

6

Bilingual learners

Activities

Thinking about second language learning

Aim

To understand how EAL pupils might behave in the early stages of learning a second language.

To identify what is helpful to EAL pupils.

What to do

Ask students how they understand and communicate when they go on holiday to a country where they do not speak the language.

They usually say things like:

- keep quiet;
- point to things;
- learn a few key phrases;
- feel embarrassed;
- try to say as little as possible;
- look for pictorial clues;
- look for support from my companions;
- smile and use other gestures.

Links can be made between their behaviour and attempts at the language and a young bilingual child's behaviour and early production of English.

Reading in an unfamiliar language

Aim

To understand how illustrations can help children to understand and read.
To understand how visual support helps children to understand.

What to do

Ask students to read the following text which is in Portuguese.

'Capa vermelha da equitação do!', chamado mãe. 'Eu cozi alguns bolos. Você gosta de fazer exame de alguns bolos ao grandma? É doente e em bed.'

'Eu estou vindo, mãe,' disse-a a capa vermelha da equitação, e põem sobre seu cape vermelho.

Retirou a cesta dos bolos e do jogo para a casa do grandma.

Most students will probably struggle to read this.

Now ask students to look at the picture in Figure 6.1. This should help them. After looking at the picture ask the students if they can identify the story and read any more of the text.



Figure 6.1 Red Riding Hood

The picture usually helps students to identify the story as 'Red Riding Hood'. Gradually they begin to work out what some of the words say starting with Red Riding Hood and then they see connections between some of the English and Portuguese words. What does become clear is that a picture provides a way into reading a text.

The English version of the passage is given below.

'Red Riding Hood!', called mother. 'I have baked some cakes. Would you like to take some cakes to grandma? She is ill and in bed.'

'I'm coming, mother,' said Red Riding Hood, and she put on her red cape.

She took the basket of cakes and set off for grandma's house.

This activity is based on an idea in Jean Conteh's (2003) book *Succeeding in Diversity: Culture, Language and Learning in Primary Classrooms*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Welcoming new arrivals

Aim

To consider how teachers can prepare for new arrivals.

What to do

Ask the students to consider when they were a new arrival, maybe when they first started their teacher training course or when they made their first visit to one of their placement schools. What made them feel welcome? Could they use or adapt any of these features for use in their classrooms?

Preparing language resources for newly arrived EAL pupils

Aim

To consider how to communicate with pupils who do not speak English.
To consider how to teach key vocabulary.

What to do

Ask students to list what they think are the most important words a child starting school needs to know.

Ask them to create a chart like the one in Figure 6.2. They could use the children's dictionary Logos (<http://www.logos.it>) or the translate facility in a word processing package to translate some of these key words into another language.

Preparing language resources for teaching a new topic

Aim

To consider how to teach key topic vocabulary.

What to do

Pre-teaching key vocabulary can be very helpful for bilingual pupils and all children.

Ask students to list the important vocabulary associated with one of the following topics:

- Ourselves
- Time
- Electricity
- Homes

How could they pre-teach this vocabulary?

Ideas might include a display, artifacts, a visit, pictures and photographs, creating a word bank, making a picture dictionary and art activities.

Supporting bilingual pupils in literacy sessions

Aim

- To think of ways to use adults and other resources to help children access the curriculum.
- To provide practical examples of teaching strategies that can be used to support bilingual pupils.

What to do

Ask students to bring in a session plan from one of their teaching practices. Alternatively they could write a session plan where the objectives are to:

- retell stories, ordering events using story language;
- identify main events and characters in stories;
- make predictions showing an understanding of events, ideas and characters;
- visualise and comment on events, characters and ideas.

They need to show on their plan where and how they would provide support for a child who is learning English as an additional language.

Figure 6.2 is an example of a completed session plan showing EAL support.

