The Production of School English

End of Award Report

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THE PRODUCTION OF SCHOOL ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Context: Although the National Curriculum and the changes associated with it have been established for more than a decade, there has been no extensive research into their impact on the English classroom: the classic studies of urban English teaching date from the 70s and early eighties. This project investigated the opportunities to explore the inter-relationship between a stipulative national policy, an exceptionally strong professional culture, and a socially and culturally heterogeneous student population. Here important issues of policy, professionalism, entitlement and diversity come together. The project shows how these forces work to produce forms of curriculum and pedagogy; it has asked the significant question about the kinds of classroom, and the forms of curriculum that have emerged from the multiple changes of recent years.

Methodology: The project has an innovative methodological element. Earlier studies of classroom English focused on spoken and written language. Over the last decade, there has been a growing realisation among researchers that such a focus is both incomplete and inadequate. Our research therefore adopts an multimodal approach to English, which aims to demonstrate the importance of modes of representation and communication such as image, gesture, gaze, movement, classroom layout, wall display, and others, all central to the meanings of English. Our intensive analysis involved nine English teachers in three inner urban schools. The teachers represented a range of experience, gender, age, and racial profile.

A multimodal approach requires a broadening of data, and analysis. We have developed a ‘new’ language of description of teachers’ work, differing from methodologies in which talk or writing is central. It has expanded the scope of what is to be looked at.

Research Objectives

1) A new methodology: It aimed to establish a new (multimodal) methodology for the study of English, focused on the realisation of the subject through the rhetorical work of the teacher in classroom context. This was to provide an explanation for the different appearance of English in classrooms. Questions were of the kind: “If the wall display in this classroom brings in objects significant to the students – their films, music, fashion - then what conception of English is held by the teacher, and what does it mean in terms of the social factors that are at work here?” or “If a literary text appears in this classroom merely as a fragment – say just one scene from Macbeth - what does that say about the notion of text in general, and about the teacher’s aims for her/his students?”

2) Forms of realisation and social explanation: To identify and analyze the forms that this realization takes and to seek social explanations for these forms: To see the ways in which English appeared in the different social environments of classrooms, we looked at specific aspects of the English curriculum. For instance, with the concept of character we looked at how it was taught, from a literal notion such as character as person, to means for reflecting on salient issues in your life. We related this to the social features – is this a school that has a policy of selection, is there streaming, etc? This combined questions about the form of English with questions about its social meanings.

3) Policy and Actualisation: We wanted to illuminate the relationship between policies aimed at the creation of cohesive and successful communities and their ground-level implementation in urban contexts. Since 1988, government policies have presented the national curriculum in terms of entitlement: a means of allowing access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, and therefore as a strong contributor to objectives of social inclusion. Our research shows that the realization of ambitions around entitlement and inclusion is problematic. Differentiation
remains a strong feature of schooling, in terms of organisational form as of student experience.

4) Implications for policy makers: For the research to be useful we aimed to provide research conclusions which can be of use to curriculum policy-makers and researchers. The project has strong implications for policy makers, for all school subjects. It shows that social conditions are at least as significant as the stipulations of a mandatory curriculum. If equitable outcomes are one aim of curriculum policy, then our findings give important pointers to how that might be done – or not attempted.

Our question “Has this methodology revealed something that would not otherwise have been visible?” can be answered in the affirmative; one effect will be that in future researchers need will to ask: “can we avoid a multimodal approach to the question at issue in our research?”

5) General methodology: We wanted to contribute to the development of a general methodology for the study of classrooms, in relation to other contexts, school subjects and pedagogies. The findings have established a secure sense of social factors and their interaction with curriculum, to make predictions with a high degree of confidence. This project, combined with the project *The rhetorics of the science classroom* will make it possible to describe, analyze and compare policy and curricula newly and differently.

