

English as an Additional Language

From mountain to sea

Guidelines: helpful hints for settling in a bilingual learner

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2010	1.0	Guidelines	New draft
December 2017	2.0	Guidelines	Refresh
March 2023	2.1	Guidelines	Updated interpreter & total communication links

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1 Create an Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

Whole School

- Check that the pupil is placed in an age appropriate class.
- Find out the language your pupil speaks and confirm language of education – do not assume e.g. many Latvian pupils speak Russian not Latvian.
- Relate the pupil's cultural background to the curriculum and enable the pupil to draw on their own experience. This is a whole school issue and should be part of the inclusion/diversity education policy.
- Reflect diversity in visual displays and materials used across the school. These should be part of a whole school policy and already in place e.g. Welcome posters in many languages, use Widgit symbols, [Total Communication](#).

Classroom

- Ensure the new pupil relates to the environment by displaying labels and signs in the home languages in the classroom.
- Do not assume prior knowledge of English, but do remember that bilingual learners will have a complete range of cognitive abilities. Do not assume that because a pupil appears fluent orally that they will understand complex curricular language and instructions.

'Language for social purposes ... can develop in two years or less' but
'Language for academic purposes ... can take from five to 11 years to develop, depending on the previous educational experience and the extent of home language development.'

(Learning in 2+ Languages, 2005)

- Check that you know how to pronounce and spell your pupil's name correctly before introducing him/her to the class.
- Make sure that the rest of the class knows that a bilingual learner is arriving and can pronounce his/her name and know where they are from.
- Give the pupil time to settle in – a silent or receptive period is normal. This can last weeks or even months but the child is absorbing English all the time.
- Build quiet time/time out into the daily timetable, if necessary. It is hard work thinking/ translating/speaking in a new language all day, every day and bilingual learners can become very tired.

2 Parental Involvement

- Develop parents' involvement as part of the School Community.
 - On enrolment ensure the parent and pupil receive school's welcome pack and calendar and direct to online information including [school closures](#). Refer to **EAL Primary Enrolment checklist** and **EAL Secondary Enrolment checklist**.
 - When necessary, [use an interpreter](#) for meetings with parents or to call parents on the phone.
 - Advise parents how to support their child's language development bilingually, for example sharing picture books in their first language and continuing to speak in their first language. Refer to **Be Bilingual** leaflet.
 - Endeavour to provide correspondence to parents in a language they can understand.
 - Where there are a number of bilingual parents, discuss how they could meet to support each other, the school, their children and new arrivals.
- Communicate with CLD about what is available in the community to support the family, including community ESOL classes.

3 Learning and Teaching

The following advice is consistent with good practice for all learners and is consistent with learning and teaching policies in school.

Pairing and Mentoring

- Pair with a "buddy" as soon as the child arrives to support new pupil with school routines.
- Ensure the buddy has good communication skills, is a good model of English and is friendly and outgoing.
- Choose different buddies for different activities to introduce new friends and share the responsibility.
- If there is another pupil with the same first language in another class, introduce them to each other.
- Ensure the pupil is seated near the front of the classroom and is not sitting on their own. Place the pupil beside supportive peers with good models of English and behaviour.

Practical Activities

- Create opportunities for the pupil to become involved in the classroom, using a partner at first. For example:
 - Distributing equipment
 - Collecting jotters/books
 - Finding out where things are kept
 - Getting to know the layout of the classroom and the school
 - Becoming familiar with class routines and school routines
 - Knowing where the nearest toilet is
 - Understanding what to do at breaks and lunchtime

Use of First Language

- Encourage regular transfer between first language and English and show that the pupil's first language is valued, fostering self-respect and motivation by:
 - learning a few simple phrases, numbers, colours (if the child is willing, encourage them to share a few of these with the class)
 - providing opportunities for pupils to work in own language pairs/groups, where appropriate
 - borrowing dual/first language books from the EAL Service or library service
 - making bilingual books/summary sheets/glossaries/word banks
 - encouraging bilingual learners to continue:
 - annotating and taking notes in their first language (if literate)
 - reading and writing in their first language (if literate), planning writing tasks in first language
 - listening to bilingual taped stories
 - using home language in drama and role play
- Ask parents and other adults to offer bilingual support, where appropriate.
- **Google Translate** is useful for periodically translating individual words or short phrases only, **NOT** sentences or large chunks of texts. However, short phrases must be treated with care. The **speech function** is good for pronunciation. Do not become reliant on it!

