

# Supporting EAL learners

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## QTS Standards

Q1 Q2 Q18 Q19 Q21 Q25

The aim of this strand is to provide practical advice on how student teachers might best support EAL learners (and particularly newly arrived pupils) in their classrooms. Student teachers are required have *'a full and accurate understanding of the needs of each learner so that they can deploy a range of skills to tailor provision in ways that challenge, promote achievement and secure progress'* (Q19,TDA, 2007). For example, tutors are asked to consider whether student teachers *'successfully identify and address the needs of different learners, for example .....those for whom English is an additional language, and those from diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds'* (Q25)and whether they *'understand the impact of the design and content of the curriculum on meeting learners' needs, and the extent to which teaching strategies and resources can be modified to provide for personalised learning'* (Q19). Although there is inevitably some overlap with issues relating to [refugee and asylum-seeking students](#), every attempt will be made here to limit the discussion to those aspects of the induction and education of EAL learners that are not closely related to their residency status.

The period since the Second World War has been marked by shifting political environments, the voluntary and enforced migration of people, and the increasing spread of English as a world language. One of the benefits of this for the UK's cultural and economic landscape has been the arrival of people from all over the world to spend longer or shorter periods in the UK. This has been thrown into sharper focus for many schools and teachers with the arrival of many new pupils from the 2004 EU accession countries. By far the largest national group migrating to the UK in recent years are the Poles, of whom an estimated 423,300 were resident in the UK in the second quarter of 2007.

Whilst many families come to this country as a positive choice others do so because they are fleeing difficult circumstances in their home country or because they have been posted here by the company they work for. In the early 2000s, for example, there were over 50,000 Japanese living in the UK, 10,000 of whom were of school age. Most of these will stay for three or four years before returning home. Some come to fill urgent vacancies in our schools and hospitals and may leave again or decide to stay permanently; others come to be reunited with their families, intending to remain permanently; and others again will come as temporary visitors such as diplomats or students. They may arrive at any point in the year, intending to spend indefinite periods of time here, and they may choose to place their children in school for the length of their stay. Understanding something of how a child came to be in a particular classroom is an important aspect of planning for their education whilst they are there.

Whilst there are specific issues that need to be addressed in terms of EAL learners, it is impossible to disagree with the fundamental view of the National Union of Teachers in their report 'Relearning to Learn' (2002: 2):

In many ways, the task faced by teachers is the same with regard to all new children. They have to make them feel welcome, provide support, encourage friendships, make sensitive assessments of their current levels of attainment and learning needs, and provide a curriculum that meets those needs.

Student teachers should not feel that they are facing an impossible task in supporting new arrivals and they are more likely to succeed in this if they are not left to cope alone. Taking a positive approach to the task is best. Student teachers should always expect that the child before them can do more than they currently imagine and they will be probably be proved right. When assessing their abilities, they should start from what the child can do rather than what they can't, and what more they can do today than they could yesterday. That way their real progress will become clearer and the route to it easier to map out.

Student teachers should be encouraged to make the maximum use of the human resources at their disposal, starting with the EAL learners themselves. The other children in the class are the next source of support. If they are aware of the issues and determined to be good hosts then they will provide the sort of role models that will help the child not only fit in but stake out an appropriate place for themselves and all they have to offer. The child's parents are also key in this; it would be shameful to waste the knowledge and skills they bring with them and in helping them to help their child the student teacher will undoubtedly be helping them too.

## Section Editor and Author

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## Key Readings

Cummins, J. (2001) *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins*. Clevedon : Multilingual Matters  
This book contains 19 readings from the work of Jim Cummins, who is possibly the most influential writer on bilingual education. The book provides an excellent introduction to his work and the development of his thinking over the last twenty-five years.

Dalby, A. (1998) *Dictionary of Languages*. London : Bloomsbury  
A comprehensive guide to over 400 languages containing maps, information on writing systems, origins and cultural significance, as well as estimated numbers of speakers.

Davies, N. (ed) (2005) *Naldic Working Paper 8 Teaching Isolated Bilingual Learners of English as an Additional Language*, Luton:NALDIC  
A guide to supporting EAL learners who are linguistically isolated.

DCSF (2007) *New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance* London:DCSF Retrieved on 26th February 2007 from [http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/neap\\_guidance/ns\\_naep\\_gdce\\_0065007.PDF](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/neap_guidance/ns_naep_gdce_0065007.PDF)  
Guidance to meeting the needs of new arrivals in primary and secondary schools. Supported by a useful series of case-studies available on DVD.

