

Partnership Teaching

Co-operative teaching strategies for English
language support in multilingual classrooms

An inservice pack for schools

Introduction

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The Partnership Teaching materials

Who is this inservice pack for?

The Partnership Teaching pack is aimed at facilitating **whole-school** inservice. It is intended to be used in school-based sessions, led by school staff themselves, and should involve the full staff working together at some stage in the process. It is aimed at teachers working across the 9–14 years age range.

What is it about?

It is about the ways in which primary and secondary schools are developing mainstream structures and strategies which recognise that language is central to all learning, and that meeting the language needs of **all** pupils, including those learning English as a second language, is the responsibility of all class and subject teachers. It is about linking strategies for language support* in the mainstream into staff, curriculum and school development plans – to help towards implementing policy at classroom level across the school. It is about the ways in which pairs and groups of teachers can work together inside or outside the classroom in order to develop classroom organisation strategies and a curriculum which meets the needs and extends the learning of all pupils in multilingual schools.

It aims to help schools examine ways of managing change in classrooms so as to provide access to the curriculum for all pupils.

Who should lead the inservice sessions?

We see the development of Partnership Teaching as essentially a **whole-school** issue, which has implications for all staff and in which all staff should be involved. It is vital that schools see this material as their own, selecting and adapting it to meet their own context and experience. The inservice should



* All references to language support, unless specifically stated otherwise, are to support provided to enable bilingual pupils to have full access to the curriculum and to develop the English language skills they need to succeed in it.

therefore be led by members of the school's permanent staff with a close knowledge of the school. In Unit 1 we suggest that a small Working Party be set up to plan towards the school inservice sessions. This Working Party should include a cross-section of staff, including members of the Senior Management Team, if it is to be most effective. While language support service staff have a role to play in perhaps introducing the materials to the Working Party, or in working *alongside* it, it is not recommended that they organise and lead this inservice work.

Why is the material whole-school focused?

Language is central to all learning, and therefore the language needs of pupils are the responsibility of all teachers.

Most local education authorities (LEAs) have accepted the policy of providing language support for bilingual pupils within the mainstream classroom, and many language support teachers have received inservice on strategies for working within the mainstream multilingual class.

However, language support within the mainstream has implications for classroom teaching styles and organisational strategies, and also for traditional school structures, if it is to be effective. Whole-school discussion enables teachers to share their understandings of the purpose of mainstream support, and to examine the issues it raises in the light of their own classroom experiences and their own school context. Working together, staff can consider the ways in which curriculum policies might be implemented through working in partnership, to provide access for every child. By drawing on the Senior Management Team and, in the secondary school, Heads of Departments, resource implications and timetabling can also be discussed and clarified.

In this way, curriculum development, inservice education, policy development and language support can be intermeshed. This school-based and school-focused inservice therefore aims to lead to:

- a) shared understanding of classroom processes
- b) shared understanding of ways to develop and improve classroom processes
- c) senior management consideration of the resources and structures needed to support the processes of development.

What is included in the materials?

The Partnership Teaching pack includes three video programmes, together with a range of supporting materials for participatory, school-based inservice. The supporting materials include **Facilitators' Notes** as well as **Participants' Materials**. Some suggestions for routes through the materials are offered in Unit 2. **It is important to note that these materials are only offered as suggestions for inservice activities.** We hope that Working Groups will select, adapt, extend and rewrite the materials, drawing only on what is appropriate and useful for *their* schools.

What sorts of schools will we see in the videos?

Every school is different. Inservice organisers will need to stress that the schools presented on the video and in the materials are not set up as 'models of good practice'. There is no one 'right way' for Partnership Teaching. Schools will differ in the degree to which staff are familiar with the routines of team teaching, collaborative curriculum planning, and joint record-keeping. Within each school's staffing, there will be different areas of expertise and experience to draw on in planning for change. Classroom organisation strategies will vary in the degree to which small group work is familiar, individual choice in

activities is encouraged, and other languages are used to support learning, for example. School structures may be such that Partnership Teaching is already encouraged, and the school would simply like to reappraise and evaluate its provision; on the other hand, a school may be just beginning to think through the implications for the whole school of a recent decision to support bilingual pupils in the mainstream.

We hope that our 'case-study' schools will reflect a range of starting points and backgrounds, whilst all showing a commitment towards developing better access to the curriculum for all pupils. They include both primary and secondary schools from a variety of geographical locations, each with a different percentage of pupils who are bilingual (from 10 per cent bilingual pupils to 90 per cent); they also include schools where most of the bilingual pupils share a language other than English, and other schools where pupils speak a variety of different languages as well as English. Again, the schools vary in terms of the numbers of language support teachers they have attached to them, and in terms of the bilingual skills available on the school staff. They have different management structures and are each developing their own strategies for resourcing and managing language support in the mainstream.

