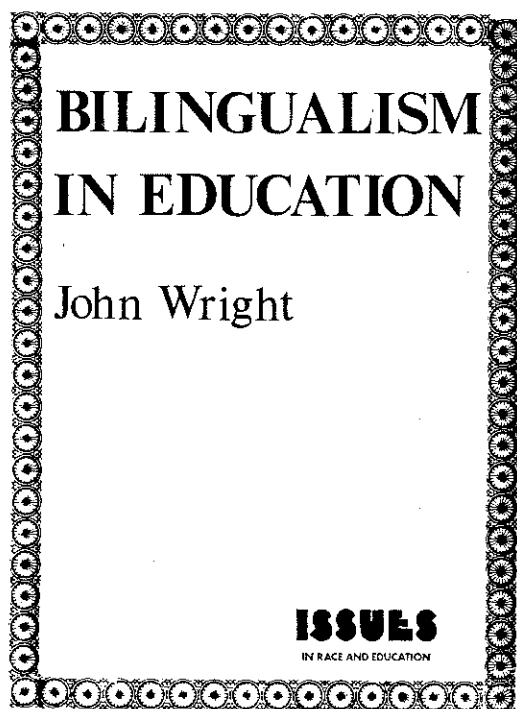
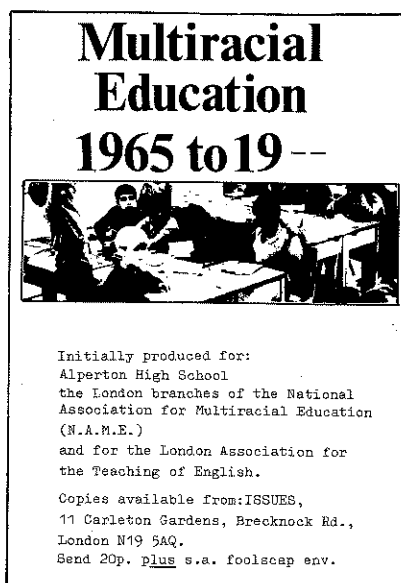


other ISSUES publications

ISSUES IN RACE AND EDUCATION is a non-profit making publishing collective. In addition to this magazine, we aim to produce leaflets, posters, booklets for teachers and for children. The following publications are available now:



A revised version of an article first published in 1978 by the ILEA Centre for Urban Educational Studies. It examines the notion of bilingualism and considers what policy should be in Britain on this important issue. 80p (including p & p)



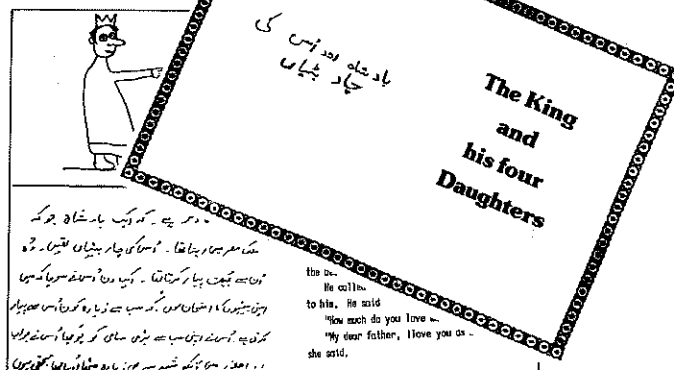
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.....



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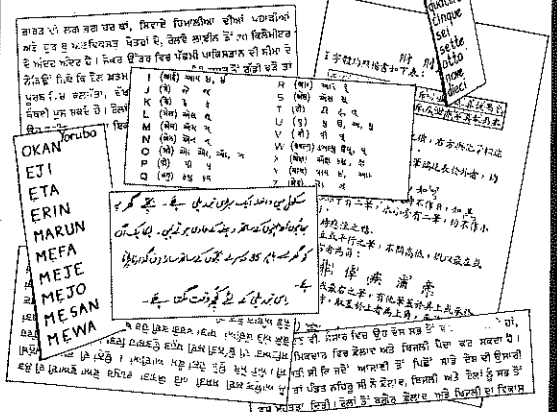
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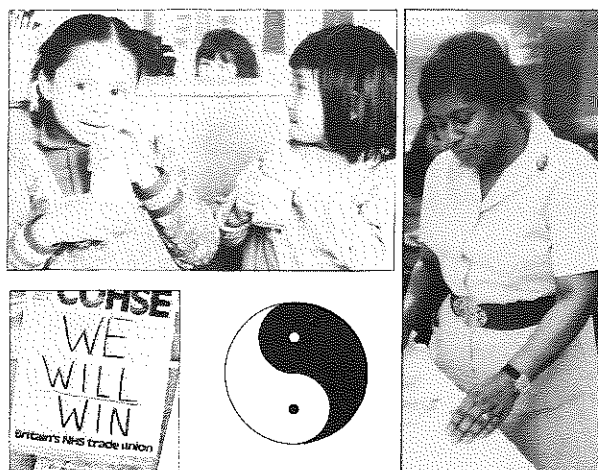
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ISSUES: Summer 1983

In the beginning...

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO HAVE TO LEARN IN A LANGUAGE THAT IS NOT YOUR OWN? FEW OF US HAVE DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF THIS SITUATION. BELOW WE GIVE EXTRACTS FROM TWO PIECES OF WRITING. THE FIRST WAS WRITTEN BY A 13 YEAR OLD GREEK GIRL, 18 MONTHS AFTER SHE ARRIVED IN LONDON. THE SECOND IS FROM THE WOMAN WARRIOR BY MAXINE HONG KINGSTON. WE HOPE THAT THE TWO EXTRACTS WILL HELP TEACHERS TO BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE ENORMOUS TASK WHICH FACES OUR BILINGUAL PUPILS IN SCHOOLS.

1

IN the beginning I couldn't understand a lot of English, but I could understand if the teachers were talking good or bad about me. The girls at school were looking at me and started laughing secretly behind my back, but I couldn't do anything about it. I just was waiting and waiting. And that waiting made me so anxious and nervous. I was becoming nervous with the most tiny thing, I was speaking nervous at home to everybody. I didn't feel like eating or sleeping. I thought I was going to end that way. But I didn't care.

A lot of times I wished I had never come to England. I wished I was back in my own country, near my school and friends. Specially friends, who could understand me, and I could speak their language perfectly. I was feeling like an old person, weak, sad and lazy. I couldn't help myself, I thought I was falling down and down every minute. But at the right time Language Centre helped me once more.

THE teachers there were so willing to help me, a bit opposite of my school teachers. They didn't care a lot about a girl in the whole class who couldn't understand them, but about the rest of the class. When I am thinking of these things now I feel so funny.

A lot of times I felt really horrible but I didn't stop there. I continued searching for an end. Sometimes I said to my parents to send me back to Greece. But they didn't. After I sat quietly in my room and thought over it again and again. Then I took all the pieces of my courage and put them together and said to myself. "Jenny, you have to fight, you can't win without a fight" and I really believed it and believed in myself too for the first time in my life. And tried really hard. I didn't stop until I knew I had made a lot of progress.

THE time passed, my English became better and better every day. My heart started opening slowly slowly, giving a smile inside me. I was happy and I still am, when I am thinking of what I was and how I was acting and what I am and how I am acting now, I start laughing with myself. But all these are in the past now. I am thinking only for the future, only for the tomorrow not for the yesterday.

2

When I went to kindergarten and had to speak English for the first time, I became silent. A dumbness - a shame - still cracks my voice in two, even when I want to say 'hello' casually, or ask an easy question in front of the check-out counter, or ask directions of a bus driver. I stand frozen, or I hold up the line with the complete, grammatical sentence that comes squeaking out at impossible length.... A telephone call makes my throat bleed and takes up that day's courage. It spoils my day with self-disgust when I hear my broken voice come skittering out into the open. It makes people wince to hear it ...

My silence was thickest - total - during the three years that I covered my school paintings with black paint.. I painted layers of black over houses and flowers and suns ... The teachers called my parents to school ... pointed to the pictures and looked serious, talked seriously too, but my parents did not understand English...

During the first silent year I spoke to no-one at school, did not ask before going to the lavatory, and flunked kindergarten. My sister also said nothing for three years, silent in the playground and silent at lunch. There were other quiet Chinese girls not of our family, but most of them got over it sooner than we did....

It was when I found out I had to talk that school became a misery, that the silence became a misery. I did not speak and felt bad each time that I did not speak. I read aloud in first grade, though, and heard the barest whisper with little squeaks come out of my throat....

Reading out loud was easier than speaking because we did not have to make up what to say, but I stopped often, and the teacher would think I'd gone quiet again.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES PUBLICATION

ESL Learners in the history classroom: a discussion document for teachers, by Tricia Hardwicke and Sandy Leigh. Available in the Autumn term, 1983, from ISSUES.

(1) The full version of this essay is to be published in *Teaching English: mother tongue and second language*, from ILEA English Centre, Ebury Centre, Sutherland Street, London SW1. Available in July '83. For further information, ring the English Centre: 01 828 8560.

(2) *The Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston, Picador, 1981.

