

## **CHILDREN WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

**Research shows that a beginner in English will take up to two years to acquire social language and up to seven years for their academic language to develop. Research also shows that pupils learn English most effectively in mainstream classrooms with their peers, where they are exposed to a range of relevant and authentic contexts and materials for developing skills in English.**

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**Bilingual pupils who have strong literacy and language skills in their first language will find it easier to develop comparable skills in English.**

### **First steps**

- As pupils learn a great deal of language from their peers place the bilingual pupil next to someone who is articulate and who will provide a good model of language.
- Encourage pupil and family or the school library to acquire a dual language dictionary and to use this regularly in class.
- Don't panic if the pupil is reluctant to speak in class and allow him/her to watch and listen initially. Speaking in a new language is always very daunting, particularly for more self-conscious and timid pupils. Remember that just because they are silent does not mean that they are not learning.
- For the first few weeks allow the pupil to make friends and become familiar with the school, its routine and environment as this will be very different to previous experiences. If the pupil feels at ease and settled this creates a much better atmosphere and incentive for learning.

## **SUPPORTING SKILLS**

### **Listening:**

- Repeat key words and encourage pupil to repeat after you.
- Use the pupil's name and make eye contact to focus on key information.
- Try and use the same language consistently.
- Ask pupils to listen out for specific things ie: "how many times did I say..."
- Use visuals to reinforce language.
- Write key words on the whiteboard for reinforcement.
- Develop listening skills in conjunction with reading by using taped books and listening centres.

### **Talking:**

- Use modelling when asking questions providing appropriate structures and vocabulary for the answers.
- Encourage group/paired activities with sympathetic and articulate pupils whose good model of language can be repeated and copied.
- Encourage learning self-help phrases and survival language with the support of parents or peers/older pupils.
- Give lots of praise and positive feedback to help raise pupil's confidence.

### **Reading:**

- Allow pupil to take home novel/text book in advance to enable him/her to pre-read material and become familiar with concepts and context.
- Set up paired reading with peers or older pupils in the school.
- Use taped books for novel support.
- Recall and discuss previously read work to reinforce comprehension, concepts and structures.
- Photocopy pages from novels/text books and highlight key words and passages for pupil to focus on.
- Provide summaries of novels/ new topic prior to tackling text.
- Simplify information by using charts, diagrams and key visuals.
- Use true or false questions to check comprehension.

### **Writing:**

- If applicable, allow pupil to write in their first language initially. The learning process is still taking place but in a language other than English.
- Pupil can copy relevant information in small bursts to record class work, to reinforce structures and to help develop speed and accuracy writing in English.
- Provide models and frameworks to support writing with key vocabulary and structures.
- Encourage pupils to build up subject-related word bank with meanings.
- Use computers to encourage writing and help develop word processing skills.

### **Worksheets:**

Suggestions for making work more accessible for EAL pupils and enabling them to manipulate and interact with relevant text:

- Use key visuals/charts whenever possible to support text.
- Ask pupils to rearrange sentences/paragraphs in the correct order to reinforce structure.
- Provide multiple choice and true or false questions to check comprehension.
- Fill in the gap activities with a choice of possible answers provided.
- Matching the beginning and ending of sentences from relevant text.
- Identifying key words (as directed by teacher) using dual language dictionary and recording meaning.
- Identifying specific information in a passage, i.e.: names of places, people, geographical terms.
- Matching definitions to key topic words.

### Homework:

EAL pupils require the same intellectual challenges as their peers and should therefore be set homework, taking into consideration their different linguistic demands.

Here are some initial suggestions for homework:

- Pre-reading relevant pages in novels/text books to support comprehension.
- Learning and recording meanings of key vocabulary.
- Selected questions from worksheets/books.
- Listening to taped information.
- Making notes/writing in first language.
- Copying relevant sections of text.
- Recording information in charts/diagrams.

### Exam Courses:

- A recently arrived bilingual pupil may find it difficult to cope linguistically with the full range of GCSE courses. Depending on the pupil's ability, language development and previous educational experience, it might be suitable to look at a reduced timetable to enable pupil to consolidate work.
- EAL pupils should be placed in appropriate groupings which reflect their ability and potential.
- A reading age in a second language is not an accurate reflection of actual reading skill.
- EAL pupils will find it easier to access the curriculum if given materials beforehand for pre-reading activities.
- Where applicable, a bilingual pupil should be encouraged to gain formal qualifications in their first language.

### Assessment and Examinations:

- New EAL pupils should be allowed to settle and gain confidence before attempting formal assessment.
- **Most EAL pupils are entitled to extra time and the use of a dictionary during exams. Please check with your exam board for up to date details.**

### Additional Information:

EAL pupils often have different cultural experiences and expectations and may therefore struggle in terms of comprehension with culturally embedded concepts and contexts.

- Meet with parents regularly to suggest strategies at home to help develop the pupil's language.
- Reinforce with parents the need to continue to develop language skills in the first language as these, in turn, will help pupils develop better skills in English.
- Encourage the pupil to attend lunchtime/after school study support/homework classes.
- Set up scheme of lunchtime/after school tuition with senior pupils studying relevant subjects at Advanced Level.
- Where applicable, insist on the pupil consulting dual language dictionary/ English dictionary in and out of class to help develop language skills.
- Set short term attainable goals to give encouragement and boost confidence.