**[Craig Smith]:** Welcome, everybody, to this, VCAA's first in a series of nine webinars to support their introduction of the new Victorian Curriculum: F-10 English as an Additional Language curriculum.

It's my great pleasure to introduce you to one of my colleagues, Kellie Heintz. Kellie is our curriculum manager for all things EAL and she'll be leading today's presentation.

In the back end, we also have Peter Fisher. Peter is a colleague in the F-10 unit and he's the person responsible for making this webinar happen. So, a big shout-out to Peter.

But before we start, I just want to start by acknowledging country today.

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. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and the waterways over generations. We 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 memories, traditions, cultures and hopes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation, and hope they will work with us on our...will walk with us on our journey.

So, without further ado, Kellie, I'll throw over to you for today's presentation.

**[Kellie Heintz]:** Thank you, Craig. And welcome to everyone. I hope that this presentation will provide you with an overview of the kinds of things you need to know about the implementation of our new EAL curriculum.

Just before I start, I'd just like to remind you all that this session will be recorded, so if you have colleagues who would like to catch up on the information or you'd like to go back over it, it will be presented up on our website once we've completed our presentation.

The other thing that I'd like to remind you all is that today we're going to be using the Q&A function only that you'll see on your screen. So, if you have any questions as I'm moving through the material, you're most welcome to put your questions into the box.

If I end up answering those questions as I move through the material, that will be good. If not, we will gather those questions and group those questions together and we have allowed time at the end for me to cover any questions that have not yet been answered.

So, I'd like to begin by talking to you about the contents of my presentation. In it I will cover the importance of the new Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL, the responsibility of teachers about the implementation and the teaching of the curriculum. I'll unpack some of the curriculum for you to show you what it looks like on the website and the way that you approach particular ways of accessing the material. I'll familiarise you with some of the resources as well as the website. And I'll talk to you about the new addition to the curriculum, which is known as plurilingualism.

So, firstly, it's important for you all to be aware that in 2021, so next year, the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL will be mandated for implementation in both government and Catholic schools. For those of you who teach in the independent sector, you will be guided by your own school as to the status of the curriculum and when it will be mandated. So, you'll need to look to your school for direction with regard to this.

Many people might be posing the question, "Well, why have we introduced a new EAL curriculum?" Well, I think those of us who are experienced teachers of EAL students understand the importance of having a curriculum for these students that is a stand-alone curriculum, it's a curriculum in its own right and it isn't just seen as something that is an add-on to English. We would like also to provide a consistent curriculum structure across all of the Victorian Curriculum learning areas, so that everyone is clear that EAL is part of that suite of subjects and that it is required the same kind of thought and care that the other learning areas are afforded.

The other reason we are really supportive of the introduction of this curriculum is to recognise the diverse backgrounds and learning experiences of EAL students in schools across Victoria.

And, as many of you know, the number of EAL students that we have arriving in schools has been increasing over time. Perhaps that won't be the case next year, with the restrictions on travel that have been imposed by the coronavirus. However, the expectation is that as time goes on, we will be accommodating even more EAL learners than we already do. We really think it's time that our EAL students are supported and that their specific needs are addressed by teachers.

Very often at the moment, there are EAL students who are sitting in classrooms across the state that have not even been identified as EAL students. Some teachers are not even aware they have EAL students in their cohort. So, we really would like to work with you to identify these students and, at the same time, to recognise that these students might know more than one language and that they bring with them a linguistic repertoire in that language, that can be used to support the learning of English.

This is quite at odds with the philosophy of the past, which really saw EAL students as blank slates. They came into the classroom, we were instructed that they must teach...must speak English only when they're in the classroom. Well, this is the new contemporary educational philosophy that presents the idea that our students do, in fact, come with a range of skills, and that through the teaching of this curriculum, we can harness those skills to help the students to develop their proficiency in English.

Now, what's really important about the curriculum is that EAL students, as you'd be aware, need to be able to access the English language in all of their learning areas. So, this curriculum recognises that students need to access and demonstrate learning in these learning areas.

Now, I know that for many of you, this may have caused some anxiety, thinking about the idea that every single teacher in every single school needs to be teaching the EAL curriculum.

Well, that is not necessarily the case.

And I'd like to propose to you how we envisage the curriculum being implemented in schools. So, teacher responsibility. In general, teachers will need to be aware of EAL learners in their classrooms. So, regardless of your subject or content area, you need to be aware of who's in front of you and what their needs are. And that goes with the case for all kinds of students - students with disabilities, students who are gifted, a range of students, a range of learners in front of you, all require their own specific care and instruction.

So, as a teacher of EAL learners, we expect that you'd be aware of who they are, that you would have a sense of the proficiency and level of English that these students have. It doesn't mean that you need to understand exactly the specific pathway that your EAL student is on if you are, for example, the PE teacher. But what it does mean is that you have a sense of the kinds of things that this student can currently access in English, and, as a result, how would you unpack the content-specific language for your students that you have in front of you that may not be able to access the specific language of your subject.