*The Rhetorical Work Of Teachers And Students*

Conceptions of English held by teachers are important, but the project shows that neither they nor the official curriculum are the prime determinants of what English will be. We stress the ‘rhetorical work’ of the teacher, as one part of a large and complex ensemble of factors. The potentials for teachers to act as professionals is very different in the three schools; we have given detailed accounts of these differences. The possibility for students to make their voices heard, to stake their claims in the production of English, is greatly influenced by the school and its institutional policies and of the English department and ‘its’ classrooms. This leads to profoundly different potentials for students’ potential in the three schools. A very large factor is that of the perceived ‘risk’ of failure in the examinations, and the schools’ and teachers’ responses to that perception.
1 Background

Although SATs, the National Curriculum and the changes associated with them have been established now for more than a decade, there has been no extensive research into their impact on the English classroom. Beyond the classic studies of urban English date from the 70s (see Grace, 1995) and the early eighties (Barnes & Barnes, 1984). This report takes up the potentially rich opportunities to explore the inter-relationship between a stipulative national policy, an exceptionally strong (local) professional culture, and a socially and culturally heterogeneous student population. It is a social nexus at which important issues of policy, professionalism, entitlement and diversity come together. To investigate how these various forces work to produce particular forms of curriculum and pedagogy is to ask significant questions about the kinds of classroom, and the forms of curriculum, which have emerged from the multiple changes of recent years.

To this substantive element we added a methodological element. Our research adopts a multimodal (Kress and van leeuwen, 2001) approach to the analysis of classroom English, aiming to demonstrate the importance of forms of meaning-making beyond speech or writing to the actualisation of the subject, and thus to the ways in which it is experienced by students.

1.1 Location of the research

We have identified a system of resources and constraints – curricula, forms of management, operational concepts such as ‘ability’ - which operates across England. But we do not claim to present an account of the actualisation of English which is representative of a national situation. On the contrary, we have found that the production of English, however much it is shaped in line with the regularities of detailed national policy, is to a significant extent the result of the impact of local and professional practice. What we analyze, therefore, is the production of English in specific local spaces, although there are important regularities in this production of school English that apply to the context of multi-cultural urban schooling.

The project was based in the English departments of three schools. The departments were selected on two main grounds. First, that the schools to which they belonged should be in a broad sense representative of urban secondary education in London. Secondly, that the departments themselves should be experienced (both in school terms, and in terms of their location in subject networks) and secure (in the sense that for the most part their members should have been trained specifically to teach English and should be on permanent contracts). The institutional landscape of secondary education in Inner London is now exceptionally diverse (Whitty, 2001), and there could be no attempt to select schools which ‘represented’ all types of institution. The schools were therefore selected using broad social and cultural criteria relating to the composition of the school population, including:

- A significant proportion of students from low income families (using free school meals as a guiding indicator: 43 % and over )
- A significant proportion of black and ethnic minority students (60 % and over)
- A significant proportion of refugee students (30 % and over)
- A significant proportion of students with English as an Additional Language (66 % and over)

The schools selected were all mixed gender. Gender is a significant variable in the English classroom (Younger et. al. 1999) which the research team wished not to overlook. Additional information on the schools was gathered from school policy documents and teacher interviews.
1.2 The Teachers
To develop a fine-grained multimodal analysis of English, we undertook an intensive analysis of a small sample of teachers and lessons. Nine English teachers participated in the project, three in each school. The teachers were ‘recruited’ via the Head of the English Department to represent the range of experience, gender, age, and racial profile of the ‘team’, although participation was voluntary. Of the nine teachers three are male and six are female; the three male teachers are white British, as are five of the female teachers, and one female teacher is Black African-Caribbean. The teachers had different degrees of teaching experience, from two to 16 years. Two had entered English teaching relatively recently but had significant teaching experience as Language Support teachers. In each school the head of the English Department participated in the project.

1.3 The Lessons
The project focused on Year 10 lessons, with 14/15 year-old students. One reason for this choice was contingent – unlike Years 9 and 11, they were free from the immediate pressures of examination preparation. Another reason was that we wanted to study the ways in which English was shaped by the requirements of public examination. We negotiated with the teachers to ensure that a range of curriculum modules was observed representative of English at this level. The modules included are shown in Table 1.

Classes in schools 1 and 2 were unstreamed. In the case of school 3, where students are streamed into three ‘ability’ sets, the classes selected for observation covered the range of ‘ability sets’.