ISSUES: Summer 1983

ING MATERIALS

ion to identifying the potential
s of young children learning in
ilingual nursery, we went on to
to gaps in published resources
ling additional strategies and
materials.

oping appropriate curriculum
s we have attempted to illu-
ays that adults can work with
ildren and encourage further
up collaboration. Much thought
into the production of visual
s which accurately reflect our
tural society, in a style that
e enough to be accessible to
ildren, but that avoid the
pes and generalisations often
commercially published material.
had to limit ourselves to
ng strategies and resources for
rriculum areas - story-telling,
and games, and working with

ocused on the adult's role in
ing, organising and leading an
. We have also devised exten-
k where children have time and
work together - refining and
ng their ideas and understanding.

aterials have been carefully
so that children at different
f English can work alongside
er and make equal contributions.

staff, children and their
have played a valuable part in
lopment of these materials -
ng refinements for the illustra-
roviding story-lines, recipes
ucing multilingual versions.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

ect has also been concerned with
al ways in which the nursery can
e and share in the rich variety
al experiences of the children
r parents. Children are clearly
s of racial and cultural differ-
om a very early age. If all
are to be given equal recogni-
status then the resources in
ry must reflect the multicult-
ality of our society in a posi-
e. In working towards this it is
s necessary to deal with nega-
ponses and criticisms from other
s and parents. But it is well
e effort. We have found children
rier and more secure and become
ident in forming relationships
ts and peers and more involved
play when using resources (such
ng utensils and dressing up
that they are familiar with.
le one nursery teacher acquired
fan which neither she nor (as

GREEK SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 large onion

3 tomatoes

1 cucumber

2 green peppers

olive oil

wine vinegar

**salt, pepper
and oregano**

feta cheese

or white cheese

stoned black olives

UTENSILS

1 large bowl

1 small bowl

chopping boards

knives

teaspoons

1 wooden spoon

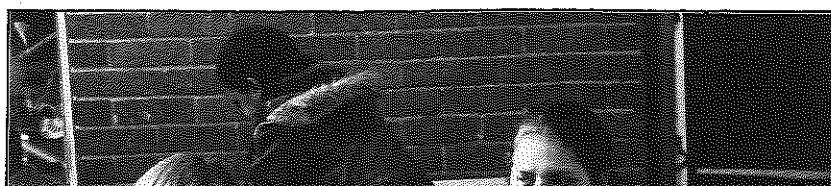


fan in the correct way. Her delight in
being able to share her knowledge was
obvious, as was the respect and interest
of the other children. They started to
draw her more into their play, especial-
ly in the home corner and her confidence
grew, as did her eagerness to talk and
communicate, in Bengali and in English.

GIVING children confidence and the
motivation to communicate is an import-
ant first step, that we can take by
creating a stimulating learning environ-
ment that reflects yet extends what a
child has already experienced.

The project team has
developed sets of
recipe cards in
English and various
other languages to
be used in the
nursery.

Pauline France



disorienting for the bilingual child by challenging her with two learning contexts? A young child beginning to come to terms with the busy nursery class may feel very insecure if she is withdrawn from this, especially if s/he is taken while s/he is engaged in a favourite activity, just to fit in with the busy specialist timetable. Alternatively a child may find a temporary security in the small group situation and never develop confidence within the classroom - yet ultimately it is here where s/he needs to learn to survive and achieve.

• if we are to foster a positive attitude to multilingualism and help all our children value the multicultural nature of society should we not welcome the opportunity which young children have to experience diversity? Children who use only one language in their everyday lives will benefit from contact with their bilingual peers. By constantly removing certain children for language work we are in danger of creating divisions and resentment between children and passing on negative messages about the place of bilingualism in our society.

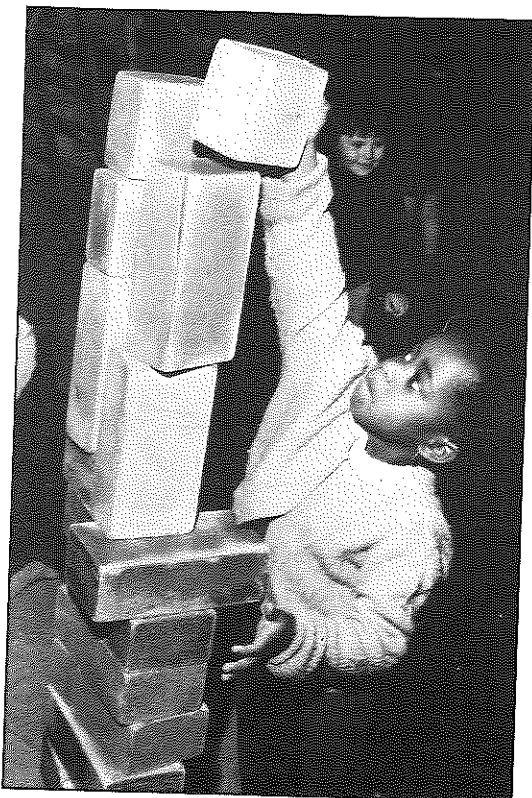
photo (left):

Bob Bray

photo (right):

Dave Thomas

Photography



DEVELOPING A POLICY

In the light of our fieldwork in a range of nurseries within the ILEA we concluded that the following assumptions can form a useful basis to the development of a policy on education in the multilingual nursery:

- the mainstream nursery classroom with its emphasis on learning through doing and talking provides an appropriate learning context for bilingual children
- young bilingual children are highly motivated to communicate with their classmates and gain considerable linguistic support from working and learning with their English speaking peers
- bilingualism is a positive asset, an important learning experience which can be built on, and a resource to be welcomed in the classroom
- it is essential for nursery staff to create an environment where children's diverse cultural experiences are recognised and shared in a positive way. Staff should be ready to handle any negative incidents with sensitivity and care.
- the cognitive development of children is as important as their linguistic growth and this needs to be considered when organising resources and activities
- parents have a vital role to play in their children's education and can help to broaden the experiences of everyone in the nursery by sharing their cultural knowledge and expertise.

IN formulating their language policy, nursery staff will need to consider not only these points but also many practical implications for nursery organisation - for example, if a flexible system is followed, with very few timetabled or teacher-directed activities, how can bilingual children be encouraged to sample and join a range of activities? How can we ensure that these children move beyond solitary play to collaborative tasks and parallel play in a group? When we group children (eg for songs, stories, cookery) what criteria do we use for selecting them?

The BUF team has produced 4 videos illustrating the work of the project: 1) *Early Days at School*, 2) *Food for Talk*, 3) *Sharing Stories* and 4) *The Teacher's Role*. Further details of the 4 videos and the forthcoming Teacher's Book from: Learning Materials Service, Highbury Station Road, London N1.

The multilingual nursery

WORKING within the multilingual nursery can be a demanding but very rewarding experience. If we aim to create a fruitful learning environment where all children feel valued and involved we need to positively recognise and draw on the cultural and linguistic resources of every child. Ways of working with young bilingual children so that their experiences are strengthened and broadened have been the key concern of a curriculum development project at the Centre for Urban Educational Studies since April 1978. (1) Although the major brief for the project has been to examine how children acquire and develop a second language within an educational setting, we have chosen to use the term 'bilingual' (rather than second language learner of non-English speaker) when talking about children who are functioning in two languages, at whatever level, in their daily lives. This descriptive term highlights the dynamic nature of young children's linguistic potential and avoids the negative connotations of the other traditional terms.

YOUNG CHILDREN'S LEARNING

GIVEN that young children are active participants in and organisers of their own learning, we felt it was crucial to identify what support bilingual children draw from the mainstream nursery class, what strengths children have to offer each other and to define the adult's role in creating a positive learning environment. To achieve this we concentrated our work on the nursery classroom

rather than the specialist withdrawal group. It became clear that specialist language support for young children should take account of the work going on in the nursery, and draw on the insights of current nursery theory and practice. The specialist language teacher is most effective where s/he has experience of working with young children and can work as part of a team alongside the nursery staff in the familiar environment of the classroom. Withdrawal of young children on the basis of their inexperience in English, apart from being socially divisive, can create problems and lead to a reduplication of materials and effort because:

- if we accept that good nursery practice is supportive to bilingual children then why, how and when do we remove children from a stimulating environment?
- if we appreciate the amount of support children get from their peers, then why do we remove children from a range of language models to a situation where the teacher is the only model?
- if we wish nursery staff to draw on the specialised knowledge about bilingualism and second language development possessed by the ESL teacher then isn't it appropriate for her/him to work alongside the nursery team, so that they may see through practical example what s/he may otherwise only be able to discuss at coffee/lunch time?
- if we realise how demanding it is for young children to become confident and feel at home in the school environment then why do we make settling in doubly

(1) For further details of the *Bilingual Under Fives* project contact Pauline France, CUES, Robert Montefiore Building, Underwood Road, London E1. (01 377 0040)

The photo below illustrates one set of wooden puzzles, *Face Play*, developed by the project. *Face Play* is available from LMS, Highbury Station Rd, London N1 (for ILEA teachers) and from ESA, Fairview Rd, Stevenage, Herts (for teachers outside ILEA).

