PDM 4

Supportive contexts: scaffolding language and learning

Aims

- To explore ways to develop cognitive and academic language proficiency
- To develop a range of learning and teaching approaches which support curriculum access and additional language development

Key messages

- Essential understandings from PDM 2 and PDM 3.
- Importance of teaching language objectives alongside compatible curriculum targets.
- Range of ways in which learning can be scaffolded for EAL learners.
- Importance of providing models of language appropriate for purpose.
- Value of providing opportunities for children to work with partners and in small groups.

Overview of a suggested professional development programme

Learning and teaching: assessment for learning			
PDM 1 Establishing layered curriculum targets as a context for language development		**PDM 6** Day-to-day assessment	
Learning and teaching: language development and curriculum access			
PDM 2 EAL principles, pedagogy and practice: first language as a tool for learning	**PDM 3** Integrated planning for language development and curriculum content	**PDM 4** Supportive contexts: scaffolding language and learning	**PDM 5** Speaking and listening: guided sessions for language development
Conditions for learning			
PDM 7 Culture and identity: ethos, environment and curriculum			
Partnerships beyond the classroom			
PDM 8 Developing learning partnerships with parents, carers, families and communities			

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Suggested activities

Review and reflect on progress since the last meeting.
- **What have you done?**
- **What was the impact?**
- **What have you learned?**
- **Share curriculum targets.**

- Share the use of concept maps or KWL grids (see Unit 2, pages 11–12) as a strategy for activating prior knowledge. Use a context relevant to the participants, e.g. prior knowledge of the cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds of the children for whom English is an additional language.

- Share the use of 'Dictogloss' using a text with content relevant to the school context and priorities. Unpack the learning by eliciting from discussion the range of ways in which this technique scaffolds language and learning. Discuss how and when this strategy might be used (see Unit 2, pages 43–44).

  Also see Unit 2, page 44, for 'Vanishing cloze' – another text reconstruction activity which could be adapted for use with much younger children.

- Discuss how the teaching sequence for writing scaffolds the writing process and the way in which writing frames and graphic organisers can further scaffold the process for children learning EAL.

- Discuss a 'structured overview' of strategies which make learning contexts supportive for children learning EAL (available on the accompanying CD-ROM). Point out that a structured overview is an example of a graphic organiser. Share other examples of graphic organisers of different kinds and discuss their main purpose/function.

- Work in pairs or small groups to develop a graphic organiser which could be used to organise and prioritise ideas before writing. Choose a text type and context relevant to the school's current curriculum targets.

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Summary of key scaffolding strategies

Making expectations explicit by sharing objectives and success criteria

Providing models of language:
- orally by teaching staff and peers
- in print in the environment, books and on writing frames and language prompt cards

Providing visual support:
- pictures and props
- underlining and highlighting in text
- diagrams
- writing frames and graphic organisers

Providing opportunities for speaking and listening with peers:
- partner talk in first language as well as English

Next steps

Agree scaffolding strategies to be tried out by all staff and to be shared and evaluated at a future meeting.

Notes

Specific

- This PDM may require a series of sessions as it addresses a number of strategies to support teaching and learning. It is important to secure understanding of the underpinning rationale.
- Discussion will be more productive if it is clearly related to key school improvement priorities (e.g. boys' writing).

General

- Arrangements should be made to facilitate participation by part-time staff, EMAG-funded staff and teaching assistants.
- Ensure that key messages are secure and that participants leave with a clear understanding of where they need to focus over the coming half-term.
- Staff who are confident in this area should support other colleagues.
- The activities above are intended as examples. Choose from, and adapt, the suggested activities to fit in with the current priorities for the school as identified in the half-termly whole-school curriculum targets.

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Resources and further reading

- Activating prior knowledge (Unit 2, page 10–12, especially concept maps and KWL grids)
- Teaching sequences for reading and writing (Unit 2, pages 33 and 46)
- Modelling (Unit 2, pages 19–20)
- *Developing Early Writing* (DfES 0055/2001) and *Grammar for Writing* (DfES 0107/2000), see especially shared writing and oral rehearsal
- *Guided reading: Supporting transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2* (DfES 0064/2003)
- Graphic organisers and other visuals (Unit 2, pages 21–25)
- *Models and images* DVD (DfES 0508-2003 GCDI)
- For further detail on graphic organisers also see the handout on the CD-ROM Dictogloss (Unit 2, pages 43–44)
- For the value of collaborative activities for EAL learners and advice on groupings see Group discussion and interaction (Unit 4, pages 25–27)
- Gibbons, P. (2002) *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom*, Heinemann
- McWilliams, N. (1998) *What's in a Word: Vocabulary development in multilingual classrooms*, Trentham
- Moline, S. (1995) *I see what you mean*: *Children at work with visual information*, Teachers Pub. Group Inc.

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