Table 1: The modules observed in each school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>MACBETH</td>
<td>Wider reading</td>
<td>Wider reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Short Stories)</td>
<td>(Short stories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>ROMEO AND JULIET</td>
<td>Media: film trailers.</td>
<td>20th century drama –</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Crucible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>Poetry – Hearts and Partners Anthology</td>
<td>Media: TV Comparison of Television Programmes</td>
<td>Media – newspaper language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 METHODS, DATA AND FORMS OF ANALYSIS

2.1 Data Collection
The project breaks new theoretical and methodological ground in that it attends not only to the spoken and written language of classrooms, but also to other modes of representation and communication which are central to the actualisation of English – including image, gesture, gaze, movement, and spatial and temporal organisation. This demands a re-thinking of what to include within the analytical domain: the notion of ‘data’ has to be expanded - which in turn requires a broadening of data collection, transcription and processes of analysis. Data collection and analysis responded to these issues.
After an initial period of observation (without video), each teacher was video-recorded once or twice a week teaching a Year 10 class over a half term period (6-7 weeks) during 2000 - 2001. A total of 29 lessons was observed and 30 lessons video-recorded. In a multimodal perspective the classrooms themselves become data: the spatial arrangements were mapped and the visual displays recorded. The movement of the teacher and students was observed and recorded, as were gestures and the images and diagrams drawn on the board. The material texts and resources used by the teacher (e.g. dictionaries, thesauri, films, and worksheets, etc) were recorded, copied and collected. The talk of teachers and students was recorded as embedded within this multimodal ensemble.

The main focus of data collection was the teacher. For most of the time the video camera followed their work. Analytically, we saw this work as a multi-modal rhetorical performance – a series of efforts at ideational and inter-personal levels to convey ideas to students and to affect their behaviour and the forms of their learning.

2.2 Sampling the Video Data
Members of the team viewed all of the video data, and ‘incidents’ which were considered significant by groups within the team were watched and discussed by the whole team. These incidents were transcribed in such a way as to record their multimodal character. (An example of such transcription is included as Annex 2) Following further discussion, notes were made to give an overview of the lesson and to mark critical incidents which realized in significant ways, aspects of the ‘production of English’.

The question of the basis on which particular incidents and episodes were deemed to be ‘critical’ rested on the features identified as most salient in the historical and social framework of the project. Drawing from policy-orientated research in which one member of the team was particularly engaged, we focused on episodes where the (generally plentiful) effects of this shift were clear. It was through this ‘lens’ that we examined, and made selections from, video data, cross-referring it to interview material. To this extent our selection was strongly affected by our collective knowledge of recent ruptures in traditions and new practices of English teaching. Our aim was to provide a social explanation for the production and realization of English as it appeared in the classrooms we observed. We worked with the view that the 1990s had been a turning point not only in policy terms, but also in classroom practice (e.g. Pollard 2002). This change was especially significant for English which had tended to be ‘an uncertain space, where the formal curriculum and procedures of the school encountered and to varying extents negotiated with the cultures of learners’ (Jones 2003). We focused on episodes where the (generally plentiful) effects of this shift were clear. By this we imply that teachers – in both interviews and practice – positioned themselves in relation to currently dominant policy designs, and their eclipsed ‘alternatives’.

Our work thus captures a particular historical moment in the development of English teaching.

2.3 Transcription
A multimodal approach raises fundamental questions around transcription. One of the two main questions of the project was ‘What is English in this classroom?’ This made it essential theoretically and methodologically to attend to all the means of making meaning, and impossible to rule any one of them out beforehand. Hence our transcription needed to attend to all modes that were present.

For us there are two distinct perspectives on transcription: for the purposes of analysis the needs of theory have priority; for the purposes of presentation the needs of the audience come first.
2.4 Interview and Documentary Data

Alongside the observation of English lessons, regular, casual interviews were conducted with the teachers throughout the observation period and an in-depth interview was conducted at the end of it. The interviews gathered information on the constraints and resources that affect and inform classroom practices, including teachers’ professional biographies, perception of their school, department, their students, their motivations and objectives in the classroom, as well as the purpose and meaning of particular incidents that we had observed. The interviews averaged one hour in length.

