

ESRC Seminar Series: Complementary Schools: Research, Policy and Practice Goldsmiths and King's College London

Seminar 3 (November 12 2009): University of Birmingham

Professional Development: Teachers and Curriculum

Focusing on: professional training for complementary school teachers; the national quality framework and code of practice for complementary school teachers; innovation in curriculum development and classroom practices in complementary schools; inter-relationships between teaching and learning styles and philosophies in complementary schools and mainstream schools; the National Languages Strategy and Specialist Language Colleges, significance of Asset Languages.

This report covers sessions on:

Professional development for complementary school teachers: What the teachers say

Olga Barradas, Bhavna Bhatt, Yadi Luo

Teachers' Imagining and Enacting: Educating for bilingualism Ofelia García

Links across sectors: TDA projects Hugh Baldry

Community-Based Sites of Learning in Wisconsin: Programs, practices and issues Margaret Hawkins, Kathy Nicoletti and Jane Zuengler

National perspectives and local innovations Kelly Badwal, Sarah Cartwright, Charmian Kenner

Professional development for complementary school teachers: What the teachers say

Bhavna Bhatt (Jalaram Bal Vikas School and St. Barnabas Church of England Primary School), Olga Barradas (Ministério da Educação/Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros – Coordenação do Ensino, London), Yadi Luo (Harlow Chinese Community School)

Bhavna is a teacher in Gujarati complementary school and teaching assistant in primary school. She has many opportunities for government-funded professional development in mainstream, but complementary school runs its own sessions without funding. Bhavna takes her *training* from mainstream into comp school, eg ICT, Better Reading, behaviour management. She takes her *culture* from comp into mainstream, eg running Bollywood Dance Club, interpreting.

Olga showed a video of 3 teachers from classes funded by Portuguese Ministry of Education (1 primary, 2 secondary) expressing their desire to link with mainstream to understand curriculum and pedagogy and share resources, in order to support pupils with widely diverse language skills.

Yadi teaches in Chinese comp school and is doing PGCE for Community Languages at Goldsmiths. Course has given her creative new strategies to take into comp school, eg activity-based lessons such as buying fruit and vegetables in the market. She now uses a bilingual approach so students can make links between English and Chinese.

Teachers Imagining and Enacting: Education for bilingualism

Ofelia Garcia, The City University of New York, USA

Bilingualism has become 'the B word' in US – decline in bilingual education programmes. No Child Left Behind programme aims for every pupil to be proficient in English by 2013 – but what about constant immigration? However, dual-language schools (eg where children from English-speaking and Spanish-speaking backgrounds learn together in both languages) have increased to 3.6%.

Imagine that children's languages and cultural practices could be valued in all settings. In this imagining, complementary schools play an important role as a 'safe space' for children. Should be linked with mainstream schools – rather than being 'two solitudes'. Cummins' theoretical work on language interdependence and common underlying proficiency shows bilingual children are not two monolinguals in one. Rather, they are drawing from multiple cultural repertoires. Vivian Cook talks of 'multi-competence' coming from knowledge of two languages in the same mind.

'Dynamic bilingualism' means 'using/doing' languages, ie 'linguaging', rather than 'having' languages. Previously bilingualism was conceptualised as 'subtractive' (losing a language' or 'additive' (gaining one). But situation is now much more complex. English is no longer the vernacular in New York City – most children speak other languages at home and switch between these and English. Previously concept of bilingualism as a bicycle – try to balance both wheels ie languages. Comp school teachers often frustrated that can't get other wheel balanced. Rather, should imagine an all terrain vehicle, always unbalanced, but wheels adapt to each new terrain.

'Complementary' – how conceptualise this term? Comp and mainstream can be seen as two primary colours - placing them next to each other makes each brighter and more intense.

What is special about comp schools? They are a sociopolitical act, giving more access to equity, expecting more of children. Shouldn't just take over testing from mainstream, but develop fair assessment using observations, conferencing, what child can do in real-life situation. Need language tolerance and translanguaging in classrooms, so that children can use different repertoires.

'Translanguaging' (original concept developed by Colin Williams in Wales): bilingual or multilingual practices for sense-making. Allow use of two languages in classroom, side by side. Fits with children's needs, eg quote from child: 'Spanish runs my heart, English rules my veins.' Learn faster if can connect to personal experience via Spanish – eg of child who arrived in US with only a few words of English, but by using both languages, in a few months could produce whole texts in English too. Need to involve children in sense-making through multiple discursive practices: active reading, speaking, writing.

Links across sectors Hugh Baldry, TDA

'World Languages' concept refers to all languages, including English. Need to improve status of lesser-taught languages in mainstream schools, plus qualifications for teachers. Eg of Mandarin teacher, qualified in China – could exchange teaching observations with Spanish teacher in same secondary school. Currently not happening, because non-European languages relegated to 'end of the corridor'. Little understanding of their importance, or that different languages may need different teaching strategies.

