

# English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) effective school practices

Research report

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation



## Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

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# | Foreword

When reading **English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) effective school practices**, I remembered my introduction in 1989 to EAL/D education in NSW schools. As a newly appointed specialist English as a second language teacher at Belmore South Public School, I was immediately drawn into a network of people and resources focussed on ensuring the best possible educational outcomes for children for whom English was an additional language. For many of our children and their families, English language needs intersected with other forms of disadvantage such as low income, gender barriers and re-settlement issues. Yet despite the challenges, I remember the school and those surrounding it as vibrant, intellectually stimulating places, alive with possibilities for students and staff alike. Our school leaders were strong advocates for pluralism and equity, school-community relations were positive, and the whole school focus on English literacy emerged from nascent collaborative research with universities. These features resonate with the findings of this report: that is, **school leaders** who view cultural and linguistic diversity as strengths; positive, **respectful school cultures**; and **EAL/D pedagogy** led by specialist EAL/D teachers working in collaboration with mainstream colleagues are key to the provision of effective programs for EAL/D students.

**EAL/D effective school practices** reports on joint research conducted by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) and the Multicultural Education Team of the NSW Department of Education. The research sets out to make what works for EAL/D learners in schools explicit by describing the particular school and classroom features which support English language learners to succeed. Taking a mixed method approach to focus on a selection of impactful schools, the research draws on variety of 'macro' and 'micro' level data from system wide sources to actual minute-by-minute classroom observations. The ensuing rich picture of activity described in the report is a testament to the recent work in EAL/D provision as it has responded to shifts in broader social and policy contexts, addressing new initiatives, reshaping and adapting as necessary. These responses can be seen in the provision of professional learning for EAL/D leaders, the emphasis on home languages and the relational aspects of student engagement, the strengthened description of effective EAL/D expertise and pedagogy. The report has much to offer policy makers, curriculum writers, schools, teacher educators and researchers alike. In providing vignettes of EAL/D education in a range of settings and discussions of its findings, the report provides ample evidence of what successful EAL/D provision looks like in a range of settings. The EAL/D quality teaching observation tool is a particularly useful measure for future research, and for reflection among communities of practice.

**EAL/D effective school practices** comes as recent global and local events have exposed social fissures, rendering inequities even more visible. English language, alongside home languages and cultures, offers individuals access to knowledge and information and the means to participate in society, providing voice to a diverse community. Now more than ever, the provision of effective and sustainable EAL/D education is a critical role for public education. This report represents a significant step toward that goal.

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## **| Executive summary**

The increasing proportion of English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students in NSW Government schools presents challenges to policy makers, principals and teachers as they respond to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. With almost one in four students learning English as an additional language or dialect<sup>1</sup>, objective, evidenced based research into what works for these learners can make a significant contribution to effective EAL/D education.

The aim of this research is to identify and document effective practices in schools with demonstrated high EAL/D student learning progress. It builds on previous work by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) identifying effective practices in high value add schools<sup>2</sup> by providing additional insights into specific aspects of effective practices in the EAL/D educational context. It acknowledges the foundational EAL/D research conducted in NSW schools in the last 20 years and seeks to add currency to this body of research. An important feature of this study is that it employed a rigorous school selection methodology consisting of a combination of measures to ensure insights gained reflect the best practices common across schools that have demonstrable evidence of strong EAL/D student growth.

In this research, a small number of schools in the NSW Government school system that had demonstrated significant positive impact on EAL/D student learning were first identified based on a suite of measures including the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) based value-added measures for all but in particular EAL/D students, rates of English language proficiency progress of EAL/D students using EAL/D learning progression phase data, school self-evaluations from using the School Excellence Framework, and insights from EAL/D experts into schools working effectively with EAL/D students. A mixed-methods approach was then used including lesson observations and analysis in the context of stated learning sequence, teacher, student and school executive team interviews and measures of teacher self-assessment using the EAL/D Evaluation Framework to identify common elements of effective practices most noticeable across these schools. To facilitate the research, a lesson observation and analysis tool based on the NSW quality teaching model (EAL/D quality teaching observation tool) was specifically developed.

The research is a collaborative initiative between the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and the Multicultural Education team, Learning and Teaching Directorate, in the NSW Department of Education, aiming to better understand the pedagogical, leadership and school organisational practices that are most likely to yield sustainable improvements in EAL/D student learning.

The research has confirmed that the 'six effective practices in high growth schools' described in CESE research (2015b) that are essential for the broader student population need to be amplified for the English language learners.

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1 NSW Department of Education, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Schools: English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) learners, 2019, (forthcoming 2020)

2 High value-add schools: Key drivers of school improvement; Sustaining success: A case study of effective practices in Fairfield high value-add schools; Closing the Gap case studies; and Six effective practices in high growth schools



The study has confirmed **the importance of school leaders who understand the strengths and needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse communities** and who recognise the role of **EAL/D specialist teachers in responding to the complex needs of their communities.**

**In research schools, leaders:**

- respect parents as critical and knowledgeable partners, using home language to support their engagement in all aspects of school activities
- know their students and families – learning their unique histories, educational experiences and knowledge of English, the aspirations they hold for their children, and their mental health and wellbeing
- utilise EAL/D teacher expertise to build the collective capacity of the school to support the social, emotional and academic progress of EAL/D students
- employ qualified and experienced EAL/D teachers and support their sustained professional development through participation in local networks, EAL/D professional learning courses, including Leading EAL/D Education professional learning, personal study and mentoring from specialists (such as refugee support leaders).

Findings from this research **indicate the value of productive respectful relationships.** These were evident across all levels of the participating schools: the leadership teams, mainstream staff and EAL/D specialist teachers all demonstrated a shared energy and enthusiasm for their EAL/D students and school community. Respectful relationships were evident in:

- highly productive co-teaching relationships, where EAL/D expertise is valued and shared knowledge of EAL/D pedagogy informs planning and teaching
- high levels of trust in the classroom where EAL/D students have the confidence to take risks with new learning and develop new identities as successful learners
- strong relationships between teachers and EAL/D students (and between teachers) creating a positive school and classroom culture of high care and high expectations where students feel a sense of belonging.

Last but not least, this study has identified that **effective teaching and learning for EAL/D students is designed to amplify, rather than simplify, English language and literacy practices associated with increasingly complex curricula demands.** **In research schools, teachers adopt key elements of EAL/D pedagogy by:**

- identifying a language focus within each learning sequence and providing clear instruction of language structures and features required to demonstrate subject discipline knowledge
- articulating clear goals for language and curriculum discipline learning, including learning intentions and success criteria for each lesson, and scaffolding each EAL/D student to accomplish tasks independently
- planning for oral interaction during lessons, allowing students to explore and clarify their understanding of concepts through classroom talk, while pushing them to produce extended stretches of language which are comprehensible to others
- targeted use of students' home language
- using EAL/D student assessment evidence, analysed with reference to EAL/D learning progressions, to inform learning and teaching across the school
- participating in rigorous evidence-based professional learning that facilitates teachers to apply and deepen their understandings of what works for English language learners within their school setting.



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This research has made explicit what works for EAL/D learners in schools. It has expanded the evidence base for effective practices in schools by describing the particular nature of school and pedagogical factors that drive successful EAL/D education. The EAL/D quality teaching lesson observation tool, developed as part of the research project, has the potential to further enhance understandings into EAL/D teaching practice in future research projects.

This research provides new insights into aspects of leadership, school culture and teaching for successful EAL/D education. School leadership that understands, respects and connects with their culturally and linguistically diverse communities and values EAL/D expertise helps build a respectful school culture. This respect underpins the productive teacher-student relationships that are characterised by genuine care and high expectations where students feel a sense of belonging enabling them to reach their potential in learning. In the classroom that sense of belonging is nurtured through targeted use of home language and building on students' existing knowledge to strengthen new learning. Use of EAL/D learning progressions as part of formative assessment practices provide evidence of English language development that better supports EAL/D teaching and learning.

**In summary:** effective and sustainable EAL/D education means strong and strategic leadership that understands and engages the diverse school community and draws on EAL/D expertise to lead professional learning and to have an integral role in teaching and learning; respectful relationships that foster a positive school and classroom culture of cooperation, high care and high achievement; and sustained teacher knowledge-building and effective EAL/D teaching that is characterised by features of 'high challenge', 'high support' and explicit language and literacy teaching.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Current context of the EAL/D program in NSW

EAL/D students represent a significant proportion of learners in NSW Government schools (almost one in every four students), and are a subset of the broader population of students who come from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE). EAL/D students represent great linguistic and cultural diversity speaking 213 languages and coming from 193 different countries. They may start schooling in Australian schools at any year grade and with varying levels of prior schooling, English language proficiency and linguistic competence in their home language.

Studies show that it can take five to seven years for EAL/D students to develop academic English, and up to ten years for students with disrupted or limited prior schooling (Cummins, 1981; Collier et al, 1989). In general, students from a refugee background have greater educational and support needs than most other newly arrived EAL/D students.

In June 2019, there were 190,889 EAL/D students including 10,140 students from refugee backgrounds enrolled across 2,210 NSW Government schools.

Resources to support the English language needs of EAL/D students are distributed to schools each year based on the number of students reported in each of four developmental phases of English language proficiency (Beginning, Emerging, Developing and Consolidating).<sup>3</sup> English language proficiency resources include EAL/D specialist teaching positions and/or flexible funding.

The organisation of school EAL/D programs varies depending on the number of EAL/D students and their levels of English. EAL/D teachers may provide support for EAL/D students through direct instruction, collaborative teaching and/or resource teaching including collaborative planning and professional learning. In this research we observed EAL/D specialist teachers across a range of EAL/D program organisation models<sup>4</sup>.

The aim of this research is to identify and document effective practices in six schools identified for their high EAL/D student learning progress. The research builds on previous work by CESE identifying effective practices in high value add schools by providing additional insights into specific aspects of effective practices in the EAL/D educational context.

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3 The EAL/D phases are described in detail in the English as an additional language or dialect teacher resource – EAL/D learning progression: Foundation to Year 10, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, May 2014

4 Further details about the models of EAL/D program organisation are described in English as an additional language or dialect: Advice for schools, 2014, NSW Department of Education and Communities

## Departmental documents and initiatives referenced in this research

- The **School Excellence Framework** provides direction for schools to undertake school planning and reporting, self-assessment and external validation, identifying quality practice across the three key domains of education – learning, teaching and leading. It underpins the department's approach to planning and reporting, and assists schools to identify strategic directions, decide on improvement measures and assess progress. Schools conduct annual self-assessment against the Framework and report on their progress in their Annual School Report.
- The **EAL/D School Evaluation Framework** is used by schools to evaluate how they are working towards a whole school EAL/D student support strategy. The framework can support the development of the school EAL/D strategy and inform strategic directions within the annual school planning process. The EAL/D School Evaluation Framework identifies differentiated levels of achievement which relate to the School Excellence Framework levels: Delivering, Sustaining and Excelling. Progress of achievement can be measured over time by assessing EAL/D practices against the framework over time.
- The **EAL/D learning progression** describes a progression of English language learning typical of students learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). They are used by EAL/D and mainstream teachers to identify EAL/D students and their level of language development, to understand the broad phases of English language learning that EAL/D students are likely to experience, and to monitor the language development of their students.
- **English as an additional language or dialect: Advice for schools** (2020) provides guidelines for schools with EAL/D students.
- The **Refugee Leadership Strategy** (2017-2019) provided system support for schools with significant numbers of refugee students. Through the strategy, 18 refugee support leaders (15.4 FTE) worked with targeted schools to support planning and implementation of whole school strategies, professional learning, transition processes, community participation and personalised learning for refugee students. A preliminary evaluation of the Strategy, conducted in 2017 by the department's Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) indicated that this strategy had a positive impact in targeted schools.

## 1.2 Review of current literature on effective EAL/D practices

This section first provides a brief overview of research into EAL/D effective practices from empirical and theoretical perspectives of EAL/D education. This is followed by a summary of relevant EAL/D research and initiatives and programs in NSW as they relate to the six effective practices identified in research from the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE, 2015b) for the broad student population.

### 1.2.1 Research into EAL/D effective practices

For EAL/D students, engagement in intellectually challenging curricula is dependent on language skills as well as conceptual knowledge. That is, EAL/D students are attempting to engage with substantive curriculum concepts through a new language whilst simultaneously learning about and how to use that new language, (Halliday, 1979; Gibbons, 2002). Therefore EAL/D students need to develop academic language and literacy that is integral to understanding and communicating those substantive concepts.

This section describes a number of significant EAL/D research initiatives conducted over the last 20 years to examine effective EAL/D teaching practice in culturally and linguistically diverse NSW Government schools. This body of research confirms the importance of high expectations and student engagement whilst also elaborating and refining the pedagogical model of scaffolding for EAL/D learners.

Research conducted in partnership between the University of Technology, Sydney and the Multicultural Programs Unit within the NSW Department of Education, and reported by Gibbons and Hammond (2005), has resulted in a robust and enriched model of scaffolding, describing the features found to be central to an effective EAL/D teaching program. This research documented and analysed teaching practices that were designed to support EAL/D students in mainstream classes in NSW Government schools. The resulting pedagogical model includes 'designed-in' features evident in well-planned teaching programs as well as 'contingent' features where teachers interact with students in response to the teaching and learning opportunities that present themselves<sup>5</sup>.

Ongoing complementary research has resulted in further refinements to the EAL/D scaffolding model with a focus on articulating the specific nature of high intellectual challenge for EAL/D learners. A special themed edition of the *Linguistics and Education Journal* (April, 2013) documents research into the relationship between literacy and learning in the secondary context. Another themed edition (*The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 2008) documents research by Gibbons, Hammond, Schleppegrell, Greer, Taylor, Freebody, Maton and Martin. Both editions contribute to an understanding of the nature of intellectual challenge and the demands of planning for, and implementing, high challenge curricula for EAL/D learners. Research by Derewianka and Christie (2008) has contributed to understanding of how learning across different school subjects requires control of subject specific literacies. A common theme across this research is that engagement with the language and literacy of curriculum is central to engagement with an intellectually challenging curriculum.

<sup>5</sup> The scaffolding model is described in detail in 'Putting scaffolding to work: The contribution of scaffolding in articulating ESL education' by Gibbons and Hammond (2005).

Further research by Hammond (2018), for the NSW Department of Education, identifies a number of key factors contributing to high quality learning environments for students of refugee backgrounds in mainstream classes. It reiterates the importance of high challenge and high support teaching programs with a focus on explicit teaching of the language and literacy of the curriculum area. Furthermore, findings confirm that effective practice also includes:

- positive, supportive and predictable school and class learning environments
- school structures that support processes of collaborative program planning between EAL/D and class/ subject teachers
- clarifying purposes for learning and sharing these purposes with students
- providing students with opportunities and support to 'talk to learn' and to 'learn to talk' (and read and write) academic English.

Related research about EAL/D students from refugee backgrounds by Hammond (2014) resulted in the design of a lesson analysis tool that provided the evidence base for the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool used in this project. Hammond's analysis tool incorporated selected elements from the NSW quality teaching model as well as new elements reflecting pedagogical features highlighted in EAL/D research as especially significant for EAL students. Hammond draws on research by Hammond and Gibbons (2005), Michell and Sharpe (2005) and Gibbons (2008) as evidence for incorporating in the analysis tool a focus on systematic and explicit teaching of academic language; targeted and differential levels of EAL/D student scaffolding; and clear articulation of purposes and directions of learning. Through the addition of the elements **academic language focus**, **scaffolding** and **explicit goals**, the tool acknowledges the importance of high challenge and high support for all students, whilst also providing nuanced and detailed insights into the nature of the lessons themselves. The lesson analysis tool was used to identify patterns of pedagogical practices in 32 lessons across Intensive English Centres and high schools included in Hammond (2014) study. The resulting analysis provided important evidence for the refinements made to the EAL/D quality teaching lesson observation tool used in this current research.

Research by D'warte (2017) provides evidence that students' confidence, motivation and engagement as learners is strengthened when their language repertoires are recognized, validated and treated as resources for learning. In D'warte's research (2017), teachers report that making explicit connections between home language practices and in-school tasks resulted in increased student confidence in their own abilities, motivated students to complete tasks, and increased the length and complexity of their writing and their engagement in discussion and reflection. Bilingual reading engaged all participants and worked to not only offer an acknowledgement of the linguistic diversity of the school community but began to expand the linguistic repertoire of the classes and participating schools. Findings reveal that teachers further realized the strong relationship that exists between language and identity and came to see its importance in promoting self-esteem and belonging for students, parents and the wider school community.