Focus groups were conducted with six students from each class at the end of the observation period. The interviews were on average 55 minutes in length; and addressed a range of issues, including perceptions of English, of course work, and a series of questions relating to the purpose and meaning of particular events observed in the classroom. The teacher interviews and the student focus groups were tape-recorded and transcribed.

The research team collected policy documents of various kinds – from national curriculum documents to departmental statements. The ways in which such documentation was analysed are set out below.

3 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

We have developed a 'new' language of description of teacher's work in English. We exemplify that below. The approach has expanded the scope of what needs to be looked at in the realisation of English - from spatial arrangements and classroom displays, to different actualisations of curricular entities such as character, or text. It makes it possible to focus on a distinction between ‘that which is spoken’ and ‘that which is not spoken’ in the English classroom. This ranged from ‘definitions' of what English is through the wall display, to meanings of the texts studied – whether meanings from the life-world of students are welcomed or kept at bay. The meanings that cannot be spoken are potently present; however they are not available for overt debate or contestation. In the often socially fraught environments of urban schools, this is a significant factor.

Here we briefly set out the five objectives of the research; and the ways in which we have realized and met them.

3.1 To establish a new (multimodal) methodology for the study of English, focused on the realisation of the subject through the rhetorical work of the teacher in classroom contexts.

The aim was to provide a social explanation for the production and realization of English in the classrooms. The kinds of questions we asked were: 'If the wall display in this classroom is of this particular kind, then what conception of English is held by the teacher, and what does it mean in terms of the social factors that are at work here?' or 'If the literary text appears in this classroom as mere fragment, what does that say about the teacher’s aims for her/his students?’ We focused
on the use of specific modes and attempted to understand the signs produced as realizations of social meanings. In the analyses we focused on ensembles of modes and their meanings: seeing how the notion of text was developed, together with the shape of the classroom, other resources used such as OHPs, dictionaries, and with the wall display as a constantly insistent declaration of what English is.

3.2 To identify and analyze the forms that this realization takes and to seek social explanations for these forms.

We examined a range of curricular entities (such as character) and looked at their different realizations in various classrooms. In the case of character for instance this ranged from a relatively literal notion such as person, to highly abstract notions such as vehicle for the debate of large ethical questions, or notions such as means for reflecting on salient issues in your life. In each case we related this to the ensemble of social features in focus – Is there selection? Is there streaming? Does the school wish to keep the outside world at bay as too dangerous? Does the teacher judge the students to be of limited ability? In relation to text similarly: if, with different groups of students in the same classroom, annotation served to establish a text both as a means for personal response and as means for an entirely surface comprehension exercise, what set of social factors are at work?

In this way our methodology combines the question about the form of English with the question about its social meanings.

3.3 To illuminate the relationship between policies aimed at the creation of cohesive and successful communities and their ground-level implementation in urban contexts.

Since 1988, government policies have presented the national curriculum in terms of entitlement: as a means of allowing access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, with the objective of social inclusion. It is clear from our research that these ambitions around entitlement and inclusion are in many instances problematic. Differentiation remains a strong feature of schooling, not only in terms of organisational form, but also of student experience. Depending on a school’s policy on selection or streaming for instance, or on a student’s ascribed ability, the meanings of English can be very diverse, hence the experience of its resources an uneven one. A school that aspires to be a haven for its students from the latent violence of racism around the school, may respond by inflecting English in ways that keep such difficulties at bay. If a teacher asks, in the context of a discussion of Romeo and Juliet about the meaning of the word ‘pilgrim’, and a student says ‘It’s a Haj thing’, the teacher may not want to open up a potential religiously focussed debate further.

3.4 To provide research conclusions which can be of use to curriculum policy-makers and researchers.

The project has strong implications for policy makers, for English as for other school subjects. We have a clear answer to our question: ‘How does English come to be actualized in a specific classroom, and what are the salient factors in that?’ We show that social conditions are at least as significant as the stipulations of a mandatory curriculum. If equitable outcomes are the aim of a curriculum policy, then our findings give important pointers as to how that might be done – or not be attempted. The ability to contrast our analysis of English with a previous (also multimodal) project on Science, allows us to begin generalizing the implications of our findings. While this project was rigorously focussed on the production of the (unstable) English curriculum, the Science project had been focussed on the representation of an entirely stable curriculum. The two can be seen to be ‘limiting cases’ for school subjects.
As far as research is concerned, the impact of the work is becoming evident. Our questions ‘Is our methodology one which offers a significantly different way of looking?’ And ‘Has it shown something that would not otherwise have been visible?’ are answered in the affirmative. We do not wish to overstate our claim here, but one effect of our research will be that researchers in similar areas will in future need to ask: ‘Can we avoid a multimodal approach to the question at issue in our research?’

