**Kellie Heintz:** Good afternoon, and welcome to the 10th webinar in our program of professional learning on the implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10 English as an additional language. My name is Kellie Heintz, and I am the EAL Curriculum Manager at the VCAA, and I will be hosting our webinar this afternoon. Thank you all for your attendance. I hope you’re feeling positive and hopeful as we move towards the loosening of restrictions.

Before we begin our session today, I would like to acknowledge country. In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s spiritual and cultural connection to country, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Kulin Nations and all of the lands on which we meet today. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and waterways over generations and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the nation and hope they will walk with us on our journey.

Please be advised that this presentation is being recorded and that the slides and recording will be made available as soon as possible. You will find this webinar with other recordings from the program uploaded on the VCAA website. Today, in this webinar, we have more than 300 participants who come from the Department of Education and Training, Catholic and independent schools, as well as various other EAL stakeholders. We will be managing questions through the question-and-answer function of the software, and we ask that you do not use the chat function, so that we keep all of our questions together. There is time available at the end of the presentation for Allie to respond to your questions. Any questions that remain unanswered will be addressed in our final Q&A webinar, which will occur on 29 October.

I would like to acknowledge my two VCAA colleagues who are working with us this afternoon – Alicia Farrell and Craig Smith, the manager of the F-10 unit. They will be present to support Allie and I as we work through this presentation.

I would now like to introduce you to Allie Baker, who is an EAL teacher from regional Victoria. Allie is passionate about making classrooms accessible for EAL learners. And today she’s going to share her ideas about ways that teachers can scaffold and differentiate their teaching in order to achieve this. So I’d like to hand it now over to Allie so that she can begin her presentation.

**Allie Baker:** Good afternoon, everyone. It’s a great pleasure to be with you here this afternoon. Yes, as Kellie said, coming from sunny regional Victoria, and really excited about the opportunity to talk to you all about a range of strategies that you might like to adopt in your classroom practice.

I’m conscious of the fact that this is the 10th webinar that’s being offered by the VCAA, and so I really am going to make this session quite practical in terms of strategies, and less about the theoretical behind the VCAA curriculum. Much more about strategies that you might like to use in your lesson planning, encouraging you to have an EAL lens when you’re looking at planning and differentiating for EAL learners in your classrooms.

I’m also conscious that there are people listening today that are from a range of curriculum backgrounds – maths, physics, chemistry, biology – also from primary school and secondary school settings. I’m hoping to be able to touch on something for everyone. But if there is something that I brush over or something you’d like to know more about, my contact details are just there in the slides, and you’re most welcome to make contact with me after the presentation, or ask questions at the end. So, let’s begin.

In terms of the introduction of the EAL curriculum and the responsibility of teachers across the state, I like to think of the teaching of literacy as everyone’s responsibility, and the teaching of EAL learners is officially everyone’s responsibility. And this is because literacy and language are best taught within context and within the context of the subjects that we taught...that we teach. We each have a unique knowledge of what language is essential to our subject and how to best communicate in our subject. And it’s really the language of our subjects that we are best equipped to teach, as we’re experts in those fields.

EAL pedagogy is excellent teaching pedagogy, and so if you are using EAL principles or pedagogical principles or EAL practices in your classroom, you will be doing good teaching. It is also very useful for monolinguistic learners as well. So, I’m hoping that people in the audience, they will be really open to adopting some of these strategies that I talk to you about.

Ultimately, when we’re catering for EAL learners, we’re catering for learners who have language and communication as a difficulty. They don’t necessarily have a difficulty with their knowledge base. We know that, with EAL learners, the first skills that they will learn are the receptive language skills. So they may well understand what’s being said to them, but in terms of the second lot of skills that EAL learners acquire, after receptive skills, it’s productive skills. And so, initially, they might be able to hear and comprehend and understand what’s being taught to them, but they may not be able to produce the language that shows that. And so, as teachers of EAL learners, we need to try to find ways of diminishing or reducing language barriers for these students through adjusting our tasks that we present to students or adopting some EAL strategies that might help to scaffold and differentiate for these EAL learners so that we can diminish the language challenge and give them an opportunity to show the true knowledge that they do have and allow them to demonstrate that.