The Successful Language Learners (SLL) research, a joint initiative of the NSW Department of Education and the Catholic Education Commission of NSW conducted during 2009 and 2010, documents significant improvements in EAL/D student learning outcomes across participating schools through targeted initiatives (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011). Analysis of the NAPLAN results for matched students who were in Year 3 in

2008 and Year 5 in 2010 shows significant growth across the SLL group of schools. The success of the project was attributed to the four major interrelated initiatives:

1. regular assessment and analysis of student needs using EAL/D specialist tools (ESL scales)
2. EAL/D specialist teachers working as instructional leaders providing in-class and whole school EAL/D professional learning for teachers and school leaders
3. whole school commitment to EAL/D education
4. establishment of schools as centres for community activity with a flexible range of strategies for engaging parents.

The SLL initiative demonstrates the major impact that EAL/D informed pedagogy can have on the language learning of EAL/D students.

### 1.2.2 EAL/D perspectives on ‘What works best’ CESE research

In 2015, CESE first published Six effective practices in high growth schools. This is a successful document summarising effective practices found in the broad student population. This next section relates these findings specifically to the EAL/D population examining research and initiatives relevant to each of the six effective practices identified in the CESE research (CESE, 2015b).

#### **Creating an environment that promotes learning and high levels of student engagement**

‘Six effective practices’ includes ‘student engagement’ and ‘effective teaching practice incorporating high expectations’ as important factors driving learning for all students.

A significant body of research explores the nature and impact of student engagement for EAL/D learners. Yongmei Li’s research synthesis (2018) finds growing consensus that positive teacher-student relationships play a critical role in engaging EAL/D students in school and their schooling success. Similarly, Quin’s systematic review of research (2017) finds strong associations between positive teacher-student relationships and EAL/D student engagement.

Research conducted by Ransom (2019), finds that the most successful student-teacher relationships in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) schools have characteristics of the ethics of care. According to Noddings (2012), care is important when it goes beyond establishing a surface rapport, with the quality of the care impacting favourably on students’ outcomes. A meta-analysis by Cornelius-White (2007) reveals a strong association between ‘empathy’ and ‘warmth’ and CALD student outcomes. For Gay (2018), culturally responsive caring entails teachers holding high expectations of their students and being tough in their enforcement of diligence and performance (p. 80). This notion of care, referred to in the research as ‘**warm demander**’ is defined as a teaching style in which teachers show warmth to their students while simultaneously communicating firm rules of respect and expectations of achievement. The ‘warm demander’ research shows that teachers who are high in both warmth and demand towards their students produce the best outcomes for African American students (Ware, 2006).

Hammond and Gibbons (2005) confirm the importance of the interpersonal dimensions of classroom interactions in their scaffolding research in NSW schools. They find that one of the most significant aspects of teacher–student interactions is when students’ voices are taken seriously, thus positioning them as authentic communicators and effective learners.

The role of students' home language in learning and engagement is well documented (Moll et al 2005; Garcia 2009). Where teachers provide focused opportunities for the use of home language in learning, students' curriculum discipline and language learning and feelings of belonging are enhanced. A teacher that acknowledges the linguistic diversity of students will provide targeted opportunities for students to interact in first language to deepen understanding of new concepts, will provide access to bilingual texts and will draw explicit connections between languages.

### Engaging and sharing in professional learning

CESE research (2015b) identifies professional learning as one of the six critical aspects of effective practice in high value-add schools. Professional learning was used strategically to support school goals and was shared among staff so that learning was embedded across the school. In addition, schools established systems to support teachers so that the benefits of learning were maximized and not forgotten.

In NSW, a number of EAL/D professional learning programs have been developed and implemented at a system level by the NSW Department of Education. These programs align with three critical aspects of professional learning as identified by Timperley (2008): teachers developing strong theoretical frameworks that enable them to make principled changes to practice, teachers developing professional, self-regulatory inquiry skills that can help them making effective decisions on changes to practices and an organizational infrastructure that supports professional learning and self-regulated inquiry.

Descriptions of the professional learning programs referenced in this research report are included below.

#### EAL/D professional learning programs referenced in this research

- The **Leading EAL/D Education (LEE)** course aims to build the capacity of schools to improve the learning and wellbeing of students learning English as an additional language or dialect, including those from a refugee background. School teams use the **EAL/D School Evaluation Framework** tool to reflect on existing EAL/D education practices against best practice benchmarks and use data and evidence to plan and implement an inquiry based project to achieve improved EAL/D teaching and learning or whole school practices to support the learning and wellbeing of EAL/D learners.
- **Teaching English Language Learners (TELL)** provides a comprehensive program of professional learning to support teachers of EAL/D learners across the range of school subject areas. It reflects current EAL/D pedagogy research and NSW priorities in literacy, numeracy, assessment and quality teaching. The aim of the professional learning program is to equip mainstream teachers with the professional knowledge and practice needed for effective and confident language and literacy based teaching of EAL/D students within their curriculum area.
- **Teaching Students from Refugee Backgrounds (TSRB)** has been developed to support classroom teachers, K-12, to develop their understanding of the educational needs of refugee students in order to provide effective teaching strategies. The course consists of 5 modules, each of 2 hours duration. It also includes 10 hours of professional learning through between session tasks that require them to apply their learning in their professional practice.



## Using explicit and effective teaching strategies

In CESE's research (2015b), data-informed explicit teaching and curriculum differentiation are identified as two aspects of effective teaching practice. Teachers use data to identify individual student learning needs and respond with differentiated lessons and assessment. Explicit teaching includes breaking down the steps and knowledge required for students to access new learning.

EAL/D research conducted to date elaborates on each of these aspects of explicit teaching for EAL/D learners.

The SLL research (described above) shows the importance of using an EAL/D learning progression (ESL scales in this case) to assess and monitor student progress. In the SLL initiative the ESL scales were used to assess the English language development needs of individual students, and to assist teachers in developing individual language learning plans as well as whole class programs that met the collective language learning needs of their classes. The use of the ESL scales gave teachers a shared understanding of the pathway in English language development for EAL/D learners. ESL scales data also informed reporting of students' progress to parents and supplemented the A-E reporting required by schools, where ESL learners, due to their limited English skills, often did not demonstrate high outcomes.

Hammond and Gibbons research (2005) shows that specific 'designed-in' features must be present for scaffolding to occur and that at particular points in lessons teachers will draw on either one or a combination of interactive features to provide both the challenge and the support that will enable students to work to achieve their learning potential. The features are described in more detail in the 2005 report. The research provides convincing evidence that effective scaffolding provides the intellectual 'push' to enable students to work at 'the outer limits of the ZPD'.

The model acknowledges the importance of explicit teaching of language as one of the specific 'designed-in' features of effective EAL/D teaching. Teachers deliver the content of their lessons but also focus systematically on the language related to that curriculum discipline, so that students' English language learning needs are consistently addressed in the context of the construction of curriculum learning.

## Setting high expectations for achievement

CESE's research (2015b) reports that high expectations for students, both academically and behaviourally, is essential to improving student performance. EAL/D research shows that high expectations have special significance for EAL/D teaching and learning. Learners with developing English language proficiency need additional linguistic support at the same time as high cognitive challenge to achieve academic outcomes.

Hammond (2008b) describes high expectations for EAL/D students enacted in the classroom through 'supporting up' rather than 'simplifying' the curriculum learning for EAL/D learners. Her research provides evidence of the importance of language and literacy learning for EAL/D students. In classrooms where EAL/D students achieve their academic potential, teachers address the language and literacy demands of the curriculum more extensively, and explicitly. Teachers with access to high quality professional development are found to more readily recognize the complex nature of language and literacy.

Research by Hammond (2018) exploring the nature of an intellectually challenging curricula for refugee students, confirms the need for high expectations and explicit language teaching. In addition her research identifies that teachers in effective high challenge EAL/D programs:

- “Ask serious questions about the purposes and significance of studying specific curriculum subjects such as history, science, geography;
- build students’ understanding of key curriculum concepts in relation to their understanding of the purposes of the subject, and the purposes of specific units of work;
- require students to use their developing field knowledge to think like geographers, or scientists or historians, and then require students to transform that knowledge in order to complete cognitively challenging tasks;
- sequence tasks in ways that acknowledge students’ current understandings, but that aim beyond this – and that encourage students to question, analyse and think critically about what they are learning.”

### **Effective collaboration**

CESE’s research (2015b) stresses the importance of a collaborative approach to planning, programming and assessment throughout a school. In the context of EAL/D education, EAL/D teachers work collaboratively with teachers and bilingual officers across the school to plan, program, teach and assess. In EAL/D education, effective collaboration is critical to an effective EAL/D school program.

The SLL research (described above) shows that the significant growth of student learning outcomes was attributable, at least in part, to the effective collaboration of EAL/D specialist teachers working as instructional leaders across the school. In this project EAL/D specialist teachers worked collaboratively to plan teaching programs and resources, to reflect on teaching practice, to discuss student work samples and to monitor student progress. The research identifies the importance of a school-wide commitment to EAL/D education led by an EAL/D specialist teacher.

### **Setting whole school goals and strategies for change**

CESE’s research (2015b) describes the importance of identifying key strategic whole school goals in implementing change. Effective leadership plays a key role in the planning and implementing change.

- “In high value add schools, the leadership model was often described as strategic, consultative, supportive and transparent. One of the key strategic approaches used by the executive staff was to use data to build a clear and focussed direction for the school and to drive whole-school changes in practice.”

(CESE, 2015a, p. 12)

The SLL research identified the importance of EAL/D informed leadership, citing instances of creative responses to the changing needs of schools’ cultural communities.

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## Summary

The role of this summary of background research is to provide an overview into significant studies into the field of EAL/D education and to relate it to recent studies into effective school practices for the broad student population. Whilst there is considerable commonality between findings in both areas, for example the importance of high expectations, explicit teaching, and sustained professional learning, the EAL/D studies highlight some additional critical aspects that need to be amplified for EAL/D learners, for example, explicit teaching of the language and literacy in the context of curriculum areas, use of learning progressions specific to EAL/D language development and the use of home language in the classroom.

This current research aims to capture those critical aspects of pedagogy as implemented in those NSW Government schools with demonstrable evidence of significant and positive impact of EAL/D education on student outcomes. This study uses a rigorous methodology to first identify schools with high quality EAL/D education. It then examines the theoretical models identified in previous research and describes their application in successful EAL/D teaching and learning contexts as observed in the identified schools. In this current study, a classroom observation tool (the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool), adapted and refined from the Hammond (2014) tool, is used to document and analyse teaching practices as captured through the lesson observations.

The research project team, consisting of five EAL/D education experts, observed lessons and rated each aspect of quality teaching using the observation tool. Additionally, the project team conducted interviews with teachers, students and school executive team, with the aim to document and describe those critical aspects of pedagogical practice for EAL/D learners as complete as possible. Whilst acknowledging and potentially confirming the theoretical frameworks developed in previous EAL/D research, this research study also aims to develop new understandings around ways in which specialist EAL/D knowledge is applied most effectively within the complex contexts of contemporary schooling in NSW.

The following section outlines the methodology used for this project, first for identification of potential schools for this project, and then for observing the lessons.

## Chapter 2: Research methods for the EAL/D effective practices project

In this study, a small number of schools with demonstrated high growth for EAL/D student were first identified using a range of quantitative and qualitative measures. These included:

- measure of school value-add to their EAL/D students' academic learning progress using NAPLAN results
- measure of school value-add to the progress of their EAL/D students on the English language proficiency scale based on teacher judgements using the EAL/D learning progression tool
- self-evaluation by schools using the School Excellence Framework
- recommendations from the EAL/D experts on the quality of EAL/D education in specific schools.

A mixed-methods approach was subsequently used to explore and document practices associated with EAL/D student improved learning identified across the six schools selected using the above-mentioned methodology. This included:

- school self-assessment using the EAL/D Evaluation Framework
- lesson observations by a team of researchers
- semi-structured teacher interviews conducted with school EAL/D teams, individual EAL/D and classroom teachers, and school leaders
- EAL/D student small group focus interviews conducted with students from the observed lessons
- descriptive notes recorded by researchers during lesson observations.

## 2.1 Method for identifying high EAL/D student growth schools

The following sections discuss the four measures, including process and criteria, used to identify schools with demonstrable high growth for EAL/D students. Full technical details of the two first two measures are also provided in Appendices 1 and 2.

### 2.1.1 Measure of school value-add to their EAL/D students' learning progress using NAPLAN results

This analysis aims to identify schools that make a larger than average contribution to their EAL/D students' learning progress. We extended the current value added (VA) approach developed by CESE in 2014 (CESE, 2014) to estimate the effect a school has on the learning progress of a cohort of EAL/D students over a time period (for example, the cohort of EAL/D students who progressed from Year 3 in 2015 to Year 5 in 2017) relative to other schools. The learning progress of the students are measured by test results from NAPLAN at different points of the students' learning careers.

The extended VA approach estimated the effect a school has on their students' progress in 'literacy' domains, as assessed by NAPLAN, for their EAL/D and non-EAL/D students, separately. To achieve this, a student's achievement in literacy at a given point in time was estimated as a weighted score of the student's standardised results in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation tests, weighted respectively at 0.5, 0.2, 0.2 and 0.1. These weightings reflect views from our EAL/D experts as well as available psychometric evidence that reliability for reading results is generally higher than that for other smaller test domains. For primary schools, two cohorts were included in the analysis (Year 3 2015 to Year 5 2017 and Year 3 2016 to Year 5 2018). For secondary schools, two cohorts (Year 7 2015 to Year 9 2017 and Year 7 2016 to Year 9 2018) were included. The data used in each of these analyses span across two years to ensure the stability of the resulting VA measures.

The VA approach is essentially a multilevel model which estimates the school effect (school value-add) on students' learning progress (from time point 1 to time point 2) by taking into account the clustering nature of education data and allowing for other contextual factors to be simultaneously modelled. The contextual factors include student and school socio-economic status measures, students' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, whether the student is studying in a class or school that is academically selective and whether the student is studying in a boys, girls or co-educational schools in secondary education. By removing the influences of contextual factors which might be outside a school's control, the model attempts to level the playing field and provides an estimate of the impact of the school on the students' learning progress.

For each school, we first estimated school effects (and the associated confidence intervals) for the school's EAL/D and non-EAL/D student population respectively. Based on the confidence intervals of estimated school effects, we then classify a school effect (or school value-add) for a particular cohort into three categories (significantly above average, average, significantly below average).

Schools that meet the following criteria are considered to be schools with demonstrable high growth for EAL/D students and eligible for further consideration for participation in this study:

- The school effect on EAL/D students' learning progress is significantly above average.
- The school effect on non-EAL/D students' learning progress is average or significantly above average.

Refer to Appendix 1 for full technical details about the multilevel model and how the school effects and its confidence intervals were derived.

### **2.1.2 Measure of school value-add to the progress of their EAL/D students on the English language proficiency scale**

Since 2014, the department has collected teacher judgements of EAL/D students' English language proficiency levels using the EAL/D learning progression (LP) tool in June every year through an EAL/D census. The EAL/D LP tool allows teachers to describe their students' English language proficiency (ELP) as one of four phases – Beginning, Emerging, Developing or Consolidating.

The availability of the census data from 2014 to 2018 has allowed us to follow a student's progress on the English language proficiency scale for up to five years. Using the methodology described below, we were able to identify schools that made a larger than average contribution to their students' progress to a higher phase on the learning progression scale.

We used a value added approach through survival analysis to investigate the school effect on the time taken for an EAL/D student to progress to a higher phase (such as progress to Developing from Emerging or progress to Consolidating from Developing). Multilevel mixed-effects parametric survival model was employed to estimate the effect a school has in progressing students to a higher ELP phase relative to other schools, controlling for contextual factors such as student background and characteristics. Separate models were fitted for the primary and secondary students because rates of progression to a higher phase can be different between primary and secondary years.

The survival model allows a student to experience multiple events throughout the observational period if they have several progressions. The multilevel nature of the model takes into account the clustering nature of EAL/D history data where students are nested within schools. The contextual factors being controlled for in the model included Aboriginal status, gender, socio-economic status, scholastic year, lowest EAL/D phase, refugee status, New arrival program status, whether they were enrolled in Intensive English Centres (IECs) and school-level mobility rate (the rate of student movements in a given year for a school). By removing the influences of contextual factors that a school does not have complete control of, the model attempts to level the playing field and estimate the effect a school has on progressing their EAL/D students to a higher phase. School effects are estimated with confidence intervals which are then used to classify schools into three categories (Significantly above average, average, significantly below average).

Schools with an estimated school effect significantly above average are considered to have demonstrable evidence of higher progression rates for their EAL/D students, relative to other schools with similar students and of similar contexts. These schools were considered as eligible for further consideration for participation in this study.

Refer to Appendix 2 for more technical details about the multilevel mixed-effects parametric survival model and how the school effects and their confidence intervals were estimated.

