English Language Teaching: issues of pedagogic diversity or pedagogies for diversity?

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English Language Teaching: pedagogic diversity or pedagogies for diversity?

- ESOL
- ESOL learners and their contexts
- Funding
- ESOL: learning needs
- Pedagogy – does it meet learners’ needs?
- Social Justice
ESOL learners and Contexts

- ESOL: learning of English as a second language by *adult migrants* in their host countries (NIACE 2006; Rosenberg 2007; Schellekens 2007).

- ESOL learner communities ‘adults from settled communities of immigrants from the new Commonwealth and from fluctuating populations of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers’ (Pitt, K. 2005)

Diverse Learning Contexts:

- FE Colleges, community centres
- Workplace
- Funded as part of Basic Skills provision (English, Maths, IT) rather than English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
- Attracts public funding as part of Basic Skills
ESOL learners’ (Language) learning needs

Need to communicate with those around them

- At work
- To access services (health, education, immigration etc.)

Need speaking and listening skills which lend to pair and group work
Diverse learners

**ESOL learners come with**

- Hope
- Positive experiences and expectations of learning
- Need language of host country

**Basic Skills**

**Learners and tutors can**

- Have negative experiences of learning
- Come with spoken language and some literacy in home language
A typical ESOL class profile

- Learners came from **Poland, Slovakia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Eritria**

- Their **existing skills in English** ranged from Entry0 to Entry1. Some were able to answer questions about their name, address etc in 1 to 4 words, others could ask questions as well

- Their **jobs** ranged from working at various positions in a take away, packing, shelf stacking to car valet

- **Previous education** ranged from 2 years in a non-English speaking primary school to 11 years at a school in Poland which has implications for script knowledge

So tutor needs to account for:

**range of contexts, first languages and latent literacy and oracy.**
Pedagogy

**Basic Skills** (literacy, maths, IT)

*Cura*riculum content responds to *individual work*

Funding tied to assessment

‘*English and Maths qualifications to enable [learners] to progress to achieve their GCSE (A* - C) or Functional Skills Level 2’*

ESOL pedagogy

- Learners expected to gain all four language skills
- speaking and listening needs can be immediate

*Cura*riculum content responds to pair and group work

Funding tied to assessment

- ‘*GCSEs in English and Maths*
- *Functional Skills in English and Maths*
- *Adult Basic Skills in literacy and numeracy (last date for new enrolments at Levels 1 and 2 was 31 August 2012)*
- *ESOL (from Entry Level to Level 2)’*

http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/Basic+Skills/
Pedagogy 2

ESOL

- activities ..... highly learner-responsive’ (Baynham et al. 2007 p.8)
- broadly resembles communicative language teaching (Cooke and Simpson 2008) *which is*
- a collaborative learning approach –focus is on negotiation of meaning rather than form (grammar)
- oral communication in the language classroom via presentations, pair work and group work (Schellekens 2007)

http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/resource/ESOL+learner+materials%3A+Entry+1%2C+Unit+1/pdf/

Basic Skills

- Focus on literacy skills
  http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/resource/Literacy+learner+materials%3A+Entry+1%2C+Unit+1/pdf/
Recent Findings (Hann 2012a, 2014)

ESOL learners benefit from

- ‘bringing the outside in [to the classroom]’ (Baynham et al 2007 p.44).
- group/pair work
- Interaction

Successful pedagogy enables learners to

- Take the class out of the room – in more ways than one….
- Sees language learners as language users, especially in a multilingual environment

Funding changes mean learners are less prepared for interaction outside the classroom
Justice… ‘about the arrangement of relationships in a society’ (Grayling 2009)

Justice and rights

- Every individual in a society has a right to certain experiences and goods (Grayling 2009)
- Individuals [should] have access to opportunities and benefits, equal to all – *fairness and justice* (Rawls, J. 2005)
- Taxation to redistribute wealth is theft (Nozick in Grayling 2009)
- Injustice – ‘*the many denied opportunities, social cultural goods enjoyed by rich*’ (Grayling 2009)

Social Justice (Court, J. in press)

- ‘capabilities’ (Sen 1999, 2009)
- ‘capabilities and functionings: opportunities to achieve and actual achievement’ (Walker 2004)
- Capability: do people have opportunity to make informed choices about their education? (Vaughan and Walker 2011)
- Fraser’s (2008:6) three dimensions of Social Justice
  - **Redistribution** of resources to benefit of all including new communities
  - **Recognition**: ‘identifying and acknowledging claims of historically marginalized groups’
  - **Participation**: ‘right to voice in debates and decision-making’
Do migrants have language rights?

- language rights
  - freedom from discrimination on the basis of language
  - Use one’s language in the activities of communal life

Second language users

- ‘legitimate speakers’ (Bourdieu 1977)
- but in L2 interactions L2 speakers positioned as inferior and helpless (Bremner et al 1976; Norton 1995, 2010)
- resource needed by L2 speakers to become legitimate speakers?
- ‘creative discursive agency’ (Flowerdew & Miller 2008)

Pedagogy to develop creative discursive agency?
Pedagogy: constraints and opportunities

Case studies and research showed

- ESOL learners often taught in mixed level groups
- Workplaces as learning venues lack appropriate resources
- Contact time limited
- Language needs are contextualised e.g. glass factory
- Lesson content could be compromised by focus on assessment
- However, learners are very resourceful – they turned virtually everything and everyone in their environment into a resource

Need to move from

Diverse pedagogies to

Pedagogy for diversity

Critical Pedagogy
‘aims to raise students’ awareness about unjust social practices and helps them to become social agents for change’
(Kubota 2004 in Norton and Toohey 2004)
Some questions ..... 

- Which language/language are taught in a country?
- Which are used?
- Who decides which language will be used when and where? What are their reasons?
- Who decides which language/s will be taught and to what level?

Can a post-modern, democratic nation which denies appropriate language provision claim solidarity with those new to the country?
Questions?
Comments?
Bibliography

- Ellis R., H. Basturkmen, et al. 2001. Pre-emptive Focus on Form in the ESL Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* 35(3)
Bibliography 2

Appendix 1

Transforming Classes (Akbari 2008)

- Teach drawing on local culture
- Learners’ L1 is a source (not interference)
- Content should be based on students’ real life concerns – more of this in ESOL later
- Support learners’ to articulate relationships between power, knowledge and language e.g. through the lense of marginalised groups