

**English as an Additional Language:  
Meeting the Challenge in the Classroom.**

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In the very early 1980s Susan Hart and I wrote an article on collaborative learning and EAL pupils. It was published in a collection of articles around linguistic diversity, reading and urban classrooms. The curriculum topic that drove our approaches to structured group work was integrated humanities, and as a consequence, we entitled our article "The Attractions of the North Pole". As a result nobody has ever quoted from or referenced this bold essay into what were then fresh pastures. We chose a title that effectively hid our ideas so that they would only be occasionally rejected by polar explorers. This title does exactly the opposite. It contains so many keywords that search engines will discover it over and over. However, a title as predictable as this, fails to tell you how different this book might be from any other which might use these keywords in a slightly different combination. For those of us familiar with research in, and up to date with the issues, political and pedagogical, around work with English as a Additional Language, this book contains no surprises. I do, however, believe this book is very special, and will be very useful for all of us who want to influence schools and colleagues.

The book is not written for us NALDIC folk. It is written for those individuals who ring us up and say "Help, there is a child arrived in class/school who doesn't speak English." The book keeps this individual focus throughout and as a result is direct, fluent, often humorous, always engaging and can be read as a narrative.

The first chapter sets the tone of the book. The writers tell a series of stories in which many of us have been involved: stories of individual pupils, the story of Jim (yes, the Jim we all know!), of partnership teaching, and of the authors themselves. The following chapters also base their work on the stories of different children to illustrate language progress, assessment, working with beginners and moving children on into the higher CALPy foothills. I cannot resist a quote here to provide a lively example of the many accessible ways in which ideas are presented:

*Heed this dire warning from old hands who have sailed many an EAL ocean and lived to tell the tale. Far, far away, beyond the rocky coasts where beginners rise up to shock the unwary, beyond the eerie stillness of the Step 4 to 5 doldrums, a devilish trap has sunk many a poor pupil. Fooled by calm bright water after all their perils, their reckless teachers see the way clear ahead and say to their sorry selves, "Seems OK! Full steam ahead, me hearties!" The hapless pupil is pushed on without a lifeboat, into the dreaded SEEMS OK trap, only to founder and sink, bound, shipmates, to underachieve for ever. .*

Although the style is often cheerful, there is no lack of seriousness. Each chapter is neatly and succinctly summarised. Every chapter contains excellent checklists, which I am certain many of us will find useful for powerpoint presentations. The authors practise what they preach by employing appropriate and powerful key visuals to illustrate their points. So probably us NALDIC folk will find the book a very useful addition to our collection. It inspires as well as informs.

One of the main points we used to and still make about the advantages of collaborative planning was that when two or more people plan together they are more than twice as good as if they planned alone. This book shows all the creativity and the modesty of collaborative planning. We will all feel we have had a small part in its production and we will all feel it will help enormously in our work.

*Stuart Scott*