

Early Years in Action

Teachers' TV (2006) *Early Years in Action - ICT*
<http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/ict-in-nursery>

Synopsis

The programme takes place at Grove House Children's Centre in Southall where more than 90% of children are learning English as an additional language (EAL). Early Years practitioners use ICT to encourage 3 and 4 year old bilingual children to listen to and use English in practical contexts.

This programme can be used to support primary trainees to understand that young children will need specific development of their spoken language and that ICT can be a particularly useful tool. It will help them to consider how to make effective provision to meet these children's needs through collaborative activities.

<http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-initial-teacher-education/resources/early-years> provides useful pre or post session reading for teachers.

Relevant sections

01:03 - 04:50 A cooking activity enables pupils to hear and use English phrases and vocabulary in a real-life situation. A bilingual practitioner models English, using open and closed questions and new vocabulary, as pupils cook jacket potatoes in a microwave oven. The children are then encouraged to look at digital photographs taken during the cooking activity.

06.20 – 9.03 Children retell the story 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' using story props. They capture this using a web camera with a record facility. The practitioner uses this to encourage the children to orally recount and sequence the story.

Principles of Good Practice

- The provision of a rich contextual background to make input comprehensible
- Actively encouraging comprehensible output

Teaching Points

You may want to start this session by asking trainees to think about practitioner and child talk and why this is important in additional language learning. Analyses of classroom discourse suggest that much of the language that children will hear in schools is associated with directives (instructions, requests and commands in particular). Practitioners use this type of language to organise what the children have to do and may use closed questions to confirm children have understood. Research suggests that many teachers ask questions that they already know the answer to - to check children's understanding they initiate a question, a pupil responds and the teacher then provides feedback – sometimes referred to as an IRF sequence (Mercer 2001, van Lier, 2001). However children also need to engage in meaningful dialogue with adults and other children to develop their understanding of how language is used. ICT can act both as a stimulus for talk and also provide different ways of

capturing talk and spoken interaction. Wegerif (2004) examines this further in *The role of ICT as a catalyst and support for dialogue*

01:03 - 04:50 Whilst watching the sequence, ask students to play close attention to the kind of language the practitioner uses, for example the directives, the closed and open questions and the IRF exchanges. Notice how she extends children's utterances (C: *Potatoes are spinning.* T *Yes, potatoes are spinning around and around. That is making the potatoes cook*). In the following discussion, ask the students to identify how the practitioner ensures her directives are comprehensible, and how she reinforces new vocabulary such as microwave and microphone. They may want to consider why the practitioner uses only English and not other languages in her interactions here. The article 'Why support bilingualism' examines this in an early years context and may spark a useful discussion

<http://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Initial%20Teacher%20Education/Documents/Opportunitiesforbilingualism.pdf>

The use of ICT to record speech and actions gives bilingual learners opportunities to revisit language items. Digital photographs encourage the children to recount their experiences. In this sequence, the photographs are taken by a parent but many settings now have equipment which children can use themselves. Many settings make extensive use of digital photography to encourage dialogue between children and between children and practitioners. This is essential if bilingual learners are to develop their understanding of how language is used for different purposes. The article

<http://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Initial%20Teacher%20Education/Documents/SpokenLanguage.pdf> provides a useful background to the development of spoken language.

<http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/eal-resources/ict> outlines some ways that ICT may be useful in this process.

06.20 – 9.03 In this sequence, the video has the same function as the digital photographs, encouraging the children to recount the story with a particular focus on sequencing and using time connectives such as first, next and then. The activity is led by a monolingual practitioner. Refer the group to

<http://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Initial%20Teacher%20Education/Documents/MonolingualPractitioners.pdf> This article examines how monolingual practitioners can promote children's bilingual language development. Refer trainees to the section on practical strategies. They may want to identify which of these strategies the practitioner uses during the sequence.

Task

In beginning to work with bilingual learners, trainees will need to identify strategies and activities which will include these learners. Following the video, trainees could be asked to identify three strategies or activities they think they could build into their own classroom practice.

Why this resource is useful for training on EAL

Supports trainees to begin to learn how to identify the needs of children learning English as an additional language and how to help meet these needs through the use of ICT

Possible issues in using the material

Bilingual practitioners use only English during these filmed sessions.

When might this resource best be used?

At any time

Resources

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References and Further Reading

Mercer, N. (2001) 'Language for Teaching a Language' in C.Candlin and N.Mercer (Eds.) *English Language Teaching in its Social Context*. London : Routledge

Van Lier, L. (2001) 'Constraints and Resources in Classroom Talk; Issues of Equality and Symmetry' in C.Candlin and N.Mercer (Eds.) *English Language Teaching in its Social Context*. London : Routledge

Wegerif, R (2004) The role of ICT as catalyst and support for dialogue in *Naldic Quarterly Vol 1.4* Spring 2004

Available to download <http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-publications-resources/Shop/shop-products/nq14o>