Leading and Supporting the Inclusion of EAL Learners in Primary Schools

Professional Learning Booklet

2025-2026

Seminar Overview

Session One 09:30 - 11:00	Knowledge of the EAL Learner
Tea/Coffee 11:00 - 11:15	
Session Two 11:15 – 13:00	Knowledge of Pedagogy (EAL and Language Acquisition)
Lunch 13:00 - 14:00	
Session Three 14:00 - 15:30	Knowledge of the Curriculum (Teaching, Learning and Assessment for EAL Learners)

Oide EAL Padlet

To find our Padlet: Go to www.oide.ie, click on primary tab, click on EAL in Inclusive Education Section, click on Resources.

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Key Messages

An inclusive school culture is one that provides opportunities for EAL learners to use their **home language** to help them **access the overall curriculum** and participate fully in school life.

A classroom environment in which **communication is valued** and promoted will support the inclusion of all learners and the development of their **plurilingual repertoire across multiple languages**.

Collaboration between **all school staff** is essential for fostering **an** inclusive learning environment that supports EAL learners.

The Primary Language Curriculum reflects the **linguistic and cultural diversity** visible in Primary schools and supports all learners in their language and learning development.

Guidance for Preparation for Teaching and Learning

https://ncca.ie/en/primary/preparation/

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Session One

Knowledge of the Learner

Home Language, Culture and Identity

What resonates with you after viewing the Jim Cummins' Video?

"I am a 5 year old Polish girl in Senior Infants. My parents moved to Ireland before I was born. I speak Polish at home with my family."

More about Zofia

Has an older brother in 4th Class who can read and write in Polish, English and Gaeilge.

Mixes some Polish words with English words when speaking to bilingual Polish/English speaking friends (code-switching) on the yard.

Teachers have observed Zofia has some challenges with articulation of some words.

Attends Polish School two times a week. Loves Barbie and cycling.

"I am 12 years old. I finished primary school in Brazil. My family and I moved to Ireland one month ago. We speak Brazilian Portuguese at home. I love spending time with my Mam and Dad."

More about Theo

Parents shared that at his previous school, he received special educational support. The school in Ireland has received his psychological report in Brazilian Portuguese.

Is very dysregulated in class and is benefitting from frequent movement breaks.

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	Has family friends who speak Brazilian Portuguese and English in other classes in the school. Loves Pokémon and Minecraft.
"I am 9 years old. I am from Georgia and I live in an International Protection Centre with my parents and sister. I arrived in Ireland in November 2024 and have started to learn English."	**More about Zurab** Has moved four times since he arrived in Ireland. There were protests outside the centre where he lives. Attends the Homework Club in the International Protection Accommodation Centre. Lived in a refugee camp in France for 1 year prior to moving to Ireland. Excellent digital literacy, loves maths and SESE.
"I am a 7 year old Roma girl. I was born in Ireland. I started school this year. I live with my extended family. My older sister is the first person to read and write in my family."	**More about Elena** Loves to draw, paint, and listen to stories. Excellent fine motor skills. Did not attend early years education. Lives in a large loving family. Excellent receptive oral language skills in English. Is comfortable with asking questions to seek meaning.

	More about Igor
"I am 10 years old and I'm in Fourth Class. I've been in Ireland for two years. I live with my mother and my cousins. I speak Russian and Ukrainian. I love building Lego."	Experienced direct effects of war in Ukraine from March 2022 to January 2023. During this time, he engaged in remote education only. Spent six months in Poland from January to June 2023 where he attended school prior to moving to Ireland. Began school in Ireland in September 2023 in Second Class. Lives with his extended family in a small home. Attends online school remotely (based in Ukraine). Strong literacy/numeracy skills in Russian and Ukrainian and basic Polish.

Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion - Relationships and Partnerships

In relation to your case study learner, with whom might the EAL teacher need to develop relationships and partnerships?
How can this be achieved?
Supporting Communication 📺 **See Panel 5 and 6 of Oide EAL Padlet**

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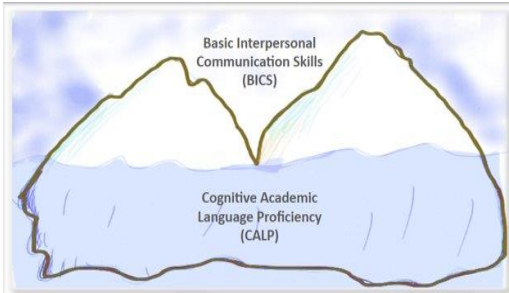Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Plurilingual Repertoire Self Reflection