3.5 To contribute to the development of a general methodology for the study of classrooms, in relation to other contexts, school subjects and pedagogies

We have a sense of effect of the interaction of social and policy factors with curriculum, secure enough to begin to make predictions with a considerable degree of confidence. The findings of this project, combined with those of the project *The rhetorics of the science classroom* will make it possible to describe, analyze and compare policy and curricula newly and differently.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 The Macro Realisation of English: Social Factors

4.1.1 Clarification of Theoretical Concepts

Our theoretical assumption is that in the English classroom everything that is meaningful contributes to the meaning of English. The contrast with Science is illuminating: if the Science teacher adopts a particular posture in the classroom, or uses specific gestures, the ‘meaning’ of the curricular entity at issue will not change – the magnetic field remains the magnetic field. In the English classroom, the effect on the curricular entity is in many cases profound: how *personal response* is understood, what a *text* is taken to be, how it is seen by the students changes.

The project extends previous analysis of classroom interactions (including Ball et al. (1990), Gewirtz (1998), and Gillborn and Youdell (2000)) in exploring the ways in which pedagogy and curriculum are related to social order and to relations of power. The project takes such work further through its fine-grained analysis of classrooms in three respects: one, in answering the question ‘what is School English?’ we offer a reply that looks at its full multimodal communicational constitution; two, it moves beyond a focus in which teachers are central; and three, it attends to the social and historical forces (re-)shaping the subject.

4.1.2 Moving Beyond Language

Previous work on classroom interaction and English attended to the ways in which ‘users of language ... organize the sources of language to achieve the ends posed by the demands of their social lives’ (Bernstein 1990, 1996). The project has taken a step beyond his focus on language by taking a look at the ways in which communicational resources such as *gaze, gesture, image, movement, space and posture* are used so as to produce meaning (Kress et al, 2001; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). The multimodal account of English offered promises rich ways of looking at classroom interaction, particularly at the ways in which it positions students in relation to authorised forms of knowledge.

4.1.3 The Work Of The Teacher: Rhetorics

Much recent research on School Englishories has placed the teacher at the centre of the classroom (Marshall, 2000); the aims and motivating philosophies of teachers become the central point of reference for understanding how the English curriculum is realized. However important teachers’ conceptions of English are, we argue they are not the prime determinants of what English will be in the classroom. We stress the ‘rhetorical work’ of the teacher, as someone who orchestrates a wide range of multimodal resources in a performance that addresses a particular audience – the students. But we see ‘English’ - the product that is the immediate creation of the teacher – as a practice that is socially located in a complex web of potentials and constraints (Rozenholtz, 1989).
Seeing the teacher as a rhetorician enables us to link a multimodal approach with social theory; to link our interest in the actualisation of the subject with the relevant theoretical and political perspectives. Hence we can demonstrate how the micro-processes in which English is constituted realise the policies which seek to create and sustain cohesive and purposive communities - as classroom, school, and community. In these contexts we re-interpret ‘rhetoric’ as ‘the work of representation and communication in a social environment’, the teacher’s rhetorical work. This allows theorising of the contexts of teaching, and re-thinking of pedagogy as rhetorically founded multimodal design.

4.1.4  Students and Agency
The possibility for students to make their voices heard, to stake their claims in the production of English, is greatly influenced by the context of the school and its institutional policies and of the English department and ‘its’ classrooms. This leads to profoundly different potentials for students’ agency in the three schools. A very large factor is that of the perceived ‘risk’ of failure in the examinations, and the schools’ and teachers’ responses to that perception. In turn this appears linked to the position of the school in the local community’s educational ‘market’. Teacher’s perception of student ‘ability’ foregrounds the pressure of the ‘examination culture’, or keeps it at bay to some extent. In the case of one school this has led to the removal of any degree of student agency for those who are judged to be of ‘low ability’. This expresses itself (in one instance) quite literally in who may hold the pencil in the annotation of the text, who gets to read the poem - the teacher or the students.