Session plan showing EAL support

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Class Year 1</p> | <p>Subject Literacy</p> |
| <p>Pupils' previous experience Yesterday worked on adjectives – words to describe Jack Regular experience of predicting what might happen next in a story</p> | <p>Other adults Ms Green</p> |
| <p>Objectives Retell stories, ordering events using story language. Identify main events and characters in stories. Make predictions showing an understanding of events, ideas and characters. Visualise and comment on events, characters and ideas.</p> | |
| <p>EAL support There is one child for whom English is an additional language. He has spent six weeks in this class and is beginning to use some spoken English. Ms Green to work with J during the whole-class session. She will read a short version of the story to him and encourage him to name the characters and the events. Ms Green, J + another pair to work together to predict what next. Include some visual prompts to support shared writing. J included in my guided writing group. He will complete the task using pictures and writing. If necessary I will scribe for him.</p> | |
| <p>Lesson Outline <i>Introduction</i> Talk partners to recap what has happened in 'Jack and the Beanstalk' so far. Which characters have we met? What has happened? Continue reading to page 11. What has happened now? Make predictions about what will happen next. Use shared writing to create a character self-portrait for one character – demonstrate I am, I live, I have, I like, I wish. <i>Development</i> Write a character self-portrait of the giant or Jack's mother Blue group – guided writing with me Red group – guided writing with Ms Green Orange group – work independently Purple group – work in collaborative pairs Green group – listening station, computer <i>Plenary</i> Orange and purple groups to read out their portraits – see if the class can guess who they have written about. Is there enough information? Is it appropriate to the character? Could we add anything else?</p> | |
| <p>How else could we make the language demands of this session easier for an EAL learner? Pair him with another child to produce a collaborative portrait. Give him a pictorial worksheet – a drawing of the character with thought or speech bubbles in which he can draw or write Continue shared writing for J and 1 other child working with Ms Green.</p> | |

Figure 6.2 Session plan

Supporting bilingual pupils in different subject areas

Aim

To think of ways to use adults and other resources to help children access the curriculum.

What to do

Ask students to bring in a session plan from a mathematics, science, geography or history lesson that they have taught. Ask them to analyse the language demands of this session. Ask them to identify how they did or could cater for the needs of children learning English as an additional language. What adjustments did or could they make?

These are some suggestions:

- Make reference to previous learning and provide opportunities to revisit key concepts and vocabulary.
- Make use of visual stimuli to support understanding.
- Make use of an interactive display to allow children opportunities to revisit activities.
- Pupils work in mixed-ability, collaborative groups with an emphasis on pupil talk.
- Pupils are organised into talk partners.
- Share the learning objective with the class using simple language and visual resources.
- Throughout the lesson, there is an emphasis on pupils talking about their learning and on using key vocabulary.
- Activities are hands-on and practical.
- Make a display of key words and images associated with the subject of the lesson.
- The teacher models the activity to support understanding of the task in hand.
- The teacher plans for her role during independent work so that EAL learners will receive some targeted support.

Producing a first reading and writing book for a new entrant

Aim

To consider how to introduce a bilingual child to reading and writing English.

What to do

Look at the 'All about me' document in Figure 6.3.

I am in class.

I like playing with

There are children in my class.

I like eating

I have brothers.

I was born in

I have sisters.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----|----------|----|----------|------|-------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|----|---------|------|---------|---|-----------|----|------|------|--|---|
| <p>I can find these words in my book</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">a</td> <td style="width: 50%;">me</td> </tr> <tr> <td>brothers</td> <td>my</td> </tr> <tr> <td>children</td> <td>name</td> </tr> <tr> <td>class</td> <td>picture</td> </tr> <tr> <td>eating</td> <td>playing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>friend</td> <td>school</td> </tr> <tr> <td>go</td> <td>sisters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>have</td> <td>teacher</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>telephone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>is</td> <td>this</td> </tr> <tr> <td>like</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ</p> | a | me | brothers | my | children | name | class | picture | eating | playing | friend | school | go | sisters | have | teacher | I | telephone | is | this | like | | <p>This book was written by _____</p> <p style="text-align: right; margin-right: 50px;">goes to school</p> <p>and is in class.</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">The book tells you about and what _____ does at school.</p> |
| a | me | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| brothers | my | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| children | name | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| class | picture | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| eating | playing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| friend | school | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| go | sisters | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| have | teacher | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I | telephone | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| is | this | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| like | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The students can use this as a starting point to produce an 'All about Me' booklet of their own which contains simple reading and writing activities for an EAL pupil. They could translate some of the English into another language to produce a bilingual book using a translation website such as Inter Tran.

Websites

The Collaborative Learning Project: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org>

This website contains downloadable games and activities which promote talk and thought about picture books. Many of the activities in the Foundation Stage section are helpful for young bilingual learners.

