'.

ICT

Despite the fact that there is a growing body of international research on effective use of ICT with EAL learners, very little of this is available to subject teachers. What advice and guidance exists is limited by the lack of EAL training available to mainstream subject specialists (see above). It is difficult to develop and extend ICT usage with EAL learners if teachers do not have adequate initial training in the educational needs of these pupils. The final and significant factor is a shortage of specific curriculum, EAL and first language resources to support access to and progress through the curriculum.

NALDIC welcomes the government's increasing policy focus on the role of Subject Associations. In particular, NALDIC recognises its role in the advancement and application of ICT in supporting the teaching and learning of bilingual and EAL pupils. NALDIC has to date been involved in a number of shared initiatives to strengthen and develop work in this area.

- Since 1999 NALDIC has list-owned the eal-bilingual email forum hosted by BECTA. This on line community plays an active role in teacher continuing professional development in the area of EAL and bilingualism and is one of the most active online networks in this area.

- ❑ NALDIC was awarded a small Subject Association BECTA grant to develop its website (www.naldic.org.uk) in 2000 to provide subject guidance and expertise to teachers around the UK. Usage of this website has continued to grow and it is now accessed by many non-member and member teachers as the source of subject guidance and advice. An important part of this has been the development of 'vignettes' of good practice, exemplifying aspects of practice for specialist and non-specialist teachers of EAL and bilingual learners .
- ❑ NALDIC has supported BECTA to develop the Inclusion area of its website. NALDIC provides recommendations and updates for teachers new to EAL and bilingual learners and is currently supporting BECTA to develop an EAL/bilingual FAQ and 'Ask the Expert' online access to support for pedagogy and practice
- ❑ NALDIC has recently been awarded a contract by the TTA to develop an on line Induction pack for teacher trainers new to the area of EAL and bilingualism. This Subject Association ITT Induction pack and programme is leading to the development of significant online teaching and learning materials linking research and practice for teacher trainers in a variety of settings. NALDIC is working closely with other Subject Associations to support consistent approaches to the teaching of EAL learners within and across NC subject areas. This development will provide on line access to new ITT trainers to teaching, programmes, research and support through virtual mentors and networks.
- ❑ NALDIC has partnered a consortium of LEAs (Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester) to develop an on line portal (www.emaonline.org.uk) to IT based resources for EAL and bilingual learners. Phase 1 development of this project has included: a scoping study across 32 schools in the three cities to discover what content is currently being used to support bilingual pupils; exploration with teachers of a "wish list" of content that they would like to see available online; gathering resources from schools and elsewhere suitable for digitisation or conversion into online activities; developing an online resource base for teachers, creation of online interactive materials in 5 community languages as exemplars of how content can be designed to support bilingual pupils, developing a real time learning environments (currently in Urdu and Arabic) to support remote teaching and mentoring and building an online Intranet area for further collaboration. Phase 2 development proposals include: a further scoping study; quality assurance; school based curriculum development projects and content creation; the use of innovative technologies including tablet PCs, PDAs and virtual (browser based) interactive whiteboard software; further digitalisation of resources and partnerships with commercial publishers.

We believe that ICT and e-learning can make a significant contribution to the teaching and learning of EAL which will support the equitable achievement of bilingual learners in schools.

ICT and e-learning used in support of EAL and bilingual pupils can:

- ❑ Promote effective teaching and learning across all subject areas, ages and levels of English language acquisition
- ❑ Provide opportunities to meet the individual learning needs of EAL learners from different language backgrounds across all ages
- ❑ Help develop effective bilingual approaches to subject content teaching and learning
- ❑ Help link school and home by providing access to EAL and bilingual teaching and learning materials
- ❑ Enable specialists and non-specialists to benefit from best practice and resources which meet the changing needs of the EAL learners they support
- ❑ Make a significant contribution to effective, structured CPD programmes

In order to ensure that the benefits of ICT and e-learning have a significant impact in terms of teaching and learning on school leaders, teaching and support staff we are proposing a specific project to develop the use of ICT and e-learning in support of EAL and bilingual pupils through curriculum subject areas. As outlined earlier **for the learner of EAL in the mainstream**

classroom, the task of acquiring English and achieving academically, is a moving target: while the learner is acquiring English, the curriculum for the peer group is continually advancing. To enable EAL learners to achieve in this situation we must ensure **access to and progress through the curriculum and English language acquisition through the integration of language and curriculum or subject content.** To date no significant research and development work has been carried out to investigate how ICT and e-learning can best be used to support the integration of language and curriculum content at a collaborative classroom level. Through our work on 'classroom vignettes' we have begun to exemplify for the non-specialist teacher how this integration of language and content can work in a classroom. We are now proposing that we extend this successful preliminary work to investigate how this task can be facilitated by the use of ICT and e-learning.

The proposed project would be 3 phase

1. **Scoping** - study to identify examples of emerging, innovative practice in this area working with partner agencies and schools (September 2003 – January 2004)
2. **Development** – commissioning of exemplars to illustrate the use of ICT to support EAL learners across subject areas in partnership with subject associations. (January 2004 – August 2004). These exemplars would cover not only 'traditional' classroom settings but also teaching setting which are more frequent in our field including:
 - subject or class teacher and learners
 - collaborative (subject specialist and EAL specialist)
 - Support (subject teacher and specialist instructors or assistants)
 - Bilingual (subject content delivered in first language(s) collaboratively or separately)
 - Withdrawal (individual or small groups of learners with teacher/instructor/teaching assistant)
3. **Dissemination and evaluation**– exemplars available nationally through a variety of channels including NALDIC and partner agencies, such as emaonline and BECTA. A key further development in this phase would be the development of an interactive self evaluation tool enabling non-specialist teachers and support staff to assess their confidence in teaching EAL and bilingual learners with the support of ICT and e-learning. The project material would also be available to support an ICT 'master class' programme. (September 2004 – December 2004)

The funding required to support this project would be £32,500.

For learners the project will mean improved educational outcomes through the more widespread use of ICT to support EAL acquisition through the curriculum. For teachers, specialists and support staff in all subjects it will provide exemplification of how ICT can be used effectively in classroom practice to embed EAL learning across the curriculum. In addition to the nationally available exemplar material created, the project would also sustain and develop existing ICT partnerships and create the necessary synergy for a significant development in the use of ICT in this area as envisaged in 'Fulfilling the Potential: Transforming teaching and learning through ICT in schools'.

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For further information and assistance regarding this proposal, please contact

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