### 2.1.3 Self-evaluation of schools' progress using School Excellence Framework scores (SEF)

The School Excellence Framework (SEF)<sup>6</sup> is a department-developed framework that identifies quality practice across three key education domains: learning, teaching and leading. The School Excellence Framework focuses on those school practices that evidence shows are most directly related to continuous, school-wide improvement and better student outcomes. Schools conduct regular self-assessment using the 14 educational excellence elements of the SEF. We acquired 2018 school self-assessment data and derived a total SEF score for each school based on their reported self-assessment across all elements. Schools with SEF scores greater than two standard deviations above the mean were considered to have SEF scores well above average. Schools with EAL/D students (determined via ELP funding received by school) who had SEF scores greater than two standard deviations above the mean were considered as eligible for participation in this study.

### 2.1.4 Recommendations by EAL/D experts

Acknowledging that the above-mentioned measures might not cover all aspects of EAL/D education, referrals from EAL/D experts were sought to identify any additional schools that might have been missed. The EAL/D experts within the department's Multicultural Education team were invited to identify schools based on their deep and expert knowledge of where effective practice might be occurring. Those EAL/D experts, including refugee support leaders working directly with schools were well placed to provide this descriptive evidence. They identified schools where they observed improved capacity in EAL/D teaching and learning and increased EAL/D student engagement in learning.

### 2.1.5 Method for determining the final list of case study schools

The above four measures were used together to support the identification of schools for this study. The criterion used to determine the final list of eligible schools is if a school appears on two or more of the four eligibility lists discussed above, with a measure of school value add using progress on the English language proficiency scale or NAPLAN results as a minimum selection criteria.

From the final list of eligible schools, CESE then worked with the Multicultural Education team to identify suitable case study schools that represent a range of backgrounds and demographics including:

- socioeconomic status based on Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI)
- student language backgrounds
- EAL/D demographics (for example, number of EAL/D students in total, and at each phase)
- geographic location
- school level (primary/secondary)
- number of refugee students.

In the end, 6 schools from the final list were identified and agreed to participate in the study. This includes 4 primary schools and 2 secondary schools.

<sup>6</sup> For more information about the School Excellence Framework, please refer to: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide/resources/about-sef>



| Table 1

**Demographic information of the six selected schools for this study**

Demographics	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Primary/secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Geolocation	Sydney – south-west	Sydney – south-west	South east NSW	Sydney – south-west	Sydney – south-west	Sydney – west
FOEI	Somewhat disadvantaged	Very disadvantaged	Somewhat disadvantaged	Somewhat disadvantaged	Somewhat disadvantaged	Advantaged
% EAL/D of total enrolments	37%	38%	25%	84%	90%	93%
# Refugee	>100	51-100	11-50	11-50	0-10	0-10
# Students by EAL/D phase (rounded to 5)						
– Beginning	5	85	5	20	55	135
– Emerging	15	105	15	110	135	160
– Developing	135	160	20	155	225	245
– Consolidating	375	240	5	80	225	60
<b>Total EAL/D</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>600</b>

Note number and proportion of EAL/D and refugee students are based on averages across 2018 and 2019.

## 2.2 Method for documenting practices in selected schools

The following sections describes the mixed method approach used to explore and document practices associated with EAL/D student improved learning identified across the six schools. A qualitative data analysis was conducted using evidence from lesson observations, teacher and student interviews and school self-assessment using the EAL/D Evaluation Framework.

### 2.2.1 Research method for observing lessons (using the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool)

A total of 24 lessons were observed and analysed across stages of schooling and, where possible, a range of curriculum subjects (refer to Appendix 3). Each lesson was observed by two researchers (from a pool of five) using a customised tool devised for this project to measure significant aspects of EAL/D pedagogy. The design of the observation tool was informed by Hammond's approach to lesson analysis (Hammond, 2014) which incorporates dimensions and elements from the NSW quality teaching model (NSW DET 2003) and includes three elements to explicitly capture EAL/D pedagogical features (**academic language focus**, **explicit goals** and **scaffolding**). The EAL/D quality teaching (EQT) observation tool (Appendix 4) comprises the same three dimensions of quality teaching as described in the NSW quality teaching model:

- **intellectual quality** – pedagogy focused on producing deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas
- **quality learning environment** – pedagogy that creates classrooms where students and teachers work productively in an environment clearly focused on learning
- **significance** – pedagogy that helps make learning more meaningful by drawing clear connections with students' prior knowledge and identities.

The EQT observation tool comprises 13 elements in total (refer to the table below). These 13 elements provide 35 measurable indicators in total. Each indicator is assessed on a rating scale of 1-5, based on rubrics developed specifically for this project, with lower scores reflecting lower level of quality teaching, and higher scores reflecting higher level of quality teaching, relating to each indicator.

The indicators were concisely written to support effective recording within the time constraints and to maintain researchers' focus on EAL/D teaching and learning with specific reference to EAL/D student behaviour. Observers are also able to enter comments against each indicator to substantiate their assessments against each indicator and capture any additional observations outside the scope of the tool.

The EQT observation tool was trialled prior to implementation for the research.

| **Table 2****Dimensions and elements included in the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool**

Dimensions	Elements
Intellectual quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep knowledge</li> <li>• Deep understanding</li> <li>• Substantive communication</li> <li>• Academic language focus*</li> </ul>
Quality learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• High expectations</li> <li>• Social support</li> <li>• Explicit goals*</li> <li>• Scaffolding*</li> </ul>
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background knowledge</li> <li>• Cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Inclusivity</li> <li>• Connectedness</li> </ul>

\* The design of the observation tool was informed by Hammond's approach to lesson analysis (Hammond, 2014) which incorporated elements from the NSW quality teaching model (NSW DET 2003) and includes three elements to explicitly capture EAL/D pedagogical features (**academic language focus**, **explicit goals** and **scaffolding**).

Prior to implementation, the tool was piloted to test the consistency of judgements using this tool. A set of observation protocols was first provided to every researcher involved in the piloting of the tool to ensure that there was a consistent understanding of how the tool should be used (Appendix 5). Using a video recording of a lesson in a primary school classroom, all observers were then asked to record their observations using the tool for this lesson. Analysis of the ratings showed an acceptable level of consistency in use of the tool by all observers.

Two classes were then selected from each participating school for lesson observations. Both classes were visited twice, a week or so apart, for observations of exactly 30 minutes. The two lessons for each class were both for the same curriculum subject, giving observers a sense of the students' progress through the unit of work.

In order to enhance the quality of ratings, two observers independently rated each lesson against each indicator using the tool, before comparing their scores and reaching final agreement on the indicator.

Distributions of the rating scores for the three dimensions, as well as each of the 13 elements, of quality teaching, were examined. As the number of lesson observations (N=48 in total) is small, and that each was observed for only half an hour, caution is needed when interpreting the results. Additionally, it's noted that, within the 30 minute observation time window, it's possible that not all quality teaching indicators could be observed for each lesson, and some indicators were more able to be observed than others depending on the teaching occasion. For these reasons, dimension and element scores from lesson observations were meant to provide one piece of information on the pedagogical practices that are common across the six schools.

### 2.2.2 Method for analysing interviews and notes taken during lessons

In addition to observing lessons, the research team also conducted interviews and collected descriptive notes from lesson observations. A qualitative analysis was conducted on the following data sources:

- **School self-assessments** were conducted using the EAL/D Evaluation Framework prior to staff interviews and lesson observations. The EAL/D Evaluation Framework is used by schools to evaluate how they are working towards a whole school EAL/D student support strategy. School teams identified their level of achievement for each of the six elements of the framework. This data provided insights into schools' priorities for EAL/D program implementation and was used as a point of discussion in the semi-structured interviews.
- **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted with school EAL/D teams, individual EAL/D and classroom teachers, and with school leaders. A set of interview questions guided the discussion to ensure consistent information was collected across schools (Appendix 6). In each interview, two researchers recorded responses.

EAL/D team meetings were conducted at the beginning of the research prior to lesson observations. Teams included school EAL/D leaders and classroom and EAL/D teachers responsible for teaching the two observation classes. They were designed to obtain detailed information about school systems and processes, and to leadership priorities in the organisation and implementation of EAL/D programs throughout the school.

Teacher interviews were conducted before and after the lesson observations and allowed the teacher to describe their pedagogical beliefs and practices in relation to their EAL/D students. They provided their perspective on the successes or challenges of the lesson and described the lesson in the sequence of learning.

- **EAL/D student focus interviews** allowed for the inclusion of student voice in relation to understandings about effective learning of English within Australian classrooms. Focus interviews lasted for approximately 30 minutes and were conducted with groups of six or seven EAL/D students. A set of interview questions guided the discussion to ensure consistent information was collected across schools (Appendix 7). In each interview, two researchers recorded responses.
- **Additional notes on classroom lessons** enabled the collection of descriptive evidence of effective practices as they were observed within a 30 minute period. In addition to data collected through the EQT observation tool, for each lesson, observers also completed field notes for more detailed reference of each lesson.

Inductive analysis was conducted to identify and conceptualize the core issues from these data. Initially open coding began the process of categorizing individual phenomena into related themes: observations and interview comments were analysed, compared and labelled, or coded, accordingly. The key points which emerged from the raw data were thus grouped into categories which provided a descriptive, multi-dimensional framework for later analysis. The next stage of analysis was axial coding, where data were examined again in the light of emerging patterns and themes. Axial coding requires a modification and reshaping of the conceptual framework so that data can be arranged into a more coherent structure of categories and subcategories.

For example, any interview comments which referred to schools' collection of information on students' language and cultural backgrounds were coded and grouped together, so that enrolment procedures and staff communication with families became part of the same category. When such communication was conducted in a family's home language, this was coded again to become part of a sub-category, as did funding decisions to employ bilingual support officers to carry out this work. Once concepts became clustered around a related theme, axial coding was used to examine dynamic relationships between categories in order to inform a more abstract grouping. In this example, data referencing students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds were related to evidence of respectful, caring relationships within schools, which eventually led to a sub-section of the findings entitled 'Knowing, valuing and caring', itself a reference to a goal within the NSW Department of Education's Strategic Plan for 2018-2020.

The major themes which emerged from this process of coding are as follows:

- data relating to school leadership of EAL/D education, including the setting up of systems and processes to develop and sustain successful EAL/D programs
- data relating to EAL/D students, and how they are known, valued and cared for within the school
- data relating to ways in which schools build an understanding of EAL/D education amongst their staff, and how they subsequently sustain and deepen teacher expertise in relation to the strengths and needs of their English language learners
- data relating to how the expertise of EAL/D teachers is recognised within the school community, and how it is utilized to support English language learners
- data relating to how classroom practice reflects teachers' understandings of EAL/D students and the ways they learn, focusing on the implementation of effective EAL/D pedagogy in the classroom.

## Chapter 3: Results

### 3.1 Results from the lesson observations using the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool

Unsurprisingly, scores from the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool show, on average, project schools had strong results across each of the quality teaching dimensions and elements; with average scores for each dimension and element greater than three and the proportion of ratings scored four or above varying from approximately 50% to over 80% (with the exception of **cultural knowledge** with an average score of 2.12 and proportion scoring 4 or above at 25%, Table 3). For each element, the most frequent score (the mode) ranged from 4 to 5 (except for **cultural knowledge**). These results were in line with those recorded by Hammond, Cranitch and Black (2018).

**Table 3**

**Lesson observation ratings by dimension and element of the EAL/D quality teaching observation tool, descriptive statistics**

Dimension	% rated 4 or above	Mean	Mode
<b>Dimension 1 – intellectual quality</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>3.95</b>	
Deep knowledge	79%	4.39	5.00
Deep understanding	65%	4.03	5.00
Substantive communication	48%	3.74	3.00
Academic language focus	56%	3.71	4.67
<b>Dimension 2 – quality learning environment</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>4.05</b>	
Engagement	71%	4.14	5.00
High expectations	54%	3.73	4.50
Social support	81%	4.50	5.00
Explicit goals	58%	3.76	5.00
Scaffolding	58%	4.00	4.00

Dimension	% rated 4 or above	Mean	Mode
<b>Dimension 3 – significance</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>3.58</b>	
Background knowledge	54%	3.44	4.00
Cultural knowledge	25%	2.12	1.00
Inclusivity	77%	4.43	5.00
Connectedness	48%	3.24	4.00

Quality teaching dimensions of **intellectual quality** and **quality learning environment** were scored higher than the **significance** dimension due to, in particular, the lower scoring of the **cultural knowledge** element in that dimension. It is possible that **cultural knowledge** may be more difficult to be observed in a 30 minute lesson, or observed on the teaching of a particular subject, than other elements. The wide range of scores observed for each element may also reflect the challenges in observing each of the elements to a high standard in each lesson when only 30 minutes were allowed for an observation.

It is important to acknowledge the high scores for the dimension **intellectual quality**. The strength of this dimension within these schools supports the literature on the importance of this dimension in supporting EAL/D students to achieve strong growth in English language acquisition and other learning outcomes. Over the last ten years the department has conducted professional learning for teachers supporting EAL/D learners to focus on building this dimension.

The strongest elements observed with the highest proportions ( $\geq 65\%$ ) of lessons rated at 4 or above and where the most frequent rating was five were:

- **social support** (81%): provision of positive feedback and encouragement to EAL/D learners within a classroom culture of respectful interactions
- **deep knowledge** (79%): teacher sustains focus on key ideas and effectively communicates these concepts to EAL/D learners
- **inclusivity** (77%): inclusion of EAL/D learners in all aspects of the lesson
- **engagement** (71%): teacher actively engages all EAL/D students in the lesson, re-engaging unfocused learners
- **deep understanding** (65%): teacher moves EAL/D learners from the known to the unknown, allowing for students to demonstrate their deep understanding of central ideas.

The strongest elements were distributed across all dimensions and each of these elements were most frequently scored with a five. These results further emphasise the active role teachers in these project schools take in creating an engaging, challenging and supportive learning environment for EAL/D learners. These results are consistent with research by Hammond, Cranitch and Black (2018), where lessons taught by schools with good practice were rated most highly on these elements. It is possible that, when present, these could also be the most easily observed across a range of lessons.



### Snapshots from lesson observers' notes

These examples, drawn from lesson observation notes, illustrate how each of the elements were translated into effective practices for EAL/D learning during classroom observations.

#### Social support: School D; Early Stage 1 class

“Both teachers took time to listen to students' responses and to answer each student, asking for clarification if necessary.”

#### Deep knowledge: School F; Stage 2 class

“Constant reference to learning intentions and success criteria relating to every task during the lesson (listening/watching video, writing key words, preparing to write report).”

#### Inclusivity: School E; Stage 1 class

“Every student was an active participant across the range of delivery modes throughout the lesson.”

#### Engagement: School C; Stage 1 class

“Strong positive relationship between CT and class – students attentive and interested; classroom teacher has engaging manner, tone of voice, use of humour.”

#### Deep understanding: School B; Stage 5 English class

“Task was very motivating. EAL/D students were able to move from known to new. Teacher recapped the previous lesson through questioning.”

**Further strong elements** observed with substantial proportions (between 45% and 64%) of lessons rated at 4 or above and where the most frequent score was also four or above in project schools were:

- **explicit goals** (58%): emphasis on the purpose of the lesson and the detailed criteria required to achieve quality work across the curriculum
- **scaffolding** (58%): teachers' pre-planning and delivery of lessons, offering differentiated levels of support in EAL/D students' learning
- **academic language focus** (56%): systematic building and sustaining of academic language knowledge, including metalanguage
- **high expectations** (54%): the provision of challenging tasks for EAL/D learners, together with encouragement of risk-taking in learning
- **background knowledge** (54%): connections between EAL/D learners and their background and language knowledge
- **connectedness** (48%): opportunities for EAL/D learners to make connections between knowledge in and beyond the classroom
- **substantive communication** (48%): opportunities for sustained, scaffolded interactions between learners and teachers, and between learners.

## Snapshots from lesson observers' notes

### Explicit goals: School B; Stage 5 English class

“Very clear spoken purpose for lesson. Consistently mentioned across the lesson. Students knew why they were revisiting their writing. They knew they were preparing for the coming lesson.”

### Scaffolding: School F; Early Stage 1 class

“Recasting, prompting, use of body language, wait time, visual prompts, phonemic prompts, links to what students know: ‘you know what it is like to be in front.’”

### Academic language focus: School E; Stage 3 class

“The lesson was focused on the academic language of parliament, including previous lesson evidence of understanding the etymological foundations of some of the words.”

### High expectations: School C; Stage 1 class

“Teacher questioning in climate of ‘have a go’ – much wait time allowed; partner talk to try out ideas as rehearsal for answering and writing.”

### Background knowledge: School A; Stage 5 English class

“The teacher referred to students’ own experiences which were related to the main themes of the text [such as] love, devotion [and so on]. Teacher made references to different cultural practices, including reference to her own wearing of a wedding ring.”

### Connectedness: School D; Stage 3 class

“Purpose of the text was to create tension in a narrative; learners explored connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom – being with friends and movies watched; learning intentions included the aim ‘to make the reader feel as though they are really there’ ([in other words,] within the narrative).”

### Substantive communication: School E; Stage 1 maths class

“Throughout the activity students were provided with the opportunity to discuss, clarify and consolidate learning through strategic pairing.”

