

Afternoon Seminars

Group 1. Teachers Talking: communication in inter-professional relationships

Presenter: Angela Creese, University of Leicester.

Chair: Carrie Cable; Notes provided by Angela Creese

Overview

This presentation looked at teachers' talk in multicultural London secondary schools. It showed how subject specialists' and language specialists' positionings within the school and beyond were discursively constructed by the various participants within the schools community. It went on to consider how issues of power might impact on the implementation of educational policy for bilingual children and how cultural and linguistic diversity are, in turn, viewed within schools.

The presentation began with a reminder that what made mainstreaming a progressive education policy in secondary schools was the establishment of teaching partnerships in subject focused classrooms. Without such partnerships and the help they provide both students and teachers, placing children into mainstream settings would amount to a submersion sink or swim arrangement. After reviewing the previous literature, outlining the theoretical framework and discussing the methodology, the main findings of the research were reported to the group. Overall, teacher talk, roles and relationships were seen as mutually constitutive and therefore complex in the different contexts they created. The range of this complexity could not be covered in the presentation. Only one kind of teaching relationship was covered, that of support mode rather than fully fledged partnerships between teachers. Findings reported on below refer to language specialists and subject specialists working in support rather than partnership relationships.

Findings have been grouped under three main headings:

Knowledge and pedagogic hierarchies:

This section presented data which showed how subject teachers and language specialists position one another in the mainstream classroom through the way they talk about one another and talk to one another in class. The students' role in this construction was also evidenced. In particular, the argument was made that the pedagogic expertise of the language specialist was positioned as a generic knowledge while the subject specialists' curriculum knowledge was presented as specialised.

Discursive Formulas:

A functional analysis of teacher talk was carried out to show how the subject and language specialists place themselves differently in terms of core curriculum concerns. The use of "I" by both teachers was examined to look at how teachers claim ownership of tasks and materials to be covered as well as to direct students to act. An argument was developed that language specialists in support modes use "I"

in ways which articulated peripheral curriculum concerns.

Language Learning in Mainstream Classrooms

Much language learning and teaching literature has made the point that because knowledge is in part, discursively constructed, disciplinary learning can be language learning. Indeed, what continues to remain promising about mainstreaming is the view that the 'input' students receive in the curriculum classroom provides the most motivating opportunities for all kinds of learning, including language learning. However, the responsibility for managing this input is an area which continues to be debated. The paper presented evidence that language and subject specialists constructed responsibility for language learning in mainstream classrooms differently. Language specialists in schools felt a responsibility for managing the input, not only for second language learning purposes but also because they understood the importance of language in learning processes. This was in contrast to the subject teachers who placed the responsibility on the students themselves. That is, they highlighted individual aptitude and motivation for (un)successful language learning. The overall argument made was that making input accessible for bilingual students must be considered as an issue of more than accessible language. Input needs to be managed and is therefore a matter of responsibility. If subject specialists do not see themselves as responsible for it, it will again say something to students about different knowledge hierarchies in the classroom.

Conclusions

A consideration of power in the discourses of teaching partnerships is central as this relationship carries the burden of delivering mainstreaming as a successful inclusive and progressive educational policy.

Group 2. The contribution of Family Literacy to pupils achievement

Presenter: Mehdi Rehmtulla

Chair: Cressida Jupp; Notes: Sara McLaughlin

Mehdi Rehmtulla's very interesting workshop began with a roundup of the various interpretations of Family Literacy, confirming that there is no one definition. All models, however, see the whole family as a target for intervention where there has been educational disadvantage. The preferred model described by Mr Rehmtulla was that developed by Elsa Auerbach in her book *From the Community to the Community* in which respect is given to the richness of home culture and parents are treated on an equal footing with educators.

The Hertfordshire examples given described work primarily with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and their children. A year group focus was first agreed with the head teacher. Mr Rehmtulla and colleague then embarked on home visits in order to explain the project to families and encourage attendance at a meeting. Having thus encouraged the families, the project took shape, with parents feeling confident enough to bring stories and Qu'ranic texts from their cultures to make into dual text books for use with children. Seven stories were recorded onto tape, and mothers took stories into classrooms, where children illustrated them. These were eventually published as bilingual big books. Another example of a Year 5 topic on Tudors

focused on the Moguls and a comparison between Akbar the Great and Queen Elizabeth 1, resulting in a book made by parents and children.