DfES (2005) *Aiming High: Meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of English as an additional language (EAL)* London: DfES Retrieved 26th February 2008 from [http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/newarrivals/pns\\_incl138105newarrivals.pdf](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/newarrivals/pns_incl138105newarrivals.pdf)

Edwards, V. (2005) *The Other Languages: a guide to multilingual classrooms*. Reading : NCLL  
A brief and accessible guide to the major 'community' languages spoken by children in UK schools, including a photocopiable language survey form for finding out which languages are spoken, as well as information on writing systems, naming systems and religions.

Edwards, V. (1998) *The power of Babel: teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms*. Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham Books. Available from [NCLL](#).  
Practical accounts of how a range of teachers has responded to the realities of multilingual classrooms.

Gibbons, P. (2000) *Learning to Learn in a Second Language*. Newtown, N.S.W. : Primary English Teaching Association  
A hugely influential book on practical ways to support the English language development of EAL students in the primary classroom.

Gibbons, P. (2002) *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning*. Portsmouth NH : Heinemann  
Written as a guide for mainstream teachers with little or no specialised EAL training. Underpinned by a clear description of its theoretical underpinning, the book gives practical illustrations of how EAL students can best be supported across the curriculum.

Gravelle, M. (2000) *Planning for Bilingual Learners*. Stoke on Trent : Trentham Books  
Provides a practical framework for teachers on how to include bilingual learners in their planning across the curriculum and at both primary and secondary levels.

Gregory, E. (1996) *Making sense of a new world: learning to read in a second language*. London : Paul Chapman.  
A discussion of the theory and practice of teaching reading in the multilingual classroom, including a glossary and lesson plans.

Gregory, E., Long, S. & Volk, D. (Eds.) (2004) *Many pathways to literacy: young children learning with siblings, grandparents, peers and communities*. London : Routledge Falmer.  
Studies of home, school, community school, nursery and church settings which show how children create for themselves radical forms of teaching and learning in ways that are not typically recognized, understood or valued in schools.

McWilliam, N. (1998) *What's in a Word?* Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham  
A practical guide to developing children's vocabulary in the multilingual classroom in the context of their cultural identity and home language.

Multilingual Resources for Children Project (1995) *Building bridges: multilingual resources for children*. Clevedon : Multilingual Matters. Also available from [NCLL](#)  
Focuses on the languages other than English most commonly spoken in UK schools and decisions concerning language, typography and design, which affect their readability and status.

N.A.G.C. (National Association for Gifted Children) (2003) *Meeting Needs of Pupils with English as an Additional Language: some practical guidance*. Milton Keynes : N.A.G.C.

A brief overview of key issues on identifying G&T EAL students and practical tips on working with them.

National Union of Teachers (2002) *Relearning to Learn*. London : NUT.

A report on best practice in working with refugee and asylum-seeker pupils.

Ofsted HMI 453 (2003) *The education of asylum-seeker pupils*. Retrieved on 11th September, 2005 from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3418>

Ofsted report containing useful case studies.

QCA (2000) *A Language in Common*. London : QCA

A framework for the assessment of EAL learners, based on the English NC.

Rutter, J. (2003) *Supporting Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain*. Stoke on Trent : Trentham Books.

A comprehensive guide to the issues with a particularly useful and detailed collection of information on a wide range of countries.

Salisbury World (2004) *Home from Home*. London : Save The Children.

An excellent guidance and resource pack for the welcome and inclusion of refugee children and families in school.

Training and Development Agency for Schools (2007) *Guidance to accompany the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)* London Retrieved 29th July, 2007, from

[http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/doc/q/qts\\_standards\\_guidance\\_2007.doc](http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/doc/q/qts_standards_guidance_2007.doc)

## Websites

<http://forum.ngfl.gov.uk/WebX?@168.x7BDalOdbwj.7@.ee6be06>

The Becta Communities website has a wealth of resources, including the Inclusion and SEN site with details of how to join the *eal-bilingual* email list and access to its archives; a very useful forum for discussion.

[www.collaborativelearning.org](http://www.collaborativelearning.org)

The Collaborative Learning Project supports a cooperative network of teaching professionals in developing and disseminating accessible teaching materials in all subject areas and for all ages. Lots of practical ideas and freely downloadable resources for teachers to use and contribute to.

[www.mantrapublishing.com](http://www.mantrapublishing.com)

Excellent range of high quality dual and multilingual resources.

[www.naldic.org.uk](http://www.naldic.org.uk)

The website of the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum, the professional association for those working with children learning English as an additional language. Contains links to other organisations.

[www.salisburyworld.org.uk/home.htm](http://www.salisburyworld.org.uk/home.htm)

The website of *Salisbury World*, contains information about their activities and services as well as practical tips on working with refugee students and their families.

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/naep/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/naep/)

New Arrivals Excellence Programme: Primary and Secondary National Strategies web pages with links to a forum and guidance.