Department for Children, Schools and Families Ethnic Minority Achievement:
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/links_and_publications/

This site contains a number of useful publications for teachers. Topics include minority ethnic pupils in mainly white schools, gypsy traveller children, newly-arrived learners of EAL, asylum and refugee children.

Dingle Granby Toxteth EAZ: <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/letters/>

On this website there are a number of standard letters for parents translated into different languages.

EMA online: <http://www.emaonline.org.uk/ema/>

This is an online resource base for teachers, developed by Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester LAs with funding from the DfES. The EL & Bilingual Resources section links to a broad range of resources including multilingual stories and lesson plans.

Letterbox Library: <http://www.letterboxlibrary.com/>

This is a long-established seller of multicultural, non-sexist and bilingual books for children.

Logos: <http://www.logos.it>

This website has a basic children's dictionary in 30 languages.

Mantra Publishing Ltd: <http://www.mantralingua.com>

Mantra publishes dual language books and CDs in over 30 languages.

Milet Books: <http://www.milet.com/>

Milet publishes a range of bilingual children's books, featuring more than 300 titles in English with over 25 languages. They also publish bilingual picture dictionaries and flashcards.

Multiverse: <http://www.multiverse.ac.uk>

This website provides teacher educators, student teachers and trainees with a wealth of resources that focus on enhancing the educational achievement of pupils from diverse backgrounds.

The National association for Language Development in the Curriculum: <http://www.naldic.org.uk/ITTSEAL>

This is the website of the professional association of EAL teachers. It contains information about EAL pedagogy, practice and policies, research and resources. The ITTSEAL section is specifically for those concerned with initial teacher education.

Portsmouth Ethnic Minority Achievement Service: <http://www.blss.portsmouth.sch.uk/training/bilschpol.shtml>

This website provides a helpful summary of EAL pedagogy.

Salisbury World: <http://www.salisburyworld.org.uk/index.php>

Salisbury World is a charity that supports refugee and asylum-seeking children and families. The website contains information that is useful to teachers including ideas about teaching EAL and working with parents and carers. The charity also produces printed resources for schools.

Links to further reading

DCSF (2007) *Supporting Children Learning English as an Additional Language: Guidance for Practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage*. London: DCSF. Available at: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00683-2007&>

The advice and guidance in this booklet is drawn from existing good practice developed by practitioners working with babies, young children and their families. This guidance is set within the themes, principles and commitments of the EYFS. It includes sections

on the importance of home languages, learning English as an additional language and bilingual support.

DCSF (2007) *New Arrivals Excellence Programme: Guidance*. London: DCSF. Available at: http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/ns_naep_gdce_0065007.PDF

DfES (2005) *Marking Progress: Training Materials for Assessing English as an Additional Language*. DfES. Available at: <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/resources/markingprogress.pdf> (accessed 24 May 2006)

DfES (2006) *Excellence and Enjoyment: Learning and Teaching for Bilingual Children in the Primary Years*. London: DfES. Available at: http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/bi_children/

This publication contains a great deal of practical advice for teachers. The booklets are accompanied by a DVD which shows teaching sequences and a CD-Rom which contains materials for practical activities.

Guidance for supporting newly-arrived pupils learning English as an additional language in the literacy hour: <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/features/literacy/659925/>
Although this material refers to the 1998 Literacy Framework it contains some helpful advice about making language and literacy learning accessible to all pupils.

Kenner, C. (2003) 'Biliteracy benefits', *Literacy Today*, 37. Available at: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Pubs/kenner.html>

This research summary shows that young children are quite capable of learning two different writing systems simultaneously and that this benefits their cognitive and cultural development.

QCA (2000) *A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language*. London: QCA. Available at: http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_5739.aspx

This document sets out steps used in the assessment of English as an additional language linked to the English National Curriculum levels. It provides guidance and assessment examples.

QCA Pathways to Learning: http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_7526.aspx

This document provides information to help teachers respond to the needs of pupils newly arrived from overseas. It provides background information on migration, countries of origin and children's rights and entitlements, guidance for schools and teachers on promoting the educational achievement of newly-arrived pupils and case studies of good practice. It has a particularly helpful section for those working in the Foundation Stage.

Stott, S. (n.d.) *Collaborative Learning Project*. Available at: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org/theorypaper.pdf>

This article was written by Stuart Stott, the director of the Collaborative Learning Network. It discusses how collaborative learning can develop bilingual pupils' language beyond basic fluency.