The other thing that teachers will need to do is to be able to plan for and to support the language learning of EAL students in order to support their understanding of the different content. So, this idea, which currently would be the practice of many teachers, "OK, I have some EAL students in front of me. I'm not the EAL specialist in the school, nor am I the English teacher, but I want my students to be able to access what I'm teaching. What are the kinds of things that I would need to do to ensure that this would be the case?"

So, what does this mean for schools?

Well, we would like to open up the idea that planning and implementing new EAL curriculum is the responsibility of the whole school. But we're very cognisant of the fact that some schools will have an EAL specialist that can support the implementation and to support the planning. They will have the skills and the knowledge that you can draw upon.

We are also very aware that in some cases, there are no EAL specialists in schools. And this is where, I guess, the idea of collaboration and many heads together, coming up with ways that you might be able to plan for these students...

But, as a result of this, it means that if you do have specialist EAL teachers, they'll need time to work with teachers across the school to help them with this. I mean, that goes for... Also, the fact that those of you who don't necessarily have specialist EAL teachers, you'll also need time to get your head around what you'll need to do.

So, we're really hoping that this becomes an opportunity for collaboration.

We hope that school leaders will be able to consider how the EAL curriculum and its implementation impacts on the whole school and the way that the school approaches EAL students in general.

We know that there are some schools where there are EAL students who are scattered through different year levels within the school.

You might have one student in Foundation, or Prep, you might have one in grade six in one school. Some schools will have clusters of EAL students where you have a high proportion of your classroom is made up of EAL learners. So, this will impact on the way that you plan. So, we're hoping that, as a result, you can work together. So, it's a matter of how all teachers of EAL learners will work together, it's a matter of thinking about who is involved in the planning, and it's really important that you have someone who has oversight of the EAL program.

So, what we would like to see is that there are opportunities for specialist EAL teachers to work collaboratively with generalist primary teachers and/or secondary subject teachers, because it depends upon your setting as to the kinds of opportunities that will be available.

Now, for those of you who work in government schools, who would be the vast majority of our audience this afternoon, the EAL curriculum school implementation guide is aligned to the FISO Improvement and it provides detailed recommendations on how to implement the curriculum using a whole-school approach.

So, if you'd like to look that up at a later date, that's where you would goto access that information. So, what would it look like?

What does it look like now that you have an EAL curriculum?

And what does it mean for teachers?

Well, what we imagine is that the specialist English or EAL teacher or teachers meet with classroom teachers and subject teachers of EAL students.

Now, let's think about the primary setting where we have generalist teachers who are most probably responsible for the teaching of English to EAL students, who may have an EAL specialist on staff.

Then we have the secondary schools where mainstream English teachers may also have an EAL specialist that supports them or may, in fact, have stand-alone EAL classes where EAL students are all in together.

It will depend upon the structure of your school as to the way you go about this. However, in general, what we're suggesting is this.

The teachers need to have a sense of what the student is able to do and to identify where they are on the EAL curriculum - that is, "What is their initial pathway?"

Now, you don't need to get into the great detail of understanding every single section of the pathway, but as a general teacher or a generalist teacher, it's important that you get a sense of where your student is at.

How many years have they been in the country?

What kind of proficiency in English do they have?

We then would hope that the EAL specialist or the English specialist is able to refer you to the EAL curriculum for examples of appropriate language learning for that pathway.

So, if you have a student who has not been in the country for very long and has limited command of English, you would be able to look at the pathway that correlates to this student's experience and to look at the kinds of things that are suggested within the EAL curriculum and consider how this could be taken across into your subject area if you're not a teacher of English and EAL and consider the ways you might be able to adapt your work in order to support the student's needs.You need to consider how the content of a specific learning area may be adapted and scaffolded to support the student's access to language in that subject.

Now, in secondary schools, as I've said, there are either the secondary English teachers will be responsible for the EAL students in terms of their learning of language, or there are EAL teachers, or there are English teachers who are trained in both.

Now, it's important to understand that this curriculum is to be considered the English curriculum, the English equivalent for the EAL students. So, that means if an English teacher is teaching the EAL curriculum to an EAL student, that they will report on the EAL curriculum, and if an EAL teacher is teaching EAL students, they would report on the EAL curriculum.

Now, just in case people were worried, and I've had a lot of questions about this, teachers who are not EAL specialists and who are not teaching English language to students - so you're teaching maths, you're teaching science, you're teaching humanities - you do not need to report on the English language proficiency of your EAL students.

That is not your role.

Your role is to report on your learning area content, as is the current practice. So, you are a maths teacher who has an EAL learner in front of you. Your role is to allow the curriculum to inform some of your practice so that the student can access the material, but your role is not to report on the EAL curriculum. You are reporting on the maths curriculum. And that's a very important distinction that you all need to make, because I know there are many people who have been very concerned about, "How do they report on this curriculum?" Well, the good news is, and the sensible news is, that you would be reporting on your subject area, you're not reporting on the EAL curriculum per se, unless you're responsible for the learning of the English language. And that would fall to the English teacher, to the EAL teacher, or, in the primary setting, the generalist primary teacher responsible for English.

