

Managing EAL Secondary -Strategies around the Clock

Teachers' TV (2005) Managing EAL Secondary - Strategies Around the Clock:

<http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/managing-eal-secondary-strategies-around-the-clock>

Synopsis

At Valentines High School in Redbridge 69 per cent of pupils have English as an Additional Language. This programme looks at two newly arrived pupils. Ibrahim struggles to read and write in his first language, Turkish, while Theebika has already got an A grade in GCSE German, her third language. The programme looks at how the school includes students at different stages of English language acquisition in mainstream classes and what interventions and strategies are in place to support them. The roles of teaching assistants, community mentors, peer groups and after-school clubs in supporting pupils learning EAL are also examined.

Pupils learning EAL provides useful pre or post session reading for trainees

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

Relevant sections

01:16 Ibrahim is new to English, has no previous school experience and is not literate in Turkish. In a Drama class, key words are translated orally and in writing for Ibrahim, and a bilingual peer also translates for him.

3:30 Theebika is described by school staff as 'gifted'. She is tri-lingual.

5:14 Theebika describes her school experience in Germany

06:38 In an interview through a translator, Ibrahim talks about what he enjoys doing in school

07:26 Ibrahim has 1-1 support to improve his literacy in Turkish, his first language

11:55 Theebika explains how she learned the nuances of oral language from her peers and in the playground. Ibrahim has extra English lessons.

Principles of Good Practice

- Actively encouraging comprehensible output
- Drawing the learner's attention to the relationship between form and function
- Developing learner independence

Teaching Points

You may want to introduce the programme by discussing the different types of EAL learners that trainees may encounter. EAL learners are not a homogenous group; they have a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. They may be:

New arrivals: These pupils may have limited acquaintance with, and low expertise in, the English language. If they are early stage learners of English they will need generously funded, sustained and intensive curriculum-related English language tuition.

Low-key British Bilinguals: These pupils have been born and brought up in multilingual homes in urban areas in Britain. They have regular routine interaction with family and community languages other than English without claiming a high degree of expertise in these languages. These pupils are entirely comfortable with the discourse of everyday English, particularly local vernacular English. However, they, along with pupils of all ethnic backgrounds including white British pupils, need sustained tuition in written subject-specific standard English for academic purposes. These pupils are often referred to as advanced bilingual learners.

Harris (1993) also identified a group of **High-achieving Multilinguals**. These pupils have a good level of expertise in one or more family/community languages other than English and a good level of competence in written subject-specific standard English for academic purposes. These pupils need funded provision of teaching to unlock the potential to develop literacy competence in languages other than English

01:16 – 3:58 Ibrahim is still at early stages of developing his English. He is just emerging from the 'silent period'. Pupils at early stages of learning EAL may not speak in class for extended periods of time as they listen, adjust to the sounds of English and make sense of their environment. The school is said to be focusing on teaching Ibrahim the 'language of the classroom'. Point out this classroom language is incredibly varied, from informal chatter between students to formal instructions from teachers. Although Theebika is also newly arrived, her educational and language background is quite different.

Ask trainees to reflect on the different kinds of provision Ibrahim and Theebika will need.. Ask trainees to identify

- what the learners can already do
- what the school is providing to support pupils' language learning

Ask trainees to consider how pupils learning EAL will learn English from a variety of sources: the school, the community, texts and media, and their peers. The types of English will vary in structure and formality in each context. Draw trainees' attention to the differences between BICS and CALP

Task

Student teachers often find working with newly arrived learners a particular challenge. Using the examples of Ibrahim and Theebika, one of the learners described in NALDIC pupil portraits (<http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/pupil-portraits>) or a learner who they have already identified, ask trainees to outline

- 1) what the learner can already do
- 2) what strategies they could put in place to support the pupil's language learning as a mainstream subject teacher

Students may find strategies for supporting early stage learners in mainstream classroom useful in this task. It will be useful to stress that these materials do not all need to be read immediately, but will provide reading for on-going CPD.

An alternative would be to ask students make an assessment of Theebika's spoken English language development (05.14 - 6.34) according to the speaking and listening scales of A Language in Common. Ask trainees to make a second assessment using local EAL scales. Ask trainees to consider the differences and which might be more useful in helping them identify her language and curriculum learning needs.

Why this resource is useful for training on EAL

- Models good practice for whole school approaches to supporting EAL students, such as the Support Room, parental liaison, wall displays and 6th form mentoring
- Could be used to prompt a good discussion on how we can 'test' whether EAL students are mimicking others or actually owning and cognitively grasping the knowledge skills and understanding of a lesson, for example reflecting on the scene where Ibrahim is participating in the drama lesson stroking the rabbit.
- Could be used to prompt an interesting discussion on the relationship between cognitive and linguistic challenge, and what needs to be considered to stretch and challenge gifted EAL learners like Theebika

Possible issues in using the material

- Ibrahim is said to have very weak Turkish (little conceptual understanding), so is it valid to simply translate English words into Turkish words for lessons? Does the programme sufficiently explore visual or kinaesthetic differentiation to support EAL learners?
- Is Theebika made to seem 'unusual' for being a clever EAL student? Does this perpetuate the misunderstanding common in student teachers that EAL is in the same bracket as SEN? If viewed in association with BICS and CALP this could be turned into a positive discussion about strategies to support and challenge different types of learner
- Does the programme explore in sufficient depth how to challenge and extend EAL students like Theebika, and how far does it explore 'pupils as resource' with regard to her exceptional linguistic abilities?

When might this resource best be used?

Using this during the first term in Professional Studies 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. Running the session as part of Subject studies after a school placement, would mean it could be used to critique the approaches demonstrated using students' own knowledge and experience. It could also be used in Subject studies to explore the relationship between cognitive and linguistic challenge.

Resources

Teachers' TV (2005) Managing EAL Secondary -Plotting Progress

<http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/managing-eal-secondary-plotting-progress>

See also: Teachers' TV (2005) Managing EAL Secondary - Strategies Around the Clock:

<http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/managing-eal-secondary-strategies-around-the-clock>

References and Further Reading

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