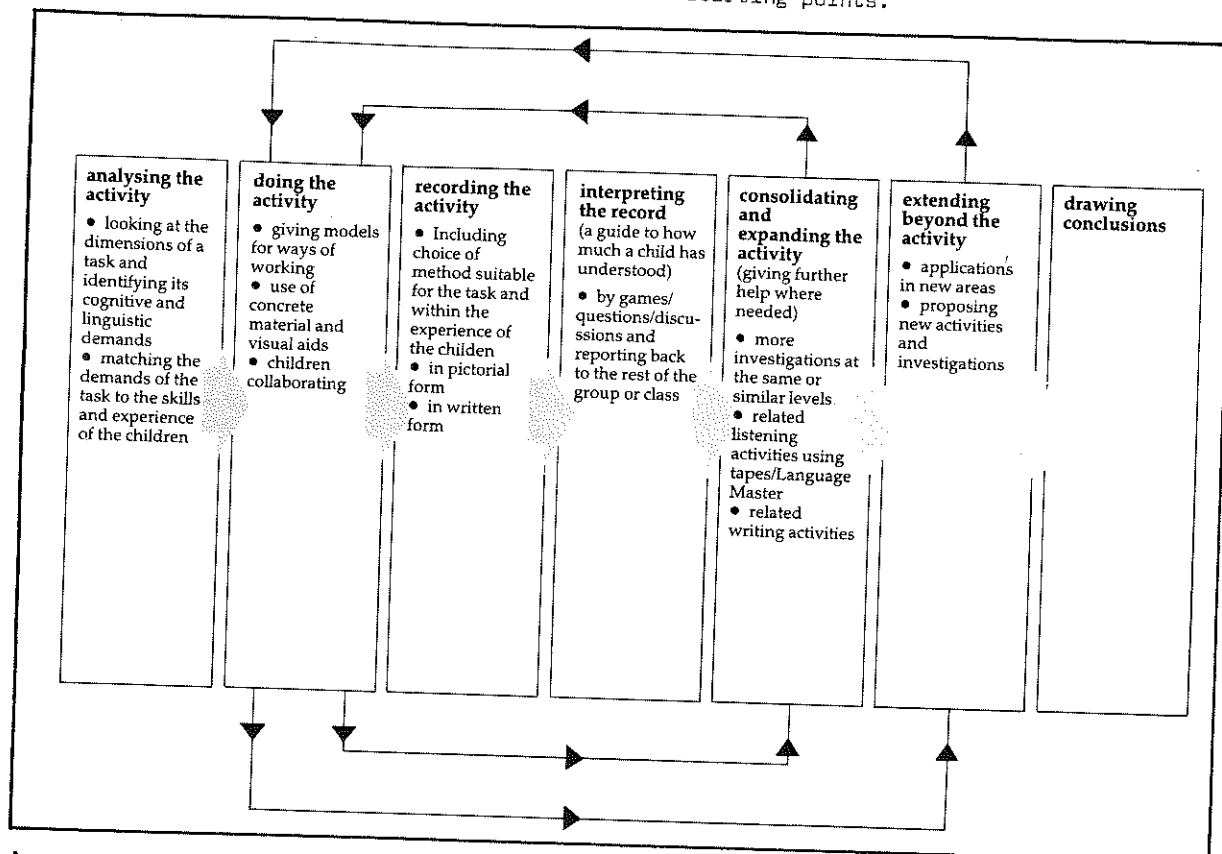


they are making their own adjustments will need monitoring.

● Secondly, errors may occur as children learn to be users of language. Any errors young children learning English are making need to be matched against the usage of English-speaking children of the same age, to ensure that children are not being expected to take on forms of the language beyond their conceptual experience.

● Lastly, errors may also be momentary lapses from what is actually known because of nervousness, excitement, the demands of a new task etc.

OFTEN, talking privately with a child about the meaning she/he is trying to convey may be enough. Other children will benefit from more experience of the task and thus of the language needed for it. Judgements about the appropriateness of intervention with children learning English need to be set within the wider context of appropriateness and effectiveness of any intervention in children's learning. As a first step we need to try to find out from children what they see as their difficulties and use their explanations as starting points.



ANALYSING THE ACTIVITY

The investigation was sparked off by the class's work on materials. Preparation beforehand included marking out three charts to record heights of bounce of a ball on different surfaces and the children preparing markers for each ball.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Bouncing six different balls on three different surfaces. The balls were: a sponge ball; a small, solid rubber ball; an airflo ball; a big, hollow rubber ball; a plasticine ball; a small rubber ball. The surfaces were: wood (the floor), polystyrene (a tile) and sand (in a tray).

RECORDING THE ACTIVITY

Recording the height of the bounce of each ball on the three different surfaces by fixing markers on charts with blu-tack.

INTERPRETING THE RECORD

Looking at the completed charts, the pupils:

- discuss the performance of particular balls on each of the surfaces;

- compare the performance of one ball with others;

- play games (making true/false statements, playing guessing games - 'Which one am I thinking of?', etc);
- discuss the reasons for the differences.

CONSOLIDATING AND EXPANDING THE ACTIVITY

Investigating the performance of a ball on another surface; initiating other children into the activity; writing statements for other children to verify. These could be recorded on language master cards; investigating other variables eg the height of the drop.

EXTENDING BEYOND THE ACTIVITY

Investigating the properties of different materials; looking at ball games and discussing/writing/collecting pictures of how the balls are used.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

What do you now know about the bounciness of balls? What would you say to someone who said: 'This is the best bouncer'?

A very useful source of ideas for science activities involving children in working and talking together is *Science 5-13*, Macdonald Educational.

ISSUES: Summer 1983

A framework for learning

A USEFUL way of looking at language development in the multilingual classroom grew out of the Second Language in the Primary Classroom (SLIP) Project (ILEA Centre for Urban Educational Studies, 1975 - 1978). The project looked at the potential support which activities in the primary classroom offer to children learning English as a second language, and at ways of working to develop activities at different levels so that all children in the class could learn.

A FULLER version of this article (containing examples of project work and transcripts of children talking) is contained in Teachers' Notes to a series of videocassettes titled: Language in the multi-ethnic primary classroom (further information from ILEA Learning Materials Service, Highbury Station Road, London N1)

POTENTIALLY, all talking in classrooms provides data which children learning English can draw on to make the new language their own: listening to their teacher talking to the whole class; chatting with other children at play-time; watching TV programmes; playing in the home corner, etc. The SLIP project focussed on those talking contexts and activities which allow children to work together and share ideas, and which provide children learning English with opportunities of hearing and rehearsing the same range of language several times.

THE most obvious areas in which these opportunities arise are stories, particularly repeating sequence stories, songs and singing. Less obvious perhaps are science and maths investigations, and turn-taking games in which the children work together. Here, the activities involve children in following certain procedures several times as, for example, in the ball bouncing investigation (testing out the behaviour of balls on different surfaces) or the Happy Families game (collecting the cards needed for your family). In these contexts, native speakers of English tend to use the same range of language each time the procedures are followed. The strength for children learning English is that they gain access to patterns of English through involvement in the activity. Opportunities for hearing and using English arise as a by-product, albeit essential, of the activity. The language is made meaningful because the behaviour of the children and the materials used in the activities provide powerful support for the children's understanding of the context, where speakers of English are members of the working group, a child will be

able to model her/his language on theirs.

FOR a few children, working with others who speak English on one of these activities may provide enough support for learning the language. Others will need more help. This may be given in a number of ways:

- more experience of a similar kind, eg other variables which affect the height of bounce of a ball in a science experiment could be explored;
- staging an activity, eg phasing the introduction of a game (handling the materials, learning their names, playing a simplified form of a game as an introductory activity, etc).
- providing extra listening support eg taped listening activities (on cassette recorders or language master cards) which relate to the work of the class. These can be set up for individuals or small groups of children in a 'Listening Resource Area'.

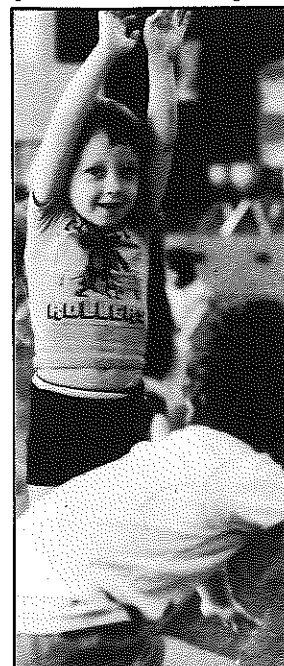
THE framework on the opposite page, which grew from the work of teachers on the SLIP project and the Project team, helps to show how an activity may be developed, and at which points additional support for children learning English can be provided.

THE arrows linking the boxes show the possible paths through an activity that individual children or groups could follow. Some children may need to follow an activity through all these phases, but some will be able to move from *Doing the activity* to *Consolidating and expanding the activity* or to *Extending beyond the activity*. Decisions like these will depend on children's previous experience, their understanding of the activity and on the nature of the activity itself. Extra support for children learning English can be developed at *Interpreting the record* and *Consolidating and expanding the activity*. THE ball bouncing investigation provides an example of the process illustrated by the diagram (see text under the diagram).

DECIDING when and how to intervene to help children with errors they are making is problematic. Decisions we make will be governed by our understanding of the children's feelings, our relationship with them, their experience with English and their age. Different decisions will be made for different children...

● First, errors may occur *within the learning of English*, and children may make their own adjustments as they become more familiar and confident with the language. But the *extent* to which

photo: Simon Wilby



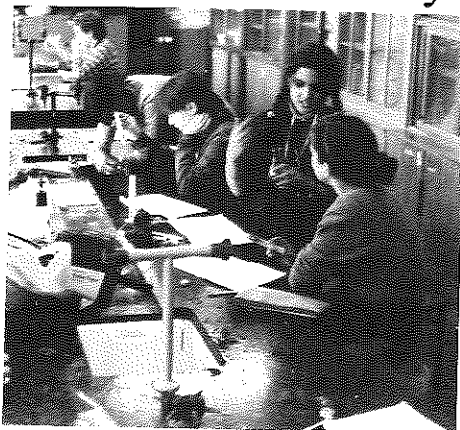
read and discuss the correct ordering of a process, for example. After the discussion they can copy the ordered sentences into their books, rather than having to construct sentences out of the air. I also get them to match sentences and pictures and parts of sentences. This not only focusses on the language used but is also an excellent way of ensuring that they have understood the science. Obviously there are times when I require pupils to do individual writing, but in that case I try to ensure that the ESL pupils have some support for the writing eg a pattern to follow or adapt. Sometimes teachers don't work out why they ask pupils to write - it's often just to get something into the pupils' books. But if pupils are able to 'read' diagrams, charts, graphs and flow charts, then a lot of descriptive writing becomes redundant.