## 3.2 Results from analysis of qualitative data including interviews with students, teachers and school leaders and additional notes from lesson observations

This section outlines the main findings, categorised into five main themes that emerged through the process of coding and categorising qualitative data as described in 2.4 above. Each theme concludes with a vignette which provides a detailed example of effective practice for EAL/D learning.

### 3.2.1 Leading a whole school response

This section describes the leadership practices and management processes employed to develop and sustain successful EAL/D programs within the six schools. In defining leadership, this research acknowledges both the pivotal role of the principal as well as the school executive and other designated staff with special responsibilities for the implementation and evaluation of EAL/D programs.

Principals in all of the project schools demonstrate visionary leadership in relationship to EAL/D education. Interview comments reflect leaders' understanding of EAL/D education, EAL/D learners' particular strengths and needs, and the need to sustain an informed school culture which supports and improves the academic, social and emotional development of their English language learners. Their vision is communicated to all members of the school community through an effective system of distributed leadership; "EAL/D is valued – this comes from the principal – her vision and moral values infiltrate the leadership team." They recognise the importance of strong leadership, especially where the principal is "brave and creative – keen to do things differently". They value the experience of a leader who can respond to new challenges by building on a school's strengths: "Everything is in response to its time – but not discounting what has gone before."

School leaders are responsive to fluctuations in school populations unique to EAL/D demographic changes reflecting wider societal movements, such as sudden refugee settlements. The principal of School E welcomes such change, relishing the opportunity to "challenge the status quo". He has initiated a whole school involvement in change, one that has "spread through staff and classrooms – we are now building the capacity of all staff to lead EAL/D programs". He considers his school's response to the needs of EAL/D learners to be evolving, and operating on many levels. Recruitment of trained and knowledgeable staff is key to success – "we recruited hard to get high calibre candidates" – as is the creation of an EAL/D position within the School Executive, and the embedding of the TELL professional learning program across the school to build confidence and expertise in classroom teachers. Transforming EAL/D pedagogy to become part of a whole school approach initially received a mixed reception from staff, but he reports that productive collaboration and mentoring from EAL/D specialist teachers have built teachers' capacity: "EAL/D created a culture of co-teaching which knocked any negativity."

Findings across all schools indicate the significance of efficient systems of communication and coordination which facilitate effective EAL/D practices. In 2013 the principal of School D received feedback from classroom teachers wanting to improve ways that EAL/D support was provided throughout the school. The executive studied the budgets and prioritised funds to provide bilingual support "in the classrooms with the highest need"; they also worked at "keeping the timetable more consistent – organising specific teachers for new arrivals and different stages". The principal is happy that there is now consistency from the specialist team –

“who supports whom”, with allocated time for collaboration: “Time for the EAL/D staff to plan and also to plan with stage teachers – they may job share and they need to ensure they have a shared vision.” As a result, “The classroom teachers feel comfortable going to staff now – the EAL/D team is respected.”

Data from participants' completion of the EAL/D School Evaluation Framework confirm that successful leadership involves the coordination of school-wide processes and systems that support effective collaboration between EAL/D specialist teachers and other members of staff. For example, the organisation of EAL/D teams led by experienced practitioners operating across stages (in primary schools) and faculties (in high schools) helps to “break down the silos” and encourages the sharing of specialist knowledge about language learning across the curriculum.

School F demonstrates an example of distributed leadership operating through teams across all levels of the organisation. The principal clearly values her EAL/D team and has built their profile within the school, encouraging staff members to attend the Leading EAL/D Education course during 2018, which led to “a raised awareness of strategies in whole class lesson planning and the building of class profiles”. The team is supervised by the deputy principal, who recognises their role in leading all staff to understand EAL/D pedagogy and programs: “It’s no longer just the responsibility of the EAL/D teachers ... we’ve moved beyond the withdrawal model.” As a member of the school executive team, she facilitates their work by providing an extra EAL/D room for them to meet regularly and by allocating release time for planning and collaboration with classroom teachers. The coordinator of the EAL/D team is a multilingual EAL/D specialist teacher who worked closely with the school’s refugee support leader and who recently trained as a TELL facilitator; she now upskills new staff and encourages the team to develop a presence outside the school by presenting at regional network meetings.

All six schools inform their practice by establishing systems for ongoing and consistent reflection on EAL/D teaching and learning. The EAL/D team in School D meet weekly to:

“Have conversations, set goals, discuss how to meet the goals, plan our teaching practices and decide which resources are needed and how we’re going to use the resources, discuss student progress – and every term we track individual learning plans to get more feedback on progress.”

Their practice is reflected in the information recorded by other schools on the EAL/D School Evaluation Framework, who report their “systematic collection and analysis of EAL/D student assessment data to inform the planning and development of effective EAL/D teaching and learning programs across KLAs”. Schools also encourage reflection of teachers’ professional learning. Building teacher knowledge of EAL/D pedagogy and leadership is facilitated through action research: in School E, the principal describes “a culture of action learning across the stages – students and teachers”. Acting as a role model for his teachers, this principal enrolled in the TELL program and completed the between-module tasks along with his staff, a process which raised further questions:

“We have a clear path to what works but need to enable more reflection that will drive high expectations – what are we noticing that is enabling us to articulate what they are doing?”

## Vignette 1

### Leading a whole school response in a primary context (School C)

When the principal took up her position three years ago, she found an EAL/D program “entrenched in a culture of isolation and withdrawal”. She was aware that the staff were ready for something different and “wanted to move”, a recognition of the need for change which led to the promotion of EAL/D pedagogy throughout the school and the appointment of an EAL/D specialist to increase teacher knowledge: “I needed the right people in the right roles.”

Such change required a whole school investment in EAL/D, and she was supported by the school executive who helped to implement strategic and purposeful processes: “We have leadership at many levels.” The school uses the department’s Scout data and analysis platform to build a school profile and identifies planning goals through the Department of Education’s priority ‘every student is known, valued and cared for’. EAL/D focus areas are determined by the department’s EAL/D School Evaluation Framework, using classroom evidence and community consultation to provide ongoing reflection and appraisal of the needs of their English language learners: “The framework keeps the school centred and focussed.” The EAL/D program is no longer seen in isolation but is now part of the whole school planning process, resulting in “more connected” families and local community.

Despite having no EAL/D staffing allocation, the principal chose to create an EAL/D specialist teacher position using the school’s English language proficiency equity loading to employ a teacher for two days a week: she appointed a staff member with EAL/D qualifications. All staff subsequently participated in professional learning to build capacity across the school, with the specialist teacher acting as co-teacher and mentor. Such professional learning became a highly valued aspect of staff development, with changes implemented through “small scale action research projects with interested teachers whose enthusiasm inspired others”. Professional growth for both EAL/D and classroom teachers has been encouraged through participation in Department of Education leadership projects, action research into vocabulary development, and attendance at EAL/D network meetings.

The principal is encouraged by the value add in the school’s NAPLAN results this year. She believes in Dylan Williams’ culture of continuous improvement, achieved through a process of staff learning and critical reflection: for her, “Effective teacher practice impacts on learning for all – what’s good for EAL/D is good for all students.”

### 3.2.2 Knowing, valuing and caring

The NSW Department of Education's Strategic Plan for 2018-2020 includes the goal that 'every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools'. This section outlines how successful schools get to know their English language learners and what they bring with them to the classroom, how they recognise and value their knowledge and skills, and how they care for the strengths and needs of all EAL/D students and their families. Key to effective practice in this area is the strength of the relationships that are built up between all members of the school community; this section identifies those significant connections that result in higher levels of student engagement and academic success.

#### Knowing

The enrolment process is seen by all schools as an opportunity to learn about their EAL/D learners, "making sure that teachers get to know the students from the get go". For the principal of School A, initial contact is a way of "making it personal". Staff interview newly arrived families with an interpreter if required, "asking about the students' stories" and providing fee support where necessary, as well as uniforms to develop a sense of school identity. Students are encouraged to "look forward to future success", reflecting the high expectations held by teachers throughout the school. School F uses enrolment data to build the capacity of all staff to understand the strengths and needs of their EAL/D students: they now "adopt a whole-school growth mindset, asking, this is our population, how do we cater for them?" Their enrolment process has recently been refined to include initial student assessments administered by EAL/D specialist teachers.

Many of the schools have enrolled EAL/D students with specific needs. The principal of School C reports learning about students and families from refugee backgrounds at enrolment, where interpreters are used to understand the family's migration stories, including students' experiences of trauma, interrupted schooling and levels of literacy in their home languages. From the start, staff "plan to build a level of trust" with refugee families, arranging for further meetings and additional support where necessary. School E has a history of refugee enrolments and in recent years has seen numbers increasing again, a change welcomed by the principal, who recognises opportunities for growth within the school community: "These families give a reminder to earlier generations of refugees and to staff about the needs of EAL/D students." Initiatives at their Schools as Communities Centre (SaCC) are also used to help everyone "understand cultural influences and make links across the generations".

Important information learned through enrolment interviews is subsequently extended by ongoing, systematic collection and analysis of EAL/D student data, as well as knowledge of personal and academic interests, shared as relationships build within various contexts of the school. School B ensures that when students exit the IEC and enter high school, their data remain accessible to all staff: "We have a common knowledge of our students." This knowledge relates to academic progress, through EAL/D assessment data and progression profiles, and also to students' wellbeing and social and emotional development. For example, one teacher in School B is responsible for the welfare of a large group of international students in Year 11, some of whom live independently. Her knowledge of their backgrounds and particular needs enables her to support them effectively in the classroom by setting up buddying systems – "students help each other when they are sick or tired" – and by monitoring their wellbeing through journal entries. Such relationships are acknowledged and valued by students: "Miss knows everything about us – she knows our story and she knows about our languages"; "My teacher knows all about me – good teachers know about their students." All of the teachers interviewed knew their students' stories and recognised the value of connecting with their cultural and language communities.

## Valuing

The recognition of valuable links between home and school is evident from reporting on the EAL/D School Evaluation Framework, which confirms schools' commitment to parent and community engagement. In particular, it identifies their use of interpreting and translation services as a way of improving communication between staff and parents. All schools value the linguistic and cultural diversity of their families by engaging bilingual school learning support officers (SLSO) who represent significant cultural groups in the area. School D, for example, employ two bilingual SLSOs who are available at the beginning and end of each school day to answer queries and chat with parents. They have been trained to build communication with families by translating information and permission notes, calling parents and attending parent interviews, as well as supporting the community run Parent Café. The parents and citizens group (P&C) at School E reflects the community's cultural diversity, with an Arabic speaking president and a Laotian secretary. Members of the P&C have been encouraged to become an active voice in the school and now provide the executive with valuable feedback on teaching and learning initiatives.

By valuing the language and cultural resources of their EAL/D students, teachers recognise the strengths of these multilingual speakers, confirming that in their schools, "EAL/D is not a deficit!" Student focus group interviews reveal the extent of linguistic knowledge held by students in primary and high schools. One Year 5 student describes his experience of bilingualism:

“I speak Arabic at home with my family ... I translate to them but sometimes I talk to my sibling in English ... Mum and Dad said to try to speak in Arabic so you don't forget your language ... I go to Arabic school on Sunday – I learn the Koran and more things about Arabic ... we keep reading over and over to remember it.”

A Year 9 student speaks five languages – Assyrian, Chaldean, Arabic, Turkish and English – and uses his home language to assist his classroom understanding: "I can think in both languages – first I think in Assyrian then translate into English."

EAL/D students' facility with language as a resource for meaning-making is respected and celebrated in effective schools. School B, for example, recognises the cultural knowledge that students bring to learning, and invites Year 12 students to lead the lessons about Chinese poetry, a practice which "changed their self-perception and the perception of them by others". Primary schools encourage the use of home languages as a starting point for learning in English and timetable bilingual SLSOs to engage new arrivals in the classroom. The Kindergarten teacher in School F recognises the value of linking her students' learning to their community's cultural resources by including one of their traditional stories within her unit of work on fairytales. By inviting family members into the classroom to read the story in their home language, she makes explicit the value she places on the skills and understandings held within the school community. The principal of School E is emphatic that his school adopts a strength based approach to EAL/D students and their families:

“Two-thirds of our community are represented as low SES but we are diligent in looking at strengths – cultural diversity is a strength and we can draw on their linguistic strengths – we need to understand their pathways, their different schooling.”



## Caring

All six schools recognise the importance of knowing and respecting EAL/D students and their families, and use this knowledge to inform teaching programs and initiatives designed to support learning and to promote wellbeing across the school.

Findings show that successful schools are characterised by strong, caring relationships between all stakeholders in the school community: students, teachers and parents. School A claims to adopt a personalised approach to the building of relationships, aiming to develop students' sense of belonging to the school, as well as connections across grades: "We're helping students to have fun – a good time learning." This sentiment is echoed in interview comments by teachers across all schools, with many professing a deep affection for the students in their care; as one teacher told us, "I love my class!" The depth of feeling was clearly evident to observers visiting classrooms, where learning was enhanced by the rapport that exists between teacher and student, often expressed through the use of humour in classroom exchanges. Within School E, teachers identify the importance of strong relationships between colleagues as key to effective programming, co-teaching and professional learning. The principal sees such collegiality as part of a school ethos that recognises productive learning partnerships within the classroom, so that "students can see what collaboration looks like". Student comments recorded during focus groups confirm that they recognise the value of a positive learning environment: "Some teachers are creative and happy for their job and it makes the student want to learn more."

Caring relationships also characterise the building of connections between home and school. In School D, teachers report that "parents love and trust the SLSOs", who extend their care to the welfare and learning support for EAL/D students both in and out of the classroom. All schools work hard to promote community harmony and develop parent engagement, connecting through consultation to create in-school parent initiatives such as parent cafes, gardening groups, and multicultural playgroups. As the principal of School C reflects, "We recognise the importance of giving stakeholders a voice about what works best." Students from refugee backgrounds have particular strengths and needs which are identified from the time of enrolment: all schools work towards meeting these needs through the implementation of a variety of available services. School D has designated an Assistant Principal role to coordinate wellbeing initiatives across the school, a response to the increasing numbers of refugee enrolments. As part of this focus, the STARS group meets once a week for one hour to promote wellbeing and develop friendships: "The students look out for each other"; the school also connects with external agencies who provide programs and counselling services for students and families.



## Vignette 2

### Knowing, valuing and caring in a high school context

School B implemented a suite of programs to support its focus on improving student engagement and wellbeing. Rock and Water is one of the programs the school used as a vehicle for achieving this. It provides a series of lessons, including exercises and games taught by a teacher (trained as a course facilitator) to develop student confidence and self-reflection.

At this school, Rock and Water was initially introduced to build the resilience and confidence of refugee students in the school; over the years the program has been extended to all students. It is implemented both as a program for a whole grade or as an intervention, as required, for targeted students. The lesson observed was one of a series of lessons for a targeted group of students who had been involved in a fight.

The lesson was characterised by respectful and affectionate interactions between teacher and students. The teacher showed considerable care for the students, checking in on students' wellbeing before the lesson started: How are you feeling right now? Did you have any lunch? How is your friend X going? Is this who you had an argument with? Would you like to tell me about the situation? How did you respond? Teacher used this information to adapt the lesson activities to be relevant for students' immediate needs. The teacher worked with the students to scaffold their understanding of their responses to conflict, helping to build their vocabulary for talking about their feelings (such as 'focused', 'connected').

Students clearly felt valued when the teacher was able to recall previous student experiences and discuss their individual progress in detail. (How did you handle the taunts last time? Remember our discussion about sticks and stones?) He identified physical, emotional and behavioural improvements to praise students individually throughout the lesson, while at the same time keeping the students on track throughout the lesson with no tolerance of disruptive behaviour.

The lesson was characterised by humour both from teacher and between the students, aiming to make them feel safe enough to try new activities and make mistakes. During a paired activity aimed at developing students' ability to focus, students attempted to disrupt the other's focus through humour leading to great entertainment for the whole class.

By the end of the lesson, students' moods seemed more relaxed and they were able to confidently articulate how they would deal with future conflict using the practised language and skills.

### 3.2.3 Building teacher knowledge

EAL/D pedagogy in NSW public schools is informed by the body of research outlined in the theoretical background to this project. This section of the findings shows how schools build an understanding of such knowledge amongst their staff, and how they subsequently sustain and deepen teacher expertise in relation to the strengths and needs of their English language learners.

School leaders recognise the importance of whole school involvement in the building of teacher knowledge about EAL/D students and how they learn: “The richness of student learning is mirrored with staff.” Interview comments reflect the benefits of a shared understanding “when we’re all on the same page”, with the principal of School E noting a change in professional discourse during stage planning meetings: “Common language and understandings are used to keep the conversation going – informal but intentional.” Targeted professional learning for all staff is identified as an effective means of building an understanding of EAL/D education: “To transform learning and teaching in classrooms we need to equip all teachers with knowledge and skills in pedagogy.”