We hope that this will enable teachers to step back and look at the ways other schools are developing in their own specific contexts, so that they can feel free to explore openly the issues involved in providing language support within the mainstream before moving on to focus on the implications of this discussion for their own school practice.

How were these materials produced?

These inservice materials are the outcome of a two-year project sponsored by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and co-ordinated by Jill Bourne and Joanna McPake, of the Centre for Research into Language and Communication at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The project team worked with schools in six LEAs, learning from their experiences. Early drafts of the materials were trialled in primary and secondary schools, and adapted in the light of their responses.



Language support in the mainstream

Why provide language support in the mainstream?

Each pupil should have a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to his or her particular needs

The National Curriculum: From Policy to Practice (DES, 1989)

If schools are to provide a curriculum relevant to the language needs of each child, then each teacher and year team, or in secondary schools, each subject department, will need to review and evaluate their practice regularly to see how far they are providing a curriculum which is accessible to pupils learning English as a second language. The National Curriculum English Working Group in its recommendations for English 5–16 (1989) has endorsed the position taken by both the Swann Report (1985) and HMI (1986, 1990) on the importance of supporting bilingual pupils within the mainstream classroom 'as part of normal lessons' (10.10). They also recommend that 'there may be a need for bilingual teaching support and for books and other written material to be available in the pupils' mother tongues' (10.10), particularly when pupils are in the early stages of learning English.

(Unit 10 contains readings which explain the background to this position.)

By working jointly with language support teachers when possible, teachers will be able not only to share experience, but to give each other some space in which to observe children at work, to try out new teaching styles or new materials, and to talk to pupils about their learning.

What language support is needed in multilingual classrooms?

It is impossible to give a simple response. Different schools will encounter pupils with very different language backgrounds and literacy needs.

However, in every case the need for extra language support will be a factor of the combination both of the individual child's language background and of the school and classroom context.

Strategies for providing access to the curriculum for pupils from a variety of language backgrounds will depend on the language backgrounds of the class or subject teachers themselves, their experience of working with bilingual pupils, their usual teaching styles and classroom organisation strategies, and the curriculum they offer. Similarly, the language backgrounds, experience, and teaching styles of the language support teachers will also influence the types of language support strategies that will be possible. Some of the basic principles behind mainstream language support are set out in Unit 10, in the reading titled 'Language support: our starting point'.

Because there is no simple 'methodology' and no one single set of teaching skills, it is probably best to think of language support work as a form of 'action-research', where observation, discussion with pupils and parents, experimentation with new approaches and careful evaluation can lead to an improved, shared understanding of classroom processes and of the responses of individual pupils within these. This is the position taken in Partnership Teaching.



Individual or whole-class approaches

In the past, there have been two very different approaches to language support in the mainstream. The first is focused on the individual child, the second focuses on the whole curriculum. In the first, the language support teacher focuses on individual children within the class, helping them to gain access to the curriculum, but without attempting to help directly in making changes in the mainstream curriculum itself so that these children can continue to benefit when the support teacher is *not* able to be present.

The second, whole-curriculum approach recognises that the presence of a language support teacher cannot always, or even often, be relied on in most circumstances. It aims to draw on the presence of the language support teacher to help class or subject teachers to adapt their classroom practices to take account of the diversity of language and learning needs in the class at all times, and to develop expertise in 'fine tuning' the curriculum to meet individual needs within this shared curriculum.

Partnership Teaching is about adopting the second approach, a **whole-curriculum** approach to language support in the mainstream.

What is Partnership Teaching?

Partnership Teaching means teachers working together, pooling knowledge, skills and expertise to **develop a curriculum responsive to the language needs and abilities of all pupils, whether monolingual, bilingual or multilingual.**

Partnerships will often look very different, having different goals in different circumstances, but in spite of the fact that schools' circumstances vary considerably, and the kinds of Partnership under development consequently also differ widely, certain common themes emerge:

- 1 Partnership Teaching has, as its fundamental aim, **curriculum development** (developing a curriculum responsive to the language needs and abilities of **all** pupils, whether monolingual, bilingual or multilingual).
- 2 Partnership Teaching is a form of **staff development** (in terms both of teachers learning from each other – inside and outside the classroom – and of the Partnership Cycle (see below), a professional way of working purposefully together).
- 3 Partnership Teaching is most likely to be effective when Heads and Senior Management Teams recognise its potential for both curriculum and staff development, and allocate appropriate amounts of time and resources to teachers involved in this work, and to developing a shared understanding of the purpose of Partnership Teaching across the school.

In a school which is developing its links with the community, Partnership Teaching will involve not only teachers and teaching assistants, but will draw on wider Partnerships by involving parents, other adults and community groups; and it will bring in primary-secondary and home-school liaison partnerships.