Languages in which I am **literate at an academic level** (Languages of Schooling)	Languages in which I am **literate at a basic level**	Languages in which I am **fluent but not literate**	Languages in which I can **'have a chat'** about day-to-day things	Languages I **can read but cannot speak**	Languages in which I **know a few words**	Languages I **used to know but I've forgotten** (Language Attrition)

Cummins' Iceberg Theory of Language Development

See Panel 18 of EAL Padlet

NOTES:

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Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Models of Language Learning

EFL (English as a Foreign Language)	EAL (English as an Additional Language)	Plurilingualism
BICS: Day to day survival language only.	Scaffolding the language of the curriculum so all learners can participate.	Scaffolding the language of the curriculum so all learners can participate. **Translanguaging** approaches used.
Focus on the target language only.	Focus on language/s and the curriculum.	Focus on language/s and the curriculum.
Lack of exposure to target language outside the classroom.	Learners are fully immersed in target language.	Learners use all the languages in their linguistic repertoire.

Plurilingualism

See Panel 7 of Oide EAL Padlet for PPLI Primary Intercultural Guidelines

Notes:

Role of Teacher and SET/EAL Teacher

See Panel 10 of EAL Padlet

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Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Stages of Second Language Acquisition

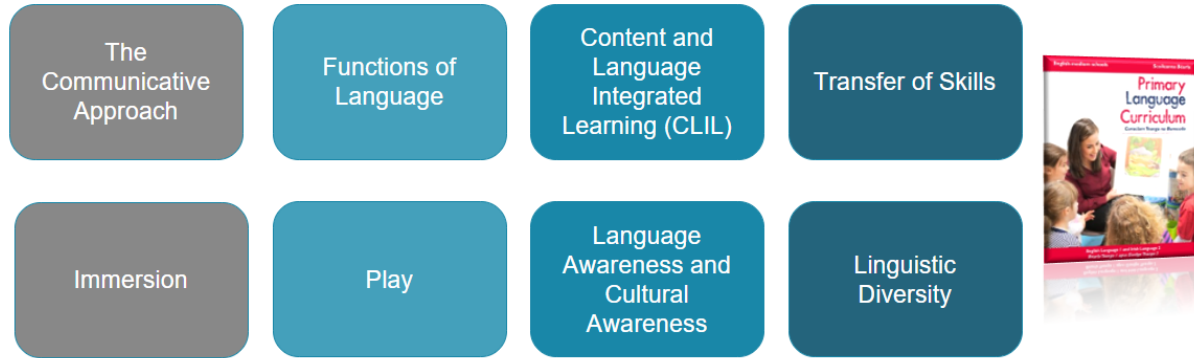|	Preproduction	Early Production	Speech Emergence	Intermediate Fluency
Appropriate expectations	Nodding, Pointing or physically demonstrating	One or two-Word responses, making choices from given samples.	Phrases or short sentences (expect grammatical errors)	Longer sentences, fewer grammatical errors
Teacher questions or cues	"Show me….?" "Which of these…?"	"Is it the _____one of the _____one?" Questions that can be answered in one or two words	"Did this happen at the beginning or at the end?" "What happened next?" "Where did you find the answer?"	"How did you …?" "What was the character trying to do?"

Adapted from Krashen & Terrell, 1983

Factors that may Affect the Acquisition of Language/s of Schooling

Intrinsic Factors*	Extrinsic Factors
Age	Trauma/Wellbeing
Aptitude	'Distance of target language/s'
Cognitive Style	Socio-economic conditions
Motivation	Attendance/disengagement with education
Personality	Quality of education/comprehensible input

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Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Pedagogical Approaches

The Communicative Approach	Functions of Language	Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)	Transfer of Skills
Immersion	Play	Language Awareness and Cultural Awareness	Linguistic Diversity

Primary Language Curriculum, Section 6

See Panels 8, 9 and 14 of EAL Padlet

Notes:

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Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Primary Language Curriculum Learning Outcomes Overview (Page 19)

