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

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

Synopsis
Over 69 percent of pupils at Valentines High School in Redbridge are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) and over 50 languages are spoken by the pupils. Pupils learning EAL spend most of their time in the mainstream classroom, not in withdrawal groups. Mainstream teachers work in partnership with EAL specialists to make sure that EAL learners are included and involved in lessons. The programme highlights the importance of whole school policies which emphasise high expectations for pupils learning EAL and view linguistic diversity as a benefit rather than as a problem to be overcome. It shows a Year 8 English lesson which aims to develop pupil self-assessment using a range of Assessment for Learning strategies such as 'traffic lights'. It also identifies strategies such as pairing up EAL students with native English speakers, open questioning, visuals and graphic organisers to encourage group discussion.

http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/eal-resources/eal-assessment provides useful pre or post course reading for trainees.

Relevant sections

00:00 – 00.49 The school describes its approach to EAL students and assessment for learning

00:50 – 2.33 The EAL specialist and mainstream staff describe their approach to partnership teaching and working together

2.33 – 09.01 The teachers describe the benefits of placing pupils at 'Stage 1' (beginner levels) of English with supportive English-speaking peers. The EAL specialist emphasises that pupils learning EAL do not have Special Educational Needs – they are learners with another language. Staff describe their approach to assessment for learning. The EAL specialist discusses the importance or oracy and how pupils learning EAL need access to many modes of expression: drawing, diagrams, charts, drama and discussion. The class teacher points out that pupils' language resources are a benefit to the school rather than a problem.

09.01 – 13:40 Class teacher and EAL specialist observe and support pupils as they discuss and visually represent in bar charts their self-assessments in English. Teachers reflect on the benefits of discussion and paired work for pupils learning EAL and for all pupils. The EAL specialist describes the language skills of pupils learning EAL, using their knowledge of first languages to learn and practise English.

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

You may want to refer back to strategies session and ask trainees to think back to the 'types' of EAL learner they discussed. This session focuses on assessment, both summative and formative (or assessment for learning). Most of the students in this programme are advanced bilingual learners although two, Ancoor and Mohammed, are at early stages. The official assessment guidance for pupils learning EAL (A Language in Common, QCA 2000) includes adaptations to the NC English descriptors in reading, writing, speaking and listening at 'pre National Curriculum attainment levels' and 'threshold' and 'secure' NC English Level 1. Not all professionals find these useful in effectively assessing pupils' EAL development in Key Stages 3 and 4 and many scales used locally are available.

00:00 - 9.01 Ask trainees to consider what kinds of assessment may be useful and necessary for bilingual pupils. The specific issues to be addressed in relation to bilingual pupils will include the assessment of levels of English, assessment of skills in the first language, curriculum related assessment, engagement in assessment for learning and the complex issue of assessing to establish whether a bilingual learner has a special need or disability.

You may want to raise:

- the importance of a positive classroom environment and a fair assessment that avoids a deficit model;
- the importance of an initial assessment of children's previous education and of building on skills they have in their first language
- an understanding that skills transfer from one language to another (for example, refer back to Theebika from the first session)

09.01 - 13:40 Ask trainees to consider what difficulties there may be in ensuring effective assessment for learning (AfL) for EAL learners. Language, or more precisely the use of language, plays a very important part in AfL - classroom teacher-pupil interaction is mediated by language. The success of AfL depends on effective teacher-pupil communication in the classroom. Teachers with EAL learners in their subjects, however, have to deal with an additional issue - that the very language in which much of classroom communication is carried out, English, is also the language to be learned by the pupils. In other words, the teacher-pupil communication that is key to effective AfL across the different curriculum subjects does not necessarily provide directly useful information for the teacher. Some pupils may be very knowledgeable about a particular subject/topic but they cannot express what they know through English, or they simply cannot express what they don't know and what they need to know. The issues of appropriate use of pupils' first or stronger language are also important. Ask trainees to consider how the strategies demonstrated in the video such as pairing, open questioning, visuals and graphic organisers might help overcome these.

