

## **KS1/2 English The Multilingual Classroom**

Teachers' TV (2006) *KS1/2 English The Multilingual Classroom*

<http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/ks1-ks2-english-the-multilingual-classroom>

### **Synopsis**

St Stephen's Primary School in Newham uses the school's visual environment to support language learning and reflect the languages of the community. Some of the teaching staff and many of the support staff are bilingual. The programme shows teachers using a range of classroom techniques to teach the curriculum to EAL learners from Y2-Y6. Teaching strategies useful for pupils learning EAL include teacher modelling of oral and written English, peer modelling and the use of key visuals.

[Bilingual language acquisition](#) provides useful pre or post course reading for trainees

### **Relevant sections**

00:15 Senior staff describe the needs of pupils learning EAL. Anne Clayden, EAL coordinator, stresses the importance of giving children with EAL lots of opportunities for speaking and listening. She also highlights the need to model the language they require and to allow other children to do the same, and to offer opportunities for children to work in their home languages.

00:47 Two girls describe why they like the school and how they are learning English. A boy says he is lucky to speak two languages. Senior staff say children are not withdrawn from classes but are included in mainstream teaching; teachers need to be aware that when they are teaching curriculum content they are also teaching language.

1:48 – 6:00 Classroom vignette: Year 2 teacher Nicola Coupland models expressive speaking, modelling language for pupils through a display of key vocabulary. She uses examples from children's literature and peer modelling to encourage pupils to enact roles in the story "Amazing Grace" by Mary Hoffman. Pupils explore the vocabulary and language structures of the narrative. Senior staff point out that it takes between 7-10 years for a child to become fully fluent in English.

6:00 – 09:50 Classroom vignette: Year 6 teacher Tam Van Tran describes his own English language learning and works with a class on using punctuation to create expressive writing. The teacher goes into role as a Kung Fu grand master to help his Year 6 class enact and practise punctuation skills

09:50 Classroom vignette: A Year 5 class, with teacher Ken Davies, works with props to take on character roles, in order to develop speaking and listening and extend vocabulary for writing. Pupils use hats from around the world to work in role, which supports their narrative and descriptive writing development.

### **Principles of Good Practice**

- Activating pupils' prior knowledge of oral and written language and of curriculum content
- The provision of a rich contextual background to make input comprehensible
- Actively encouraging comprehensible output

- Drawing the learner's attention to the relationship between form and function
- Developing learner independence

### Teaching Points

00:15 – 1.48 Prelude this session by asking trainees to estimate how long they think it will take EAL learners to become as competent in academic English as their monolingual peers. The length of time for this to happen is one reason for educating EAL learners alongside all learners – it would be impossible to educate EAL learners separately for 7-10 years! Some trainees may feel that the continuing use of first language will impede a pupil's acquisition of English as an additional language. Trainees may benefit from an opportunity to discuss this point (with reference to their own experience of additional or second language learning). Draw attention to Cummins' theory of common underlying proficiency, the benefits of additive bilingualism and the difficulties of maintaining first language fluency

1:48 – 6:00 This extract focuses on the key role of planned speaking and listening in developing additional language competence. The teacher ensures that pupils understand the key vocabulary through highlighting this, but this is only part of the story. Modelling and the planned role play gives EAL learners the opportunity to 'try out' language in an unfamiliar context to extend their spoken repertoire. Although EAL learners living in England are surrounded by English which quickly helps them develop communicative competence, they also need exposure to spoken language in academic contexts to help them develop cognitive academic language proficiency. Draw trainees' attention to the differences between BICS and CALP

The class works with familiar narrative text and pupils are encouraged to use language in role in the context of the story. They rehearse language, first using a script and then improvising, using supportive visuals/props, key words and phrases. They are encouraged to consider how intonation and inflection influence meaning. Trainees can consider how work around a narrative text can support a range of language work and how visuals, key words and role play support pupils learning EAL.

6:00 – 09:50 Point out to trainees that spoken English is not necessarily the same as the written form. For example, spoken English is full of contextual clues which are absent in written English and therefore need to be made explicit. This is why it is important to pay attention to bilingual pupils' writing in English even when they seem to understand spoken communication reasonably well. Point out that research shows that differences in the writing of bilingual and non bilingual pupils persist well into secondary schools. Refer to summary of Cameron's work on writing at KS2 which showed that the most significant differences between EAL and non EAL learners' writing related to the use of formulaic phrases, the use of prepositions and how well they handled certain genres. Note that there were no significant differences observed in how well EAL learners spelt or punctuated.

The teacher initially discusses his own experience of learning English in school as a child. Trainees can consider how they may be a pupil's 'first port of call' for English language learning.

The writing task is preceded by a teaching activity which re-inforces the role of punctuation through using a variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic prompts. Whilst children clearly enjoy the physical activity of the lesson, the learning is not always clear. Punctuation is described but not given a context. Key words in the display are also without context. Punctuation changes written meaning. When the teacher asks 'Why your voice go up at end? Because people might be confused', he has not made this explicit to pupils.

09:50 Following on from the above, ask the group to make brief notes during this excerpt of how this teaching sequence lowers the potential linguistic barrier and prepares EAL learners for their writing tasks. Pupils take on a range of roles and practice using formal and informal language associated with those roles. As they use language to match characters, they develop

cultural understandings at the same time. They use lists of key words and practice using them in oral interviews and in descriptive writing. Pupils have extended time to interact and consider accent as well as vocabulary. As pupils work, the teacher has opportunities for observation and assessment.

The teacher mentions 'open and closed questions' but does not elaborate on this. Trainees can consider which pupils might get open or closed questions and the implications for language development.

### **Task**

In beginning to work with bilingual learners, trainees will need to identify strategies and activities by which they can 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 take account of the range of learners' needs through an inclusive approach
- Supports trainees to begin to learn how to identify the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language

### **Possible issues in using the material**

- In 6:00 – 09:50, the teacher in role does all the work as pupils are not in role. Pupils are directed to 'bow to your master' and the teacher also uses stereotypical 'pidgin' English in role; some may feel this is inappropriate.
- Trainees can consider how they might take on roles in class to further children's language learning and consider the purposes of teachers and pupils working in role to develop and practice different forms of English.

### **When might this resource best be used?**

Using this resource early on during students training would demonstrate whole-school approaches to supporting the inclusion of EAL learners and encourage student teachers to explore the whole-school support that they should look for in their first placement. This may help overcome the fear of being totally alone in the class with complete responsibility for the children's futures. The resource is useful for introducing EAL issues to student teachers, particularly where student teachers have had limited previous experience with linguistically diverse learners.

### **Resources**

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### **References and Further Reading**

Cameron, L. and Besser, (2004) S. *Writing in English as an additional language at Key Stage 2* London: DfES.