It’s much better that we try to cater for these EAL learners in our planning and in our curriculum before assessment, rather than just changing an assessment at the end. We want to try and make sure that the content is accessible for students. We want to make sure that they can participate more in our classrooms. We want to give them an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge that they do possess, despite the language barriers that may be making it difficult for them. And we also want to teach them to speak and write the way that we expect students in an Australian classroom to speak and write.

So, the strategies that I go through today, some you might be familiar with, others might be new to you, some might sort of pique your curiosity and you might think, “Oh, I think I could do something like that in my classroom.” Really, we’re just trying to present you with a range of options so that you can see that catering for EAL students does not mean that you have to completely change the curriculum that you offer to students, or completely change the way that you assess or the way that you run your lessons. It’s more a way of seeing these students and trying to...trying to adopt some principles and practices that will best cater for these students for the diverse range of needs.

When I am planning for EAL learners...when I’m planning for EAL learners, I’m always trying to consider a set of three questions. The first question that I ask myself is, “What am I doing for the student today to help them access what I’m doing in the classroom in this lesson?” “What am I doing tomorrow or next week or beyond to fill the gaps that I’ve noticed that the student has?” And in this lesson, in this content, in the information that I’m about to convey to these students, “What are they likely to miss, and what am I sure that I don’t want them to miss?” When we notice these gaps, we are able to plan effectively to fill those gaps. So, when we address what we’re doing in the classroom and we think, “Hm, I’m pretty sure my students are likely to miss this piece of language or misunderstand this task,” that’s where we intervene ahead of time to try and avoid having that situation occur in the first place.

I’m hoping to touch on all facets of classroom practice today. The fact that EAL students need to be able to participate fully in the classroom environment but may be reluctant or find difficulty doing so. Speaking and listening, which are often very difficult for EAL students. Reading tasks and writing and vocabulary tasks.

So, let’s begin with participation, speaking and listening. So, this is a list of different elements of classroom participation. Those in bold I’ll go through in more detail in just a moment. But I will just touch on the idea that second on the list there – the idea of think, write, pair and share, and then, in brackets, paired presenting.

What I’m referring to there is that EAL students may truly struggle to speak independently in a classroom, to voice an idea independently in a classroom, especially if we just pose a question to the class and then call on EAL student. They may really struggle with that situation. And so, being aware of that, and before posing a question to a whole class, considering the fact that a student might need to turn to a partner, discuss something, write down some bullet-pointed notes, and then share their opinion – those steps are really essential for an EAL student to be able to confidently participate in a class discussion.

Paired presenting refers to the idea that an EAL student will always find it much easier to present ideas if they are paired with somebody else. Perhaps, if they’re asked to share their own opinion, but it’s a shared opinion, or perhaps if they’re asked to share the opinion of their partner, this is a less taxing...or there’s less pressure and less risk associated with it when they’re paired with somebody else or partnered with someone.

I’m going to now look through the other four strategies with you in a little bit more detail.

So, the first is this idea of using visuals. And I’ll touch on visuals quite a bit in the presentation, because any task where we’re using verbal instructions or written instructions, EAL students will always benefit from the use of visuals.

So, one really handy model that some of you may be familiar with, but it’s very useful in an EAL classroom and certainly useful across the curriculum, is the PWIM, or Picture Word Inductive Model. Essentially, this model requires teachers to follow five steps and the first step is showing... Well, six steps, I suppose. The first step is showing students an image, and then the five steps associated with showing that image to students are just listed there on the slide.

So, the first is to tease out words. And I think that, initially, Picture Word Inductive Model, they use the verb “shake out” words, but it seems quite violent to be shaking anything out of a student, so I prefer the verb “tease out” words. Essentially, we show students this image and we tease from them single vocabulary, single words, that they can see or that come to mind when they view an image. And we do this before even beginning a unit or even presenting them with a written text. Our first port of call is a visual. It’s a safe and accessible entry for EAL students and indeed for students with high literacy needs in your classroom as well. So we tease out those words.

And then once we have those single words... You can see there I’ve got ‘decorations’, I’ve got ‘hanging’, I’ve got ‘man’, ‘spiral’. Once we have those single words, we then ask the students to group those single words – and we do that collectively as a class – into categories. So we might say, “Oh, well, the word ‘spiral’ and the word ‘decorations’, it’s both to do with the appearance,” and so we make a little heading that’s ‘appearance’. There’s no right answer. We’re just simply trying to build vocabulary, so that when the students then have to do some writing, they have lots and lots of vocabulary that they can work with.