The program which received most mentions during executive and classroom teacher interviews is Teaching English Language Learners (TELL), the NSW Department of Education professional learning program delivered by a trained facilitator to include essential elements of EAL/D pedagogy, opportunity to practice new learning, shared action research, reflection and evaluation. Five out of the six schools have had teachers enrolling in this program; it is seen as having particular value when delivered in-house because then, “Learning is embedded across the school.” In Schools B and F, EAL/D specialist teachers have consolidated their learning by co-presenting during workshops and by providing mentoring for subject and classroom teachers, incorporating new understandings about EAL/D pedagogy, assessment and differentiation into teaching and learning programs.

Numerous comments throughout teacher interviews confirm that the completion of registered professional learning has extended their knowledge base. This includes targeted programs such as Teaching Students from Refugee Backgrounds, Leading EAL/D Education and other action research projects involving university academics and EAL/D experts: “The vocabulary research project really inspired our staff.” Collaboration with local refugee support leaders (RSLs) is valued by executive and also by EAL/D specialist teachers, who have appreciated opportunities to participate in professional communities of practice and develop new understandings. In-house professional learning is designed to support strategic school goals: leaders in School B have initiated language and literacy workshops to develop cognitive scaffolds for learning: “We wanted to improve the teaching of writing skills across faculties.” School D have run S.T.A.R.S. in schools: Supporting students from refugee backgrounds, a NSW Department of Education professional learning program, to support teachers of students from refugee backgrounds, along with grammar workshops and sessions to build familiarity with the EAL/D learning progression. Teachers report that this focus has assisted with teachers’ understanding of the needs of English language learners: “EAL/D pedagogy is now normalised across classes.”

While whole school involvement in professional learning programs is recognised as empowering for teachers, successful knowledge building is a continuing process: “We need to allow time and learning to develop positions and strength across the whole school.” The principal of School C recognises that “ongoing reflection and evaluation” is critical to sustain and strengthen understandings. Her plans to integrate EAL/D “right across the school” involve regular use of the

EAL/D Evaluation Framework, where teams reflect on their purpose and direction and design PL which is “responsive to needs”. Action research between the EAL/D specialist and interested teachers has led to the co-construction of knowledge relevant to the local context, and collaboration with a nearby university strengthens the process through lesson study, with classroom observations and feedback for EAL/D and participating teachers.

EAL/D specialist teachers are seen as leaders and role models for knowledge building within all schools. Principals encourage and celebrate post-graduate studies in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) amongst their staff, looking forward to the incorporation of current research into classroom programs. Professional collaboration coordinated through Department of Education initiatives is also highly valued. The School D executive respect their knowledgeable EAL/D team:

“This year they have worked extensively with the refugee support leader and they present at the networks – the [refugee education] networks are critical, they give them a chance to find out about the resources out there – next year they will be the contacts for the local network so it continues.”

### Vignette 3

#### Building teacher knowledge in a high school context (School B)

The executive leadership team in School B recognise the wealth of professional knowledge held by their EAL/D teachers: of the six staff interviewed for this research, five have post-graduate TESOL qualifications, while others in the IEC (including temporary and casual teachers) are studying or recently qualified. This level of expertise is a valuable asset for the school, informing teaching and learning programs in the classrooms and also providing knowledgeable leaders for staff professional learning. With high teacher retention rates, the school thus continues to grow its knowledge base: “Expertise is maintained as staff remain.”

Building and sustaining teacher knowledge of language learning and EAL/D pedagogy is a priority for the deputy principal. Professional learning across KLAS is held every second week, when the IEC and High School learn together: “We have common goals, one direction through an understanding of our school context.” Mandatory professional learning has included S.T.A.R.S. in schools: Supporting students from refugee backgrounds (NSW Department of Education) and Teaching Students from Refugee Backgrounds; recent targeted workshops have focused on scaffolding in the EAL/D classroom, and on the use of the EAL/D learning progression. While much of the school-based professional learning is delivered by school leaders and EAL/D specialist teachers, the school also values the presence of EAL/D experts and facilitators organised through the Department of Education to present registered EAL/D programs and courses.

As a result of this focus on EAL/D teacher knowledge, the deputy principal believes that “teachers are constantly growing and deepening their expertise”. She is aware of a rich dialogue between teachers as they scaffold each other, “apprenticing staff into new understandings – and also developing teachers’ expertise as PL facilitators”. And with five sessions each term with the same group, there is “plenty of opportunity for reflexive discourse and practice” so that the school now has teachers across the curriculum with a sound knowledge of EAL/D education.

**Vignette 4****Building teacher knowledge in a primary context (School F)**

In 2017, the leadership team in School F made the decision to run the TELL program for their entire staff. It was co-delivered by their refugee support leader, a trained facilitator, and the coordinator of the EAL/D team – an experienced teacher who was familiar with the cultural and linguistic context of the school. They drew on professional relationships to introduce teachers to the strengths and needs of English language learners, to the theoretical foundations of EAL/D pedagogy and to the differentiation of literacy and assessment programs; two-hour workshops were supplemented with action research tasks in the classroom, along with opportunities for shared reflection amongst staff. According to the deputy principal, it “made a positive impact”, with 95% of classroom teachers successful completing the program. She considers that it “built capacity for the whole school to understand EAL/D pedagogy. It’s no longer just the responsibility of the EAL/D team – the culture has shifted and attitudes have changed.”

In 2018, the school participated in Leading EAL/D Education, a leadership project designed to deepen and extend the teacher knowledge developed during the previous year. EAL/D staff worked with classroom teachers to develop strategies in whole class lesson planning and the building of EAL/D class profiles: “It led to a raised awareness – people understand message abundance and embedding pedagogy in classrooms – there’s been a mindshift.”

The deputy principal sees the growth of teacher knowledge continuing. The EAL/D coordinator has now trained as a TELL facilitator and regularly upskills new staff – “professional learning builds capacity especially for beginning teachers” – and teachers are engaging in individual programs “to increase their own capacity”. In 2020 the school will continue this growth: “EAL/D is a priority, it’s part of school PL now.” And as part of an upcoming focus on the teaching of writing, they are planning to engage in quality teaching rounds – this time including an EAL/D perspective.

**3.2.4 Valuing EAL/D expertise**

Findings indicate that effective leaders recognize the role of EAL/D specialist teachers in building the collective capacity of the school to support the social, emotional and academic progress of EAL/D students. This section examines how the expertise of EAL/D teachers is utilized to support English language learners within schools. It describes their role in identifying effective practices for EAL/D learners, the sharing of such knowledge through collaboration with other members of staff, and the relationships they develop with teachers and students in the classroom.

Leaders and teachers across the six schools value the work of their EAL/D specialist teachers, both individually and in teams. All schools except School C have EAL/D teams of teachers to support staff and deliver programs; in 2019 School C did not have an EAL/D allocation and the principal created the 0.8 FTE position from a combination of the EAL/D teacher allocation from New Arrivals Program support, English language proficiency equity loading resource allocations and discretionary school funding. She recognizes the importance of having “the right people in the right roles” and sees the promotion of EAL/D pedagogy and revised practices across classrooms as a result of leadership from the EAL/D specialist teacher. Leaders of the

other schools acknowledge the role of their EAL/D teams: “You need the expertise and the pedagogy”; “Our school responds [to cultural diversity] through our EAL/D team”; “Team EAL/D – the passion that they bring to work – they have taken great ownership of it.”

EAL/D expertise held by specialists in this study has been developed through gaining TESOL qualifications at university, through accredited courses and programs run by NSW Department of Education, and through years of EAL/D teaching experience. Permanent EAL/D teachers in project schools hold specialized TESOL qualifications, with some (in Schools B, C and F) combining post-graduate study with their current teaching role. Four of the six schools have participated in the Leading EAL/D Education course; in School F, for example, the EAL/D coordinator leads other staff members in the co-construction of knowledge through targeted action research projects. The EAL/D team at School D regularly leads professional learning for the whole staff on school development days (for more details, refer to vignette in this section), while the specialists in School A lead language and literacy professional learning across the curriculum: “They work as a team – working towards handover back to faculty – we’re seeing a change in KLA faculty teachers now.” In School E, the EAL/D team leader is seen as an important advocate for her English language learners: “She has an understanding of language – there’s a reciprocal learning between classroom teachers and EAL/D staff – sustainability is important.” Experienced EAL/D specialist teachers in School B initiate fortnightly professional learning opportunities across the high school and IEC, while teachers in School C are introduced to effective EAL/D practice through the use of a school-based pedagogy checklist designed by their EAL/D specialist teacher.

Knowledgeable EAL/D teachers collaborate across the school, working with classroom and subject teachers to plan, deliver and evaluate programs for English language learners. Completion of the Excelling level on the EAL/D School Evaluation Framework by Schools A and C confirms that “EAL/D expertise informs the development of whole school approaches to language, literacy and numeracy programs”. Effective programs begin with shared, systematic planning, starting with the analysis of EAL/D student assessment data; in School E, “Team members can identify themes and priorities for the whole school by looking at data – there’s sustained vision driven by data.” School F identify a focus on collaborative planning between EAL/D and classroom teachers, twice a year for stage planning, as well as attendance at stage meetings every fortnight: “There’s an expectation that they are there, they’re not used as relief teachers or helpers.” The team also meets during a shared release time on Mondays and Wednesdays – “all the EAL/D team are together” – a way of maintaining a specialist identity for the teachers.

EAL/D specialist teacher knowledge is seen as essential to meet the needs of students. Organization of time and resources within a large high school requires careful planning, and in School A, the EAL/D team coordinates planning times with faculties: “We’re part of the rotation of team meetings – and lunchtime allows for meetings.” For their special projects, EAL/D teachers have an allowance which provides extra teacher relief for planning and reflection with mainstream colleagues. School B, a high school with IEC attached, has a high number of refugee enrolments and has therefore created a refugee support team to coordinate and plan the support offered; this cross-school team includes the head teacher EAL/D, specialists from the IEC, the refugee support teacher and an Arabic speaking science teacher, who conducted a lesson in Arabic for refugee parents. As a result of this collaboration, the deputy principal believes that they are starting to address specific EAL/D needs, “Incorporating specific needs of refugees such as phonics for students beginning to read – the team worked together to identify readers from the UK which were age appropriate and engaging.”

Collaboration between specialists and mainstream teachers was found to occur both in and out of the classroom, strengthened by the relationships which develop between co-teachers, as noted in interviews with staff in School C: “It’s fun when we teach together!” Teachers also appreciate the sharing of expertise which occurs as they work together: in the School D Kindergarten classroom, for example, the EAL/D teacher “fills in the gaps” for the less experienced classroom teacher, so that “we get to know each other’s practice”. Observers’ field notes outline how the EAL/D teacher demonstrates effective questioning techniques, “scaffolding the language being used within the lesson”. During interviews, class teachers articulate how this kind of co-teaching assists them to see their planning realized in classroom practice: “It’s really empowering for us to support our students – class teachers are now drawing on EAL/D pedagogy.” Findings confirm the significance of collaboration in all schools where co-teaching between EAL/D specialist teachers and classroom teachers was observed. In School E, the principal appreciates the “trusting relationships” characteristic of effective team teaching where language expertise is valued and shared: “EAL/D teachers must be adaptive and responsive to stage demands – recognizing the needs of the students and the strengths and skills of the classroom teachers.” He identifies the collaborative nature of the role sharing: “There’s a constant point of need and ongoing evaluation, a planning and implementing cycle.” In School F, co-planning between EAL/D specialist teachers and classroom teachers is everyday practice. Teachers report that the EAL/D team attend planning days every term, after which, “Conversations between EAL/D and classroom teachers occur at the beginning and end of lessons”; this informal practice was mentioned many times across schools: “We’ll chat on the way to and from class, in the staffroom, at the photocopier!” Collaboration in lesson planning and reflection is also facilitated by online platforms; the Early Stage 1 classroom teacher in School F co-designs her lessons with her EAL/D teaching partner using their Google drive, thus allowing her to share specialist planning and evaluation tools and to monitor the progress of her English language learners.

## Vignette 5

### Valuing EAL/D expertise in the primary context (School D)

The EAL/D specialists in School D are well regarded by their executive leaders: “Credit to the EAL/D teachers who are really on top of the game – they take initiative and are passionate and excited about their roles.” The deputy principal considers them to be a highly skilled and knowledgeable team as a result of sustained engagement in professional learning and participation in local network meetings: “They know what’s going on in the community.”

The school has experienced changes in student enrolments over recent years, with an increase in families from refugee backgrounds. The EAL/D team have been “proactive” in response to this change, reassessing existing practices to accommodate the needs of their cultural communities. The teachers have worked closely with their local refugee support leader, giving the school a presence at conferences and network meetings; it has also, says the principal, “provided more status and identity for the EAL/D team”.

The EAL/D specialists know the EAL/D progression phases of all their students, and organise classroom support accordingly. EAL/D student assessment data is collected using a range of assessment strategies, and analysed to identify students’ strengths and needs “to inform stage planning and programming.” Student progress is monitored in collaboration with classroom teachers, and ILPs are tracked every term “to get feedback on progress”. Reports to parents have been changed to reflect the work of EAL/D specialists in the classroom: “There’s room to add a comment about what you are doing to support them in class.”

The EAL/D team helps to build the capacity of classroom teachers, especially beginning teachers, modelling EAL/D pedagogy in the classroom. They are given time at the beginning of the year to assist with planning: “EAL/D teachers write the programs with the beginning teachers to show how to program for new arrivals.” The specialists have also provided staff with professional learning opportunities, offering participation in TELL and the S.T.A.R.S in Schools program and supporting understanding of the EAL/D progression. A staff development day in 2019, led by the EAL/D team, was devoted to enhancing the EAL/D program in the areas of lesson delivery and teaching sequence, content and resources, class tasks and assessment tasks, and classroom space and environment. The resources developed through the interactive workshops are available for all staff on the school’s shared drive.

The deputy principal recognises the quality of the relationships that sustain this team: “They don’t walk alone – they’re very close.” As a result, they are able to negotiate change collectively – “always interested in trying something new!”

### 3.2.5 Implementing effective EAL/D pedagogy in the classroom

Findings in previous sections indicate that all six schools recognize and value EAL/D teacher expertise and the role it plays in the development of effective pedagogy and the growth of teacher knowledge. This section examines how classroom practice reflects teachers’ understandings of EAL/D students and the ways they learn, focusing on the implementation of effective EAL/D pedagogy in the classroom. It describes how teachers use their knowledge of students to make connections and engage them in learning; how they employ explicit teaching strategies which are carefully selected and sequenced to develop deep knowledge and understanding; and how they maintain high expectations for success whilst providing caring and timely support.



The section on 'Knowing, valuing and caring' (section 3.2.2) describes evidence of how staff take the time to identify and understand their EAL/D students' strengths and needs. Knowledge of their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their interests and their academic progress is reflected in teacher comments about the planning and teaching of lessons, as well as the resources that are utilized in class: "Knowledge of students shapes our lessons." Observers visited a Stage 5 class in School A, where students were preparing to write a critical response to the movie *The Hunger Games*. During the pre-lesson interview, the teacher discussed her use of popular culture with this class to explore concepts of endurance and resilience: "It's more accessible – there's a worldly connection." She recognizes that for her students, "Writing is the issue – their writing is like spoken language," and therefore explicitly targets those language forms which express cause and effect, helping her English language learners to articulate their ideas in written mode.

The value of using students' home languages to support understanding is recognized by many specialist and classroom/subject teachers, and is welcomed by students in the focus groups: "It's good to use your language to help understand a new idea"; "Sometimes it helps to speak to someone if their language is strong"; "When I'm doing maths, I count in Arabic to figure out the answer." In School B, teachers encourage the use home languages during lessons in order to "create a safe environment for students to take risks with their learning". In a Stage 6 class, students explore the language of job interviews; observers describe a group of students discussing their ideas in Vietnamese and then deciding on an appropriate English word together, the meaning of which was checked using a translation app on a student's phone and then added to a bilingual glossary. In the student focus group interviews, students from this school reflected that "we sometimes use our language to understand new knowledge – it allows us to catch up, clarify ideas". In School C, a newly arrived Thai student is partnered with another Thai speaker to support her understanding of curriculum knowledge in science; in School E use of the home language is encouraged between beginning English students and the bilingual SLSO, who explains unfamiliar concepts and terminology to support their learning: "Miss explain it, I get it in my own language and then I can share it."

