

NALDIC Conference 2006

EAL: a case of curriculum integration or assimilation

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Swann Report (DES, 1985)

We believe that a genuinely pluralist society cannot be achieved without the social integration of ethnic minority communities and the ethnic majority community within a common whole. Whilst we are not looking for the assimilation of the minority communities within an unchanged dominant way of life, we are perhaps looking for the 'assimilation' of all groups within a redefined concept of what it means to live in British society today. (p. 8)

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Swann Report (DES, 1985)

Language and language education...[have] usually been perceived in narrow and discrete terms, initially as concerning the 'problem' of teaching English to children for whom it is not a first language... We believe that the language needs of *an ethnic minority child should no longer be compartmentalised in this way and seen as outside the mainstream of education since language learning and the development of effective communication skills is a feature of every pupil's education*...Linguistic diversity provides the opportunity for all schools...to broaden the linguistic horizons of all pupils by ensuring that they acquire a real understanding of the role, range and richness of language in all its forms. (p. 385-386, italics added)

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Afterglow of Swann

EAL =

- maximum curriculum participation
- +
- learning to communicate in English
(& other languages) through classroom
interaction, opportunistic
language teaching
- +
- multicultural/non-racist ethos

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Afterglow of Swann

EAL pedagogy → strong focus on participation and communication strategies, weak on language and discourse knowledge

EAL development = English as a first language development **in nature**

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Systemic impact of post-Swann policy

Advantages:

formal equality in entitlement to mainstream schooling

formal respect for minority persons

opportunities (and incentive) for schools to promote multiculturalism and multilingualism

opportunities for broadening curriculum and pedagogy

Problems:

over-simplification of pupil needs & types

down-playing of language work in EAL practice and lack of curriculum space

non-differentiated response to all additional language needs (learning through engaging in activities)

reduced/non-existent pre-service teacher education

low curriculum status & uncertain/low level of staffing

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EAL curriculum renewal

Maintain & improve:

- equality in entitlement to mainstream schooling**
- formal respect for minority persons
- opportunities (and incentive) for schools to promote multiculturalism and multilingualism
- opportunities for broadening curriculum and pedagogy

Action:

- differentiated and pupil-referenced pedagogic responses to diverse types of EAL pupils
- a curriculum content-informed model of EAL that embraces both *language learning* and socio-cultural practices in curriculum contexts
- parity with other NC disciplines in terms ITE and curriculum specification
- explicit principles and guidance for EAL provision as pupil entitlement - a pupils' charter?

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Campbell & McMeniman, 1997; Moran, Leung & Davison, 2001

Direct assistance:

- systematic EAL development programmes
- subject-based language tasks

Indirect support:

- planned active participation
- EAL-oriented teaching (visuals, sensitive use of language)
- peer & L1 support etc

Newly arrived

EAL-bilingual

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