Neither the question of gender nor that of ethnicity was one of the stated concerns in the proposal. In the course of the project we focused on a specific ‘incident’, the discussion of the text Theresa’s Wedding in a classroom in Ravenscroft, in part to describe in detail how a multimodal analysis illuminates such an ‘incident’. Gender is the issue, barely below the surface of the debate (which is ostensibly about the curriculum entity character). And of course in this debate the social facts of gender are themselves at work in the interpersonal aspects of the lesson, so that it is not only curriculum content that is shaped, but also the form of the pedagogic relation.
Ethnicity in various forms, for instance, in one case a clear view to make the school into a ‘safe haven’ in an environment where ethnic difference as racism was a dangerous presence. At points we could see, and described, its effects on English.

4.1.5  Attainment and Ability
In the project we show how the term ‘ability’ is defined in its implementation. Although not initially a question in our proposal, the data led us into making it a concern, to see how it came to be actualised in the classroom. The project gave us clear insight into this, and we are able to provide one detailed account how a teacher’s sense of student ‘ability’ in one classroom leads to a distinctly different form of English being (co-) produced by her and the students.

4.1.6  Government policy
Here the major factor is of course the panoply of measures, of the National Curriculum, assessment regimes, inspections, performance requirements, and so on.

4.2 Forms of Realization of School English
Our focus now is on the forms of English that result from the interaction of stipulated curriculum policy with the social conditions of the environment in which English is being produced.

4.2.1 Curriculum Knowledge and Curricular ‘Entities’
Curriculum entities of English, such as text, character, plot, novel, play, personal response, etc, appear as entirely stable in curriculum at the policy level (analogous to wave-form, blood-
circulation, magnetic field, electron, water-cycle, etc in Science); when actualized in classrooms they emerge in a highly unstable form. Even with three schools of relatively comparable location and population – though with different policy responses to these – the English curriculum is highly responsive to the mix of social features. Policy alone guarantees very little indeed about entitlement, equity, access.

4.2.2 Classroom as Site, Context, and Sign
The classrooms we studied differed. In Wayford, one teacher had produced a room with carpets and soft furniture, in which the (teacher’s sense of) students’ life-world appeared as a wall display focused on the forms of popular culture (posters of the Lurhman film of Romeo and Juliet, Kung Fu heroes, etc). In Springford the departmental policy advocates the (very neat, regular) display on the walls of carefully framed entities form the National Curriculum, as the version of English. In Ravenscroft students’ carefully framed written work adorns the walls. Similarly the arrangement of furniture – desks, chairs – in the rooms, indicative of specific pedagogical / social relations differs across the classrooms.

4.2.3 Text and the cyclicity of text
Teachers have considerable freedom of choice of texts to be read; and they have considerable choice over how text is to be studied. The anxiety over the risks posed by examination failures led in many of the classrooms we looked at to a severe fragmentation of texts – that is, students get to know texts only as fragments. In many classrooms the handing over of texts to students is deferred: there is often a series of lessons preparing students for the text. ‘Texts’ often become just text - what teachers are attending to, what teachers and students ‘do’ with text, the teachers remaking of the text, who reads it - explicitness of the text, at what level is it being read/worked with.

4.2.4 Annotation
We gave serious attention to annotation. It is a constant feature of English teaching. One example made this concrete for us: the discussion of Marvell’s poem To his Coy Mistress. In the one case the issue was: ‘in the phrase ‘my vegetable love’ what does ‘vegetable’ mean?’ - a matter settled by reference to the OED; in the other it was a case of ‘what is this poem about, in terms of human (sexual) desire?’ In the one case the poem was treated as ‘text’ to be mined for ‘evidence’ for ‘argument and persuasive devices’; in the other as a means of showing the relation of the literary text to personal response. Our conclusions is that ‘annotation’ is aimed at fixing a variable meaning for the curricular entity text.