Understanding of EAL/D students' language learning and academic progress informed by EAL/D-specific assessment tools, is shown to be a significant component of effective EAL/D practice. The majority of schools report, via the EAL/D School Evaluation Framework, that EAL/D student assessment data, collected using specific EAL/D assessment tools, and analysed to identify EAL/D students' linguistic resources, is used to inform stage/subject planning and teaching. In School E, they "continue to build robustness in capacity to collect rigorous data and then interrogate the data more accurately – the tools inform refined teaching and allow us to ask enabling questions". Some EAL/D assessment tools were mentioned repeatedly in teacher interviews: "We make use of EAL/D progression data, and include the ESL scales in our planning"; "We use alerts from the EAL/D annual survey to question students' progress through the phases in the EAL/D learning progression"; "We check our data on the ESL scales and progression." NAPLAN results are also utilized: "The individual growth of every student is tracked – there's internal plus external data and the school knows that they are doing well – it's EAL/D as business as usual!" Many teachers reported using in-class assessment to inform the EAL/D teaching and learning cycle, identifying needs "based on existing work – we watch their progress, look at skills and identify the gaps".



Findings show that effective EAL/D pedagogy provides clear and systematic articulation of short and longer term learning goals. Observation notes confirm that at the start of a lesson, all teachers communicate the key ideas and concepts to their students, with learning intentions and success criteria clearly on display. Many teachers verbally elaborate on each criterion for their EAL/D learners; a Stage 1 class was observed jointly constructing their success criteria as an introduction to their writing task, with the teacher making use of a classroom visualizer to project the draft statement onto the whiteboard as it took shape.

All teachers acknowledge the importance of explicit teaching about language and how it works for EAL/D students; field notes and observation records confirm a strong academic language and grammar focus during lessons, exemplifying those effective practices identified in section 1.2.1 above. In a Stage 3 English lesson in School D, the learning intention was to introduce students to the building of tension within a narrative. Observation notes record that:

**“The notion of metaphor was explored and reiterated, introduction of adjectives – metaphoric; use and explanation of ellipsis; reference to graph to show building of excitement over time included talk about how language devices led to climax.”**

A Stage 1 mathematics class in School E were revising the language of probability, articulating the changes of modality that surround the use of the words unlikely and impossible. Observation notes record: “Recognition of previously incorrect assumptions about meaning of terminology (from formative assessment) was motivation for this lesson; focus on using terminology within sentence (explaining to others).”

All schools describe systematic planning of EAL/D teaching programs with a clear intention to identify and scaffold the language and cultural demands of curriculum learning. Analysis of their comments reveal a consistent approach to the delivery of EAL/D programs, with the adoption of a planning sequence which broadly follows an established pattern of goal setting, identification of student need and syllabus outcomes, descriptions of learning and teaching activities, and the inclusion of continual assessment and evaluation of student progress. Within this teaching and learning cycle, teachers describe an explicit focus on the language demands of the curriculum subject, and their use of specialist tools to inform the design of differentiated scaffolding which allows their English language learners to access the key concepts which may be linguistically and culturally unfamiliar to them. This planning process is outlined by one EAL/D teacher:

**“We plan with work samples, marking with a rubric, then check the data on the ESL scales and the EAL/D learning progression – then we look for an explicit focus such as Stage 2 – complex sentences, Tier 2 vocabulary [in other words, more complex and/or academic language]. We also use the school scope and sequence and ESL steps. We ask what is the rich task? Then we backward map – language demands, what will students produce as evidence? Then we begin the development of learning activities – I handover to the class teacher to continue.”**

Opportunities to develop and practise new learning through oral language are a key component of EAL/D pedagogy, and are repeatedly mentioned in teacher interviews: “We support the use of talk in the classroom as a priority – across all stages.” Talk between teachers and students, and talk between students, emerged

as regular practice across all schools. Teachers encourage talk between learners to allow them to rehearse the correct forms of the targeted language: “We’ve got lots of great communicative activities for students to practise the language before they write.” Oral interaction with peers is an opportunity for English language learners to extend their conceptual understandings: as a Stage 3 class worked together to explore government processes, EAL/D students could “discuss, clarify and consolidate learning through the strategic pairing”. Contingent scaffolding – the support given to students through oral interaction at point of need during the lesson – was observed within all classes. For example, teachers regularly recap previously learned information to help EAL/D students make connections between the known and unknown: “What did we see the emus do with their sharp claws?” They also recast everyday words into academic language less familiar to the students. Observation notes record how the EAL/D teacher scaffolds the language of her Stage 6 students as they prepare for a job interview:

**“In her interactions with students she recasts students’ language, not just repeating but rephrasing the ideas using more academic language. She also questions to give intellectual push and to extend student talk and understanding.”**

Findings confirm that teachers in all six schools have high expectations of their EAL/D students’ capacity to engage in learning curriculum concepts. They believe that with carefully designed support to meet the language demands of curriculum tasks, all learners are capable of achieving academic success. The following example highlights how high academic challenge accompanied by high levels of support is translated into classroom practice.

The high expectations created by teachers for their EAL/D students are seen as part of a whole school culture. In School E, they extend to the parent community: “We have high expectations of new arrivals – we’re involving parents as critical partners, encouraging a contemporary partnership.” For School A, the Year 6 orientation is an opportunity to “communicate expectations about attendance and learning”; subject selection is completed with an interpreter “to set them up for success”. School B has prioritized the provision of digital technology across the school (“we can’t have BYOD”) thus creating expectations that all students will be able to make effective use of ICT across the curriculum.

At a classroom level, interview comments by teachers confirm their practice of challenging their EAL/D students academically: “We use rich texts that drive engagement – we’re looking for hard fun big ideas!” Class observations indicate ways in which high expectations are explicitly communicated to students by teachers. In School F, the Stage 2 teacher creates high expectations both behaviourally and academically. Cooperation over the sharing of laptops and tablets is assumed: “You’re old enough and mature enough to negotiate”; and the cognitive demands of the lesson are also high: “We’re using more challenging material today, the earlier report was simple.” After the initial period of whole class support, this teacher works with the EAL/D learners in differentiated groups, with some students encouraged to take control of their own learning – “I’m pushing you to work independently today.” In the post lesson interview, the teacher describes how students are expected to use assessment rubrics to scaffold their success in writing because, “They’ve been taught to critique their texts through peer reading, text comments and criticism.” Clearly evident in classroom observations and throughout the interviews is the combination of care and high expectations that teachers have for their EAL/D students.

## Vignette 6

### Implementing effective EAL/D pedagogy in Kindergarten (School F)

The Early Stage 1 teacher in School F demonstrates high expectations for her learners by providing challenging literacy tasks as a response to the reading of an Indian folktale. In preparation for students' independent writing tasks, the teacher used and explained metalanguage – for example the correct use of pronoun referencing – to her young EAL/D students. Throughout the lesson, she expected them to adopt the metalanguage and include it in their oral responses and in their written recounts; the challenge presented by these learning activities was balanced by the provision of differentiated support for her English language learners. Observers noted the following examples of EAL/D pedagogy which contributed to students' effective writing:

“Content was relevant to the learners' cultural backgrounds and had been presented in L1; recapping of previous learning; reference to word-walls; allowing for wait time [providing time for students to respond]; use of different participant structures with groups [for example, with EAL/D specialist teacher support] according to need.”

Through careful design of learning activities, the teacher successfully supported her students to transform their oral responses into longer, more complex written sentences within their recounts.

## Vignette 7

### Implementing effective EAL/D pedagogy in Year 9 English (School A)

The head teacher EAL/D in School A takes a class of Year 9 EAL/D students in subject English. The majority of students are in the Developing phase on the EAL/D progression. They have been in Australia for between three and five years. Knowledge of the students, in particular their cultural backgrounds, shapes her lesson planning: “I pride myself on knowing my students well.” The relationship she has built with her students, for whom she has developed a real affection, is very important to her: “The kids are spirited – I try to give a lot of positive reinforcement and not be too harsh on moderate disconnection.” In response to good behaviour, she makes a practice of calling home to communicate student participation and strong engagement to parents.

The lesson observed was part of a Shakespeare unit focused on *Twelfth Night*. Students were preparing for an upcoming assessment task where they would be asked to write a persuasive letter to the Globe Theatre convincing them to perform the play before closing down.

In this lesson they were engaging with the plays’ themes of love and devotion, asking why love is important and whether everyone deserves to love: “The students are digging deep to discuss these issues and how it is influenced by culture and religion.” There is also a language focus to their learning, a consideration of how love is symbolized through language: “I’ll be asking big questions to challenge their thinking and to get them to use reasoning language.”

Despite students’ limited English language proficiency the teacher maintains a consistent level of challenge and support for students: “I have high expectations of the students to be able to use the subject English language, such as the techniques and the text types.” In the student focus groups, they acknowledge her support: “She reads the book to us – reading the book helps to get the expression – helps us to repeat words.” They appreciate her encouragement – “it helps to ‘have a go’ – when I’m with my friends I feel safe to take risk – it takes confidence” – and value her opinion: “We need feedback – and quickly.”

## Vignette 8

### Implementing effective EAL/D pedagogy in Year 1 maths (School E)

This vignette describes a Year 1 maths lesson co-delivered by the classroom teacher and EAL/D specialist. The lesson demonstrates planned and contingent EAL/D scaffolding including planned opportunities for student practice of target language whilst maintaining high intellectual challenge. The class consists of 22 students, the majority of whom were in Emerging and Developing phases of the EAL/D progression; the lesson addresses outcome MA1-5NA of the NSW mathematics syllabus ('uses a range of strategies and informal recording methods for addition and subtraction involving one- and two-digit numbers'). In addition to the mathematical content focus, the lesson supported students in using key mathematical language to support their reasoning when solving problems, addressing outcomes MA1-1WM, MA1-2WM and MA1-3WM.

The lesson began with controlled scaffolding as teachers recapped previous learning and revisited key mathematical language: 'strategy', 'counting-on', 'counting-back' and 'prove'. Partner talk – "turn and tell your partner what this word means ... how does it help us?" – was followed by explicit teaching of the term 'to prove', giving a verbal explanation of its grammatical usage and some useful synonyms. The class jointly constructed a definition of what it means to count-on and count-back; the EAL/D specialist teacher wrote out this definition (with visuals) on the board for future reference.

Students then moved to group work at their tables – "we have fluid grouping depending on the lesson focus" – with tasks designed to challenge mathematical and language learning. Each group had a number of counters (10, 15 or 20) and one student had to remove a given number of them while the others determined how many were left. Students talked together before recording their thinking individually, using pictures, diagrams, and/or symbols on a whiteboard.

During this stage of the lesson, one English language learner became very excited about a new subtraction strategy he was trialling, and explained his discovery to the EAL/D teacher. They share a home language and had used it in previous lessons to discuss the concept of subtraction; in this lesson the student was using English to communicate with his partner, who had removed 9 counters from the pile of 15. "P\*\* take 9 counters out – it's 6! 9 and 1 more is 10 and the 5 together make 15!" The EAL/D teacher congratulated the student on his successful use of a flexible strategy, recasting the language by introducing the mathematical term into her response: "So you were bridging the gap between 9 and 10 – and then bridging up to 15!"

This episode was later shared in the whole class reflection session at the end of the lesson, where new understandings could be articulated and consolidated through partner talk: "How did you explain your reasoning for your answer?" Teachers told the class that in the next lesson, they would all learn more about using flexible strategies, and that they would invite the student to model his strategy for others.

In their own reflection after the lesson, the two teachers evaluate each other's contribution:

**“We debrief after every lesson to determine a common path through a different perspective – TELL gave us a common language and now we understand the knowledge behind it – we respond to the point of need.”**

## Chapter 4: Summary of findings and implications

This research has sought to identify and document factors that contribute to the success of the schools that add significant value to the learning of their students, in particular their EAL/D students. Every school is a complex organisation operating within its own cultural context; however, a shared focus on particular elements of EAL/D education was demonstrated by participants throughout the study. Despite the small number of schools in the study, the consistency of results both quantitatively and qualitatively allow us to identify significant EAL/D teaching and learning practices which can help to inform future planning in EAL/D education for policy makers, school leaders and teachers.

Combining the insights gained from the lesson observations and the qualitative data collected from interviews, the following section summarises the five best practices and associated implications for successful EAL/D education in schools.

### **Finding 1:**

#### **Distributed leadership that understands and engages their diverse community builds the foundation for successful EAL/D education**

All of the schools in the study are characterised by leadership that understands, respects and connects with their culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Leaders acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of languages spoken by students and their families, understanding that it reflects the many and varied cultural communities which contribute to the life of the school. Leaders describe how they see the strengths within students' families, respecting parents as critical and knowledgeable partners and valuing their home language skills by employing bilingual staff to facilitate engagement in school activities. Building a climate of trust and community participation allows schools to more effectively meet the complex needs of their EAL/D students.

All leaders in project schools understand and promote the value of EAL/D education creating a school culture of high expectations for all EAL/D students. While principals are pivotal to the overall direction of the school, this research suggests that leadership is most effective when it is distributed throughout the organisation and critically, includes those with EAL/D expertise: EAL/D systems and practices function most efficiently through shared responsibility between the executive leadership team, EAL/D coordinators and specialists, and classroom/subject teachers. Distributed EAL/D leadership leads to EAL/D-informed whole school planning, coordinating support for language learning across the curriculum and implementing social welfare programs

to meet the needs of particular students. The EAL/D Evaluation Framework provides a leadership tool for EAL/D-informed whole school planning. Interview comments indicate that all teachers value those school-wide systems and processes designed to facilitate the organisation of a successful EAL/D program, including the systematic collection, sharing and analysis of enrolment and assessment data, the effective allocation of available EAL/D resources, regular time for planning, co-teaching and reflection, and the provision of targeted professional learning.

The research has highlighted the need for distributed leadership that engages deeply with their complex communities and promotes EAL/D specialists as school leaders.

## **Finding 2:**

### **Effective EAL/D teaching is characterised by features of 'high challenge' and 'high support'**

In project classrooms, teachers challenge EAL/D students with a clear focus on key curriculum knowledge, skills and understandings. High support classrooms provide scaffolding through planned and contingent or point-of-need use of oral language, targeted use of home language and vocabulary development, and explicit and embedded teaching of language and literacy across the curriculum. Teachers' knowledge of EAL/D pedagogy is evident throughout classroom observations: strong elements observed within lessons include **academic language focus**, **explicit teaching** and **scaffolding**. Some of the key practices related to effective EAL/D scaffolding include the use of contingent support offered through verbal interactions, and a careful balance between whole class instruction and student group or independent work, with group membership differentiated according to the needs of English language learners.

Teachers' understanding of students' language skills and complex curriculum demands enables them to gauge the level of challenge and support required to scaffold learning. In research schools, EAL/D student assessment evidence collected using formative assessment practices and analysed using EAL/D learning progressions informed learning and teaching.

Effective schools adopt a positive view of cultural diversity, recognizing EAL/D students as skilled bilingual speakers rather than disadvantaged literacy learners. Teachers acknowledge the versatile nature of multilingual communication outside of the classroom and where possible encourage movement between languages in order to promote their students' learning across the curriculum.

This research highlights the importance of articulating the specific nature of high challenge and high support EAL/D pedagogy. It identified the particular importance of harnessing students' multilingual resources in learning. It also showed the importance of assessing, monitoring and reporting EAL/D students' English language development using specialized tools such as the EAL/D learning progression or the ESL scales.

### Finding 3:

## Respectful relationships create a school and classroom culture of cooperation, high care and high achievement

Productive relationships play a significant role in building effective practices for EAL/D learners. These were evident across all levels of the school community: the leadership teams, mainstream staff and specialist teachers all demonstrated a high level of care and respect for their EAL/D students, parents or carers and the broader school community.

Successful schools build relationships with families, learning about their unique histories and gathering important information relating to parents' educational experiences and knowledge of English, the aspirations they hold for their children, and their mental health and wellbeing.

Strong relationships are evident within classrooms, with **social support, inclusivity** and **engagement** ranked as some of the strongest elements during lesson observations. Triangulation of evidence from student focus groups, teacher interviews and classroom observations suggests that high levels of trust created between teachers and their EAL/D students and their families give pupils the confidence to take risks with new learning and to develop new identities as successful language learners.

A positive learning culture for EAL/D students develops from productive collaboration. Teachers use their knowledge of student strengths and needs to provide carefully designed learning challenges in response to the increasingly complex language, and cultural demands of the curricula. Linguistic and conceptual goal setting is clearly communicated to EAL/D learners, followed by carefully planned learning sequences which introduce explicit language teaching and multifaceted processes of scaffolding to support curriculum knowledge and understanding (**deep knowledge** and **deep understanding** were also rated most strongly during classroom observations). Observation notes confirm that in addition to identifying learning intentions at the start of each lesson, teachers communicate goals and expectations through multiple oral interactions with their EAL/D students during their learning, delivered in a style consistent with the enforcement of diligence and performance identified by Gay (2018) in her study of culturally responsive caring. By framing their lessons within a culture of shared support and cooperation, teachers maintain high standards for their students, helping them to recognise their academic potential whilst also providing them with assistance to complete individual tasks.

This research shows that taking the time to develop strong relationships between teachers and EAL/D students (and between teachers) helps to create a positive school and classroom culture of high care and high expectations encouraging all students to feel a sense of belonging and enabling them to reach their potential in cognitive, social and emotional dimensions of their learning.