OK. So, we currently have the curriculum uploaded onto the website. And I know that it has been a very frantic period over the last few months and many of you will be thinking, "Goodness, not something else to worry about." We understand that.

We have tried to ensure that this curriculum is structured in a familiar way to you and that when you access it, it looks like the other curricula, so that you are not going into completely new territory.

So, the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL is organised by pathways, language modes, strands and sub-strands.

Now, these structural elements allow you to move across and to work at different... in different modes or different areas of the curriculum, depending upon what your you're looking at. So, for those of you responsible for teaching the curriculum per se, that is those responsible for teaching EAL, the curriculum should be structured in a way that shows developmental progression and makes sense to you as you look across it.

OK. Now, in a moment, I'm going to get Peter, our administrator who's supporting us, to take us on a virtual tour of the curriculum, because I think it's important that you see it on the screen and you're able to envisage the ways you can access it and the different views you can have with the different sections.

So, it's important to think about the curriculum in terms of a continuum that is structured as three EAL pathways.

Those pathways are referred to as Pathway A, Pathway B and Pathway C. Each pathway describes a different stage of English-language learning.

So, we're really talking about those students who have come to the learning of English early in their lives, when they're younger, those at the midpoint and those later on. And each pathway is divided into different levels of language learning. That is A1, A2, BL, B1, B2, B3,CL, C1, C2, C3 and C4. So, what we're going to do is to just have a look at what that might look like in terms of an overall picture.

So, we begin the pathways at early immersion. Early immersion commences at Pathway A and covers approximately Prep to Year 2. Level A1 one is for someone who comes in with no or limited levels of literacy in English and their first language. And then a student who comes in slightly later may have some command, they're at beginner levels of proficiency. And, as you can see by the shading on the diagram, as a student works up into more experience of language learning, they move further along the pathway. Now, the job of placing these students on the pathway falls to the English or the EAL specialist. It is not something that needs to be done by all subject teachers, for example. It needs to be done by someone who has a sense of what this kind of language proficiency looks like. And that's really important.

OK. So... Just briefly, understanding the pathways.

Early immersion language learners typically develop their literacy skills through experiences in the school context. So, these are the little ones who arrive and really are immersed from a young age. Those who have had some experience of formal pre-school or school will more readily adapt to the school setting. A student located on EAL Pathway A may have some experience of formal learning n their home language or other languages and some experience of informal prior learning.

Now, it's important that we recognise that before us in our classrooms, we have a range of students who have had a range of experiences. We have had students with interrupted education n their home language. We have had students with interrupted education in both languages. We have had students who have had o schooling in any language, et cetera, before they get here. So, what we do at Pathway A is to provide two levels to accommodate the students who come in with little or no experience of English and some...and another level that accommodates those students who come in with a little bit more English.

And the way that this pathway is structured equates to the rates of progression expected in Foundation or Prep, going into Year 12. It's important to understand that generally students who enter Foundation or Prep are pre-literate, regardless of their language background, and that's why there's no level... no pathway level AL.

So, EAL students who enter Foundation with minimal literacy in other languages will begin that early immersion in English t Level A1.

I can see now that we've got quite a few questions that are coming across from people. And... I will be getting Craig to have a look at them because they're quite complicated, and, so, hopefully, then, I'll be able to cover them as we go. So, I'll have a look then. So, please don't worry. I am coming to your questions.

OK. Understanding the pathways. So, EAL Pathway B is mid-immersion. So, it's roughly for students who are from Grade 3 or Year 3 up to Year 8. Now, it's really important to understand that there is overlap in some of these situations and these pathways. We're really relying on professional judgement here to be able to establish where it is most suitable for a student to be placed on a pathway.

Now, remember, there are no hard and fast rules. This goes...the placing of a student on a pathway is done as a result of the evidence that you have before you, which may be, um, from the language and learning interview, which we'll be talking about later. It may be from work that's from another school, if they're coming from another school. It can be from observations in the classroom, et cetera.

So, mid-immersion students have some use of social language use and they have some experience of learning in their home languages. And EAL learners with little or no English proficiency, fewer than two years of formal learning, will begin at Pathway BL.

But it's about really establishing what kind of literacy the student has... in terms of their home literacy, and then establishing where they might fit with their English literacy.

And, finally, with the Pathway C, which is late immersion,which is roughly Years 7 to 10... the students are older, therefore they have a different understanding of themselves in relation to different social contexts and they have different experiences about learning in the world.

So, this pathway is designed to cater to the students who are older and it provides different levels that then equate to the progress that we would expect for students who are progressing from roughly age 12 up to about...11 to 12, up to about age 15 to 16.

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