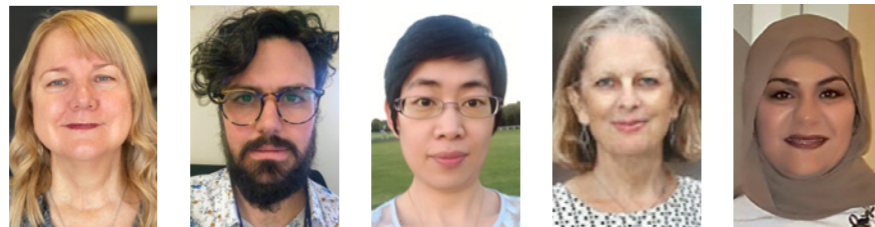**PEER REVIEWED RESEARCH**

Setting EAL/D students up for success at school: A diamond view

In this research article, Dr Lorraine Beveridge and a team of researchers explore evidence based teaching practices which support EAL/D students.

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Schools play a pivotal role in ensuring a successful future for students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). EAL/D students are a diverse group who enrich the classroom in multiple ways through their linguistic and cultural contributions. With increasing numbers of EAL/D students in both metropolitan and regional classrooms in Australia, addressing their varied language and literacy learning needs can be challenging for teachers. In this paper, academics, practitioners and parents of EAL/D students consider the challenges and opportunities that arise for teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse classes. Evidence based teaching practices which support EAL/D students are reviewed from multiple perspectives and presented here as a multifaceted 'diamond view'.

The globalisation of the workforce, alongside the Humanitarian Settlement Program (Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2019; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019) has led to an increasingly diverse student population in both urban and regional schools in Australia. This includes students from migrant and refugee families learning English, as well as students in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities learning Standard Australian English (SAE) as an additional language or dialect.

A diamond view

This paper considers EAL/D teaching from multiple perspectives which are diagrammatically presented as a 'diamond view' (figure 1). The multifaceted lens includes input from a curriculum support officer, EAL/D leader, university lecturers, an Aboriginal Education Languages manager and EAL/D parent, and provides a synopsis of their combined evidence based experiences in supporting teachers in setting EAL/D students up for success at school.
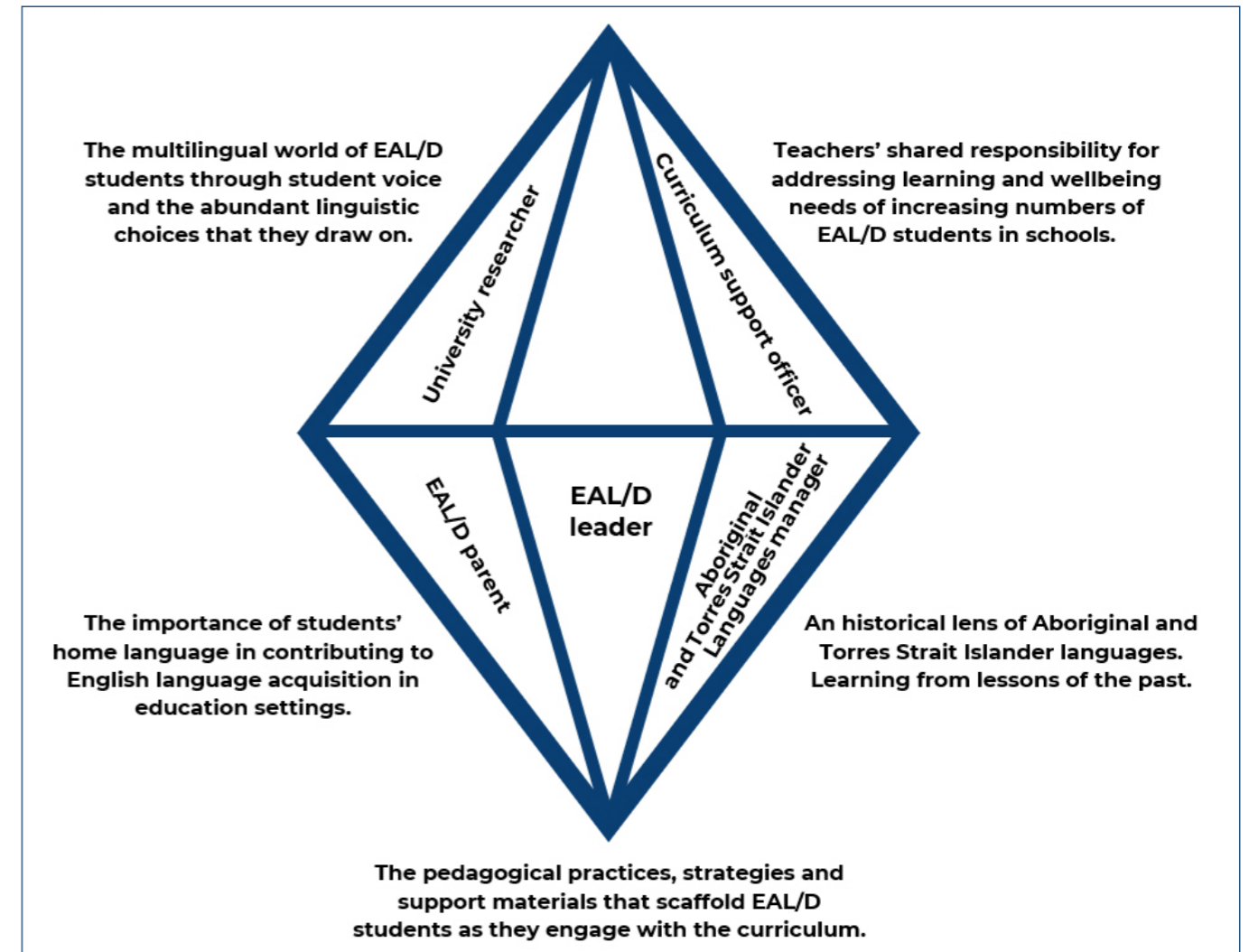

Figure 1: Setting EAL/D students up for success presented as a diamond view.

