

# What is message abundancy?

## How is message abundancy an essential element of scaffolding?

### Rationale

The [Multicultural Education Policy](#) commits schools to providing opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes and participate successfully in our culturally diverse society. Almost 25% of students in NSW public schools are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). These students require support to develop their academic English language skills so they can access the curriculum, successfully participate in learning alongside their peers in mainstream classes, and engage confidently in the broader Australian community. This document aims to develop teachers' understanding of message abundancy and its significance for EAL/D learners. It also aims to assist teachers to plan effective English language learning support that aligns with system priorities in literacy and numeracy and meets the commitments of the Multicultural Education Policy.

**Audience:** EAL/D specialist teachers, classroom teachers, SLSOs, Assistant Principals C & I, Lead specialists, School leaders

**Timeframe for use:** Document should be read in planning the implementation of intensive English programs and by teachers planning support for EAL/D learners.

**Instructions for use:** The document can be used to professionally develop teachers on key precepts in English language acquisition and EAL/D pedagogy. It can assist school leaders to plan professional learning, lead professional discussion and guide programming for EAL/D learners.

**Australian Professional Standards for Teachers:** 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.2, 3.3

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## Concept overview

Message abundance refers to multiple ways of presenting key ideas, giving EAL/D learners “more than one bite of the apple” (Gibbons, 2015). Message abundance provides EAL/D learners with multiple opportunities to understand key content. EAL/D learners need to repeatedly view, hear, see and use the same information in order to consolidate their understanding of new language and concepts. Rather than simplifying key ideas for EAL/D learners, message abundance maintains intellectual challenge through amplifying the curriculum, making key content accessible and comprehensible.

### Why is message abundance important for EAL/D learners?

Message abundance is an important component of a high challenge, high support sequence of learning. Gibbons (2015) likens message abundance to a GPS system, where the same information is presented using a combination of visual and spoken modes that provide multiple opportunities for learners to access key information and reinforce their understanding, knowledge and skills. EAL/D learners often require additional time to process new information and new language, particularly when the pace of classroom learning is fast or incommensurate with their current level of English language proficiency. Message abundance allows EAL/D learners more than one opportunity to access the learning, reinforcing their conceptual and linguistic understanding and skills.

### How do you use message abundance?

Message abundance is an important scaffolding tool within a teacher’s repertoire of EAL/D pedagogy for differentiated teaching and assessment.

Message abundance can be incorporated into an EAL/D teaching and learning sequence by:

- drawing on students’ prior knowledge to identify key concepts in home language
- using discussion and teacher talk to introduce new language and concepts
- demonstrating the meaning of new specialised words through concrete demonstrations or by providing visual representations of the words
- using visual aids such as graphs and charts to represent numbers or fractions, and learning charts, word banks and mind-maps to link key ideas
- using everyday words alongside academic terminology to allow learners to hear the use of specialised language in context
- writing both everyday words and specialist words on the board or word wall

- colour-coding vocabulary to highlight the differences between everyday and specialist words and to emphasise the differences in register
- providing a range of spoken and written activities for learners to practise the new words in familiar contexts
- supporting learning by using multimodal texts such as subtitles.

Message abundancy can be used to present key ideas through:

- oral interactions between flexible groupings involving both teacher and students
- appropriating and recasting student responses as academic language
- wall charts, worksheets, graphic outlines, flowcharts
- written summaries and notes
- videos and films
- bilingual learning drawing on learner's home languages
- visuals including pictures, photographs, diagrams, graphs, maps, and symbols
- hands-on experiences, including the use of artefacts.

## For more information

- [EAL/D enhanced teaching and learning cycle](#)
- [What works best: EAL/D](#)
- [EAL/D advice for schools](#)
- [EAL/D learners and vocabulary \(video\)](#)
- [Guide for planning and implementing explicit vocabulary instruction \(staff only\)](#)
- [Introduction to the use of visuals \(video\)](#)

## Evidence base (reference list)

Hertzberg, M. (2012). Teaching English language learners in mainstream classes. Newtown: PETAA

Gibbons, P. (2009). English learners academic literacy and thinking, Learning in the challenge zone. Portsmouth: Heinemann

Gibbons, P. (2015). Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom (2nd ed.). Portsmouth NH: Heinemann

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2021). English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) effective school practices. NSW Department of Education, [education.nsw.gov.au/cese](http://education.nsw.gov.au/cese)

Department of Education (2020). EAL/D advice for schools. NSW Department of Education.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2011). EAL/D learning progression. Sydney: ACARA.

**Alignment to system priorities and/or needs:** Aligns with strategic priority to improve literacy and numeracy, aligns with [What works best – EAL/D](#), aligns with [Multicultural Education policy](#) statements and [Multicultural Plan 2019-2022 \(PDF 1804 KB\)](#) targets.

**Alignment to School Excellence Framework:** Learning domain: Curriculum; Teaching Domain: Effective Classroom Practice

**Consulted with:** Literacy and Numeracy and Multicultural Education

**Reviewed by:** EAL/D Education Coordinator, Leader Multicultural Education

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