Language and Cultural Awareness

- Foster awareness and knowledge of language in your class by:
 - gaining a simple understanding of the pupils' first language, simple phrases, basic script form, differences in sentence structure and numeric characters
 - teaching pupils about the diversity of language within the school and wider world
 - studying the difference between formal and informal written and spoken English and different dialects (This should be possible within the curriculum, for instance when looking at Scottish poems, by exploring different scripts and through global citizenship.)
- Discuss cultural diversity with your class by sharing experiences of:
 - Festivals and holidays
 - Traditions
 - Food
 - Clothing
- Be aware that pupils may have covered different content and concepts and may have some gaps in their knowledge of subject areas.
- Cultural and political background and prior knowledge may make some aspects of the curriculum challenging, e.g. a Chinese pupil studying democracy as part of Modern Studies.

Teacher Talk

- Limit teacher talk
- Give one instruction at a time
- Repeat instructions
- Rephrase using visuals, gestures and modelling
- Make instructions explicit. Be aware that words like "OK" and "right" are not instructions and may be misunderstood
- Do not ask closed questions to determine understanding – a bilingual pupil will usually answer 'Yes' to 'Do you understand?'
- Give pupils thinking time to process language and answer before replying on their behalf
- Before asking a bilingual pupil, ask other children the question to help model the response

Prepare Differentiated Materials (taking account of the child's strengths and prior knowledge)

- When differentiating materials make sure this is done on a linguistic not a cognitive basis
- Model answers
- Scaffold learning
- Pre-teach key words before a unit and/or lesson
- Give short vocabulary lists or key words for each unit of work
- Illustrate key words with simple pictures
- Create a glossary book with the pupil to record new words
- If the pupil is literate in their first language, key words should be recorded, with a definition in the first language and in English
- Limit written materials at first
- Use writing frames
- Differentiated materials should take into account task, materials, support and expectations

Make good use of Visual Materials

- Provide as much visual support as possible in a wide variety of formats:
 - Diagrams
 - Illustrations
 - Photographs
 - Picture flash cards
 - Picture dictionaries
 - Computer programmes/Apps
 - Multimedia
 - Artefacts/Realia
- Always set any spoken instructions within a visual context.
- Produce a set of picture cards to signal key instructions initially.
- Scaffold learning using key visuals. Key visuals are a way of representing or organizing information diagrammatically or in a visual form such as:
 - Tables

- Timelines
- Venn diagrams
- Matrix charts
- Flow charts
- Graphs
- Pyramid diagrams
- Mind or model maps

Dictionaries

- Offer a variety of types of dictionaries:
 - Picture
 - Illustrated topic glossaries
 - Bilingual dictionaries if the pupil is bi-literate

Talk

- Opportunities for talk should be planned:
 - A silent period is often a stage of development in learning English as an Additional Language and a pupil should not be forced to respond
 - It is normal for understanding to exceed verbal output in the early stages
 - Create activities for scaffolded talk
 - Use paired discussion before commencing written work
 - Build up talk through pairs, small groups and then bigger groups
 - Allow pupil thinking time to process and respond
 - For solo talks, allow pupil to deliver to the teacher or a small group of friends first

Maximise your pupil's learning experience

- It is important to plan for regular collaboration with peers. The group creates a non-threatening environment for learning.

- Group tasks facilitate involvement, belonging and the need to experiment with language in order to complete a task.
- Language is modelled by peers.

Assessment

Assessment should be treated with caution!

- Standardised assessments are often unreliable.
- Diagnostic assessments may easily be invalidated by cultural factors.
- Bilingual learners should not be presented for unit assessments or exams until they are ready.
- Until there is language 'readiness' the pupil should not be expected to sit class assessments.

