



How Can Schools Best Support EAL Learners?

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Introduction



Teaching Art for 3 years



Trained at NTU



Particular interest in EAL started in training year, taught at inner city schools that had outstanding EAL provision



Moved to more rural school with a much smaller percentage of EAL, felt the current provision could be built upon to best support these students.



This research aimed to measure to staff and student confidence in EAL teaching and learning.

What is EAL?

EAL is an acronym used within teaching to describe pupils who speak English as an additional language. These students are identified as those who:

speak a different language other than English regularly

- QCA (2000).

EAL is not applied to a specific degree of proficiency or context in which this language can be spoken, and can be used to describe both fluent and non-fluent speakers of English.

Current Climate

Do EAL learners feel supported and valued in your school?

Barriers to Learning Include:

- Prejudice behaviour.
 - Data from the Home Office (2017) shows that since the EU referendum there has been an increase of 29% in hate crimes, which is the largest number since records began;
- Cultural differences
 - such as what is considered to be impolite behavior in both British and other cultures. (for example; queueing, saying please and thankyou, pointing);
- Communication
 - would an EAL learner know how to disclose a safeguarding issue? Do they know the fire evacuation procedure? Who would they tell if they were being bullied?

Current Climate

Lack of Training and Policy for Teachers.

- Research by Foley et al. (2013) found that opportunities to receive EAL specific training for staff were minimal.
- The Bell Foundation (2017) states that “although Ofsted offer no official guidance” on the assessment of EAL pupils, schools are still expected to “have an effective method of capturing what EAL learners can do, especially new arrivals”. The Bell Foundation’s Assessment framework for schools places children on a scale of A – E.
- The need for policy and specific training in my school was a key motivator for this research.



New to English



Early Acquisition



Development Competence



Competent



Fluent

Methods

First Language (Autumn Term)

Encouraging the Use of First Language

- Amending seating plans as to pair speakers of same language (Pim, 2012)
- Allowing students to write in their first language and translate afterwards (Conteh 2015; Pim 2012)

ILPs (Spring Term)

Developing Individual Language Plans (Pim, 2012)

- A single document for staff to refer to for information about a specific EAL pupil.
- A combination of student voice, staff input and data.
- Could include: proficiency, first language, target grades, differentiation strategies etc.

Good Practice (Summer Term)

Raising the Profile of EAL Learners in my School

- Producing a guide for staff to refer to due to “the omission of EAL as a required area of attention in the training of mainstream teachers” (Foley et al., 2013, p193).
- Distributing a staff questionnaire to establish if staff feel well equipped to teach EAL students.

Student Voice

Before implementing any new strategies, I asked 5 students to complete questionnaires regarding their experience of being an EAL learner.

I felt this was important as the DFE (2014) found that student voice contributed to a students' 'Increased confidence, self-respect, competence and an improved sense of responsibility'.

I also felt it was important to get an insight of EAL pupil's preferred methods of differentiation.

EAL Student Voice Questions

How long have you been learning and speaking English for?

How confident do you feel speaking English?

(No Confidence) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very Confident)

How confident do you feel writing in English?

(No Confidence) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very Confident)

Tick the boxes you agree with:

- Pictures help me understand a task
- Sometimes I know the answer, but I'm unsure how to say it in English
- It helps me when the teacher translates worksheets into my language
- It helps me when I can speak to someone in my first language about the work
- Sometimes I don't understand what the teacher is saying

Student Voice

Students were asked to complete the questionnaire. I considered the students to be a range of proficiencies using The Bell Foundation's Assessment Framework for Schools.

Students had been speaking English between 4- 10 years and spoke a range of different languages.

4 out of 5 students were either equally as confident or more confident speaking English in comparison to writing in English. However, 0% of the students felt that translating worksheets was a helpful method of differentiation.

4 out of 5 students ticked the statement 'Sometimes I know the answer, but I'm unsure how to say it in English'.

4 out of 5 students ticked the statement 'Sometimes I don't understand what the teacher is saying'.

Interestingly, the student who had been speaking English for the longest amount of time, ticked every statement. I also felt he was the lowest proficiency out of the 5 students, particularly when writing. This was reported to our SENCO.

EAL is not a Special Educational Need. However, it is important to remember that a student can be both SEN and EAL. This should be included in policy to prevent further barriers to learning.

