

Learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) - learning from home

With approximately 200,000 students in NSW public schools learning English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) the challenges faced by EAL/D students when learning from home need to be carefully considered.

EAL/D students need to learn English, learn the curriculum content through English, and learn about English simultaneously. For students who need to be engaged in learning English and learning content that is equivalent to their English speaking peers, learning from home is even more challenging.

The needs of EAL/D learners vary. Students will be at different phases of English language proficiency, will have different curriculum content learning needs and will be enrolled in different stages of schooling.

EAL/D student support

A school environment offers EAL/D students the opportunity to learn English, to develop learning skills and curriculum content through English, and to learn to control the registers of the English language according to purpose and audience. Language is necessary for learning, but while learning from home, EAL/D students' exposure to appropriate models of authentic English language occurring in real time, access to consistent and appropriate levels of planned and contingent scaffolding, and opportunities to practise and develop their language skills in a variety of social and academic contexts may be significantly reduced.

When students are learning from home, teachers of EAL/D students should:

- Know each EAL/D student's phase of English language proficiency and use this to guide the level and types of support provided. For information visit [Assessing English language proficiency](#). Students at the early phases of learning English will require support to access the learning. Students at the later phases of learning English will need support to understand and master the academic language of the curriculum.
- Identify and address the language and literacy demands as well as any cultural and conceptual knowledge underlying the curriculum and texts used in class programs. This should be relative to each student and their assessed phase of English language proficiency.
- Carefully plan the appropriate scaffolding required for both language and literacy learning as well as developing curriculum content knowledge.

Scaffolding for EAL/D students when learning from home

Learning from home presents challenges for EAL/D learners as teacher feedback, through contingent scaffolding may not be immediate, dynamic or visual. There can be a greater demand on the student to access texts and produce language independently which might otherwise be scaffolded during face to face interactions with the teacher. This can be addressed through additional planned scaffolding using strategies such as:

- creating talk-based learning tasks which allow for the generation of authentic dialogue between the teacher and the students
- connecting to prior learning by linking to previous school experiences or to home language
- building field knowledge especially when students are new and may not have the same experiences as other students
- encouraging the use of home languages to connect students to support each other in learning

- providing text models so that the students know what they are expected to do in addition to partially completed writing scaffolds
- chunking information using concept maps and graphic organisers. Advice and examples can be found at the [English Textual Concepts](#) webpage. These might be completed by the teacher and provided as a pre-reading overview to aid comprehension, or they might be completed by the student when engaging with a text.
- using features of [Google Classroom](#) such as the assignment function and shared documents. These allow individualised formative feedback on student drafts. Professional learning on [the basics of Google Classroom](#) and [Taking Google Classroom to the next level](#) are available from the learning on demand site.
- including visual support for vocabulary and concepts.

As the learning from home setting may limit EAL/D students' opportunities to ask for clarification, it is important that task instructions are explicit and transparent and students are provided with access to forums for clarifying understanding.

Beginning English including new arrivals

In addition to the strategies suggested above, EAL/D students at beginning English are likely to need targeted support for many of the learning tasks. Additional support could include:

- aural and visual support
- simple cloze passages for text construction.
- [Speaking and writing frames](#) including sentence stems, matching sentence halves or sequencing text, [Substitution tables](#) or other activities on the [Bell Foundation's Great Ideas](#) page.

Support for students from refugee backgrounds

Students from refugee backgrounds may find disruptions to normal school routines challenging. It is important to ensure students and their families understand the reasons for any disruptions to normal school routines, using interpreters, if necessary.

Students from refugee backgrounds may have difficulties accessing online learning from home. Resources are allocated to schools with recently enrolled students from refugee backgrounds to enable them to provide additional targeted support. Some students may need resources printed and provided to them. Schools with newly arrived students from a refugee background may wish to use [The Welcome Program](#) resource to create an online orientation program.

For more information about how schools support students from refugee backgrounds, see [supporting refugee students](#).

EAL/D specialist teachers

The role of EAL/D specialist teachers is critical during times of learning from home, to ensure students who are learning English as an additional language are not further disadvantaged in their education. EAL/D specialist teachers can support classroom teachers to identify the needs of EAL/D learners in their classes, provide information about their students' levels of English language proficiency, and provide expert knowledge about language learning and the scaffolding required to support the planning and delivery of learning from home lessons.

EAL/D specialist teachers can:

- ensure that students at the early phases of learning English are provided with additional support to understand and engage with learning from home activities in collaboration with the classroom teacher
- provide appropriate models of English language and opportunities for students to practise and develop their English language skills

- support class teachers with strategies that incorporate students' home language/s
- support class teachers to monitor progress in English language proficiency using the EAL/D Learning Progression
- support school leaders to identify families requiring information provided through interpreting and translation and ensure that translated documents regarding COVID19 and learning from home are available for parents/carers

For more information you may like to watch this short recording: [Supporting EAL/D learners during learning from home](#)

Professional learning

The NSW Department of Education's learning on demand website provides professional learning designed to build teachers' skills and capacity to support students learning from home. A recorded session [Strategies to support EAL/D students](#) explores pedagogies and practices which may support EAL/D learners. [Supporting EAL/D students with remote learning](#) is recorded professional learning which explores various Microsoft learning tools accessed via the [technology link](#).

The [EAL/D NSW statewide staffroom](#) is housed within Microsoft Teams and is accessible to all department staff. Being a member of the EAL/D NSW statewide staffroom is a good way of keeping up to date with information and resources. A Learning from Home channel has also been created for members to ask questions and share resources.

Learning from home

The NSW Department of Education has a [Learning from home site](#) designed to support teachers in preparing for remote learning. Resources relating to wellbeing, using technology, programming and professional learning on demand can all be accessed via the learning from home website. [Translated information](#) is available for parents and carers who do not speak English well. Schools are also encouraged to communicate with parents using the [telephone interpreter service](#).

Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre

The Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre library houses over 45,000 resources including multi-media classroom resources. Borrowing items from the library is free for all teachers, with items mailed directly to schools. Bilingual books and dictionaries are also available from the library in a range of languages.

[Membership forms](#) can be completed online. Teachers can access the libraries [resource catalogue](#) online. For more information please visit the [Henry Parkes Equity Resource Centre webpage](#).

For more information:

Contact the EAL/D Education team at [Multicultural Education](#) or EAL/D.education@det.nsw.edu.au

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