## **Finding 4:** Sustained teacher knowledge-building supports responsiveness to changing student needs

There was a strong focus on professional learning in all of the project schools, consistently reported at Excelling levels on the EAL/D School Evaluation Framework; interview comments also emphasised the significance of developing school-based, specialized EAL/D knowledge amongst classroom and subject teachers. Schools effectively build capacity in their staff through rigorous, evidence-based professional learning courses which allow teachers to co-construct new understandings relevant to the needs of the students within their school community. Teacher knowledge develops from action learning and mentoring with knowledgeable EAL/D specialists, theoretical frameworks which reflect Timperley's principles of effective practice, and with established research by Hattie et al, already widely implemented across NSW schools. Indeed, findings consistent with earlier conclusions drawn from CESE research into 'Six effective practices' suggest that many school practices that benefit the broader student population need to be amplified for EAL/D learners.

EAL/D specialists report that they value attendance at professional learning networks and at leadership courses run by the Department of Education. They appreciate opportunities to develop their own skill set through targeted programs and through professional discourse; those with access to specialist refugee support benefitted from the mentoring provided by local refugee support leaders. Some EAL/D teachers were also studying independently to achieve post-graduate EAL/D specialist teaching qualifications.

This research has highlighted the need for sustained high quality professional learning in order to ensure that all teachers are equipped to meet the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse society

## **Finding 5:** Recognising EAL/D expertise builds the capacity of schools to respond to the needs of EAL/D students

Effective schools recognise that students learning a new language need specialized support to achieve English literacy and language outcomes and they value the EAL/D expertise which informs EAL/D teaching in the classroom. Findings confirm that in all project schools respect for the expertise of EAL/D specialist teachers has allowed for the growth of highly productive co-teaching relationships. Classroom/subject teachers acknowledge an increase in awareness and understanding of their English language learners as a result of working closely together with knowledgeable colleagues, collecting and analysing EAL/D assessment data, and jointly planning and teaching units of work.

EAL/D specialist teachers can play an essential role across all areas of school operations by advising on curriculum development, mentoring their colleagues and supporting EAL/D students in the classroom.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

This study has shed light on the effective practices that have led to high achievement for the EAL/D student cohort in the identified schools. The research confirms existing theoretical perspectives of EAL/D pedagogy while also bringing to focus some new dimensions.

This research confirms and amplifies the models of EAL/D pedagogy proposed by previous research in NSW. In particular, it confirms the pedagogical model proposed by Hammond (2008b) of 'high challenge – high support' including the characteristics of EAL/D scaffolding described in Hammond and Gibbons (2005) and in particular the role of oral language and explicit language teaching. Dimensions that gain new emphasis are the role of home language in learning and the role of caring and respectful relationships in student engagement.

A notable insight from the research is the importance of school leadership that understands, respects and connects with their culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This understanding and commitment is evident in all research schools and builds a positive school and classroom culture where all students and staff feel a sense of belonging enabling them to reach their potential in cognitive, social and emotional dimensions of their learning.

EAL/D specialist teachers are key in building community connections and deeper awareness of the strengths and complex needs of families. Schools recognise the critical role of the EAL/D specialist teachers' expertise in guiding and informing whole school programs and teaching practice. Sustained learning about English language and EAL/D learner development, curriculum language and literacy demands, and the cultural and linguistic resources learners bring to school was evident in all schools. Professional learning that is both informative and reflective provides all teachers with the knowledge and understandings necessary to recognise the considerable strengths and the diverse needs of all their EAL/D students.

In conclusion, schools are complex organisations, each responding to their own dynamic cultural contexts within a wider environment of social, political and educational change. Increasing levels of linguistic diversity in the student population requires schools to be flexible in their response to English language learners, providing systems and processes which enable student growth across the curriculum, promoting EAL/D education through productive relationships and informed, collaborative learning practices.

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## Appendix 1: Technical details of multilevel modelling to estimate school value-added on literacy outcomes for EAL/D and non-EAL/D students

The multilevel model adopted in the analysis is a two-level hierarchical model to account for the hierarchical structure of the data with students (Level 1 units) nested within schools (Level 2 units) (Rasbash et al., 2005).

The multilevel model is specified as:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1ij} + \dots + \beta_n X_{nij} + \beta_{n+1} W_{1j} + \dots + \beta_{n+k} W_{kj} + \mu_{0j} + e_{ij} \quad [A1]$$

where  $Y_{ij}$  denotes the later year weighted literacy score for student  $i$  in school  $j$ . There are two steps involved in calculating this weighted literacy score. First, results for a test domain for a specific grade cohort in a particular calendar year (such as 2015 Year 3 reading) are first standardised within the specific data set. For each student, a weighted literacy score is then calculated by applying the weightings to standardised scores from reading, writing, grammar and punctuation and spelling tests for that student:

$$Y_{ij} = 0.5 * \text{READING}_{ij} + 0.2 * \text{WRITING}_{ij} + 0.2 * \text{GP}_{ij} + 0.1 * \text{SPELLING}_{ij}$$

The same process applies to the calculation of prior literacy scores ( $X_{1ij}$ ).

In equation [A1],  $X_{1ij}$  to  $X_{nij}$  are  $n$  student level controlling factors (including student's prior score  $X_{1ij}$ ),  $W_{1j}$  to  $W_{kj}$  are  $k$  school level controlling factors and  $\beta_0$  is the average performance of all schools, conditional on the student and school factors. Table A1 summarises the contextual factors included in each model.

It is easy to see from equation [A1] that the residual (unexplained part) in the student scores is now partitioned into two components: (a) the student-level residual ( $e_{ij}$ , with variance  $\sigma_e^2$ ) which is each student's departure from the predicted outcome, and (b) the school-level residual ( $\mu_{0j}$ , with corresponding variance  $\sigma_{\mu_0}^2$ ) which is the difference between the school mean and the overall population mean. The variances of these two error terms are known as the within-school variance ( $\sigma_e^2$ ) and the between-school variance ( $\sigma_{\mu_0}^2$ ).

In the context of school value added analysis,  $\mu_{0j}$  is our primary interest as it represents the contribution each school makes to its students' learning progress, over and above what can be predicted from student (such as background and prior academic achievement) and school characteristics (for example, demographic and academic composition).  $\mu_{0j}$  is assumed to have a normal distribution with a mean of zero and variance of across the population of schools  $\sigma_{\mu_0}^2$ . The school effect for school  $j$  is estimated as the mean of the student-level residuals in school  $j$ . Each school effect is then adjusted by a shrinkage factor (for detailed explanations of this adjustment, please refer to CESE, 2014).

The following shows the process of calculating school level effect and its variance with shrinkage factor:

**Step 1** calculate the raw residual for each student ( $e_{ij}$ ) in a school  $j$ , using model parameter estimates:

$$e_{ij} = y_{ij} - \hat{y}_{ij}$$

where  $y_{ij}$  is the actual performance of student  $i$  in school  $j$  and  $\hat{y}_{ij}$  is the predicted score of this student, given the individual student's background and the school's characteristics

**Step 2** calculate the mean of the raw residuals across EAL/D and non-EAL/D students in this school:

$$e_{.j,EAL/D} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{j,EAL/D}} e_{ij,EAL/D}}{n_{j,EAL/D}} \text{ and } e_{.j,non-EAL/D} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_{j,non-EAL/D}} e_{ij,non-EAL/D}}{n_{j,non-EAL/D}}$$

where  $n_{j,EAL/D}$  and  $n_{j,non-EAL/D}$  are the number of EAL/D and non-EAL/D students in school  $j$  respectively

**Step 3** estimate the school effect for the school  $j$  for EAL/D and non-EAL/D students by multiplying this raw average residual for EAL/D and non-EAL/D students respectively by a factor:

$$\hat{\mu}_{0,EAL/D} = \frac{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2}{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2 + \sigma_e^2/n_{j,EAL/D}} e_{.j,EAL/D} \text{ and } \hat{\mu}_{0,non-EAL/D} = \frac{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2}{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2 + \sigma_e^2/n_{j,non-EAL/D}} e_{.j,non-EAL/D}$$

**Step 4** estimate the posterior variance of the school effect for EAL/D and non-EAL/D students respectively:

$$Var(\mu_{0j,EAL/D}) = \frac{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2 \sigma_e^2}{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2 n_{j,EAL/D} + \sigma_e^2} \text{ and } Var(\mu_{0j,non-EAL/D}) = \frac{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2 \sigma_e^2}{\sigma_{\mu_0}^2 n_{j,non-EAL/D} + \sigma_e^2}$$

When reporting a VA measure, the confidence interval around the measure (in other words, the range of the values within which we are statistically confident that the true value of this VA measure lies) is also reported to enable valid comparison of the school effects.

Equation [A2] provides the calculation formula for the 95% confidence intervals (CIs) around the estimated school value added measures for EAL/D students ( $\mu_{0,EAL/D}$ ), denoted as [Lower 95% confidence limit, Upper 95% confidence limit]:

$$[\hat{\mu}_{0,EAL/D} - 1.96 \times \sqrt{Var(\mu_{0j,EAL/D})}, \hat{\mu}_{0,EAL/D} + 1.96 \times \sqrt{Var(\mu_{0j,EAL/D})}] \quad [A2]$$

Similarly for non-EAL/D students, the 95% confidence interval is given by:

$$[\hat{\mu}_{0,non-EAL/D} - 1.96 \times \sqrt{Var(\mu_{0j,non-EAL/D})}, \hat{\mu}_{0,non-EAL/D} + 1.96 \times \sqrt{Var(\mu_{0j,non-EAL/D})}]$$

The mean of the VA scores for each VA measure (VA 3-5 for EAL/D students, VA3-5 for non-EAL/D students, VA7-9 for EAL/D students & VA7-9 for non-EAL/D students) is **approximately** zero across all schools. Therefore, for each of the 4 VA measures, we can classify the schools into one of three groups based on their confidence intervals:

- If the lower confidence interval for the school's VA score is greater than 0, the value added by this school can be regarded as statistically above the system average.
- If the upper confidence limit for the school's VA score is less than 0, the value added by this school can be regarded as statistically below the system average.
- If the confidence interval straddles the system average of 0, the value added by this school is not statistically different from the system average.

**Table A1**

**Composition of the value added models**

VA measures	Level of education	Factors included in VA EAL/D models	Dependent variable (later score)
VA for Year 3-5 (EAL/D and non-EAL/D)	Primary	<p><b>Prior ability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student weighted score on reading, writing, grammar and punctuation and spelling in Year 3 NAPLAN tests</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard set of contextual factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status</li> <li>• Student SES (based on parental education and occupation)</li> <li>• School SES (Family Occupation and Education Index)</li> </ul>	Student weighted score on reading, writing, grammar and punctuation and spelling in Year 5 NAPLAN tests
VA for Year 7-9 (EAL/D and non-EAL/D)	Secondary	<p><b>Prior ability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student weighted score on reading, writing, grammar and punctuation and spelling in Year 7 NAPLAN tests</li> </ul> <p><b>Standard set of contextual factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status</li> <li>• Student SES (based on parental education and occupation)</li> <li>• School SES (Family Occupation and Education Index)</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional contextual factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attending a fully academically selective school</li> <li>• Student attending a boys or a girls schools</li> </ul>	Student weighted score on reading, writing, grammar and punctuation and spelling in Year 9 NAPLAN tests

## Appendix 2:

# Technical details of multilevel mixed-effects parametric survival modelling to estimate school value added on English language proficiency progression for EAL/D students

Survival analysis is a statistical approach to analyse the time taken for an event of interest to occur. All EAL/D students from 2014 to 2017 were tracked until 2018, with an event of interest occurring when a student progresses to a higher EAL/D phase. We propose using the multilevel mixed-effects parametric survival model to analyse the time taken for an EAL/D students to progress to a higher phase. A 'multilevel' model was used to account for the nesting structure of the data where students were nested within school. Multiple phase progressions for the same student were allowed in the model. Primary and secondary students were modelled separately. Note that in most survival analyses, the event is defined as a failure or a death, which is a negative outcome. However in this analysis, the event refers to a progression to a higher phase which is a positive outcome.

Let  $T$  denote the time of the occurrence of progression to a higher phase, the survival model defines the hazard function as:

$$h(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Pr(t \leq T + \Delta t | T \geq t)}{\Delta t}$$

The hazard function is a function of time  $t$  that represents the instantaneous rate of the occurrence of the event, conditional on the student having not progressed to a higher phase to time  $t$ . The proposed survival model assumes that the baseline hazard  $h_0$  is constant over time and relates contextual factors to the hazard function. Under this assumption, the model becomes an exponential regression model and the hazard function takes the form:

$$h_{ij}(t) = h_0 \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1ij} + \dots + \beta_n X_{nij} + \beta_{n+1} W_{1j} + \dots + \beta_{n+k} W_{kj} + \mu_{0j}) \quad [\text{B1}]$$

where the subscripts  $i$  and  $j$  represent student  $i$  in school  $j$ ,  $h_0$  denotes the baseline hazard function (the hazard function for a student whose contextual factors are all equal to zero).

The fixed effects of the model included the student-level contextual factors ( $X_{1ij}$  to  $X_{nij}$ ) and the school-level contextual factors ( $W_{1j}$  to  $W_{kj}$ ). The student-level factors included Aboriginal status, gender, socio-economic status, scholastic year, lowest EAL/D phase, refugee status, New arrival program status and whether they were enrolled in IEC while the school-level factors included mobility rate. The fixed effects are incorporated as an exponential function so that the regression coefficients ( $\beta_1, \dots, \beta_{n+k}$ ) can be expressed as log-hazard ratios. The exponentiated regression coefficient  $\exp(\beta)$  denotes the relative change in the hazard of the occurrence of the event of interest associated with a one unit increase in the associated contextual factor.

The random effect of the model included the school effects ( $\mu_{0j}$ ). In the context of school value added analysis,  $\mu_{0j}$  is our primary interest as it represents the contribution each school makes to its students' learning progression, over and above what can be predicted from student (such as background) and school characteristics (for example, demographic and academic composition). The random effects  $\mu_{0j}$  are assumed to follow a normal distribution with mean 0 and variance  $\sigma_{\mu 0}^2$ . Observations within school are assumed to be correlated and share the common random school effect.



To estimate the model parameters, we derived the likelihood using the hazard function and survival function. Because the resulting likelihood did not have a closed form, mean-variance adaptive Gauss-Hermite quadrature was used as the estimation method. Refer to the Stata manual on the command 'mestreg' for more details (StataCorp, 2017). After the model estimation, we obtained the estimated school effect  $\hat{\mu}_{0j}$  and its standard error  $\sigma_{\mu 0}^2$ . A confidence interval was put around the measure (in other words, the range of the values within which we are statistically confident that the true value of this value-added measure lies) to enable valid comparison of the school effects.

Equation [B2] provides the formula for the 95% confidence intervals (CIs) around the estimated school effect  $\hat{\mu}_{0j}$  denoted as [Lower 95% confidence limit, Upper 95% confidence limit]:

$$\left[ \hat{u}_{0j} - 1.96 \times \sqrt{\sigma_{u0}^2}, \hat{u}_{0j} + 1.96 \times \sqrt{\sigma_{u0}^2} \right] \quad [\text{B2}]$$

As the average of the school effects is approximately zero, we can classify the schools into three groups based on their confidence intervals:

- If the lower confidence interval for the school effect is greater than 0, the value added by this school can be regarded as statistically above the system average.
- If the upper confidence limit for the school effect is less than 0, the value added by this school can be regarded as statistically below the system average.
- If the confidence interval straddles the system average of 0, the value added by this school is not statistically different from the system average.