Task

Student teachers often benefit from practice in assessing, with tutor guidance, examples of student's reading, writing or speech at different stages of bilingual development. Tutors may provide writing samples in their curriculum area written by EAL learners as a basis for an assessment task or use a writing sample from the DfES (2005)

Alternatively the video could be shown asking trainees to comment only on the positives. This could be followed by reading of the suggested NALDIC resources to encourage students to think about how they can meaningfully assess and move on EAL learners. The greater focus of this film is AfL with some reference to EAL, rather than on 'how do we assess our EAL learners?' This could be drawn out or highlighted to encourage trainee teachers to watch the film critically, and encourage them to apply their knowledge of EAL to assess the strengths of the strategies demonstrated. Trainees could then move into subject groups to

devise AfL strategies that would be accessible and meaningful for learners in the video or their classes. Would be useful to contrast this approach with those identified in the DVD which accompanies http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-initial-teacher-education/ite-programmes/assessment-for-learning

Why this resource is useful for training on EAL

- Demonstrates good practice by showing subject teachers working with specialists to plan and deliver lessons
- Good emphasis on the fact that EAL does not equate with SEN
- Highlights the potential of seating plans to support EAL learners' development
- Challenges the notion that the 'quiet' classroom is the thinking classroom by stressing importance of paired work for all tasks to help EAL students develop knowledge, skills and understanding
- Very good suggestion about asking the student's partner what they can do to help their partner move on and achieve their target – demonstrating good practice in peer collaboration to support EAL students
- Suggests unobtrusive assessment techniques, such as traffic light cards, to encourage all pupils to assess their own understanding – good for EAL students who in the early stages may be reluctant to put up their hand or explain their answer

Possible issues in using the material

- There is no indication of the EAL breakdown of the class – clearly many are competent speakers, writers and readers, but two stand out as being far less confident within the classroom and we see from their graphs that their achievement levels are significantly lower than others… and yet there is no differentiation of task or input to help these early stage EAL learners
- During the AfL using traffic light cards, the teacher simply asks the early stage EAL learners if they "understand" – the students look back in silence, with no nod or shake of their head. The same happens when they are transforming their results into graphs. Yet in both instances the teacher moves on: if this was highlighted it could become an interesting discussion amongst the trainees as to what the teacher should have done, and how she could have actually checked the pupils understood what was being asked
- The students are asked to use success criteria to help them work out what to do to move to the next level – but there is no focus on how teachers should support the learners select relevant targets. This leads to a question of how can an early stage EAL learner differentiate between success criteria and know which ones to apply to support their development. Such as task assumes a great understanding of the success criteria themselves
- There is little evidence of the concluding comment in the film that teachers must "admire what they've [EAL students] got and what they bring to the lesson". This could be drawn into a discussion for the trainees in terms of asking them how EAL students can be drawn upon for the purposes for AfL or even whether they can be drawn upon.

When might this resource best be used?
Running this in Professional Studies would allow for a broader critique of the film than a subject Studies seminar may elicit. It would also encourage students to consider the different requirements of assessments in the whole curriculum, which is important if teachers are to understand the different pressures on EAL students, and to devise interesting but supportive AfL exercises for students across the school curriculum. Running the session in Term 2 or 3 of a PGCE would ensure most trainees would have had a chance to assess at least one piece of work to provide material for the session.

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

DfES (2005) *Marking progress: training materials for assessing English as an additional language* (DfES 0196-2005).DfES:London

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Leung, C. (2004) 'Developing Formative Teacher Assessment: Knowledge, Practice and Change' in *Language Assessment Quarterly, 1*(1), pp. 19-41.

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Primary National Strategy (2006) *Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years.* Unit 1 Planning and assessment for learning: for children learning English as an additional language. London: DfES

QCA (2000) *A language in Common: Assessing English as an additional language.* London: QCA

South, H. (1999) *Working Paper 5: The Distinctiveness of EAL: A Cross-Curriculum Discipline.* Watford : NALDIC