ANOTHER aspect of our work in science is to adopt a multicultural perspective wherever possible. In this particular unit on *Solids, Liquids and Gases*, we were able to do this when we looked at the practical implications of heating particles in solids - particularly metals - and expansion and contraction. Many of the children who have lived in hot countries know about this already and the practical applications for building roads and bridges.

ANOTHER interesting off-shoot has been the cross-curriculum liaison with the Design and Technology teachers. We discovered that the pupils all make their own bi-metallic strips in the first year, so we've now arranged for them to do this in CDT just before we come to this section in Science, so that the pupils come in with their own strip.

Trying to prepare our own materials in this way, adapted from other science schemes (Scottish Integrated, Insight, etc) has taken a lot of time and effort. It has demanded co-operation between the ESL and Science teachers in the school. However, in the long run it has been worth it since all the pupils are acquiring a solid base in scientific language and thought which will stand them in good stead throughout the school. They certainly enjoy the lessons and remember what they have learned.

Pauline Hoyle



Instructions

* Work in pairs

Tasks

A * Here are some definitions of solids, liquids and gases. Some of them only fit one substance, others fit all three. Study the definitions, remember the experiments and tick the table where the definitions are correct.

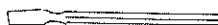
- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Because it is hard | 7. It is heavy |
| 2. Because it is soft | 8. It is light |
| 3. Because it has a fixed volume. | 9. You can always see through it. |
| 4. Because it always keeps the same shape | 10. It can be squashed. |
| 5. Because it changes its shape. | 11. It changes its volume |
| 6. Because it expands to fill the space it's in. | |

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
WOOD											
COLOURED WATER											
AIR											

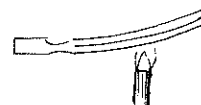
B * Now write your own definitions of a solid, a liquid and a gas.

Instructions

1. Look at the two different metals in the bimetallic strip to see which is iron and which is copper.



2. Gently heat the bimetallic strip using a bunsen burner.



Tasks

1. In your book, draw the bimetallic strip after it has been heated. Label the metals (Cu, Fe) on the correct side.
2. Fill in the beginning of the sentences below with the correct metals. Write them under your diagram in an order which explains what happened.

_____ expanded more

_____ expanded less

_____ bent more than the _____

_____ bent less than the _____

Solids Liquids and Language

ISSUES asked a Science teacher, who is also a trained ESL teacher, to talk about some of the techniques she uses to ensure that all the pupils in her mixed ability classes are able to learn Science and develop their language skills. She explained:

THE main aim of the work I prepare is that all the pupils in my class are able to a) understand the scientific concepts I'm trying to teach them, b) extend their thinking in a scientific way that will be necessary for concepts they will meet further up the school, and c) develop their language in all areas, in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

WE have mixed ability classes and the bilingual pupils are not withdrawn from my classes. In Science we are able to do a lot of group work and I always make sure that a bilingual pupil who is just beginning to learn English works with either a native English speaker, or with another bilingual child, perhaps with the same mother tongue, who is more fluent in English. Sometimes this means that I have to be quite directive in putting the children in groups, but at other times they're able to work in self-selected groups - it depends on my priorities for that particular lesson.

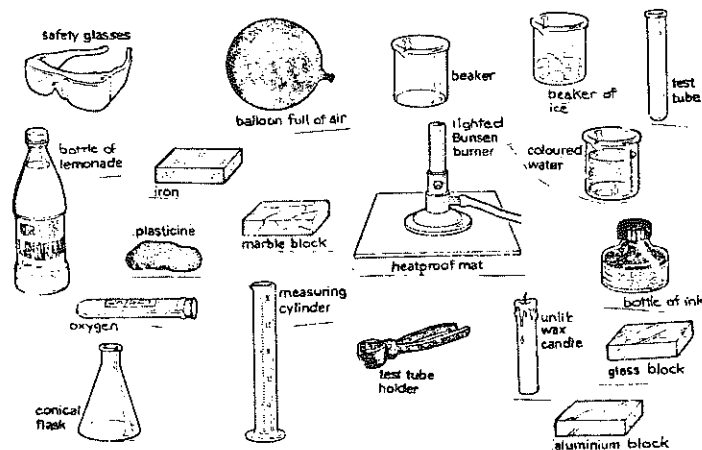
TALK is very important in my lessons and I try to get the pupils to talk about what they already know before I start teaching a topic. For example in the unit on *Solids, Liquids and Gases*, the first activity is to classify a whole range of objects into those three categories before we've even started to talk about properties and definitions. It's quite difficult to give them examples of gases that they'll know but there's certainly a lot of discussion because many of the items fit into two or more categories. This sort of discussion gives the second language learners a lot of language support because the pupils are focussing on a limited range of vocabulary, but such words as 'solid', 'liquid' and 'gas' are constantly being repeated, as are phrases like: '...because it's solid/hard/runny/transparent, etc'. So by the end of this exploratory exercise everyone can pronounce 'solid, liquid and gas', as well as a large number of items. In addition they are able to justify their own classification. This activity is also very valuable for me to assess what prior knowledge the pupils have before I do any input.

MOST of the activities that the pupils do are investigative - as most science is - and I always try to ensure that the activities are demanding intellectually at all levels. Not all the pupils will do all the tasks set, but the more able pupils will have their thinking extended more than the average. One of my main

Instructions

Work in pairs

Look at the picture of each object



You are going to look at what happens to the particles when you mix different types of matter together.

Prediction

Predict what will happen when you mix each of the following amounts of substances. What volume of what do you expect?

Tasks

Now do the experiments which are around the room. Fill in the actual results you get on the chart.

RESULT CHART

	Volume in the first cylinder (cm ³)	Volume in the second cylinder (cm ³)	Predicted Volume when mixed (cm ³)	Actual Volume when mixed (cm ³)
1	25 cm ³ sand	25 cm ³ sand		
2	25 cm ³ sand	25 cm ³ gravel		
3	10 cm ³ salt	40 cm ³ water		
4	10 cm ³ gravel	40 cm ³ water		
5	5 cm ³ water	5 cm ³ water		
6	5 cm ³ water	5 cm ³ alcohol		

concerns is that the pupils should work systematically on a range of activities and I find that writing tasks are often a barrier to this. Therefore I try to use a variety of ways for the pupils to record what they have understood and show they have carried out the activities correctly. In science this is obviously much easier than in some other subjects, and we are able to use a lot of charts, diagrams, tables (both for prediction and for actual results). In addition I use things like sentence sequencing activities so that the pupils have to

Policy (cont.)

- b. It is important to develop the means by which staff can support one another.
- c. A development that is both anti-racist and builds upon cultural diversity will need the particular involvement of those who are most aware of racism and those who have special knowledge and experience of cultural diversity to contribute.
- d. The school or college will want to use the best supports available outside the school.



The most important way staff can SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER is through team teaching with language specialists. SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL should come from language centre staff helping to develop resources; giving advice about particular pupils; advising on appropriate teaching styles for multilingual classrooms.

7. Relationship of the school or college with parents and members of the communities with an interest in the school or college

- a. The school or college needs to acknowledge clearly and openly that it intends to tackle racism.
- b. Parents and others in the communities should be canvassed for their support in the development.
- c. The school or college will then be strengthened in its important role of tackling those who refuse to accept its firm line on racism.

THE RELATIONSHIP needs to develop beyond traditional structures. PTA meetings, elections of parent governors, etc, favour people skilled in English - not necessarily minority group parents.

8. Dissemination of policies and other developments

- a. Positions and policies should be made clear in school brochures and other booklets.
- b. They should be introduced to the pupils or students in assemblies and other gatherings and made reference to as often as needed.
- c. They should be discussed with parents, friends of the school and other 'interest' groups.

DISSEMINATION AND DISCUSSION of anti-racist policies and developments are conducted in English, yet speakers of other languages are among those most affected by racism in our schools.

9. In-service training

- a. Responsibility must be taken for finding out suitable courses and ensuring attendance.
- b. Expertise within the school or college needs to be harnessed to provide on-site seminars and workshops.
- c. London-wide and local resources, human and material, need to be used to add to the school or college expertise.

Schools need to draw up long term IN-SERVICE PROGRAMMES which ensure that all teachers will be able to meet the needs of bilingual children in their classes. This means that everyone will be more aware of the language learning process and the demands made on second language learners by different subjects.

10. Monitoring

- a. Aims and objectives will need to be continually set out.
- b. Appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation, recording achievement as well as registering of opinion, will need to be constructed.

MONITORING is, understandably, a sensitive issue. Full consultation with, and involvement of, minority groups is essential at all stages. This is particularly important when schools undertake language surveys and classify their pupils, often without reference to them or their parents.

Policy(cont.)

4. Staff relationship with pupils and students: attitudes, expectations and treatment

- a. Teachers will need to be well informed of the experience of young people out of school.
- b. Teachers will need to know what are the really significant cultural strengths and perspectives of the families whose children they teach.



Often TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS of students' learning ability are based on response to the way they speak English. The fact that bilingual students need linguistic support does not necessarily mean that they have learning difficulties - they just have a greater amount to learn.