Some of the pitfalls of Family Literacy projects have been that they can be too long, causing high drop-out rates; the interagency approach using F.E. tutors can be problematic, as there is often a different ethos from that in primary school teaching; problems can occur between white and ethnic minority groups; not enough fathers become involved; and women in purdah cannot be taught on school premises. Despite all this, it was clear that families and schools involved in the Hertfordshire example had gained a tremendous amount, with parents feeling empowered to be role models for good literacy practices at home and schools gaining from the richness of the families' cultures.

Group 3. Mirror, mirror on the wall: seeking identities of assessment in English as an additional language

Presenter: Pauline Rae-Dickens

Chair/Notes: Charlotte Franson

Dr. Rea-Dickens opened the session with a discussion of the processes for assessment, highlighting

- strategies for planning
- classroom strategies
- strategies for monitoring
- recording and dissemination strategies

and presenting a diagram of how these connect and inform each other. Teachers need to go through a process that identifies purpose, focus, and activity in order to develop and implement assessment procedures. Furthermore, EAL and classroom teachers need to be clear about their individual roles and purposes in planning assessment.

Teachers regularly make informal assessment of pupils' progress during their classroom practice. Strategies might entail

- teacher questioning and probing
- small group interaction
- between individual learner and teacher
- immediate feedback/more formal feedback
- teacher observation of pupil-pupil interaction

The work of Clarke (Clarke, S. (1998) Targeting Assessment in the Primary Classroom. Hodder and Stoughton) was cited: implementation of assessment needs to consider the questions why?, what is to be assessed?, and how should learners be instructed in doing the assessment? Examples were given reflecting these stages. A grid offering types of assessment that both class teachers and language support teachers are engaged in with respect to EAL learners was presented. The assessment activities were analyzed by categories which included aims, criterial features of assessment activity, focus, prior input, operation, resources, and assessment conditions.

Clare Johns presented her work which addresses the talk that children generate and use in learning. She commented on how peer discussions can provide insights into learning and form part of the assessment process.

In the final part of the presentation, the broader question of assessment was addressed and Dr. Rae-Dickins argued that classroom based assessment has many faces, many identities, both external and internal. Firstly, there is the bureaucratic face, the obligation of teachers and schools to provide information for external agencies. Then there is the internal face of assessment which overtly informs teaching. And then there is the assessment that is embedded within classroom procedures and contributes to learning, developing learner awareness, understanding and knowledge. (One might suggest that this includes affective dimensions where motivation and self esteem have an impact.) Assessment may be useful in scaffolding learning, helping the pupils to know much they have achieved, and how they might reach their goal. In this situation, assessment can be construed as part of a constructivist view of learning.

One message that was persistent throughout the presentation was the need for principled approaches to assessment in the classroom. Teachers might ask themselves

How do I achieve a balance in assessment – for measuring attainment and for assisting learning?

Which activities provide the best information?

What impact will the assessment have on the learners?

What assessment procedures will boost their motivation and engagement?

Other issues that were addressed in the session included teacher preparation – how are teachers prepared to conduct informal, classroom based assessment that is purposeful, principled and contributes to learning?; the washback of testing on teaching and learning, and the need for more research on these issues.

EAL teachers may not be able to change the external practices of assessment but they may be able to develop a more critical stance with regard to classroom practice.

This session raised some key issues for EAL teachers, not least of which is the need to look again at assessment practices in the classroom, to ensure that the purpose, the instrument, and the method of assessment are appropriate to what is being assessed. Furthermore, there is a need to look more closely at how assessment within teaching can support learning. But perhaps, most importantly, there is a need to understand what assessment is. As Dr. Rae-Dickins concluded, 'There is no easy answer'.

Group 4. Bilingual Children in the Foundation Stage

Presenter: Barbara Sampson and Kitty Owtram

Chair: Ian Jones; Notes: Richard Barden

Kitty Owtram started the session by stressing that the seminar was about collaborative work in progress in her authority. The development work the two presenters were doing together was partly a response to valued input from Priscilla Clarke. There had been other prompts to developing a document 'The Foundation Stage and EAL learners: Developing the principle of inclusion'. The aim of the document was to develop and provide accessible guidance for all practitioners in all early years settings.