## Appendix 3: Classes and subjects in lesson observations

**Table A2**

Classes and subjects in lesson observations

School	Stage	Curriculum subject
<b>School A</b>		
Class 1	5	English
Class 2	4	English
<b>School B</b>		
Class 1	6	English
Class 2	5	English
<b>School C</b>		
Class 1	1	English
Class 2	2	Science
<b>School D</b>		
Class 1	Early Stage 1	English
Class 2	3	English
<b>School E</b>		
Class 1	1	Maths
Class 2	3	HSIE
<b>School F</b>		
Class 1	Early Stage 1	English and maths
Class 2	2	Science

# Appendix 4: EAL/D quality teaching observation tool

## Class details

School:	Teacher/s:	Coder:	Grade:	Subject:
Number of learners:	Number of EAL/D learners:	Number of Beginning:	Number of Emerging:	Number of Developing:
EAL/D specialist: Y/N	Scheduled time:			Number of Consolidating:

## EAL/D observation criteria

A. Intellectual quality						
1	Deep knowledge	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
1.1	The teacher sustains focus on a small number of key ideas.	L	M	H		
1.2	The teacher effectively communicates the key concepts of the lesson for EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		

2	Deep understanding	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
2.1	The teacher moves EAL/D learners from the known to the unknown.	L	M	H		
2.2	The teacher provides opportunities for EAL/D learners to demonstrate deep understanding of the relationship between central ideas.	L	M	H		
2.3	The teacher frequently checks with EAL/D learners for understanding.	L	M	H		

3	Substantive communication	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
3.1	The teacher provides opportunities for sustained interactions between learners throughout the lesson.	L	M	H		
3.2	The teacher and/or learners scaffold substantive communication.	L	M	H		

4	Academic language focus	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
4.1	The teacher plans for and sustains academic language teaching during the lesson (for example, ensures opportunities for regular and ongoing talk about language).	L	M	H		
4.2	The teacher systematically builds EAL/D learners' knowledge through language across the modes.	L	M	H		
4.3	The teacher encourages EAL/D learners to take an analytical approach to understanding language (for example, teaches metalanguage).	L	M	H		



B. Quality learning environment						
1	Engagement	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
1.1	The teacher makes active efforts to engage all EAL/D learners in lesson substance.	L	M	H		
1.2	The teacher re-engages unfocused EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		

2	High expectations	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
2.1	The teacher provides challenging tasks for all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		
2.2	The teacher encourages risk taking in learning for all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		

3	Social support	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
3.1	The teacher provides positive feedback and encouragement to all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		
3.2	The teacher demonstrates respectful interactions to all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		
3.3	The teacher maintains a classroom culture that is free of negative personal comments / put-downs for all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		

4	Explicit goals	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
4.1	The teacher regularly and consistently engages EAL/D learners with the purpose of the lesson or task.	L	M	H		
4.2	The teacher makes explicit the detailed criteria for quality EAL/D learners' work related to curriculum content and language.	L	M	H		
4.3	The teacher provides opportunities for EAL/D learners to self-assess against success criteria.	L	M	H		

5	Scaffolding	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
5.1	The teacher displays strong evidence of systematic pre-planned support in the lesson (such as planned use of students' home language) that takes considers EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		
5.2	The teacher displays strong evidence of point-of-need support in the lesson (such as using students' home language) for all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		
5.3	The teacher consistently recognises and addresses all EAL/D learner needs to develop curriculum knowledge of language and literacy.	L	M	H		

5	Scaffolding	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
5.4	The teacher carefully selects and sequences tasks to differentiate levels of support for all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		
5.5	The teacher monitors growth in independent learning for all EAL/D learners.	L	M	H		

C. Significance						
1	Background knowledge	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
1.1	The teacher connects the lesson to EAL/D learners' prior and out-of-school background and language knowledge (such as planned use of students' home language).	L	M	H		

  

2	Cultural knowledge	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
2.1	The teacher recognises and values EAL/D learners' cultural knowledge throughout the lesson.	L	M	H		

3	Inclusivity	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
3.1	The teacher ensures all EAL/D learners are included in all aspects of the lesson.	L	M	H		
3.2	The teacher ensures inclusion of EAL/D learners is both significant and equivalent for learners from all social groups.	L	M	H		



4	Connectedness	1-2	3-4	5	N/A	Observed teaching practice
4.1	The teacher provides opportunities for EAL/D learners to make connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom.	L	M	H		

## Coding scale for EAL/D lesson observation tool

A. Intellectual quality						
No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1	<b>Deep knowledge</b>	Almost all of the content knowledge of the lesson is shallow because it does not deal with significant concepts or ideas.	Some key concepts and ideas are mentioned or covered by the teacher or learners, but only at a superficial level.	Knowledge is treated unevenly by teacher and learners during instruction. A significant idea may be addressed as part of the lesson, but in general the focus on key concepts and ideas is not sustained throughout the lesson.	Most of the content knowledge of the lesson is deep. Sustained focus by teacher and learners on central concepts or ideas is occasionally interrupted by superficial or unrelated ideas or concepts.	Knowledge is deep because focus by teacher and learners is sustained on key ideas or concepts throughout the lesson.
2	<b>Deep understanding</b>	Learners demonstrate only shallow understanding.	For most learners, understanding of key concepts is shallow most of the time, with one or two minor exceptions.	Deep understanding is uneven. Learners demonstrate both shallow and deeper understanding at different points in the lesson. A central concept understood by some learners may not be understood by other learners.	Most learners provide information, arguments or reasoning that demonstrate deep understanding for a substantial proportion of the lesson.	Almost all learners demonstrate deep understanding throughout the lesson.
3	<b>Substantive communication</b>	Almost no substantive communication occurs during the lesson.	Substantive communication among learners and/or between teacher and learners occurs briefly.	Substantive communication among learners and/or between teacher and learners occurs occasionally and involves at least two sustained interactions.	Substantive communication, with sustained interactions, occurs over approximately half the lesson with teacher and/or learners scaffolding the conversation.	Substantive communication, with sustained interactions, occurs throughout the lesson, with teachers and/or learners scaffolding the communication.

No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4	<b>Academic language focus</b>	<p>There is no evidence of attempts by the teacher to incorporate language teaching into the lesson. That is, there is no teaching of strategies for reading, text structure, paragraph organisation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation.</p> <p>There is no systematic discussion of the language of curriculum content.</p>	<p>There is some discussion of meaning of specialised vocabulary in the lesson, but little systematic focus on strategies for reading, text structure, paragraph organisation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation.</p> <p>There is only occasional or incidental discussion of the language of curriculum content.</p>	<p>Language teaching occurs occasionally, although somewhat unevenly. The teacher includes some teaching of various aspects of speaking, reading or writing relevant to curriculum content, and addresses some strategies for reading, text structure, paragraph organisation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation.</p> <p>There is some talk about language during the lesson, but this is not systematic.</p>	<p>There is at least one systematic and sustained instance of academic language teaching during the lesson. This language teaching includes, as relevant, strategies for reading, text structure, paragraph organisation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation.</p> <p>There is regular ongoing talk about academic language in the lesson where learners are encouraged to analyse their own and others' use of language.</p>	<p>There is evidence of systematic and sustained academic language teaching during the lesson. This includes, as relevant, aspects of speaking, reading or writing. It makes connections to previous lessons and builds learners' knowledge about language in systematic ways.</p> <p>There is regular ongoing talk about language in the lesson, and learners are consistently encouraged to take an analytic approach to understanding their own and others' use of language.</p>

## B. Quality learning environment

No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1	<b>Engagement</b>	Low engagement or disengagement. Learners are frequently off-task, perhaps disruptive, as evidenced by inattentiveness or serious disruptions by many. This is the central characteristic during much of the lesson.	Sporadic engagement. Most learners, most of the time, either appear apathetic and indifferent or are only occasionally active in carrying out assigned activities. Some learners might be clearly off-task.	Variable engagement. Most learners are seriously engaged with key concepts in parts of the lesson, but may appear indifferent during other parts and very few learners are clearly off-task.	Widespread engagement. Most learners, most of the time, are on-task pursuing the substance of the lesson. Most learners seem to be taking the work seriously and trying hard.	Serious engagement. All learners are deeply involved, almost all of the time, in pursuing the substance of the lesson.
2	<b>High expectations</b>	No learners, or only a few, participate in any challenging work.	Some learners participate in challenging work during at least some of the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.	Many learners participate in challenging work during at least half of the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.	Most learners participate in challenging work during most of the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so. The teacher encourages learners to succeed academically.	All learners participate in challenging work throughout the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.
3	<b>Social support</b>	Social support is low. Actions or comments by the teacher or learners result in 'put downs' and the classroom atmosphere is negative.	Social support is mixed. Both undermining and supportive behaviours or comments are observed.	Social support is neutral or mildly positive. While no undermining behaviours are observed, supportive behaviours or comments are directed at those learners most engaged in the lesson rather than those learners who are more reluctant.	Social support is clearly positive. Supportive behaviours and comments are directed at most learners, including clear attempts at supporting reluctant learners.	Social support is strong. Supportive behaviours or comments from learners and the teacher are directed at all learners, including soliciting and valuing the contributions of all.

No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4	<b>Explicit goals</b>	<p>There is no discussion of the purpose of lessons, (beyond 'this is what we are doing today') either in regard to curriculum content or to language.</p> <p>There are no explicit statements, beyond technical or procedural criteria, about expected quality of learners' work.</p>	<p>There are only general statements regarding the purpose of the lesson, and of specific tasks. There is little discussion of where the lesson fits within the overall curriculum and units of work. Discussion rarely addresses language learning goals.</p> <p>Only general statements are made regarding the expected quality of learners' work.</p>	<p>Some statements are made regarding the purpose of the lesson and of specific tasks. There is some discussion of the purposes of the (science, history) curriculum and of expected language learning outcomes.</p> <p>Criteria regarding the expected quality of learners' work are made explicit during the lesson, but there is little evidence that learners are using the criteria to examine the quality of their work in regard to curriculum content or language.</p>	<p>There is frequent discussion of the purposes of the lesson and tasks, and of where they fit within the curriculum and within units of work. This discussion addresses both curriculum content and language.</p> <p>Detailed criteria regarding quality of learners' work for both curriculum content and language are made explicit or reinforced during the lesson and there is some evidence of some learners examining the quality of their work in relation to those criteria.</p>	<p>There is regular and consistent discussion of purposes of lessons and tasks in relation to the overall curriculum and unit of work. Classroom discussion of purposes and goals addresses both curriculum content and language.</p> <p>Detailed criteria regarding quality of learners' work for both curriculum content and language are made explicit or reinforced throughout the lesson. There is consistent evidence of learners examining the quality of their work in relation to these criteria.</p>

No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
5	<b>Scaffolding</b>	<p>There is no evidence of systematic pre-planned and point of need support that recognises and responds to groups or individual learners' language and learning needs.</p> <p>Selection and sequencing of tasks appears somewhat random and does not reflect the sequential steps necessary to support learners in their developing understandings of curriculum knowledge.</p>	<p>There is occasional evidence of pre-planned and point of need support that recognises and responds to groups or individual learners' language and learning needs, but this is not consistent.</p> <p>Selection and sequencing of tasks takes some account of the sequential steps necessary to support some learners, but this is not consistent. There is little evidence that learners are becoming more capable as learners.</p>	<p>There is some evidence of pre-planned and point of need support that recognises and responds to groups or individual learners' language and learning needs.</p> <p>There is some attempt to support learners' developing curriculum understandings through sequencing of whole class, group and individual tasks and through provision of differential support to meet some learners' needs in language and learning. There is occasional evidence of handover, although not necessarily evidence of learners becoming more capable as learners.</p>	<p>There is frequent evidence of pre-planned and point of need support to address the language and learning needs of most groups or individual learners.</p> <p>This support is evident in sequencing of tasks and in support for most groups and individuals in response to their language and curriculum learning needs. There is evidence of handover and of some learners becoming more capable and independent as learners.</p>	<p>There is strong evidence of systematic pre-planned and point of need support in the lesson. This support explicitly and consistently recognises and addresses all learners' needs in their developing understandings of curriculum knowledge and of language and literacy.</p> <p>Careful selection and sequencing of whole class, group and individual tasks within lesson enables differential levels of support for groups and individual learners. Support within the lesson also provides opportunities for handover, and there is evidence that learners are becoming more capable and independent as learners.</p>

C. Significance						
No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1	<b>Background knowledge</b>	Learners' background knowledge is not mentioned or elicited.	Learners' background knowledge is mentioned or elicited, but is trivial and not connected to the substance of the lesson.	Learners' prior background knowledge is mentioned, or elicited briefly, is connected to the substance of the lesson, and there is at least some connection to out-of-school background knowledge.	Learners' background knowledge is mentioned or elicited several times, in connection with the substance of the lesson, and there is at least some connection to out-of-school background knowledge.	Learners' background knowledge is consistently incorporated into the lesson, and there is substantial connection to out-of-school background knowledge.
2	<b>Cultural knowledge</b>	No explicit recognition or valuing of other than the knowledge of the dominant culture is evident in the substance of the lesson.	Some cultural knowledge is evident in the lesson, but it is treated in a superficial manner.	Some cultural knowledge is recognised and valued in the lesson, but within the framework of the dominant culture.	Substantial cultural knowledge is recognised and valued in the lesson with some challenge to the framework of the dominant culture.	Substantial cultural knowledge is recognised and valued throughout the lesson and this knowledge is accepted as equal to the dominant culture.
3	<b>Inclusivity</b>	Some learners are excluded, or exclude themselves, from lesson activities throughout the lesson.	Some learners are excluded, or exclude themselves, from the majority of lesson activities except for minor forms of inclusion in one or two instances during the lesson.	Learners from all groups are included in most aspects of the lesson, but the inclusion of learners from some groups may be minor or trivial relative to other groups.	Learners from all groups are included in a significant way in most aspects of the lesson, but there still appears to be some unevenness in the inclusion of different social groups.	Learners from all groups are included in all aspects of the lesson and their inclusion is both significant and equivalent to the inclusion of learners from other social groups.

No.	Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4	<b>Connectedness</b>	The lesson has no clear connection to anything beyond itself. Neither the teacher nor the learners offer any justification for the lesson beyond the school.	The teacher or learners try to connect what is being learned to the world beyond the classroom, but the connection is weak and superficial or trivial.	Learners recognise some connection between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom, which might include sharing their work with an audience outside the classroom, but they do not explore implications of these connections which remain largely abstract or hypothetical.	Learners recognise and explore connection between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom in ways that create personal meaning and highlight the significance of the knowledge. There might be an effort to influence an audience beyond the classroom.	Learners recognise and explore connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom in ways that create personal meaning and highlight the significance of the knowledge. This meaning and significance is strong enough to lead learners to become involved in an effort to influence an audience beyond the classroom.



## Appendix 5: Lesson observation protocols

### Before lesson

1. Observers check in with principal/coordinator on arrival.
2. Teachers to be asked for a class list on which phase details can be recorded. Teachers can then share information about where particular students (new arrivals) might be seated. This information to be added to a seating map of the classroom (sketched out by observers).
3. Describe the observation process, explaining that observers will be taking notes rather than participating in the lesson.
4. Reiterate that observers are looking for examples of effective practices – celebration not evaluation!
5. Follow pre-lesson interview questions with teacher/s.

### During lesson

1. Observers sit in different parts of the classroom (where possible) so as to have a broader view of learning activities, student responses and interactions.
2. Observers remain unobtrusive throughout the session and don't interact with students.
3. Observers make a note of classroom layout, use of walls, resources related to EAL/D students (for example, signs in home languages, multilingual texts). Photos of classroom? (**not** students – not all have permission).
4. Observations last for 30 minutes. At the end of this time, the relief teacher will take over the lesson.

### After lesson

1. Give initial positive feedback.
2. Follow post-lesson interview questions with teacher/s. One observer leads the questioning and the other makes notes.
3. Give opportunities for teachers' questions.
4. Make time for discussion and coding as soon as possible after the interviews are completed. Student focus group to be interviewed at a time and place convenient to the school.
5. Check out with principal/coordinator before departure.
6. Gill to come to one high school observation for moderation purposes.

## Appendix 6: Teacher interview questions

### Pre-lesson questions

1. What are you looking forward to us seeing within the 30 minutes? How might effective practice (relating to focus areas) be evident in this lesson?
2. What can you tell us about the EAL/D students in this class?
3. Where does this lesson sit within the teaching sequence?
4. If there is more than one member of staff involved in the lesson, what are their roles?

### Post-lesson questions

1. In particular, what worked well during this lesson? Were there any unexpected outcomes?
2. If the lesson didn't go as planned, why not?
3. What did you notice about the response/progress/behaviour of your target students?
4. How did you decide on lesson purpose and possible outcomes?
5. What knowledge of your students shaped your planning of the lesson?
6. What was the impact of joint teaching during this lesson?
7. Next steps: how will the teaching sequence continue (including adaptations)?
8. How were the focus areas previously identified for your school evident within the lesson? For example, student wellbeing: how do you see the impacts of particular programs enacted generally and also during the lesson?
9. What do you think this lesson shows about effective practice in EAL/D teaching?

# Appendix 7: Student focus group questions

## Introductions

DoE staff introduce themselves and explain purpose of project and the importance of hearing students' opinions about what makes effective EAL/D practice.

- What year/class are you in?
- Have you been to school in another country?
- When did you start school in Australia?

## Using language

- What languages do you speak?
- What languages can you read and write?
- How do you use different languages in different situations? (for example, interpreter, with family members, activities, language school, visits to family's country)
- Which language do you prefer to use at school (in the classroom/outside class)?
- Will you keep using your home language/s when you grow up?

## Learning at school

- Who helps you to learn at school? / What things do teachers do that help you to improve your English? Are there things they do that really don't help?
- What things do teachers do to help you understand the work? Anything that makes understanding the work harder?
- Do you talk to other students in your home language/s when you are trying to understand new work (in English) at school? Does this help you to understand?
- Are there any books/apps written in your language/s for you to use at school?
- Do you use translation apps or programs? Which ones work best?
- Is there anything you would like your teachers to know about you?
- Is there anything you would like other students to know about you?

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