Need to offer more languages – eg through federation of schools. How provide more teachers in different languages, when there is not always enough demand for their language in a school? They could teach another subject as well, eg maths teacher who also does Urdu. When training, could have mentors from any background for most school subjects, plus language mentor.

Need to integrate languages into whole curriculum. Eg primary school children can learn French through themes linked to National Curriculum, such as 'Celebrations'. Could be done in comp schools too. Share topics and pedagogy, raise status of comp schools. No simple solutions – recognise complexity of different levels that teachers face in comp schools.

New dynamic – faith schools teaching Arabic, Urdu, Hebrew. Need teachers and curricula for these languages too.

World Languages consultation: www.tda.gov.uk/worldlanguages. Now depends on next Govt.

Questions to Ofelia and Hugh raised several issues:

- How can we develop a translanguaging pedagogy?
- Important not to pathologise pedagogies in comp schools – they are necessarily diverse?
- Lack of resources– lots of direction and commentary from central and local Govt, little practical help
- What languages will be given a space in the curriculum? Depends on political agendas, eg Mandarin favoured over Cantonese

Themes emerging from discussion groups

Which languages?

Participant from the US asks what we mean by World Languages? In US, World Language Education means any language other than English. 'Less commonly taught languages' have become important for security purposes – now have funding and materials development. But what about other languages with few speakers – who will learn them? And what if some govts pour in resources – may be laden with other political agendas.

British govt agenda also affects language policy – Foreign Office supports Mandarin for economic/political reasons, whereas Cantonese is more widely spoken here. A Joint International Unit works across Depts but with no dedicated Minister, so actions are taken without consulting others. In general, voices of Ministers on languages are getting fainter. Meanwhile Home Office doesn't mention multilingualism – focuses on English for citizenship test. The media affects Ministers more than civil servants, and has created notion that if don't speak English, can't be a citizen.

Power structures and funding/resources

Need to lobby MPs to get a govt minister/official with responsibility for complementary schools. Funding needed from central and local govt for training and resources in the sector. Should be a requirement for primary and secondary schools to make links with complementary sector, and share resources and training. Can be part of community cohesion, Every Child Matters focus on 'whole child', and agenda to narrow the gaps in achievement. New report due from DCSF-funded study on whether children attending comp schools do better in mainstream. Need to win 'hearts and minds' of headteachers. Eg of Head who gave premises to Urdu school on Sundays, and gradually integrated them into mainstream assemblies and activities. Our Languages project case studies show other successes.

Resources in short supply for comp sector. Teachers have to make difficult choices about which courses to take. Curriculum Guides (CILT/Nuffield funded) produced by Goldsmiths for community languages are excellent resource – need more languages!

Mainstream could also make better use of resources already in comp schools – eg could be sites for teacher training, or a ‘beacon school’ for others. Links into Languages is new govt-funded organisation, keen for comp sector to get involved.

Pedagogies

Does there have to be just one way of teaching? Euro-centric - some groups want to pass on cultural approaches to pedagogy. Alternative perspectives fostered by comp schools (eg Francis Drake seen not as ‘hero’ but as ‘pirate’) may be written out and silenced by incorporation into mainstream? The curriculum is never neutral. Integration vs interference? What place for open dialogue? These issues need to be raised in context of mainstream teacher education too!

Mainstream and comp sector both need to explore new approaches such as ‘flexible bilingualism’. Through translanguaging, need to develop pedagogy that really uses the linguistic resources young people have in daily life. CLIL (content and language integrated learning), eg geography taught through a language, is an approach that involves joined-up thinking. All lessons need pace, structure, content and objectives, but can be taught in different ways.

Every Language Matters report recognises need to provide more teachers of community languages. Now idea of building ‘content-free framework’ which can be adapted to all languages. And widening range of people who can teach languages, eg higher level teaching assistants. Problematic nature of some of the language around the credentials and qualifications of comp school teachers. Time limit for obtaining QTS if not UK trained.

Example from Pakistan: all teachers need to be multilingual (own language, Urdu as national language, and English) and are brought together across country for professional development. Online courses often used too. Could also be used in UK, eg Open School for Learning is an online community.

Community-based sites of learning in Wisconsin: Programmes, practices and issues

Margaret Hawkins, Kathy Nicoletti and Jane Zuengler, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

‘Out-of-school’ learning in community centres for low-income housing where largest ethnic groups are African-American, Hmong, Latino/a. Programmes with youth/family services, including homework clubs, ICT, empowerment. ‘Community’ means geographical area for estates of townhouses with defined entry/exit point. Community centre a fluid space – can pop in and out. ‘Safe space’ from threats from nearby gangs.