	Oral Language Teanga ó Bhéal	Reading Léitheoireacht	Writing Scríbhneoireacht
Communicating Cumarsáid	Engagement, listening and attention Rannpháirtíocht, éisteacht agus aird	Engagement Rannpháirtíocht	Engagement Rannpháirtíocht
	Motivation and choice Inspreagadh agus rogha	Motivation and choice Inspreagadh agus rogha	Motivation and choice Inspreagadh agus rogha
	Social conventions and awareness of others Gnásanna sóisialta agus feasacht ar dhaoine eile		
Undertsanding Tuiscint	Sentence structure and grammar Struchtúr abairte agus gramadach	Conventions of print and sentence structure Gnásanna cló agus struchtúr abairte	Conventions of print and sentence structure Struchtúr abairte agus gnásanna cló
	Vocabulary Stór focal	Vocabulary Stór focal	Vocabulary Stór focal
	Demonstration of understanding Léiriú tuisceana	Phonics, word recognition and word study Fónaic, aithint focal agus staidéar ar fhocail	Spelling and word study Litriú agus staidéar ar fhocail
		Phonological and phonemic awareness Feasacht fhóineolaíoch agus fhóinéimeach	
Exploring and using Fiosrú agus úsáid	Requests, questions and interactions Iarratais, ceisteanna agus idirghníomhuithe	Purpose, genre and voice Cuspóir, seánra agus guth	Purpose, genre and voice Cuspóir, seánra agus guth
	Categorisation Catagóiriú	Comprehension Tuiscint	Writing process and creating text Próiseas na scríbhneoireachta agus ag cruthú téacs
	Retelling and elaboration Athinsint agus mionléiriú	Response and author's intent Freagairt agus intinn an údair	Response and author's intent Freagairt agus intinn an údair
	Playful and creative use of language Teanga a úsáid go spraíúil agus go cruthaitheach	Fluency and self-correction Líofacht agus féincheartú	Handwriting and presentation Peannaireacht agus cur i láthair
	Information giving, explanation and justification Eolas, míniú agus údar a thabhairt		
	Description, prediction and reflection Cur síos, tuar agus machnamh		

Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Language Development Learning Experiences

Binary Boards
Binary Boards can be used for all languages being taught in a school and can support oral language and writing. Learners can use them to make simple phrases with vocabulary cards (i.e., "I don't like bananas, but I like apples." "Rory likes apples but doesn't like bananas." This can support language awareness, grammar and semantics.
PLC Learning Outcome/s that this activity could help to achieve:
Reflections on activity:

Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Language Development Learning Experiences

Colourful Semantics
Colourful Semantics is a system for colour coding sentences according to the role of different words. It can help children to break down sentences and understand the individual meaning of each word and its role in the sentence. It can help children to better understand word order.
PLC Learning Outcome/s that this activity could help to achieve:
Reflections on activity:

Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

Dual Language Texts
Dual language texts acknowledge learners' home language and/or home language literacy as a scaffold and encourage comprehension of stories, poems and other genres. When learners are given dual language texts, they can gain an understanding of the key vocabulary, concepts and content of text and transfer that understanding from their home language to English.
PLC Learning Outcome/s that this activity could help to achieve:
Reflections on activity:

Session Two

Knowledge of Pedagogy

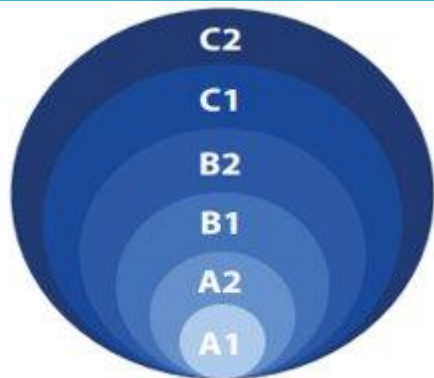| Vocabulary Development Activities |
|---|
| Using scaffolds like sentence stems, sentence frames, graphic organisers, etc, learners can develop their English vocabularies in context and attain an understanding of the structure, semantics, syntax, and grammar of English in context, rather than just learning vocabulary in isolation. |
| PLC Learning Outcome/s that this activity could help to achieve: |
| Reflections on activity: |

Session Three

Knowledge of Learner

Assessment

Assessing Language Proficiency	
	CEFR Language Proficiency Levels (CEFR: Common European Framework for References of Languages) **See Panel 9 of EAL Padlet** *"The European Commission promotes the CEFR as a credible and coherent framework for describing language competence levels. This supports language mobility and provides a sound basis for effective delivery of interventions and assessments for additional language learning"* Inspectorate Report Meeting Additional Language Needs: Whole-school and Classroom Approaches for Inclusive Language Learning. **See Panel 20 of Oide EAL Padlet**
	There are three sets of assessments of the Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK): • SET 1 (Placement) • SET 2 • SET 3 Assessments are carried out for each of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The PSAK is the tool teachers use to assess Language Proficiency in Irish Primary Schools. **See Panel 11 of EAL Padlet**

