

Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition

[>What is bilingualism?](#)

[>Bilingual language acquisition](#)

[>Bilingual education](#)

[>The bilingual learner](#)

QTS Standards

Q18 Q19

Student teachers will vary in their understandings of bilingualism and the processes of second language acquisition. Some student teachers will be bilingual or plurilingual themselves and have a wealth of personal experience to draw on. Others may be very familiar with multilingual school environments. Some may have had no contact with bilingual or EAL learners.

The guidance relating to the professional standards (TDA, 2007a) indicates that *'teachers recognise the range of influences that affect the development, progress and well-being of children and young people. Understanding how children and young people develop and the factors that influence development helps teachers to improve learning and teaching. It is important for teachers to 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'*. In particular, Q18 requires trainees to understand how children's learning is affected by linguistic influences which are relevant to learners in the age ranges they are training to teach. All student teachers will therefore need to *'become familiar with models of bilingualism and second language acquisition and current research evidence and how they relate to practice in the classroom'* (Bourne and Flewitt, 2002).

In this section we outline aspects of bilingualism and the development of first and additional languages which can inform student teachers' approaches to bilingual and EAL learners in schools. Student teachers should, for example, be aware that:

- The learner's first or home language plays a significant role in the learning of the additional language in terms of cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural influences.
- Learning a second language will not necessarily proceed in an orderly and systematic fashion. Learners will use prior linguistic, learned and world knowledge. They will learn when there is a need to communicate and to learn.
- Most EAL and bilingual learners will develop a functional level of English in the first two years of schooling in English but they will need continued support to develop the cognitive academic language proficiency necessary for academic success.
- Bilingual education can be very beneficial in the development of the second language
- Learning a language and becoming bilingual is also about learning and living in different societies and cultures. It is not just about acquiring a new language, but also about understanding another culture and developing another identity.

The materials in this section provide an introduction to bilingualism and second language acquisition and its implications for the classroom. Most providers include sessions on bilingualism and second language acquisition within their [programmes](#).

Section editor and author

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References

Bourne, J. & Flewitt, R. (2002) *Teaching Pupils from Diverse Backgrounds: What do trainee teachers need to know?* London : TTA

Training and Development Agency for Schools (2007a) *Guidance to accompany the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)* London:TDA Retrieved 29th July, 2007, from http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/doc/q/qts_standards_guidance_2007.doc
[Qualifying](#)

Training and Development Agency for Schools (2007b) *Professional Standards for Teachers Qualified Teacher Status* London:TDA Retrieved 29th July, 2007, from http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/s/standards_qts.pdf

Key Readings

[BICS and CALP](#)

Jim Cummins article on the differences between acquiring English for social purposes and English for academic purposes

[Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue and Why is it important for education?](#)

Jim Cummins article on the role of pupils' first languages in developing academic English proficiency

[Bilingual Learners: Bilingualism, Learning and Inclusion](#)

A 2005 article by Maggie Gravelle aimed at student teachers and trainees as an introduction to bilingualism and second language acquisition

[Romantic bilingualism](#)

A summary of Harris's 1997 article on the concept of 'romantic bilingualism'

[Displacing the 'native speaker'](#)

A summary of Rampton's 1990 article discussing language expertise, affiliation and inheritance

[Language proficiency, Bilingualism and Academic Achievement](#)

A summary of Cummins' 1984 paper discussing bilingualism and academic achievement

[School Effectiveness for language minority students](#)

A summary of Collier and Thomas' 2002 analysis of the effectiveness of different educational programme models for pupils learning EAL in school.

[School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students](#)

Final report of Collier and Thomas' National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement

[The effectiveness of bilingual education](#)

Rennie and Marcos paper bringing together research assessing the effectiveness of a range of bilingual education programme models

[Tri-lingual 11 year olds in Hackney](#)

Summary of a recent research project from the University of East London highlighting how children can thrive on a complex diet of language and literacy

[Portuguese students who attend mother tongue classes](#)

Summary of a research study at Goldsmiths College, University of London which indicates that Portuguese students who attend mother tongue classes have a much higher probability of obtaining grades A*-C.

Websites

www.iteachilearn.com/cummins

This is a website dealing with bilingualism and the teaching of ESL (EAL) learners. Numerous topics are covered including a link to the website of Jim Cummins with a vast range of articles and resources concerning bilingual education.

www.ncela.gwu.edu

This used to be the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education but its name has changed as a result of changes in educational policy in the United States. However, under resources and research are listed numerous titles of articles dealing with bilingualism, as well as reports on the teaching of ESL and ethnic minority groups.

www.cal.org

This is another site in California which provides online readings and research reports.

www.edu.bham.ac.uk/bilingualism/database

The University of Birmingham, offers an extensive listing of resources.

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/education/research/groups/llg/wpull.html>

A collection of working papers and articles on urban language and literacies by academics such as Brian Street, Roxy Harris, Constant Leung, Marilyn Martin-Jones and others.

In addition, the [key readings](#) section of the site provide a number of links regarding bilingualism and bilingual education.

The principal publisher in the UK of books on bilingualism is Multilingual Matters: www.multilingual-matters.com

A further source of publications for teaching bilingual learners is Trentham Books: www.trentham-books.co.uk

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