- c. It is essential for us all to become very aware of the ways in which we can collude with or go along with racism without our being conscious of it in our interaction with pupils and students.

Some examples of COLLUDING WITH RACISM:

Arguing that children need to be taught in small withdrawal groups in order that they be protected from large rowdy classrooms. This denies them access to the mainstream curriculum.

Accepting inadequate accommodation and resources for ESL. Provision (never satisfactory) is being disproportionately eroded by cutbacks in spending. There are schools where funding intended to meet the needs of the ESL learners is being used to maintain the school's general staffing level. (The misuse of Section 11 funds has been well documented.)

5. Processes of selection and grouping

In the past ten years, criticism has been made of the educational system charging that it is discriminating against certain pupils and students by unfair processes of selection and grouping. This can occur where there are 'nurture groups', banding or streaming, withdrawal groups and selection of examination groups in secondary school:

- a. It is essential to ensure that no selection of these kinds is affected by conscious or unconscious stereotyping of an ethnic group or black pupils.
- b. It is also important to match any special provision with a clear and accurate diagnosis of why special provision is thought to be needed.
- c. As has been stressed earlier, our knowledge of our pupils and students needs to be free of any false notions of inherent ability based on ethnic or cultural diversity.

ESL learners are particularly vulnerable to discrimination by SELECTION AND GROUPING. They are disproportionately located in remedial groups, non-examination groups, CSE as opposed to O level streams... a classic example of an unfair process of selection would be a test in English which resulted in bilingual pupils being placed in 'remedial' groups and labelled as slow learners. Such a test may say a lot about students' knowledge of English but nothing at all about their ability to learn. Schools should be aware of the risk of increasing pupils' vulnerability to racist attacks by segregating them into WITHDRAWAL GROUPS or 'special' language classes, then siting the classes in a remote part of schools (eg in a prefab in the corner of the playground). This sets the children up as easy targets for attack by racist students cutting lessons and looking for 'fun'.

6. Sharing knowledge and support

- a. The school or college will wish to analyse the contributions that different members (teaching and non-teaching) can make.

It's important to recognise the CONTRIBUTION of bilingual staff, but without exploiting their free time, goodwill and concern for the students.

WE QUOTE BELOW EXTRACTS FROM ILEA'S DRAFT DOCUMENT. OUR SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS (ALONGSIDE) AIM TO MAKE THE DOCUMENT MORE RELEVANT TO THE NEEDS OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

ILEA Policy

1. Ethos and Climate

- a. Assemblies and other group meetings should consistently emphasise the multicultural nature of society and the school or college, underline the aims of equality and, where necessary, tackle the issues and incidents of racialism naturally as being unacceptable.
- b. The displays on walls throughout the buildings should also make a similar emphasis, drawing explicitly on what is important in different cultures including languages.
- c. Meetings with parents should acknowledge the multi-cultural ethos and stress equality of access. Again this emphasis enables issues of racism to be raised naturally.



EQUALITY OF ACCESS can be a myth for minority group parents - especially those who speak English as their second language. Community or home languages should be used to foster genuine two-way communication, ie to let schools know what parents think and want as well as vice versa.

2. The Content and Organisation of the curriculum and resources

- a. Very young children need both an affirmation of the value of people of all colours and cultures and to be helped towards avoidance of stereotypes and misrepresentations which form at a very early age.

AFFIRMATION OF CULTURE involves recognising that language is central to cultural identity. Community languages need to be accepted within the school, libraries, subject departments, class libraries, etc. This demands extra resources.

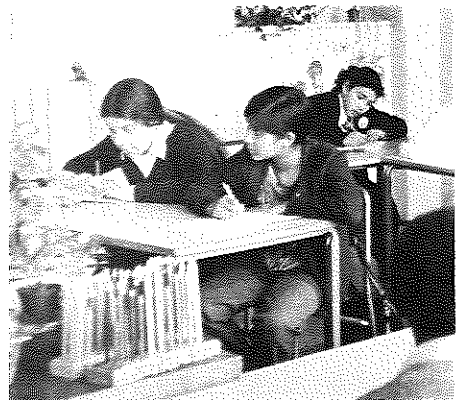
- b. A wide range of content is important but what is essential is that pupils develop the skills to be analytical and to engage in an understanding of cross cultural perspectives and values.
- c. Pupils and students must have opportunities to gain an historical perspective that is free from ethnocentric biases.
- d. The whole curriculum must be open to all so that no sort of restricted access is given to some pupils because of stereotyped views of ability.

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM is particularly restricted for bilingual pupils, unless teachers ensure that the selection of content and resources takes account of the differing language needs of the pupils. The organisation of the curriculum and resources should recognise the role of language in learning.

3. Teacher knowledge and awareness: styles and methods of teaching

It is necessary to consider the organisation of the teaching groups and the best methods of interaction. It means working out how information is best given out and when pupils or students need to work individually, interact in small groups or share in a whole class group:

- a. Time is required for sorting out aims and objectives and selection of themes and content where appropriate.
- b. Teachers' wider set of 'reference' points need to take in both what is common to all people and what is particular to groups and individuals.
- c. It is vital to build in processes of sharing in learning between pupils and students.



By recognising the importance of SMALL GROUP WORK, the document implicitly acknowledges the value of talk in learning. But 'time for sorting out aims and objectives', which is timetabled into the school day will cost the authority money. Cover will need to be provided. This demands a commitment to increased spending.

POLICIES ENCOURAGING - PROVISION SCANDALOUS

GOOD practice in schools needs to be underpinned by supportive policies: both within the school and from the local education authority. *ISSUES* readers will recognise that this is one of our recurring themes.

THE aim of this article is to prompt teachers and administrators to take a serious look at what should be the components of an authority policy on ESL and a school policy on ESL. We have tried to do this by:

- first, quoting at length from a document which describes the inadequacy of provision in North Westminster Community School. This was written by the head, Michael Marland, as part of a report to the school's governors. We are grateful to him for having opened up a much wider debate in such a frank and positive manner.
- Second, we reproduce an edited version of ILEA's draft document listing the elements of a school's work which can be 'very positively engaged in in order to tackle racism and improve education'.

Again, we welcome this as a forthright and positive statement. However, while it confronts most of the areas where racism is prevalent in schools, it lacks detail in terms of practice related to the needs of second language learners, who have been overlooked within mainstream classes and therefore been the victims of institutional racism for too long. We have attempted to supply this detail in the form of comments on and amendments to the original statement.

BY July 1984 all schools in the ILEA will have to send copies of their school policy on tackling racism to the Education Officer, and by September 1984 a review of detailed curriculum policies with reference to their language work. We hope that this section of *ISSUES* will help ensure that the needs of second language learners are not, yet again, ignored or forgotten when schools are drawing up their policy statements on these inter-related issues.

AN EXTRACT FROM 'THE CHALLENGE OF TEACHING PUPILS WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH: THE POSITION OF THE SCHOOL IN THE AUTHORITY' BY MICHAEL MARLAND.

A constant concern of my reports to the Governors has been my unhappiness and that of my colleagues at the E2L situation in the division. Indeed, I have described to officers, inspectors, members, and Governors some aspects of ILEA provision as 'scandalous'. In December 1981 I formally reported to the Governors as follows:

'...the whole question of resourcing E2L needs a new policy. Put simply, the school cannot keep asking for more resources in every aspect of its work. In other aspects of the curriculum it is our decision as to whether we teach this or that, and our decision how we arrange our resources. That is the proper professional decision delegated by the Authority to the school. However, there is no curriculum choice over E2L: if the pupil cannot speak English, we have to teach it...

AT the moment there are ten pupils waiting for places in the school: we have the places but not the E2L strength. Some of these are cases which are especially hard, eg two orphan girls, a family with siblings in the school, others who live very close indeed.

WITH regret I have to say that despite the commitment of the ILEA to multi-cultural education, I and my colleagues in the school cannot:

sense a policy towards the teaching of English as a second language which recognises the reality of the situation. The DI (Divisional Inspector) has been trying for a long time, and the multi-ethnic inspectorate are most interested and encouraging. However, there is as yet no solution.

THEY declared us to be 1.5 below strength by the Authority's formula for the pupils we had then. We were then authorised one extra teacher for two terms only...

WITHIN the school our problems, briefly are:

- (i) E2L staff over-pressed;
- (ii) Other subject teachers and tutors having difficulty teaching classes with E2L pupils;
- (iii) Inadequate continuation work with more advanced students;
- (iv) Very heavy pressure on office and pastoral staff resulting from frequent admissions from non-English speaking families;
- (v) Future planning made difficult by uncertainties of staffing.

OUTSIDE the school we know there are a number of children not yet placed in schools...

I continue to be very distressed by the overall inadequacy of policy and provision in an aspect of education in which an individual school cannot go it alone. Work in one school depends heavily on broader policies in the Division and the Authority ...

in pairs and small groups, sometimes directed by the teacher to maintain mixed ability and language levels and sometimes self-selected depending on the nature of the task. The classes are invited to mess around with the text, to see it as negotiable not sacred. Other areas of work that have proved popular and useful have been those that look at the 'voices' in a poem, sorting out who is speaking to whom, and exercises which draw attention to oppositions within a poem, for instance, outside/inside, cold/hot and so on. These last two areas not only generate lively discussion and provide useful approaches to language, they also make the supposedly more sophisticated requirements of the literature exam syllabuses far more manageable for everybody, by providing ways of dealing with those fairly meaningless concepts such as 'tone' and 'style'.