Partnership Teaching – its role in curriculum and staff development

In the past, it has sometimes been believed that bilingual pupils in the process of learning English needed special teaching methods and materials, which were not necessarily relevant or appropriate to other pupils. More recently, linguists and educationalists have recognised that teaching methodologies which have developed – or are developing – in response to mixed-ability classes, are, by definition, appropriate to the needs – and abilities – of bilingual learners of English. The National Curriculum, which recognises the linguistic diversity of the school population in England and Wales, reinforces the need to find **inclusive** teaching methods and materials, responsive to *all* children's needs and abilities, rather than **exclusive** ones which threaten equality of opportunity. Within such inclusive teaching strategies, it is then possible to observe pupils' learning and to 'fine tune' the curriculum to meet any particular needs as they emerge.

Inclusive teaching strategies can be developed by class or subject teachers working alone, of course, as well as by those working within team teaching structures. But if 'mainstreaming' support for bilingual pupils is to be effective, it does mean carefully reorganising all mainstream classes to meet a wider range of linguistic backgrounds and needs than some teachers have been used to, and that's where Partnership Teaching can help. In this way, Partnership Teaching is clearly a means of staff development.



As suggested in Programme 1, Partnership Teaching is an appropriate method for schools to use in curriculum development. In this context, we extend the 'traditional' concept of the 'teaching pair' (one support and one mainstream teacher) to a broader view of Partnership, covering:

- pairs or groups
- of teachers and/or other adults and/or pupils
- working together inside and/or outside the classroom.

We include class teachers working together, departments taking on an issue jointly, and subject specialists or advisory teachers working alongside school staff, where they are working on issues relating to language support in multilingual classrooms.

There are a number of reasons for taking a broad view of Partnership:

- 1 The National Curriculum and other related developments in current educational thinking and practice suggest that the **sharing of expertise** (through the appointment of postholders with responsibility for language, maths, science, etc., in primary schools, and the development of similar cross-curricular posts of responsibility in secondary schools) will become a commoner feature in teachers' lives. It will become increasingly rare for the class or subject teacher to have *sole* responsibility for planning, teaching and evaluating *all* aspects of her/his classroom work.
- 2 Conversely, the allocation of Section 11 staff with a specific responsibility for language support is – inevitably – uneven, varying from class to class, department to department, school to school, and over time. The development of language support in the mainstream cannot be dependent on the presence of support teachers, although it is clearly desirable that they should be involved wherever possible.
- 3 Consequently, it would appear that schools aiming to develop Partnership Teaching as an appropriate method for curriculum development should create and maintain flexible definitions of Partnership and of structures to support it.

From the perspective of **staff development**, the principles of Partnership Teaching are these:

- 1 Teachers working together with other teachers and/or other adults or pupils have a wide range of different ideas, experiences, knowledge, skills and expertise to share.
- 2 By working together, with a common purpose, all involved in the Partnership can learn from each other in a relevant, practical way, and thus develop together the knowledge, skills and expertise required to achieve the purpose for which the Partnership was originally set up.
- 3 This method could be seen as a form of 'action inservice'.

The Partnership Cycle

The Partnership Cycle (see below) is a model of the way in which Partnerships of this kind develop. It is based on a number of similar staff and curriculum development models. The aim of including the cycle in the pack is to make the model explicit to everyone involved in Partnerships, and to help them to structure the stages of the Partnership accordingly. It has considerable potential to be applied to other aspects of the work of the school.



The Partnership Cycle is a professional model for teachers working in partnership to develop a curriculum which is appropriate to the needs and abilities of **all** pupils – monolingual, bilingual or multilingual.

From the cycle we can see that Partnership Teaching involves pairs or groups of teachers

- a) **Reviewing** what is going on now in their classrooms and identifying one or more area(s) they would like to develop – classroom organisation, materials, teaching strategies – which they think might make the classroom more responsive to the needs of **all** the pupils within it.
- b) **Setting short-term goals** for working together to achieve the changes desired, by which their work together can be jointly evaluated after a specific period of time.
- c) Working together inside and outside the classroom to '**experiment**' that is, jointly to plan, teach and monitor progress.
- d) At the end of the specified time together, **evaluating** the achievements of the Partnership, and then either jointly setting new goals for future work, or allowing the language support teacher to move on to work alongside another member of staff or department.
- e) But the final part of the Partnership Cycle should not be forgotten; if the Partnership has produced some interesting results, these should be **disseminated** – shared with other members of the department or with the whole staff.

In the course of Programme 1, you will see evidence of teachers

- ◆ sharing knowledge, skills, and expertise
- ◆ learning from each other
- ◆ developing the curriculum by applying what they have learnt
- ◆ focusing and developing the work of the Partnership through the Partnership Cycle

What is the difference between Partnership Teaching and support teaching?