Encouraging the use of first language



80% of the participants in the student voice questionnaire ticked the statement 'Sometimes I know the answer, but I'm unsure how to say it in English'. Because of this, I encouraged students to write in their first language and translate afterwards. However, none of the participants chose to do this.



One participant said she was reluctant to write in her first language due to "being seen as different" Suggesting that there is still a culture of intolerance, rather than a history of intolerance as mentioned in Harris and Leung (2001). This student was in a class with no other students who also spoke her first language and her proficiency in English is already very high.



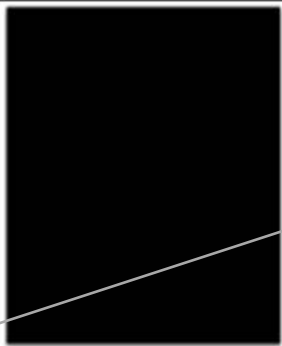
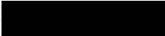





I observed that two students who shared the same language regularly spoke to each other in their first language but would still only write in English. They said they preferred to discuss in their first language and "help each other translate harder words" before writing.



One student said that **they had been** in English schools for so long, they found it easier to write in English rather than their first language.

Individual Language Plans (Pim, 2012)

- A single document for staff to refer to for information about a specific EAL pupil.
- A combination of:
 - Staff input;
 - Data;
 - Student voice.
- Could include: proficiency, first language, target grades, differentiation strategies etc.
- Maintenance of these documents should be the responsibility of the EAL coordinator.

 Name: 	Tutor Group: 7YLE Proficiency: D (Competent) Last Reviewed: 03/19 Target Grades: English: 3 Maths: 4- To reach Grade E Proficiency (Fluent),  must work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Using complex sentence structures in written work. <input type="checkbox"/> Refine use of abstract vocabulary. <input type="checkbox"/> Use subject specific keywords consistently.
Languages Spoken: Polish	Date of entry to UK: 2010
Vulnerable groups: Pupil Premium	Additional Info:  is a very quiet student who enjoys reading and drawing. She also enjoys cross-country.  and her family left Poland and moved to the area in 2010, but she had English lessons in Poland since the age of three. Mum speaks English but needs  to translate some words for her. A translator should be present in meetings without  .
Student Voice: Confidence speaking in English: 9/10 Confidence writing in English: 9/10 <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures help me understand a task. <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes I know the answer, but I'm unsure how to say it in English. <input type="checkbox"/> It helps me when the teacher translates worksheets into my language. <input type="checkbox"/> It helps me when I can speak to someone in my first language about the work. <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes I don't understand what the teacher is saying.	

Individual Language Plans



Two of the student voice participants were in the same Year 7 Art group. Both ticked the statement 'sometimes I don't understand what the teacher is saying', and one ticked 'pictures help me understand a task'.



This impacted my teaching as I made a conscious effort to speak concisely – giving definitions of words that were subject specific when speaking to the class. Due to the visual nature of my subject, I already used a lot of imagery on my resources when teaching Art. However, I made sure to refer to images to help explain key words and concepts relevant to the success criteria.



Producing and utilising their ILPs allowed me to consider the proficiency of the learners rather than considering them purely as EAL and therefore requiring the same methods of differentiation.



I found that this positively impacted the whole Year 7 Art group, not just the EAL learners. The class were often reluctant to answer more difficult questions, however, are noticeably more engaged and getting answers correct during discussions.

EAL Support Checklist

- Staff have access to training
- School has a ratified EAL policy
- Individual Language Plans produced through discussion with pupils and teaching staff
- Designated EAL coordinator
- All EAL pupils assessed for proficiency

ILPs should be reviewed at least once per year. A 2 stage review is recommended, first with the pupil and then discussed with teaching staff.

EAL Support: Sharing Best Practice

EAL is an acronym used within teaching to describe pupils who speak English as an additional language. These students are identified as those who "regularly speak a language other than English" by QCA (2000). EAL is not applied to a specific degree of proficiency or context in which this language can be spoken, and can be used to describe both fluent and non-fluent speakers of English.

Policy

The DfE's (2011) Teachers Standards state that all teachers must "have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with [...] English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them", meaning that as teachers we must be prepared to cater for EAL students of all abilities.

Does your school have an EAL specific policy? Policies promote equality and diversity, improve teaching and learning, and promote consistency when assessing and supporting EAL learners.

