Effective Practice Guidelines: The Basics
English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Information for Educators

What background information is important?
- Level of fluency in English
- Country of birth
- Status (i.e., Canadian citizen, permanent resident, temporary resident, international students)
- Length of time in Canada/Saskatchewan
- English speaking contact information (e.g., name, phone number, relationship to student)
- School background of student
- Languages spoken

Which Saskatchewan students may require EAL supports?
- Students who speak another language(s) and are not fluent in English when they come to school. These students may include:
  - First Nations
  - Hutterite
  - Children of recent immigrants, refugees
  - Fee-paying and international students

How do we make our EAL students feel welcome?

Gather basic information about their previous location (e.g., languages spoken, climate, economic situation, political situation and cultural norms, etc.).

School Environment
1. Provide a welcoming atmosphere (i.e., have “welcome” in the student’s language in the school entrance and classroom).
2. If possible, have school expectations translated for parents/guardians (or have a translator available). When engaging parents of students from other countries and locations, understand that they may be going through various stages of adjustments themselves.
3. Encourage the sharing of culture and involve parents as much as possible.
4. Ensure students have access to appropriate social/emotional supports.
5. Have flags, map, or globes of various countries displayed in the school and in the classroom.
6. Celebrate cultural diversity every day in the school. Recognize cultural dates important to students and their families (e.g., Saskatchewan Multicultural Week (Nov. 22), International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21), and National Aboriginal Day (June 21).
7. Have a variety of "picture dictionaries", and a variety of bilingual dictionaries (in the language of the student) in the school library and in the student's classroom.
8. Have books about various cultures and countries available in the library.

Classroom Environment
9. Prepare the class with the new student’s name and as much information as possible about his/her previous location.
10. Learn the correct pronunciation of the student’s name.
11. Learn some survival words in the student’s language (e.g., hello, good-bye, lunch, how to count to 10, etc.)
12. Partner EAL students with a classroom ambassador (possibly someone who speaks the same language) who will show the new student the washrooms, gym, locker, library, etc.
13. Encourage continued use of the first language while students are acquiring English. The stronger the first language, the stronger the second. There are educational, social, and economic benefits to maintaining the student’s first language.
14. Respect the student’s "silent period" for up to 4 months. The EAL student may not speak for several months but is processing the sights and sounds of the new environment.

(Acknowledgements: Dr. Andrea Sterzuk, University of Regina; Joyce Vandall, EAL consultant)
### The Basics

#### Assessment and Placement
- Know purpose of the assessment.
- Place students with appropriate age/grade (for social, emotional, situational and linguistic needs).
- Initial and ongoing assessments should be conducted using instruments that have been examined for cultural and linguistic fairness.
- Continue to assess and monitor progress (e.g., using interviews, tests, checklists, portfolios, rating scales and inventories, language samples, etc.).
- Include dialogues with parents about assessment and placement whenever possible.

#### Conversational Language Skills

**Basic Interpersonal Communications Skills (BICS)**
- The language used for daily living
- Includes everyday conversational English, high frequency words
- May take 2-3 years to become proficient
- Remember, focus on fluency rather than grammatical accuracy

#### Academic Language Skills

**Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**
- The language used for education and instruction
- Involves content (subject specific) vocabulary
- Achieved by being immersed in content area study
- May take 5-7 years to become proficient
- Focus is on development of both fluency and accuracy

### Accessing Core Curriculum

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Affirm identity and culture</td>
<td>1. Communication is natural. Listening and speaking skills will come. Reading and writing need to be taught</td>
<td>1. Keep teaching as visual and concrete, as possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Put yourself in the shoes of the student...How would you feel?</td>
<td>2. Focus on meaning and content (communication comes first)</td>
<td>2. Scaffold content and meaning</td>
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<td>3. Place the student near the front of class, and away from auditory distractions</td>
<td>3. Explain the explicit rules that govern interaction (i.e., turn taking in conversation)</td>
<td>3. Employ the use of multiple literacies, (drawing, acting, computer, song)</td>
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<td>4. Focus on student’s strengths</td>
<td>4. Encourage global perspectives in class discussions (e.g., including country and culture)</td>
<td>4. Encourage the students to watch DVD productions of novels covered in class. Use graphic novels with visual supports if available</td>
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<td>5. Encourage the student just like you would anyone else who is attempting to speak a new language</td>
<td>5. Be conscious of the use of idioms and acronyms.</td>
<td>5. Give instructions in print/visual example on the board</td>
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<td>6. Accept a silent period while students are being acclimatized.</td>
<td>6. Give students the chance to provide and use their prior knowledge</td>
<td>6. When teaching writing, make it “real” (i.e., authentic with a real audience)</td>
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<td>7. Encourage students to use their first language, including development of reading and writing skills</td>
<td>7. Be aware of material and content that is culturally biased</td>
<td>7. Read to your class (all ages using visual supports and pre-teach vocabulary when possible)</td>
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<td>8. Gradually introduce opportunities for involvement.</td>
<td>8. Teach basic English/skills (i.e., asking for help, directions, etc.)</td>
<td>8. Draw attention to grammatical concepts (one at a time)</td>
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<td>9. EAL students can be a resource - use them WHEN they are ready and comfortable</td>
<td>9. Pre-teach key vocabulary to aid content learning</td>
<td>9. Model what is expected of students</td>
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<td>10. Allow the student to read and write in first language</td>
<td>10. Provide as many hands on experiences and manipulatives as possible</td>
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<td>11. Invite guest speakers who can be cultural role models whenever possible</td>
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<td>12. Give students multiple ways to demonstrate their learning</td>
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<td>13. Allow the use of first language dictionaries whenever possible</td>
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