Support teaching is where a language support teacher works within a mainstream classroom to help individual children or small groups. The classroom is organised and the curriculum is planned by the class or subject teacher, and the support teacher helps individual bilingual pupils who are learning English to cope with the tasks set. If some liaison time has been managed, the support teacher may be able to provide some adapted or additional materials; otherwise he or she must respond as the lesson unfolds. Effective support teaching always requires some liaison time.

Co-operative teaching is where the language support teacher and the class or subject teacher plan together a curriculum and teaching strategies which will take into account the needs of all pupils in the class. Rather than trying to fit pupils into the learning situation, co-operative teaching works to try to change the learning situation to fit the pupils. It implies equal status and shared responsibility, with lead and supporting roles alternating between the two teachers. Depending on how familiar the teachers are with it, co-operative teaching will require more or less time spent together outside the classroom for planning and evaluation, but co-operative teaching always requires some liaison time.

Partnership Teaching 'Co-operative Teaching Plus'! It builds on and extends the concept of co-operative teaching by linking the work of the two teachers in the classroom with plans for **curriculum development** and **staff development** across the school, as a way of developing and implementing school policy, through adopting the Partnership Cycle process. Here, the emphasis is on

reviewing practice, setting short-term goals, 'experimenting' (teacher action-research), evaluating joint work and disseminating the results to the rest of the school (and sometimes across other schools). It includes teachers working together *outside* as well as inside the classroom, to make the curriculum responsive to the language needs of all pupils.

Like support and co-operative teaching, Partnership Teaching requires time for liaison, but as it becomes part of the school's staff development plan, Partnership Teaching becomes eligible for training-grant funding at certain stages, to support joint planning and evaluation. It is essentially a project-based approach to school development, in which teachers' joint work is supported and valued by the school. Initially, projects will need to be given some time, as teachers get used to working in partnership – perhaps taking up to a year. But as this way of working becomes more familiar, Partnership projects can be set up with specific goals for shorter periods.



School structures for effective Partnership Teaching

In order to allow Partnership Teaching to fulfil its potential for both curriculum and staff development, Heads and Senior Management Teams need to ensure that those involved in Partnership work have their share of time and resources, in the same way as any other curriculum and staff development initiatives in the school; and also that school staffing structures, the timetabling of language support work in the mainstream, etc. reflect the view that Partnership Teaching is integral to the work of the school, rather than marginal.

This may involve Heads and Senior Management Teams in a fundamental review of current practice in the school. Aspects to consider include:

- ◆ the basis on which teachers are allocated to work in partnerships in the classroom, across the curriculum
- ◆ how these Partnerships are monitored
- ◆ overall responsibility for Partnership work in the school
- ◆ appropriate resources for Partnership work
- ◆ the system by which these resources are allocated
- ◆ how clear the system is to all staff

These issues and others will be explored in more detail in Programme 2, Units 4 and 7, and in the reading in Unit 10 titled 'Bidding systems'.



The responsibility of teachers working in partnership

Where Partnership Teaching involves time and/or other resources formally allocated to the Partnership from the school's inservice funding or other sources, the teachers involved in the Partnership are engaged in a form of 'action inservice' designed to benefit the school in some way.

Where the school supports Partnership Teaching, teachers working in partnership have a corresponding responsibility to the school, in terms of

- a) ensuring that the purpose of their Partnership is clear
- b) ensuring that the purpose is of value to the school (in that it relates to the development of a curriculum more responsive to the language needs and abilities of *all* pupils, as defined through school policy documents, statements of aims, etc.)
- c) ensuring – as far as possible – that the purpose is achieved, through following the **Partnership Cycle**.



Summary

1 The **aim** of Partnership Teaching is:

To develop a curriculum responsive to the language needs and abilities of **all** pupils, whether monolingual, bilingual or multilingual.

2 The **principles** of Partnership Teaching are:

a) Partnership Teaching covers:

- pairs or groups
- of teachers and/or other adults and/or pupils
- working together outside the classroom, and sometimes **also** together inside the classroom.
- to meet this aim

b) All those involved in a Partnership bring a range of different **ideas**, experiences, knowledge, skills and expertise to share with **each other**.

c) By working together, with a common purpose (see '1', above) **all** involved in the Partnership can learn from each other in a **relevant**, practical way, and thus develop together the knowledge, **skills** and expertise required to achieve their purpose.

3 The **means** to achieve effective Partnerships include:

Heads and Senior Management Teams allocating appropriate **amounts** of time and other resources to Partnerships in the school, and to developing a shared understanding of the purpose of Partnership Teaching across the school.