STUDENTS have also enjoyed preparing group readings of a poem. The discussion that ensues about how you divide a poem between readers to dramatise it effectively involves considerable analysis. I have seen second language learners involved in Eliot's *Macavity the Mystery Cat*, a poem with a lot of difficult language, but also a strong

detective story line. Students with very little English can be incorporated in a group exercise like this and given line(s) to read, whereas it is unlikely that they would be able or willing to undertake even a small part in a class play.

LASTLY one example of a very simple poem which can be used either on its own or in the context of a 'Myself/Ourselves' project is by A A Milne:

When I was one
I had just begun.

When I was two
I was _____

When I was _____
I was _____

and so on. Students who work quickly can then continue using the structure provided and go right up to *Now I am twelve*. A lot of language development and talk is involved, and how much less daunting a task for a second language learner than being asked to 'Write about yourself up to now'!

Jean Gould

...from different cultures

THE work described here - which was done with a leavers' class in a secondary language centre - was sparked off by one of the students bringing in her own copy of *Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty*.

FROM then on we had fairly regular poetry readings (in a variety of languages) and discussions about the poems in English. First, some of the students wanted to read their poem to the class and this often gave the group the opportunity to talk about rhythm. Then the reader would paraphrase the poem into English, and we would talk about the kinds of things the poet might have wanted us to think about. The students wrote their poems out for display - and then wrote down their paraphrases and simple criticisms in English.

AS a starting point for imaginative and critical writing in English there are obvious advantages:

- bilingual students are given the chance to demonstrate a knowledge of their own culture and literary heritage to the teacher and to other students;
- students work on their own favourite poems - ones with which they are very familiar and which genuinely excite and move them;
- the focus can be on the students' interpretation of poems, on discussing the implied meanings and comparing the way different poets deal with similar

themes. It is necessary to practise all of these to succeed with CSE work, yet if only poems in English are used as stimuli, bilingual students, at an early stage of learning English, risk falling at the first fence - grasping only the initial surface understanding of what a poem is about.

M. Oliphant

The image shows a collage of handwritten Arabic text and a diagram. The diagram depicts a person sitting at a desk with a lamp, looking at a book. The text is in Arabic script, with some parts underlined or highlighted. There is a small box with the word 'Stranger' in English. The overall theme is related to the poem 'The Stranger' by M. Oliphant.

A new look at poetry

SOMEONE from the Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi community, during a discussion about how the state sector might begin to meet the needs of Bangladeshi youth in its schools, used the Greenham Common experience as an analogy. I repeat it here because I think it is a perspective which can teach us a great deal. Sympathetic commentators on, and participants in the mass protests by women against the nuclear base at Greenham all recognise that a qualitatively different form of organisation and political protest has been unleashed. It is not that women have developed new skills or aptitudes, but that a particular conjuncture has enabled women to express themselves effectively and creatively. Just as traditional forms of male organisation have hampered the full development of women, so the ethnocentric assumptions and practices of our education service militate against full and active participation of ethnic minorities.

ONE secondary school English department has made a start by looking at the relevance of lower school poetry for second language learners from the sub-continent. In a tradition of English Literature and literary criticism which has elevated the writer as inspired individual transcending her, or usually his, society, poetry has been revered as the most complex and esoteric literary product. So it may be seen as a form which is too linguistically and conceptually complex to use with pupils in the early stages of second language acquisition. In practice, as we all know really, forms of story-telling using rhyme, rhythm, metre and so on are wide spread and by no means the province of the elitist English graduate.

FOR second language learners poetry has several advantages. Not only does its sound and rhythm carry echoes of an oral tradition, but its appearance as text on the page is reassuring. It looks manageable, has relatively short lines and is usually broken up in stanzas which provide units of meaning. Secondly it provides students with a range of structures within the language to support learning. Poetry is often repetitious, both of words and phrases and of clause and sentence structures, but how much more interesting to work on repeated structures that actually enhance meaning and effectiveness of language rather than the boredom and irrelevance of language drills.

THIRDLY poetry encourages close listening and discrimination of sounds, particularly through fun exercises focussing on rhyme and half rhyme. It also helps students to enter those areas of language which can seem impenetrable in a second language, figurative usage, language of emotions, atmosphere and so on. Something like the conditional can be great fun if it's in the framework of a poetry cloze or a sequencing game.

THE work that teachers have developed in one school with a largely bilingual population has not only meant that poetry can be taught across all levels of language and ability, but also that poetry has become very popular in the lower school, and who knows, it may even stay that way right up to the fifth year!

MUCH of the work consists of cloze, completion and sequencing exercises. Students are always encouraged to work

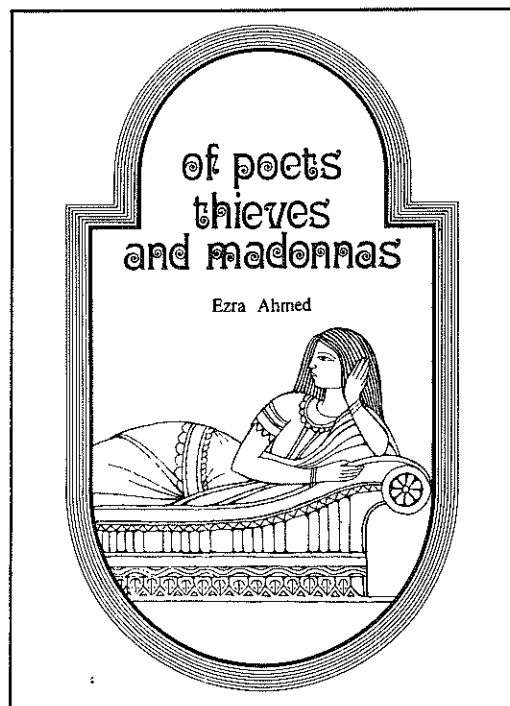
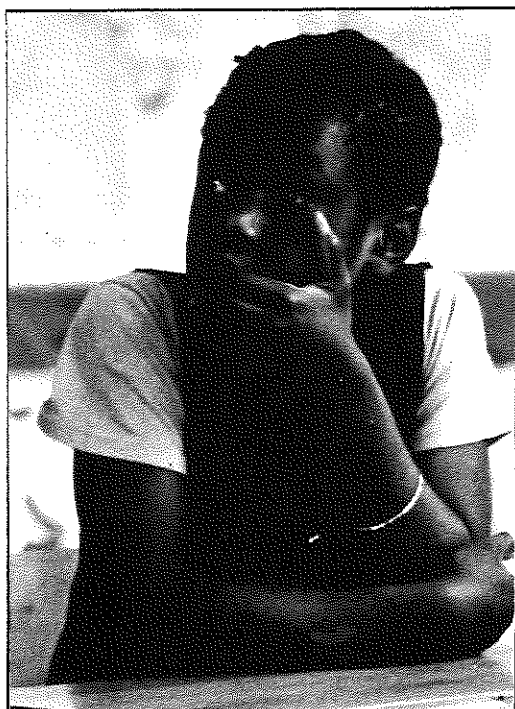


photo: Cambridge-shire College of Arts & Technology

A book of poems written by a young poet who chooses to use English rather than his mother tongue, Bengali. Copies available from: Hena Ahmed, Myrdle Street AEI, Myrdle Street, London E1. Price £2.50.



THE materials we gave the kids were a lot better thought out - that's partly because when you're team-teaching you can't afford to be sloppy - but also because I took the language element more seriously - or became more aware of the language demands on the kids. Mind you that's a phrase of ESL-speak that I've got from the ESL teacher.

WE had problems with making the materials - time to think about them and money to reproduce them. It's hard in a department that's unconvinced about the relevance of ESL work in the mainstream, to justify what they see as additional expenditure in the face of ever-increasing anxiety about apparently endlessly diminishing resources. In reality in my English department there is a very simple truth - if ESL provision is really to be taken seriously we must have the money to resource it - without that it's all hot air, it's just tokenism.

What difference did your work make to the way your classroom operates?

SINCE the ESL teacher started working with me, I've put greater emphasis on collaborative work - verbal as well as written. I think this is partly because with two teachers in the class it's so much easier to develop a situation where you aren't always trying to be at the front, talking to the kids - it's easier to let them talk. More importantly I'm now beginning to recognise that phrases like 'collaborative learning' and 'the importance of talk' aren't ethereal phrases from fashionable universities that threaten my authority in the classroom, but are central to the language development of the kids. This is also a question of class size. I know I couldn't allow kids to talk and express themselves so freely in a class where there were thirty of them.

MIND you I don't want to give the impression that we've found the solution to the problem of white racist English speaking kids using their immeasurably greater level of confidence in talking English, to intimidate and exclude our Bangladeshi pupils. That's much more to do with the ESL kids organising themselves in the school so they have the confidence to stand up for themselves - whatever language problems stand in their way. That needs support from both the school and the community.

So what did the ESL learners gain from this work?

WELL, I find it hard to assess the effect on them. We both want them to be more confident, and they certainly feel more at ease in the classroom because they've got two teachers in there who are trying to help them. They trust that we are working for them even though they occasionally can't catch the meaning - say when we talk about racism. You've got to have that trust but you need more - you've got to be able to build on that with real help - with materials. In our case we got their trust and a situation developed where they were listened to for the first time, but that's only the beginning. We must now provide the language support so that they can take advantage of the opportunities to participate. It's taken us a long time to establish at last a formal respect from the white kids (all of whom are more or less overtly racist) to the ESL kids. For example it took us two months to make the word 'Paki' feel out of place. So I suppose I'm saying that in terms of their language development I'm not sure where they are but at least now they've got space in the class to speak and work, if we can continue to provide the right sort of support for them.