4.2.5 Examination
To an increasing extent, examination overshadows all the work in most of the classrooms we visited. We have argued earlier that English is being moved in the direction of Science in the name of explicitness. This could also be phrased somewhat differently by saying that English is being moved in the direction of positivist accounts - in which notions of evidence are constantly evoked by teachers in direct relation to examination success. Hence a Marvell poem or the scene from Macbeth become simply means for demonstrating the ability to adduce evidence.

As a constraint this looms large in teachers’ interview comments connecting and justifying the work of classrooms with the constraints of examination, which shapes the work/timetable of the classroom. So for example, the whole of the work done on Romeo and Juliet in one classroom was shaped by the assessment criteria for the speaking and listening 'examination'.

5. IMPACTS: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS FOR CURRICULUM AND POLICY MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS
5.1 For Policy Makers
If equitable outcomes are the aim of a curriculum policy, then our findings give important pointers as to how that might be done – or how it should not be done. We have shown that the social conditions impact differently on different types of school-subjects; this enables distinctions to be made and to be attended to which are of crucial significance to curriculum policy.

5.2 For Researchers
We have shown and exemplified a different way of looking, and its methodology; and we have shown that this way of looking can be turned to distinct uses: focussing the representation of a stable curriculum, or on the production under varying conditions of an unstable curriculum, on curriculum and its entities, on curricular representation; it can be focused on pedagogy and on the social relations in the classroom and their effects on certain school subjects. The multimodal methodology is ‘transportable’ as a framework, and it is applicable as a general methodology for the study of other school subjects and pedagogies. The methodology enables a new set of questions to be asked about school curriculum, namely questions which ‘locate’ a subject between locations where the effects of the social environment affect the shape of curriculum, and those subjects where that is less the case or not at all. From the work of the project we can develop reflections on pedagogic practice in relation not only to English, but also in relation to other subjects. Here our insights into how to handle the relation between the ‘lifeworld’ of students and the curricular matter might be one of the most significant.

6. ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS AND IMPACTS
The project team has presented numerous papers at a wide range of conferences, seminars and participatory workshops aimed at both academics and non-academics. In addition the project team have published a co-authored book with RoutledgeFalmer and a number of journal articles, book chapters which report on specific aspects of the research. The details of activities, outputs and impacts are listed in the annex to this report. As outlined in the end of award form we have specific and more general plans to continue these dissemination activities and outputs.

The project has had an impact on the initial teacher training program at the institute of education. The wide dissemination of the research findings to date, and planned for the future make a strong case for using the findings in future in initial teacher training, or in the reflective modalities of continuous professional development. It’s impact goes beyond the context of England, to the major project aimed at curricular reform initiated by the Singapore government (via the specially founded Centre for research in pedagogy and practice) where professor Kress has been engaged as an ‘expert’ in relation to the science and English curriculum.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES
The project raises significant issues around relation of the effects of examinations and forms of curriculum; around entitlement through notions of ability and forms of curriculum. The relationship between policy and the production of school English in the context of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy is the focus of a research proposal currently being developed by Jill Bourne.
REFERENCES


ANNEX 1: ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS AND IMPACTS
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2004
Workshop 1: genre theory / text types;
Workshop 2: multimodality: enhancing student learning in the subject areas..
Seminar 1: Meaning making, Design and Reading of Multimodal Text
Seminar 2: Meaning and Learning: media, modes, texts and knowledge
G.Kress English in Urban classroom: a multimodal approach Talk to the Staff and Doctoral research group, Roehampton Institute, London, January 28, 2004

Urban English Classrooms: symposium (Kress, Jewitt and Bourne) (forthcoming 2004) AERA Symposium, April, San Diego, USA.

ESRC Masterclass (forthcoming 2004); BERA/ESRC/TLRP Research Capacity Building Network Master Class on 'Multimodal analysis of video data in classroom interaction' award, disseminating methods of research analysis developed as part of the project. Convenor: J.Bourne. (Award from the ESRC Small Capacity Building Grants Scheme.)