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Session Three

Continuum of Assessment

Assessment Type	Examples in EAL Context	Further Examples
INTUITIVE ASSESSMENT Unplanned, unrecorded, and ongoing. Children usually unaware they are being assessed. **Example** posing appropriate questions to scaffold learning; being flexible and responsive to indications of children's misconceptions. Occur naturally on an ongoing basis during learning experiences. Can be invisible, yet still be intentional.	Observing EAL learners engage with peers in social play. Initial development of a language and learning profile for EAL learner. Day-to-day responsive teaching and learning that considers EAL learners use of language structures and builds on their current knowledge of language and curriculum areas.	

Assessment Type	Examples in EAL Context	Further Examples
PLANNED INTERACTIONS More visible, may be recorded, and related to Learning Outcomes/competencies. Children may or may not be aware they are being assessed. **Example** asking children to construct concept maps to communicate their current understanding of a topic; conferencing with a child about a piece of work. More explicit, planned. Follow on from Intuitive Assessment	Having conversations, questioning and seeking meaning. Constructing concept maps. Graphic Organisers (concept maps) about EAL learners' prior knowledge before a unit of work. Writing conferencing	

Session Three

Knowledge of Curriculum

Continuum of Assessment

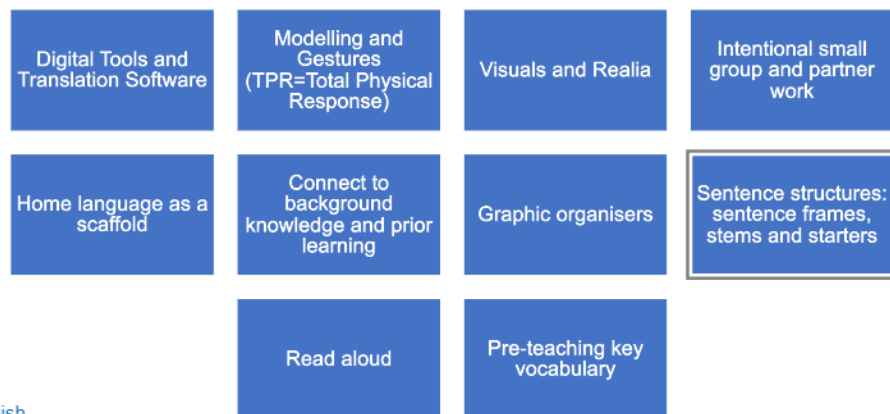| Assessment Type	Examples in EAL Context	Further Examples
ASSESSMENT EVENTS Distinct, visible, recorded events Children are usually aware they are being assessed **Example** teacher designed tests/quizzes; externally constructed standardised assessments; diagnostic assessments Distinct events Almost always involve producing a record of the outcomes of the assessment Children are aware they are being assessed.	End of unit assessment Primary School Assessment Kit Standardised Testing Teachers can use a variety of ways to document assessment information, such as notes, photographs, videos, and learning stories.	

Preparation for Teaching and Learning

Preparation	Considerations for EAL Learner
Invisible	
Visible	
Recorded	

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Session 3

Knowledge of Curriculum

Scaffolding Strategies for EAL Learners

Digital Tools and Translation Software	Modelling and Gestures (TPR=Total Physical Response)	Visuals and Realia	Intentional small group and partner work
Home language as a scaffold	Connect to background knowledge and prior learning	Graphic organisers	Sentence structures: sentence frames, stems and starters
	Read aloud	Pre-teaching key vocabulary	

Scaffolding for English Learners, Valentia Gonzalez

See panel 10 of EAL Padlet

What scaffolds did Moises use?	
In what ways was Moises agentic in his own learning?	
What impact do you think this assessment may have on Moises?	
How can we, as teachers, improve EAL learners' access to the curriculum?	

See Panel 18 of EAL Padlet for Moises Immersion Video

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Session 3

Knowledge of Curriculum

Scenario

Unit of Work in SESE

Subject: Geography

Strand: Natural Environments

Strand Unit: Planet Earth and Space

Class: fifth

Geography Content Objectives of Lessons:

recognise that the Earth, its moon, the sun, other planets, and their satellites are separate bodies and are parts of the solar system.