Space to speak and work

ISSUES interviewed a mainstream English teacher who had been team-teaching a second year class with an ESL teacher.

Why did you take up the offer to work with the ESL teacher?

I WAS aware that our department had only superficial links with ESL and I thought that wasn't enough, either practically or theoretically. Practically, unless the ESL and English departments know what each other are doing, the kids miss out on the continuity of the English lessons. Also most English teachers have no expertise in teaching ESL pupils, as it's not part of our initial training. It was also important as part of the anti-racist offensive in the school. There's been much staff discussion about this but little has happened in the classrooms. You see in mainstream lessons the white kids need to see that the teacher is concerned with the learning of the ESL kids - most of our ESL kids are Bangladeshi - so it is a sort of positive discrimination in front of the white kids. From the teacher's side it is also necessary to break down the division between, what in my school they call, 'the Paki teacher' and 'real' teachers.

I HOPED that the ESL kids would relate to me as a mainstream teacher and a supportive ally both for their learning as well as against the racism they confront daily from both staff and other pupils.

What did you decide to work on?

THE English department had decided that each class in the second year would read a class reader each half term, so we decided to work together on the books. We chose books which raise the issues of oppression - racism and sexism. This gave us continuity week by week. You see only having two lessons a week to work together, it was important for the kids to see a particular focus for the week. Using the class reader meant that everyone in the class read it together even though the ESL kids were sometimes given different worksheets.

THIS focus on a book was also a way of putting pressure on other members of the department because we provided them with the materials we had made. They would probably use these materials since they would have to do the same book with their groups, and they were more likely to accept materials that were firmly context-based, than straight language materials which they wouldn't know how to use.

Were there any problems in setting up the work?

WELL, the personal element was quite important. It's difficult for some teachers to let others see that they 'fail' in the classroom sometimes. But it's important to be honest about that and know that you can work with someone who recognises the difficulties of some secondary classes and is supportive.

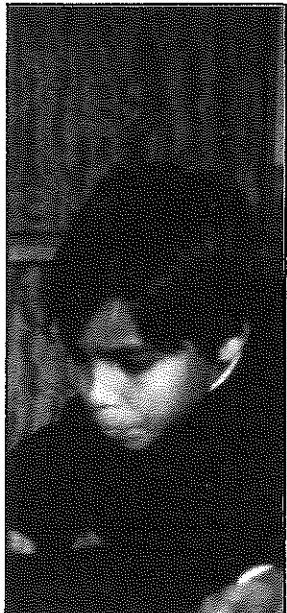
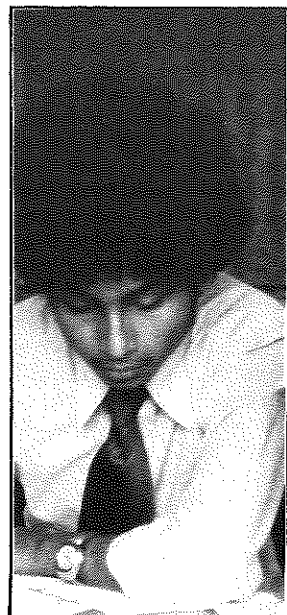
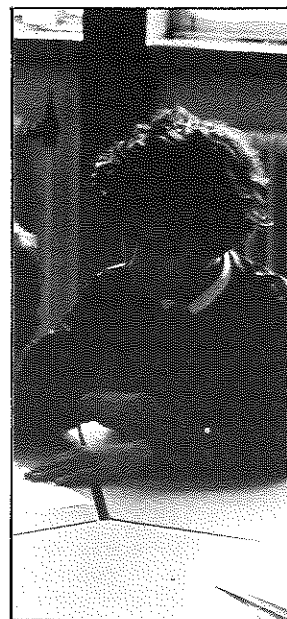
A BIG problem was lack of time available to develop the work. If schools are serious about providing education for their ESL pupils in the mainstream, then that obviously has to be reflected in the timetable. Teachers must have the time to be able to work together, and the point of doing it is not just to produce materials, but to share each other's expertise. We ended up having to work together at weekends and in the pub after school, because the timetable didn't allow for that during school hours.

What have you learnt from working with the ESL teacher?

IT'S made me a lot more interested in working with ESL kids. I've become aware that I need a more rigorous understanding of the difficulties the ESL kids face. I'd like to be able to read the essays in the same way as the ESL teacher and be able to identify the areas where they need help - even those kids who have been in Britain for ages, as some of my 5th year have been. These kids are in a sort of 'grey' area between ESL provision and mainstream English provision, and it's very hard for me as a mainstream teacher to identify their problems with English and know how I can help them. The ESL teacher was able to convince me of the enormous task that an ESL learner has to take on when s/he is learning English. This awareness has also made me more conscious of what the native English speakers are also dealing with in schools. I now feel I'm able to help them when things go wrong - especially those kids who don't speak or write bourgeois English.

Has this knowledge made a difference to the kinds of materials you offer the kids?

I THINK now my materials focus more on the actual language known by the kids and they try to bridge the gap between the actuality and what school demands of them. It has decreased my sense of powerlessness because I now understand those problems can be tackled and I would now like to get some in-service training to take that on properly.



cooperation is yet to be fully negotiated. It will develop slowly, be as much about teachers learning to work together and respect each other as about children learning to do so, about organising classrooms as about designing assignments. And it involves risk.

SOME teachers have already begun as is evident from the articles in this issue of *ISSUES*. As further evidence of the value that lies in taking risks, here is what Ann Burgess (specialist language teacher) and Leon Gore (mainstream English teacher) write about their collaboration in a boys' secondary school in Brent.

OUR first task was to arrive at a way of working together. It would have been very easy for the specialist language teacher to sit in one corner of the room with the second language learners, following the lead of the mainstream English teacher, but (in our circumstances) we could see only how that kind of joint teaching would reinforce differences and even harden attitudes against second language learners.

We needed to establish a way of working which would act as an example to the pupils. The specialist language teacher has to be seen as equal to the mainstream teacher by the pupils within the classroom. It was therefore important to work towards our roles becoming interchangeable. Planning lessons together (and not just one teacher following the other's lead) was one of the most important factors in enabling us to function within the classroom as equals. As important was the decision that second language learners would attempt the same tasks as the rest of the mixed ability class. However, if there was to be no special work for the second language learners to do, then we had to take special care that the tasks set would be accessible to them and that we organised the lessons so that the best support possible was available to them. Such support consists of group work, pair work, talking through with the teacher, being in contact with a range of different models of writing, careful teacher introductions, support lessons.

A THIRD element in our success is the place we give to talk in our work. Talk

means interaction and a seeking towards collaboration. What has become salient for us is that this mode of working together, of collaborative learning, is a mode and an attitude of mind that needs to permeate not only pupil-pupil interactions but also those between teachers and pupils, teacher and pupil and teachers and teachers.

...working in groups with the teachers acting as consultants as well as leading the class or working in support groups became our principle mode of working. Second language learners then had access both to pupil-teacher talk and pupil-pupil talk.

WE discovered, too, that we had to think hard about the composition of groups if our aims were to be achieved ... the working groups (had to be) mixed ability, mixed experiences, mixed first and second language users of English and, crucially, multi-ethnic...

...we took the risk of composing working groups ourselves; the pupils would not have free choice of who they worked with. Not unnaturally, there was some initial resistance to such an imposition, but our basic relationship with the class was good, and they recognised that we were very determined. If not by magic, nevertheless an increasingly notable feature of the class was the growth of good relations and racial harmony. The fact is that the very strategies of openness, interaction and support which we were developing for second language learners were equally applicable to the rest of the mixed ability class. It was an unlooked for, but critical benefit of what happened when we looked for ways of teaching second language learners (that worked better than withdrawal from the mainstream): we have improved our teaching and learning processes to a point where we believe our tactics can play a part not only in school learning, but also in countering racism in education.(3)

AND, perhaps one should add, they are doing so by granting equality to each other's experience and expertise, and negotiating from there.

Josie Levine

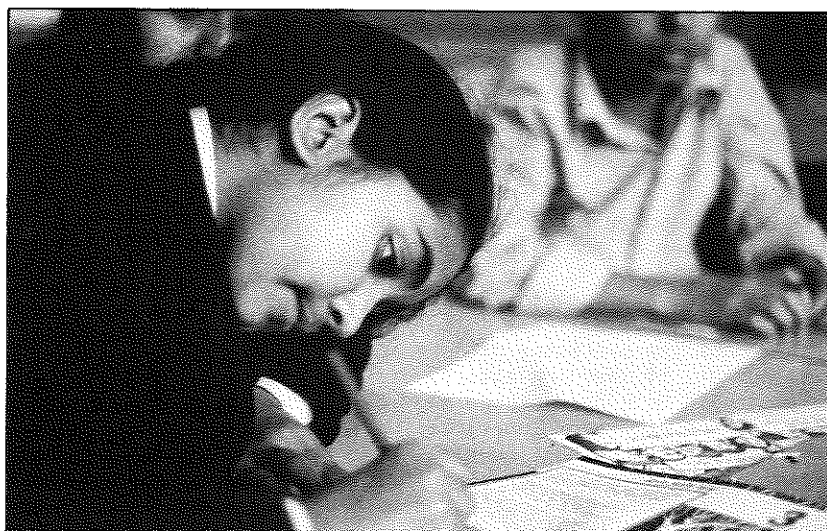
(3) Ann Burgess & Leon Gore are members of the 'Second Language Learners and Mainstream Curriculum' Group of Schools Council Programme 3 Activities - Language for Learning. This quotation is from their contribution to the group's book which is currently being written. Further information from Josie Levine, English Dept, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1.



which hang over what is available in specialist withdrawal provision are at least as serious as those which hang over the uncaring mainstream class. Most serious though is the fact that even if all withdrawal provision teaching caught up with the best practice which has been developed within it, it would still not fulfil children's learning and language learning needs. Even if it all became, overnight, communicatively based and attended centrally to the content of the curriculum, and every language teacher was capable of staging accessible learning tasks which brought the learner close to the conditions for natural language learning, withdrawal would still remain an instrument of isolation. No one teacher can 'do' the whole curriculum. The children still have to 'go back' to the mainstream. The special class protects them from (rather than helps them to cope with) the complexities of society as they are mirrored in the community of the school.