So once we’ve teased out those words and we’ve classified the categories, we then make titles or statements. So, these are then leading students to creating complete ideas or complete concepts. So, you can see, on the slide there, A Decorated Staircase could be a potential title, or The Spiral. And then, beyond that, we move onto sentence stems, where we might say to the student, “OK, I want you to now write a sentence beginning with the phrase ‘The man is...’“ and then use some of the vocabulary that we’ve teased out here.

Once students have then responded to those scaffolded sentence stems, we then ask students to do some independent writing.

So, I think you’ll be able to see that, by beginning with that image and teasing out single words and then putting those words into sentences, there’s a journey that the students take whereby they’re much more readily able to produce a more extended piece of writing, because we’ve supplied them with all of this vocabulary, whereas, if we were just to throw an image at them, they may well struggle to get started with writing or to access a writing task.

Now, this is also really applicable in mathematics or science classrooms. So, you can see the images here. You might recognise the bottom right as the Weasleys’ car from Harry Potter, but you may, in a science classroom, talk about gravity or forces. On the left are some images from Turkey and Morocco. Again, in a maths class, you might be able to look at estimation, or the prices of objects, or counting different objects that you can see there. In the top right, you might be able to use that in a food technology classroom. Before even beginning the process of working through a recipe, you may be able to talk about procedural verbs or words associated with cooking, the different objects that you might use or ingredients that you might use in a recipe. And so we tease out these words and create sentences before beginning a task with our students.

When we’re discussing in class, EAL students are likely to feel quite nervous, and a little bit reluctant to share their ideas. They may also not... Depending on their educational background, where they’ve been educated or whether or not it’s been interrupted schooling, they may struggle to understand the purpose of classroom discussion. In many countries that our EAL students come from, there is no discussion, and students are simply dictated to by the teacher. They take notes and then they produce their own written work. Some students come from classes where there’s 60 students in a classroom, so there is no room for classroom discussion. So it’s something that’s essential to Australian classroom culture that these students may not be comfortable with. So we actually need to demonstrate how to discuss, and teach students how to discuss, and give them the language of discussion before they end up in a situation that they find quite challenging or quite nerve-racking.

So, in a standard classroom, I might say to the class, “OK, everyone, I want you to discuss.” I’ve put the question on the board there – it’s, “Should we invest in the science of de-extinction?” De-extinction being this movement to try and investigate how we can bring back animals that are now extinct. So, bringing back the dodo. So, should we invest in the science of de-extinction? “OK, chat with your partners, and then we’re going to talk as a whole class.” An EAL student may find that quite arresting.

So, instead, we scaffold that discussion using what I refer to as quick scripts and some prompts that you might have in poster form or you might write them very quickly on your board. So, on my whiteboard, rather than simply verbally saying, “Should we invest in the science of de-extinction?” I would put the question on the board and then I would model for the students an answer. So I might say to them, “Should we invest in the science of de-extinction?” and then say, “I don’t think we should. I think it’s a waste of money.” So I’ve given them my opinion. I’ve then given them a reason in a secondary sentence, and then I give them a question to be able to turn to their partner and discuss, “What do you think?” And then I say to them, “Discuss in pairs.”

I then can model a script for them that you can see there in purple. So, I might then say to the class... Depending on the context of my EAL students and how strong their English vocabulary in discussion is, I might then say to them, “I don’t think we should. I think it’s a waste of money. What do you think? Discuss in pairs. For example, you might say, ‘What do you think? Is Mrs Baker right about that?’ ‘I’m not sure. I have an idea. What about you?’“ And I model that language for the students.

Now, I tend to kind of play that up a little bit and go a bit silly, and the students find that a bit fun. But, really, you don’t need to play it up. You can have scripts like this or phrases or language like this on posters. And similarly, you can see the green question stems, which I like to keep as a visual in my classroom at all times. So I might say to the students, “If you get stuck, you know what you can do – you can ask more questions using those stems there that are in green.”

In the little speech bubble at the bottom there, you can see that I then...once I bring it back into a class discussion, I continue to model that scaffolded discussion. So, the whole time that my class are talking and offering opinions, I might call on them, and I’m providing them with the scaffolded language of discussion. So, we start the classroom discussion and then I say, “Does anyone want to add to what Sarah’s saying? Sue, you could say, ‘I agree with Sarah, but...’“ And so I’m constantly filling with vocab for interaction that students might not feel confident about using unless I provide them with that language.

