

## Practical ways to support new arrivals in the classroom, Frank Monaghan (2004)

**National Centre for Language and Literacy ISBN 070491447796**

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This book by Frank Monaghan is a welcome new addition to the NCLL 'Practical Ways' series providing short practical guides for teachers on issues of language and literacy. The book provides practical advice on how best to support newly-arrived pupils. It explores

- who these children are
- where and what they have come from
- why they are here
- what we need to know about them and their families
- how we can make our schools more welcoming places
- how we can make the curriculum more accessible and
- what help we can get and where we can find it

New arrivals often find themselves at the sharp end of the failure to address issues of additional language development

systematically within the UK system. As Jim Cummins noted in *Negotiating Identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society* (1996) one of the educational structures which discriminates against EAL students is teacher education which has 'treated issues related to culturally diverse students as marginal and sent new teachers into the classroom with minimal information regarding patterns of language and emotional development among such students and few pedagogical strategies for helping students learn' (p140). The latest figures released by the TTA show that even now only 25 per cent of newly qualified teachers rated their training as 'good' or 'very good' in preparing them to work with children with English as an additional language. With increasing global mobility, most teachers will encounter a newly arrived learner at some point in their career and many new teachers will be working with such pupils from their first day in the classroom. This timely book is aimed at this audience of non specialist primary and secondary teachers with limited experience of new arrivals.

Throughout the book, the author maintains a positive view of the 'plentiful rewards in working with new arrivals' and draws on a wide range of examples and references to connect with his audience. Within the first few pages he has referred both to Joanna McPake's 1999 work on dissonance experienced by Japanese children in British classrooms and to a 1956 TES article on 'Talking to the Refugees' advising English hosts not to be offended if Hungarian refugees refuse a cup of tea. Although the tone of the book is accessible, the practical issues concerning preparing for new arrivals, including profiling backgrounds and language expertise and affiliation and issues relating to children from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds are clearly explained with supporting exemplars and sources of further information.

Language development in the classroom is covered in the final third of the text. This includes a common sense explanation of five key principles which should underpin planning for language development drawn from NALDIC's Distinctiveness Working Paper 5 and sections on speaking and listening, and reading and writing.

In a book of this limited length, there are of course gaps. Set against this is the strength that you can actually imagine a teacher sitting down and reading this slim book from cover to cover after work and being prompted to think a little bit differently about the 'new arrival' in their class. It is a refreshing antidote to the check list and bullet point approach which characterises so much of the guidance on EAL currently produced by government agencies and others. The voice of the author shines through on every page as does his conviction that teachers can and do make a real and positive difference to children's lives and that children make a positive difference to the lives of their teachers. .

Nicola Davies