Some of the long-term concerns were:

- a lack of Early Years practitioners with EAL knowledge, reflected by the minimal attention to it in the Foundation document which only 'flagged up' recognition of multilingualism by encouraging 'communication in all ways'.
- the variable assessment practice for EAL learners, with a prevailing model of monolingualism.
- crucial links between identity, self esteem, language and culture. The transition from the home L1 setting to the school setting marks a major change where the child can literally be 'lost for words'.
- understanding the interplay between EAL and SEN: the issue of inclusion emphasises even more the need to separate SEN and EAL needs at an earlier stage.

Barbara Sampson placed their work in the context of a changing scene in their authority. For example:

- the setting up of EYDCPs with a wide range of provision
- changes in EMTAG funding leading to the loss of central Early Years teams and a consequent need to refocus
- the inclusion agenda – there were similarities between groups accessing needs
- implementation of the Foundation stage and consequent Early Years training opportunities
- the QCA publication on assessment – consideration of Early Years issues was largely absent
- Baseline Assessment - many colleagues found they could not make observations as evidence in these frameworks, especially in speaking and listening
- an Early Years thematic review in Camden identifying gaps in work and provision in schools
- underachievement in certain groups
- a NALDIC Early Years Special Interest Group Seminar led by Priscilla Clark, where key issues were identified for advancing practice.

The main outcome of this was the draft document, which looked at the aims of the Foundation Stage and at the implications for practitioner knowledge. The first part was about 'promoting an inclusive ethos', and set out ideas on what practitioners in settings with EAL pupils needed in their repertoire of understandings. Aspects which could help EAL pupils are highlighted, and are both 'aspirational' and 'fundamental', if a child is to gain the opportunities to be a valued member of the group.

It was argued that some early years strategies are not always faithful to their intention, e.g. Home/School partnerships are often not true partnerships in practice. 'Circle time' which can be very beneficial is sometimes used as a form of social control. It was felt that the Foundation document had 'its heart in the right place', as it encouraged flexibility and formed linkages between diverse areas of work and provision. It is hoped that the framework developed will encourage positive observations and interventions, which otherwise may not be made when using 'mainstream' methods of recording. The document is also intended to guide practitioners' interpretations and give them support, and it is likely that it will be disseminated more widely. There are no copyright restrictions on the document as yet, and interested colleagues can contact the presenters in Camden LEA to enquire about its availability.

Discussion centred around concerns about the weakness of EAL perspectives in many initiatives and the need to share practice across authorities. The issue of mother-tongue assessment was discussed, with an emphasis on the need for sensitive and open models and the importance of linking with local communities

Group 5. From theory to practice: So when, (and how), does the EAL teacher get to teach language?

Presenter: Manny Vasquez

Chair/Notes: Catharine Driver

The session focused on three areas of work:

- Theory and models used by the EAL specialist

Manny discussed and illustrated key instructional sequences that work for pupils with EAL on a macro level such as: activating prior knowledge; provision of a rich contextual background; comprehensible input; comprehensible output [beware of the 'silent period']; the relationship between form and function; and developing learner independence. He then reviewed classroom procedures that work on a micro level such as: keeping pupils on task; focussed feedback; controlled pupil teacher interaction; paraphrasing vocabulary; space for repetition and practice.

- Opportunities to teach language in mainstream context

Manny considered what is shared by the different frameworks that integrate language and content; that they all move from thinking processes to language forms. He illustrated the development of complexity of thought and language structures through the National curriculum levels descriptions.

- Benefits and potential gaps for EAL learners in the NLS at KS3

The KS 3 literacy initiative was thought to be beneficial for most EAL learners as at last language is to be taken seriously and be situated in mainstream, cross curricular learning. However, he felt that there may be gaps for pupils with little or no English [as was found in the NLS]. It is difficult to integrate beginners into whole class sessions. Also, there is little opportunity for sentence reformulation or extending sentences from grids or notes.

Finally, Manny considered the support/partnership model and the discourse of planning. The key role of the EAL teacher remains in unpacking the task rather than modifying the content and that unplanned intervention was only possible when the EAL teacher was familiar with the scheme of work.