2003


J. Bourne 'Realising literature lessons' University of Hamburg, International Graduate School Seminar, Faculty of Education, June 23, 2003


C. Jewitt 'English classroom visual displays as a multimodal sign’, AERA, Chicago, USA, 21-25 April, 2003.


K. Jones ‘Reshaping Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools’ paper to the RAPPE Seminar (Réseau Analytique et Pluridiscipline des Politiques éducatives’), ‘Governing, Regulation and Equity in Urban Schools’ March 2003

K. Jones Schooling, National Policy and Classroom Pedagogy in England Today, Research Seminar, School of Education, Southampton University May 2003


K. Jones Histories of the Present: a report on classroom research, DOMUS seminar, School of Education, Birmingham University December 2003

G.Kress, representation, modes and media: new communicational designs and some likely effects’ keynote talk, conference on interdisciplinary approaches to multimodal communication, university of bielefeld jan 9 – 10, 2003

G.Kress, ‘learning: a semiotic view (in the context of (digital) technologies) london knowledge lab, jan 14, 2003

G.Kress, ‘English for an era of radical instability’ keynote talk, Annual Conference of Association of Advisers in English, York, Jan 15-17, 2003

G.Kress, 'Reading in the age of the new media: from reading as interpretation to reading as design’, keynote address, European conference on reading ‘reading – writing – thinking’ Tallinn, July 6-9 2003


G.Kress, ‘Gains and Losses: Writing in the era of the screen’, Talk to the Language and Literacy Research Centre, Institute of Education, October 2002

G.Kress, The revolution in the landscape of communication: from page to screen’ Vestfold University College, Vestfold University College, 4 November 2003


G.Kress, ‘Children in the contemporary world of representation: markets, agency, authority and ethics’, Plenary talk, Conference on Childhood and Education: Challenges in Contemporary Societies, Athens 7,8,9 November 2003


G.Kress, English in Urban classroom: a multimodal approach Talk to the Staff and Doctoral research group, Roehampton Institute, London, January 28, 2004


K. Jones, Cultural Disconnectedness: Reshaping Pedagogy in Urban Schools
C. Jewitt and J. Bourne Orchestrating Debate: a multimodal approach to researching the teaching of higher order literacy skills
J. Bourne ‘Two Blushing Pilgrims’ and ‘The Hajj Thing’: the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on reader positioning in urban secondary English classrooms
A. Franks Subject and Agency in the Teaching of School English: looking at how teachers ‘produce’ English
G. Kress, ‘The Production of School English: Implications for future thinking, policy and practice’

J. Bourne ‘Constructing ability: pedagogy, boundaries and possible futures’, paper presented in Symposium on ‘Working with Bernstein in Educational Contexts’, BERA, Edinburgh, Sept., 2003. <<Note: This was a second paper at BERA, in addition to paper presented as part of our own SEP symposium>>

2002

J. Bourne 'In what ways does linguistic and cultural diversity impact on the English classroom?' 18th Annual Kongress of the Deutschen Gesellschaft fur Erziehungswissenschaft (DgFE), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat, Munich, March 2002.


Carey Jewitt, 'The classroom as a multimodal environment', ‘Qualitative Classroom Research Seminar’. Mexico City University. May 27- June 4 2002. (Funded by the Spencer Foundation)


C. Jewitt,’Multimodality and literacy’, Graduate School of Education Seminar Series, Bristol University, UK, 10 November 2002.

G.Kress, ‘Literacy in the new Media Age’ Kenote address at the Annual Conference of the Basic Skills Agency, Cardiff, Wales, March 5 2002

G.Kress, ‘Imagination, the world of image and the new media’ Keynote talk at the Conference Icon and Child, University of Thessaloniki, Sept 27-29 2002

G.Kress ‘Literacy in the New Media Age’, and ‘Teacher Education in the New Media Age’ two keynote Talks, at the Conference ‘Spraklig samhandling’ University of Trondheim, Nov 7 – 9 2002

G.Kress, ‘Educating for instability: Literacy in the New Media Age’ The Basic Skills Agency Annual Conference, Keynote, December 2 2002

G.Kress, Tracks of learning: a multimodal approach, Workshop / Conference ‘Missed Opportunities: Qualitative Research’ Institute of Education, Dec 10, 2002

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Book chapters
J.Bourne (forthcoming) ‘Framing talk: towards a "radical visible pedagogy". In Morais,A and Muller,J (eds) Reading Bernstein, researching Bernstein, London: Routledge


Journal articles