Primary Language Curriculum Learning Outcome:

Motivation and Choice: Evaluate and critically choose appropriate tools, strategies, content and topics to create text in a range of genres across the curriculum for a variety of purposes and audiences. (Solar System Project)

Geographical Skills:

Analysing: sort, group and/or classify data on natural phenomena using a range of appropriate criteria

Recording and Communicating: record and communicate a project on the Solar System

Activities:

Criteria for successfully communicating information in project form is discussed with whole class. Purpose, Audience, Text, and images are discussed with class.

Children create KWL chart in groups on solar system.

Children work in groups to create project on solar system.

Session 3

Knowledge of Curriculum

Scenario

Assessment

WALT: Choose and use appropriate content about the solar system and convey it effectively in project format using text and images

WILF: Solar system project that clearly communicates the properties of the planets and their relative distances from each other and the sun.

Olena

Age: 11   **Class:** 5th   **Nationality:** Ukrainian

Linguistic Repertoire:

Languages	Oral Language Development	Academic Language Development	Language/s of Schooling
Russian	Home Language	At or above expected age/stage level	Primary language of schooling
Ukrainian	Home Language	limited	Second language of schooling in school in Ukraine is Ukrainian
Polish	A1	-	Attended school in Poland for 3 months (April 2024-June 2024)
English	A1	-	English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for 2 years in school Ukraine in 3rd and 4th class (BICS only)

Session 3

Knowledge of Curriculum

Scenario

Family context: She arrived in Ireland with her older brother and mother in July 2024. Her father remained in Ukraine. Her family lost their family pet and Olena misses her father and grandparents very much. Her family home was occupied during the war and her mother has shared that Olena has been quite sad about the separation of her family. Her family are eager to reunite when it is safe for them to return.

Hobbies, interests, favourite subjects: Excels at mathematics and the arts. She plays the piano, studies ballet and paints. Her family would describe her as creative, shy, and kind. Olena loves to read and watch films in Russian.

Disposition: She can at times be shy and needs encouragement to participate in the mainstream class but will engage in oral work in small groups.

Home language education: She has continued with Ukrainian school online in the mornings for one hour and in the afternoons for two hours when she arrives home from school. There are two other Ukrainian students in Olena's class who have been in Ireland and attending the school.

Available Supports: The school has other Ukrainian students who have attended since May 2022. There is a SET/EAL teacher who can support Olena and other EAL learners in the school.
Two other families in the same school from Ukraine live in the same accommodation centre as Olena, and their parents are friendly. Olena travels to and from school by taxi each day from the accommodation centre with them. There is a Russian/English speaking parent who supports the Ukrainians in the centre who can support the communication between home and school. The school has the use of tablets for Digital Tools and broadband connection.

Session 3

Knowledge of Curriculum

Scenario

What are the considerations for preparation for teaching and learning for SET/EAL teacher and class teacher?

Consider:

How can Olena access this unit of work?

What language learning opportunities are there?
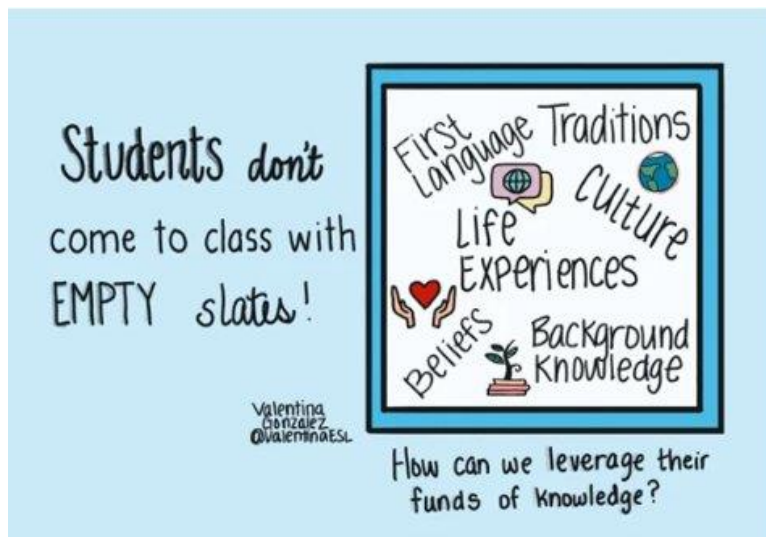
What types of activities might she engage in?

Session 3

Knowledge of Curriculum

Scaffolding EAL Learners

What Key Competencies from the Primary Curriculum Framework might Olena be developing during this unit of work?

Reflection and Next Steps….

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