Supporting children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) – Part 2

Overview

In 2014 the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) audited training courses relating to EAL provision in 2011-12. They are running a new audit this year. In 2014 it was reported:

> "EAL CPD and vocational training remains patchy, despite the increase in the numbers of pupils learning EAL since 2004."

> "There is a significant unmet demand for EAL training and CPD which is highly specific and closely related to individuals' working context, this context includes the type of school, type of EAL learner and type of teaching work the participant is involved in."

In surveyed schools only 3% of staff receiving specific training were non-teaching support staff. This resource explores key principles for providing support to help practising TAs better meet the needs of children learning English as an Additional Language.

Target audience

Teaching Assistants, either directly supporting a child or children learning EAL, or working in a class with such children.

Duration

Approximately 1 hour

The Learning Institute provides opportunities for individuals and communities through high quality education, training and research programmes that challenge personal barriers and promote social inclusion. To find out more, please get in touch.

Introduction

You may have received limited or no training to help you support children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). This work can be very daunting when the communication barrier prevents you successfully using strategies that you may be used to using with other children you work with. It is also quite common for schools to try to support children learning EAL by grouping them with children of lower ability, because they are not able to access the curriculum with their peers. However strategies used to support lower ability children may not be appropriate for children learning EAL. Having explored the principles underpinning successful support of these children in the first CPD session, this session will help you develop strategies to improve your practice.

The tasks here will specifically help you to meet the objectives detailed below.

Objectives

- To understand how children learning EAL make academic progress

- To review strategies you use when working with children learning EAL

- To explore new strategies to use when working with children learning EAL

Resources

Pen and paper for note taking

Internet access to following:

- Bell Foundation webinar available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=V24BprRr1uY [video]

- Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework for Schools: Introduction, available at https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2018/07/16105720/EAL-Assessment-Framework-Introduction.pdf [document]

- Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/177036/Aiming_High.pdf [document]

Task 1

Read The Bell Foundation (2019) *EAL Assessment Framework for Schools: Introduction* about the importance of how children learning EAL should be assessed: https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2018/07/16105720/EAL-Assessment-Framework-Introduction.pdf .

The key point is that their proficiency in English should be assessed independently of their progress in literacy and the other curriculum areas. Think about a child you support and make notes about the difference between their level of English and their progress in particular curriculum areas, using the prompt questions below:

1. Literacy - How does their achievement in Literacy differ from their age expected outcomes? If you know about their proficiency in their mother tongue, what would you expect their literacy outcomes to be in this language?

2. Use of specific language for curriculum areas - Can you think of occasions where their understanding of a topic has been hindered by their lack of understanding of particular language structures?

3. Area of language - Can you think of occasions when their outcomes have been hindered by a lack of specific language skills, such as questioning, language to structure a piece of work, basic transactional language?

4. Fair assessment - Can you think of occasions where you think a child may have received an assessment outcome which does not truly reflect their cognitive ability because of their English language level?

Task 2

Read the section titled 'Placing a new arrival in an appropriate class/group/set', which is on pages 2 and 3 of DfES (2005) *Aiming high: meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of English as an additional language,* available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/177036/Aiming_High.pdf

Consider each of these statements in the light the children you work with. Could any of these aspects of provision improve the support given?

Task 3

Read the section titled 'Strategies to help the beginner in the classroom', which is on pages 5 and 6 of DfES (2005) *Aiming high: meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of English as an additional language,* available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/177036/Aiming_High.pdf

Copy and paste this list of strategies onto a word document and work through them, traffic lighting them in relation to your practice – green for strategies you routinely use, amber for strategies you have used on occasions but could use more, and red for new strategies you think would be useful. (You may not code them all, some may not be relevant to all pupils).

Task 4

Watch the webinar recording, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=V24BprRr1uY, from time 38:00-45:00 (move the timing slider on the video player in YouTube to skip to this point). This section of the webinar is about useful resources available for supporting children learning EAL.

Make notes about the ones you think worth exploring for your school. Write a summary of these resources to pass on to a key member of staff.

Task 5: Reflection on learning

Note down your responses to the following questions:

- What knowledge did I already have that has been refreshed by this CPD?

- How has this CPD developed my knowledge and understanding?

- How can I apply what I now know to my practice?

- Consider how you can record your goals/targets so that you will make use of them when you are able to return to the classroom.

Sources

The Bell Foundation (2019) *EAL Assessment Framework for Schools: Introduction.* Available at: https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2018/07/16105720/EAL-Assessment-Framework-Introduction.pdf (Accessed: April 2020)

The Bell Foundation (2020) *Newly arrived pupils who are new to English 2 - webinar recording.* 10 March. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V24BprRr1uY (Accessed: April 2020)

Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Aiming high: meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of English as an additional language.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/177036/Aiming_High.pdf (Accessed: April 2020)

Further reading

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (2014) *National audit of English as an additional language training and development provision*. **Available at:** https://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Professional%20Development/Documents/EAL%20Audit%20Nicola%20Davies%20NALDIC.pdf (Accessed: April 2020)

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