Group 6. Supporting the entitlement and achievement of refugee children in school

Presenters: Bill Bolloten and Tim Spafford

Chair: Nicola Davies; notes supplied by Bill Bolleton

The aims of the seminar were to provide an outline of the current situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Britain: the presenters considered recent immigration and asylum legislation, the new support arrangements and some of the key educational policy developments that are of importance with regard to the well-being of refugee children and for those teachers and others in education who are working to ensure children's entitlement and progress. Some case studies of practice initiatives then led into and stimulated wider discussion.

The session began with an overview of ways in which recent immigration and asylum legislation has changed the way the majority of asylum seekers are being supported in Britain. In early June the Audit Commission published a report called 'Another Country' which called attention to the increasing concern about the Government's dispersal policy. The report highlighted the fact that dispersal is unlikely to work unless much more planning and resources are made available to assist asylum seekers and refugees to settle successfully in parts of Britain that have often had little or no experience of, or contact with, refugees. The Audit Commission highlighted the absence of mental health services, English language support, legal representation and refugee community support in dispersal areas, the lack of school places for children and the fact that many GP's practices were closing their lists to asylum seekers.

More worryingly, there is evidence of increasing levels of racial violence and attacks against refugees across the whole of the UK. The atmosphere of hysteria, racism and xenophobia stoked up by both local and national newspapers is making dispersal a far more arduous, and in some cases dangerous, experience for those who have to undergo it. Isolation and lack of support is leading to asylum seekers moving to where they can find appropriate support.

The group considered recent education policy developments impacting on this situation, including:

- the £500 extra earmarked for each dispersed asylum seeker child, announced by David Blunkett on 30 June 2000, and applying only to those children accommodated by NASS outside of London and the South East (see NALDIC response, questioning whether this was an effective way to build services and support structures)
- Performance tables to take asylum seekers and refugees into account - pupils who arrived in English schools for the first time in the past two years and speak English as an additional language 'should not be counted as being on school rolls when performance is calculated for the purpose of producing the primary and secondary school performance tables'.
- DfEE advice to Chief Education Officers - reaffirmed the entitlement to full-time education, urged LEAs to consider the needs of refugee children in Education Development Plans and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, explained that NASS supported families are entitled to free school meals and encouraged LEAs to develop effective practice in the admission and induction of children who arrive mid term.
- Teacher Training Agency guidelines - contain a whole section on teaching refugee children.
- OFSTED advice for inspections from September 2000 - emphasised the responsibility of inspectors to determine whether schools are effective for all pupils, whatever their educational needs or personal circumstances.
- OfSTED guidelines on evaluating inclusive education - pose three key questions for schools: do pupils get a fair deal at school? how well does the school recognise and overcome prejudice and racism? do the school's values and practice promote inclusion?
- Home Office strategy for the integration of refugees - reaffirmed an entitlement to education

- Reports by the Migration Research Unit and OfSTED - focus on the impact of high levels of pupil mobility on schools and services and the implications for strategies for raising achievement. OfSTED will be looking at schools to find out whether there are procedures related to mobility.

Case Studies related to specific refugee children and a Somali Families Learning Together project were discussed with the group. These highlighted the need for a comprehensive strategy of inclusion and support for refugee children, and emphasised the need for multiagency joined up practice with key service providers.

In conclusion, it was pointed out that existing good practice demonstrates that mainstream schools can successfully promote the inclusion of refugee children and families in society with appropriate external support, resources and partnerships across the community.

Group 7. Forum on EAL, Bilingualism, African-Caribbean pupil achievement and Race Equality

Presenters: Roxy Harris, Jennifer James and Constant Leung

Chair/Notes: Hugh South

This session took place in the context of a debate initiated in NALDIC News on the relationship between EAL, Bilingualism, African Caribbean pupil achievement and race equality. The forum was concerned with both the common and the distinctive aspects of these four related areas of education.

Jennifer James began by suggesting that little had changed with respect to race equality and the achievement of black pupils over the past forty years. African Caribbean pupils did well at Key Stage 1 but a significant gap in achievement had emerged by the time they reached GCSE level. A national strategy was needed to address this issue. Jennifer James referred to guidance issued by the CRE ('Learning for All') which could be developed and built on at LEA level. She felt there was a need to look at the curriculum, not only the learners, and a national research programme at KS3/KS4 was called for. Since the DfEE model for schools' self-review did not properly address issues relating to African Caribbean pupils, she suggested that an amalgamation of 'Learning for All' with the self-review framework would be productive.