Barriers to Learning

Do EAL learners feel supported and valued in your school?

Barriers to learning include:

- Prejudice behaviour. Data from the Home Office shows that since Brexit there has been an increase of 20% in hate crimes, which is the largest number since records began.
- Cultural differences, such as what is considered to be impolite behavior in both British and other cultures. For example: queueing, saying please and thankyou, pointing.
- Communication - would an EAL learner know how to disclose a safeguarding issue? Do they know the fire evacuation procedure? Who would they tell if they were being bullied?
- Lack of support and differentiation from schools.

Using First Language

Encourage students to write and speak in their first language to build their confidence, share ideas and access higher order thinking. Pairing students with the same first language prevents the frustration of being unable to articulate their thoughts clearly.

Individual Language Plans (ILPs)

These documents outline a student's proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English. The Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework for Schools clearly explains each level of proficiency, from A (New to English) to E (fluent). These documents could also provide background information, such as the date of entry to the UK and the student's preferred methods of differentiation. More guidance on ILPs can be found overleaf.

Other useful resources:
NALDIC, The Bell Foundation
The East Midlands Education Support Service

Guide for Teachers

Covers key theory from Literature Review

- Barriers to learning
- Importance of policy
- Strategies of differentiation
- Sharing best practice
- EAL support checklist
- Guidance for creating ILPs

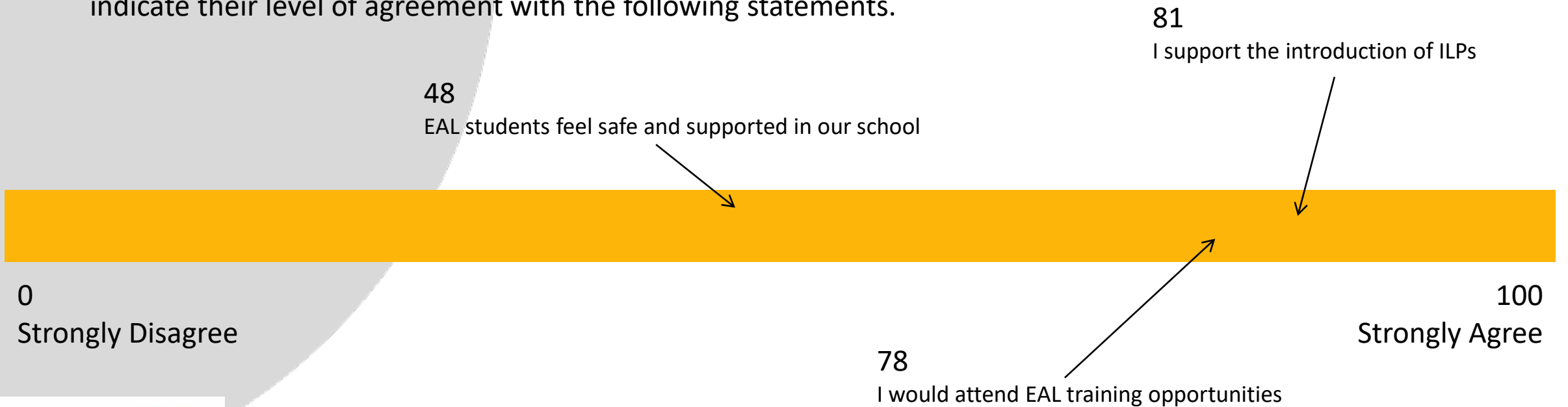
Staff Feedback

5 out of 7 teachers:

- had never received EAL specific training.
- did not feel well equipped to teach EAL students.
- felt that an EAL policy would be beneficial to our school.

Participants were then asked to place themselves on a scale of 0 – 100 to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements.

- More training opportunities
- Policy
- Method of assessing and monitoring EAL students



Recommendations and next steps



Ensure your school has a ratified policy specific to EAL and that every member of staff is confident in supporting EAL learners.



Ensure your school has a specific EAL Coordinator who can oversee the EAL provisions including Individual Language Plans



Assess the proficiency of every EAL learner using a scale such as The Bell Foundation's for consistency.



Encourage the use of first language to help build confidence



Continue my study to measure impact of ILPs in practice and collect further staff feedback for quality assurance.



Other useful organizations:

NALDIC

The Bell Foundation

The East Midlands Education Support Service



Referencing – including images

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