"5 Ensuring validity: the key steps 5.3 Think about the candidate as well as the assessment." SQA Guide to Assessment – p.12, Publication Date: July 2015, www.sqa.org.uk,

"In order to succeed in tests and assessments, pupils require to have well-developed skills in language for academic purposes." (Learning in 2+ Languages – Education Scotland – Assessing the progress of bilingual learners p. 21).

4 Additional Information for Pupils in Secondary Schools

- There are specific SQA [Assessment Arrangements](#) for bilingual pupils and application should be made at the appropriate time for all subjects with the exception of English, ESOL and the home language. Support for in-class assessments should also reflect this arrangement.
- It may also be possible for the school to offer bilingual pupils the opportunity to sit an SQA or GCSE examination in their first language.
- Alternative English courses may be more appropriate for recently arrived bilingual pupils whose language skills are not sufficient for English subject. The SQA offer ESOL qualifications from National 2 to Higher. Cambridge examinations and IELTS are alternatives which may be preferred by some universities and courses. The EAL Service can advise as the minimum language entrance requirements may vary according to subject and institution.
- Where a bilingual pupil has an Additional Support Need other than English as an Additional Language, SQA Assessment Arrangements may be required in line with provision for those needs.

5 Useful Websites

[Aberdeenshire EAL Glow page](#)

Aberdeenshire EAL Service's Glow page

www.nationmaster.com

provides background information about a pupil's home country

[Eurydice](#)

information about education systems within Europe

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/quickfix

see and hear common words & phrases to learn welcoming phrases before a new pupil arrives

www.bfinclusion.org.uk

for support strategies

www.scotdec.org.uk

excellent resources

www.elite.net/~runner/jennifers/

hello, goodbye welcome etc. in many languages

www.Mantralingua.com

resources

<https://eal.britishcouncil.org/>

EAL information and resources

<http://www.newburyparkschool.net/langofmonth/>

Language of the Month in 57 languages (free)

- interactive video clips showing children teaching first words and numbers in their home language
- Downloadable resource packs
- Activity packs/booklets

<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/>

Woodlands Junior School

- Includes Literacy resources with lots of activities for whiteboard or tablet use

www.senteacher.org

SEN Teacher – free resources

- Literacy printables
- Maths printables
- Others (certificates, visual timetables, subject resources)

www.the-treasure-box.co.uk

The Treasure Box – resources for sale

- Multi-cultural/modern language stampers in many languages
- Multi-cultural praise stickers in Polish, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali
- Self-assessment stampers - Traffic Lights, Smiley Face and Two Stars and a Wish
- Free resources – Self assessment posters and fans
 - First words, numbers, phrases and jigsaws

<http://www.smartkids.co.uk/>

Smart Kids – resources for sale

www.freechildmindingresources.com

Free ‘Welcome’ posters in six languages

Aberdeenshire Library Service (ALS) links

<http://worldbookonline.com/kids/home>

translated information - useful for topic research/background

<https://www.overdrive.com/>

Books available through Aberdeenshire library login

Other Websites with good strategies and downloadable visual resources (e.g. communication fans, starter instruction fans, literacy, numeracy, topic cards, posters, games and audio stories) –

www.earlylearninghq.org.uk

www.twinkl.co.uk

www.primaryresources.co.uk

www.eal-teaching-strategies.com

www.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org

Facebook pages

- Education Scotland

A selection of Facebook pages specific to bilingualism

- BBC Learning English
- British Council
- LearnEnglish Kids – British Council
- TeachingEnglish – British Council
- Schools Online – British Council
- Cambridge English
- Bilingual Brain
- Multilingual Café
- Bilingual, Bicultural
- The Association for Language Learning

Facebook pages featuring teaching ideas suitable for use with bilingual pupils (often with free downloads/visuals)

- K-3 Teacher Resources
- Teaching Ideas
- Teaching Resources (author of corkboardconnections blogspot)
- Teachers Pay Teachers