



The Learning Institute

Supporting children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) - Part 1

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. Exploring the principles underpinning successful support of these children will help you develop your practice more effectively.

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

Objectives

- To understand key principles for supporting children learning EAL.
- To review your knowledge of the children learning EAL you work with in relation to these principles

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: Research and Development, available at <https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2018/07/16105720/EAL-Assessment-Framework-Research-and-Development.pdf> [document]

Task 1

Watch the webinar recording, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=V24BprRr1uY, from time 03:50-06:05 (move the timing slider on the video player in YouTube to skip the introduction). This section of the webinar is about the three key principles of supporting children learning EAL.

Reflect and make notes on how much you know about the children you work with in relation to these three principles, using the prompt questions below:

1. Bilingualism is an asset - How does the child you work with feel about their mother tongue? Are they proud to share and demonstrate it? Are you or other people in the school community able to share and celebrate the child's culture and language?
2. Cognitive challenge can and should be kept appropriately high – Once the child understands a learning activity, do they complete it easily? Have you been surprised by the

child's performance in a particular curriculum area? Does their progress accelerate if they have access to translation or peer support in their own language?

3. Language acquisition goes hand in hand with cognitive and academic development – Does the child show markedly better progress in either spoken or written language (indicating the mismatch between cognitive understanding and language proficiency)? Is the child able to articulate concepts being learnt to individuals, or only certain people, but not in groups or a whole class situation (indicating a potential lack of confidence in spoken language)?

Task 2

Watch the webinar recording from time 06:05-08:30 and answer for yourself the two questions asked, pausing the recording to do so. Compare your answers to those given by the webinar participants and presenter.

Please note: The rest of the webinar focuses on good practice for new arrivals with EAL. You may be interested to explore this independently.

Task 3

Look at pages 7 and 8 of the Bell Foundation (2017) *EAL Assessment Framework for Schools*, available at <https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2018/07/16105720/EAL-Assessment-Framework-Research-and-Development.pdf>, which outlines key principles for understanding how the progress of children learning EAL should be effectively assessed. Think about a child you support and make notes about what you know of the child for each of the 7 headings.

If there are gaps in your knowledge, how can you best find out this information to better inform the support you give?

Task 4

Watch the webinar recording from time 18:35-20:55 about the Initial EAL pupil profile. Consider the information included on this document and reflect on whether something similar exists for children you work with. How much of this information do you know? Is this something that would be useful in your practice?

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 (2017) *EAL Assessment Framework for Schools: Research and Development*. Available at: <https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2018/07/16105720/EAL-Assessment-Framework-Research-and-Development.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)

Further reading

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

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