At the same time major national projects like Sure Start, Beacon Schools, EAZs, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, as well as the inclusion agenda including equality audits and training standards, needed to take account of race equality and African Caribbean achievement issues. The OfSTED report 'Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils' acknowledged that although inspectors could report on race equality and the underachievement of specific groups, in practice very few did. However, if OFSTED identified these as key issues, LEAs would follow. It was also important that the TTA responded to race equality issues more effectively, particularly with regard to an accredited programme on supporting black children for overseas teachers and graduate teachers. There was also a need for training of headteachers and inspectors to ensure that race equality issues were identified at a management level.

Roxy Harris agreed that the story had been much the same for the past 40 years although he suggested that there was now a different 'take' on it informed, for the purposes of his talk, by three perspectives: agency, social class, and language. By 'agency' Roxy Harris meant ways in which pupils are conscious social actors, as opposed to passive victims. Research by Tony Sewell (2000) had highlighted ways in which black students related to the construction of their peer-group culture. It was no longer simply a question of relating low achievement to the overt racism in society and education that applied in the 1960s/70s; the issue was not quite the same now and seeking solutions in that previous agenda would not be productive. Over the years the data on black achievement had followed a well worn path and had been referenced to different kinds of 'codings' (colour, ethnicity, and nationality). These were also not helpful and could lead to confusion. There might be a basic incompatibility with how black pupils lived their lives and the culture of schools which the pupils found difficult to negotiate. Greater attention therefore needed to be given to the 'agency' of black pupils.

This related to the second perspective of social class. Roxy Harris pointed out that this issue was often avoided because it raised fundamental questions about British society and about the long-term problems associated with educational achievement and social class. A factor which was not recognised was that the African Caribbean group happened to be abnormally skewed towards working class backgrounds on entry into British society; on the other hand recently arrived West African pupils with high achievement living in similar areas came from middle class groups. This pointed to the significance of socio-economic group rather than the black/white issue. There was a need for research on black working class and white working class pupils in the same schools.

With reference to his third perspective, Roxy Harris said that 30 years ago there had been material about Creole languages and pedagogy in relation to standard English. This interest had dropped off the agenda. A better understanding was required of the relationship between the language pupils derived from the home and the community, and the language of the school. Fine grained research was needed to study local situations paying attention to the distinct modes of communication used by pupils in particular localities.

Constant Leung said that the concept of educational equality in linguistic and ethnically diverse situations could not be regarded simplistically. He explored equality of opportunity in relation to notions of equality of entitlement, equality of treatment, and equality of outcomes.

The notion of equality of entitlement emphasised equal dignity for all citizens. This view would lead to all pupils being offered the same environment and curriculum; universal equality of entitlement is often supported by procedural equality under which pupils are treated and taught in the same way, irrespective of their ethnic and linguistic differences. A system based on such principles would tend to be blind to differences between individuals and groups. In an extreme scenario, for example, EAL, or even in-class EAL support, would not be allowed.

In contrast, the second view, based on equality of treatment, would acknowledge that all individuals and groups were unique. Distinctiveness, in this view, was recognised. From this perspective to deny recognition of difference is to deny equality. The application of such principles would permit measures designed to

address the needs of specific groups (for example, religious schools, as well notions such as SEN and EAL).

In the real world, however, the application of universalism would lead to tyranny of uniformity; but if the politics of difference were taken to an extreme, the common basis of shared community and citizenship would be denied. The current educational environment can be said to be a mixture of the two positions. Recent official reports on effective teaching and schools tend to make judgements on the basis of universal 'good practice'; at text level, these reports would look and feel quite different if words related to ethnic minority achievement, language and culture were inserted in appropriate places. Constant Leung concluded by reminding us of Furlong's study of black students in South London in the 1970s which showed that for black boys, not being seen to be insulted or to compromise on their identity brought them into conflict with authority. These were issues which would require the balance of response to be shifted more radically towards an interpretation of equality based on acceptance of difference, and which took greater account of the need for equality of outcomes.

The three speakers' presentations stimulated a lively discussion in which participants reinforced, developed and added new perspectives.