FOR these reasons, specialist language teachers with a communicative approach to language learning, mainstream teachers who are developing an anti-racist, anti-sexist and class-conscious education, mainstream teachers who are committed to and experienced in the practice of mixed ability teaching and work with the need for all learners, for example, to talk their way to understanding - all agree that second language learners should be in the mainstream. Other mainstream teachers, often less explicit about the issues of race, gender and class and often less aware of the role of language in learning are moving the same way. They want to know how to teach their subjects better. They may have once believed that the children should learn the language first, before joining the mainstream class, and that when they did know enough English they would easily be able to take part in ordinary schooling. But not any more. They have seen the results, both for themselves and for the children, of leaving them unattended on the edges of their classes, and do not like being party to creating failure.

OF course, like every mainstream teacher, they do not have to argue for second language learners being in their classrooms. They are already there. (What is conveniently forgotten when support is lent to off-site withdrawal is that it is either part-time or very short term, or both.) The fact is that second language learners have never not been in mainstream classes - it is only as if that had been so. What is central in the debate is not whether or not to withdraw but how far teachers will be able to accept and then engineer the changes necessary to make classrooms better learning environments for everyone. Mixed ability? Bilingual? Talk as a central learning mode? How far, too, will teachers be able to collaborate? How far will they be able to understand



each other's very different starting points? How far will they be able to work their ways towards each other's experience? For despite the innovative nature of this work, the experience is there to learn from.

THESE are questions we should ask of everyone, but because they have been given a crucial role to play in initiating the changes, specialist language teachers must make sure they are included among the teachers of whom these questions are asked. There is a full, responsible and necessary task requiring diplomacy and tact. It is absolutely vital that because of their special role they do not collude with circumstance to reinforce the idea that all the wisdom about how to make the responses (even all the wisdom about language and language demands in the school) rests within the tradition of this single specialism. If they do, they will be trapped again in the impossible expectation of trying to do by themselves something which intrinsically cannot be done by one set of people.

MIXED ability, multilingual, multicultural mainstream classrooms (with given and negotiated curricula) are very complex places. There is expertise and knowledge at work within them that are crucial to creating the pro-learning environment we are talking about.

THE language specialist's expertise is needed. So is content knowledge of subjects and an understanding of how to set challenging and yet accessible assignments that leave space for learners to develop their own ways of thinking and talking about topics and expressing their own views, that encourage interaction with people as well as engagement with texts.

FEW teachers at present know all this from within their own experience, that is why the nature of teacher collaboration is central to success in learning to support second language learners in mainstream classes. The agenda for

(2) Brumfit & Johnson, *The Communicative Approach in Language Teaching*, OUP, 1979.

Dulay & Burt: "You Can't Learn without Goofing" in Richards, J: *Error Analysis - Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*, Longman, 1976.

Krashen, S: *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Pergamon, 1982.

Krashen, Dulay & Burt: *L2*, OUP, 1982.

'Going back' to the mainstream

THE debate about how best to support second language learners in both their learning and their language learning comes to us as a debate about whether or not to withdraw the learners from the mainstream of schooling.

It is a curious issue for us to maintain as central, since all that is currently known about the processes of language development, of learning itself, of the relationship between language and learning, of the growth of intergroup understandings, tells us that developing bilinguals, like all other school students, should be following the mainstream curriculum in mixed ability classes where talk and interaction are central to the learning and teaching that goes on. (1)

THE need for a strong form of withdrawal has been argued on the grounds that the conditions which have just been sketched are rarely found, that most mainstream classrooms are experienced by second language learners as places of incomprehension and racism. What this argument slides over, however, is the fact that special language classes can be equally poor places of learning: neither the children nor the teachers have access to a wide enough curriculum, socially the children are ghettoised, and the specialist provision (with honorable exceptions) is too much based in the teaching of linguistic structures in isolation from the natural contexts in which they occur. This was once standard practice in foreign language teaching. When lessons are well learned people get to know quite a lot about the language they are learning but usually only learn to use it when they have the opportunity to be in the country where that language is spoken and to interact with native speakers of the language. Plainly, in

situations like ours, where the language being learned and its skills have to be put to immediate, even simultaneous use, both for social and educational purposes, such a teaching method is not appropriate. We have seen that if youngsters in this country are to do themselves justice in school, the best language learning will take place when we can arrange for them to learn and practise the language they are learning in communication and interaction with other speakers of that language as they engage on the subject matter of school, ie in real contexts in which the language is used; furthermore, where they can do this without being barred from use of their mother tongues. (2)

THE pro-withdrawal argument fails to articulate two other education-linked issues: first, the means by which we organise our teaching and, second, the strategies we adopt for teaching.

AT one time, withdrawal provision seemed right because it fitted so well with the remedial organisation already in existence. But, it further went unchallenged because it fitted so well with both the need of mainstream teachers 'to get on with their normal work' (how could they when there were people in the class who couldn't speak English?) and with language-structure teaching strategies, (these being different work from normal teaching). There was no question of devising organisational strategies and a pedagogy from observations and understanding of learners' needs and processes. Teachers' needs were prior.

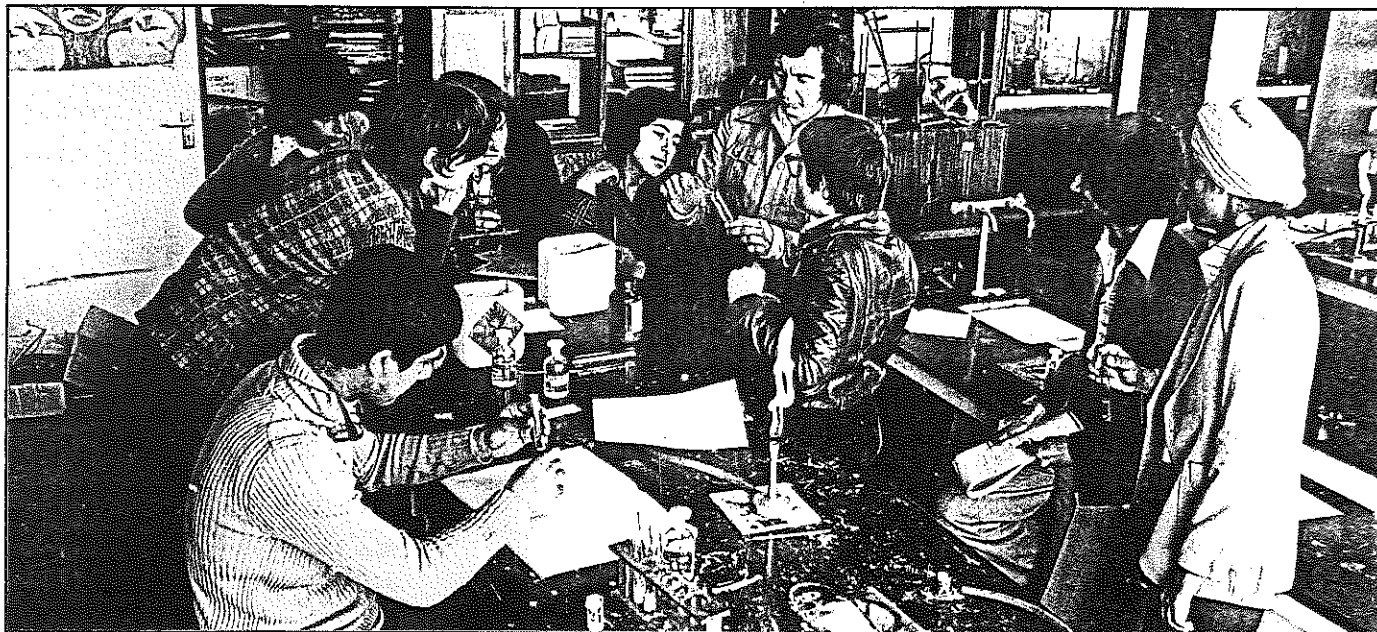
IN other words, questions about racism, about access to the curriculum, about what motivates organisation in schools, even about language learning, all of

[1] Barnes, D: *From Communication to Curriculum*, Penguin, 1976.

Barnes & Todd: *Communication and Learning in Small Groups*, RKP, 1977. HMSO: *Aspects of Secondary Education in England and Wales*, Chapter 6 'Language', 1979.

Martin, N, et al, *Writing and Learning*, Ward Lock, 1976.

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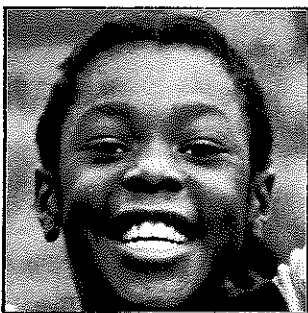
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