Alright. There’s been some studies that have examined how little EAL students are called on in classes, and unfortunately... And, potentially, it comes from well-meaning teachers, I think – teachers that feel they don’t want to embarrass an EAL/D student or put them into a really difficult or challenging situation in the classroom. Which I think comes from a place of good intention, but what seems to be happening in some classrooms is that an EAL student is not called on at all, and therefore they barely speak in a class...in a mainstream classroom, or they’re called on but only for the very low-level or simple questions, and then the more higher order questions are given to students that are more confident with English, or the teachers assume will be able to more confidently or competently answer.

So, the issue we have here is, we don’t want to embarrass or shame EAL students, we don’t want to make them feel awkward, and we don’t want them to disengage in class discussion either. But, rather than only ever asking them low-order questions, or not calling on them because they’ll feel uncomfortable, we actually need to scaffold the way that we question.

One strategy for this is to provide EAL students with what we call – or what I call – an advance questioning card. So what you can see there is, it’s a question card which has the date, the student’s name, teacher’s name. Just complete it. There’s nothing fancy about this. And then you offer the student a date when you’re going to ask them a question in class. You then write the question in full on the card, and you provide that card to the student in advance of that lesson. I usually leave three days to a week between posing the question to the student and then them bringing that card to class or preparing for the class when I say that I’m going to ask them that question.

I try to make them higher-order questions, ones that require them to do a bit of thinking or a little bit of research. And then I ask that they put their answer there. And if they are lacking confidence, they can come and check that their answer is accurate. Then, in the lesson, I can quite naturally just call on that student to answer that question. They don’t need to hold up the card if they feel embarrassed about it, they can just learn the answer by rote. And, over time, this will build their confidence to participate in class discussions. It also gives them a chance to demonstrate knowledge but not to have to do that on the spot, where there’s much more of a high-stakes situation that they’re faced with. That’s quite a simple strategy that you can use to ensure that the EAL students participate more fully in class discussion.

I’m very aware that there’s already been a VCAA presentation that went into the concept of plurilingualism, so I will just touch on this briefly. It’s essentially the idea that students...I suppose, historically in EAL classrooms, we actually encouraged the monolinguistic classroom, so we encouraged teachers to have this immersive English environment. And we assumed that, by having that immersive English environment, students with a different home language, speaking a different language other than English as their first language, they would, through that immersion, learn lots of language and be able to competently access the curriculum.

What we’ve realised over time is that, actually, a student who is allowed to use their own home language, or encouraged to use their home language, for different tasks in the lesson, out of the lesson, discussing the content with a peer, those students are actually able to use their home language to access prior learning experiences that may have happened previously, in their home language. They’re also more able to absorb new concepts when they’re wrestling with them in their own language, as well as wrestling with them in English.

So, different ways that we can encourage plurilingualism in the classroom... It’s not expected that you as a teacher will learn all the languages of the students in your classroom. In the 2014 census, it came back that there are more languages spoken in Melbourne than there are countries in the world. So, by no means is there an expectation that you will learn every single language that a student speaks. But you can learn key words or show a curiosity or interest in a student’s home language. You can also provide moments in the class where you say to students, “OK, I probably didn’t make as much sense as your peers will, so let’s have a translation moment where you can talk to a friend about what I just said.”

Now, this concept of translation doesn’t have to be between English and a home language, it can just be between teacher language and student language. So, translation moments, and planning those into your lesson structure, it alleviates the pressure on the EAL student and actually gives them a moment to clarify, but also gives the other students a chance to clarify with their peers as well – a bit of a peer-teaching moment as well.

You can also encourage students... And we’ll talk a bit more about glossary a little bit later, but you can certainly have vocabulary charts or glossaries where there’s multiple languages represented, encouraging the use of bilingual dictionaries, so that students... Or visual dictionaries as well, online, students can use to look up words, and maybe having those bilingual dictionaries in all the classrooms in the school. Also, encouraging students, when they’re looking at a particular research subject, they don’t always have to do their research in English. They can do their research in their home language and then write about it in English. Indeed, when you group students, if you have students that speak the same language, it might be an effective strategic move to have them brainstorm and discuss in their home language and then present their ideas in English.

[Copyright Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx) 2020