After-school session where each age group gets one hour on computers. Some surveillance eg if games involving guns. Supposed to tell co-ordinator if have homework to do, but often child can’t fill them in on vital details. Interesting to see variety of activities developed by children.

After-school project with young people from different backgrounds: Hmong, African American, White, Latino. Attend same schools but self-segregate by ethnicity. Racial tensions high both in school and setting. Aim was to get students to collaborate on long-term project. Task: design an after-school activity for primary school children – has to be fun, engaging, help children do better in school, reflect languages/cultures/interests of children. Met every Friday evening for six months, with help from university students. Designed computer game as maze with nine rooms, each themed with task cards – story involving children selves.

Promoted talk between young people from different backgrounds – challenged stereotypes each held of the other. Freely used multiple varieties of home language and English. Other kids started to ask Hmong kids how to speak Hmong. Valued project: ‘here it’s like you could let your inside out.’

Questions raised by research:

- How can teaching and learning be culturally and linguistically responsive? Who learns from whom?
- What can community sites do that schools cannot? (as well as supporting schools)
- Complexifies notions of identity and ethnicity – children using each other’s languages

National Quality Framework and code of practice for complementary school teachers

Kelly Badwal, National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRC)

Thought to be around 6-8,000 comp schools in England - NRC in touch with around 2,000. When a comp school joins NRC, commits to achieving Code of Practice, and registers to work towards Quality Framework - c.300 schools part of QF. Levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Distinction. Covers range of areas - lots of work around CRB (child protection). Higher levels include self-evaluation, action plan, portfolio. Peer assessment of portfolios.

Via NRC, schools receive support and training from mentor (has usually worked in local authority, eg Ethnic Minority Achievement Service) and regional adviser. NRC also works with local authorities to make links *between* supplementary schools.

NRC recognizes that different learning environment may be positive help to children not doing well in mainstream, eg maths teaching done in different ways in different countries. Important to make comp school pedagogies effective.

Comp schools can use QF recognition to go to mainstream and say ‘We’ve covered everything, there’s no reason for you not to work with us.’ Plus get more recognition from funders.

National Languages Strategy: the role of Specialist Language Colleges and the significance of Asset Languages Sarah Cartwright, CILT

National Languages Strategy (NLS) promotes languages in primary – 10% of primary schools now teaching Mandarin. However, Rose report could narrow choice of languages since emphasises

continuity with secondary school. Language Colleges at secondary level (now 390 in number, mostly in SE) are supposed to be working with surrounding communities and promoting community cohesion. In secondary, personalised learning agenda could also stimulate languages.

Asset Languages has done a great job in widening range of languages that can now be officially assessed (25 initially). Fits the test to the bilingual speaker – separate tests for different skills, plus can choose test that suits your level, regardless of age. Mainstream should be promoting Asset and paying for assessment.

DCSF operates via tendered projects with limited time-scale. Our Languages (major national project on links between mainstream and comp schools) was one of these. Did show a commitment to sector, and Our Languages partnership toolkit has received intense interest by senior management in schools due to community cohesion agenda – but what happens when project finishes?

Mainstream/community partnerships: exchanging teaching strategies Charmian Kenner, Goldsmiths

Research project, funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Tower Hamlets Children's Services, set up partnerships between primary and complementary teachers on topic-based bilingual learning. Two-way exchange: mainstream teachers recognise the value of complementary teachers' strategies, as well as vice versa. Example of James, primary teacher, struck by 'child as teacher' approach used in Zainab's Somali class. At the same time, he had ideas that Zainab could use, such as groupwork and drama to activate children's understanding of keywords. James and Zainab successfully co-taught a Somali song at primary school, combining all these strategies.

Reflections on the day

Viv Edwards, University of Reading

Day has shown diversity of provision and experiences in comp schools, and lack of resources. Mainstream and comp schools need to come together in spirit of learning from each other.

Several types of dialogue noted: a dialogue within one person (where a teacher works in both sectors); between universities and comp/mainstream schools (via research); between teacher educators and mainstream teachers on support for community languages (via TDA initiatives).

Progress being made: now many initiatives around comp schools, and funded research projects. Considered worthy of attention and research - TDA World Languages, NLS Our Languages.

This is encouraging but we can't be complacent. Need for conceptual clarity – not just looking for one solution, must use imagination to find useful ways forward. Contribution of N. American colleagues – expanded our minds, new ways of looking at things. Ofelia provided a new concept of bilingualism - moving from subtractive/additive to dynamic/translanguaging. Wisconsin initiatives highlighted collaborative strategies and need for neutral, non-threatening spaces for learning.