Each perspective offers a facet of the figurative diamond and together they display:
- the diversity represented by EAL/D learners and their potential contribution to Australia's future, and
- the varying insights that each researcher brings to the topic.

Initially, Lorri Beveridge outlines the collaboration required in meeting the language learning needs of EAL/D students, given that at some time, most Australian teachers will have EAL/D students in their classroom. Thus, all teachers share the responsibility of ensuring they have a sound understanding of the language learning needs of these students and related pedagogies, so they can best cater for the varied learning and wellbeing needs of EAL/D students in their classrooms.

Next, Henry Fraser points out the gravitas of learning lessons from the past relating to the emerging language learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The lessons he outlines include an understanding that the first languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people must continue to be recognised, respected, and utilised in classroom learning. As with all EAL/D learners, Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander students benefit from best practice teaching strategies, and these students have the right to access the educational opportunities afforded to all students to achieve success in academic English.

Of equal importance, Chaumei Dong provides a parental lens that focuses on valuing students' home languages and ensuring students have the best chance of success in learning English. She shares her confusion, echoed by many of her friends with EAL/D children entering formal education in Australia for the first time. Dong wishes for her child to remain multilingual but is concerned that keeping home languages alive may hinder or slow childrens' English language acquisition and impact success at school. English language acquisition is highly prized because it is regarded as a precursor for academic success, and because English is widely considered a global language.

Robyn Cox garners the voices of primary-aged EAL/D students in her research. She investigates their multilingual childhoods and the place of multiple languages in their lives. Her findings suggest that all students benefit when EAL/D students share their multilingual knowledge and experiences with the wider school population. The challenge for teachers is ensuring equitable, adequate and sufficient support both at home and in English languages classrooms.

Finally, the 'diamond view', suggested by Abby Saleh, is a pragmatic one. She shares the notion that many EAL/D students have experienced trauma in their migration journey and emphasizes the absolute importance of students feeling emotionally and socially safe, through schools collectively focusing on building trusting relationships between students, teachers, peers and the wider school community. Saleh asks teachers to self-reflect and seek out the additional learning they require, through personal research or engaging in relevant professional learning or further study. Such self-reflection, evaluation and ongoing professional learning is critical in ensuring the progress and achievement of every EAL/D student.

English as an additional language or dialect

The acronym EAL/D describes a diverse group of students learning English as an additional language or dialect (ACARA, 2014). This includes students whose first language is a language or dialect other than Standard English, a diverse group previously described as learning English as a second language (ESL), as well as those learning Standard Australian English (SAE) as an additional dialect, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who use one or more varieties of Aboriginal English as a first language (Eades, 2013). Students from these backgrounds require different levels of support to learn academic English at school, depending on their level of proficiency in SAE in general, and academic English in particular (Choudry, 2018; Hertzberg, 2012; Dobinson & Buchori, 2016).

Over half the world's population speaks more than one language (Hessel & Murphy, 2019; Choudry, 2018), a capability that has been shown to have cognitive and social advantages (Ward, 2019; Hessel & Murphy, 2019; Bialystok, Craik & Luk, 2012). Additionally, on arrival in Australian schools, EAL/D students often require support to help them develop proficiency in 'academic' English, the language variety students need to master in order to achieve educational success in Australia (ACARA, 2014; Hessel & Murphy, 2018; Bialystok, Craik & Luk, 2012; Hutchinson, Whitely, Smith & Connors, 2003).

Success at school is not only measured by academic learning. There is an increasing understanding of the importance of ensuring students' wellbeing as the foundation of academic achievement at

EAL/D students experience anxiety, low esteem and low motivation if they are exposed to written or spoken input they do not understand. These affective responses can impede academic learning, and thereby reinforces the importance of students feeling safe, valued and comfortable in the classroom if they are to learn successfully.

school (Roche, 2015; Graham, Powell & Truscott, 2016). The link between academic learning and student wellbeing has been modelled by Krashen (2009) using an 'affective filter hypothesis'. According to Krashen's hypothesis, EAL/D students experience anxiety, low esteem and low motivation if they are exposed to written or spoken input they do not understand. These affective responses can impede academic learning, and thereby reinforces the importance of students feeling safe, valued and comfortable in the classroom if they are to learn successfully. These affective variables are related to success in language acquisition.

Contextual commentary

The goal of all language learning is meaningful communication. Speakers of one or more languages, where one language is considered dominant (L1), are described using terms such as 'bilingual', 'trilingual' and 'multilingual'. The term 'plurilingualism' is increasingly used to recognise that multilingual

Drawing on students' entire repertoire of language resources, including multiple languages, dominant home languages, individual ways of speaking (idiolect) and use of gestures, has the potential to maximise learning and achievement.

speakers integrate all their linguistic and cultural experiences and resources when communicating (Bak & Mehmedbegovic, 2017; Coste, Moore & Zarate, 2009). This shift is reflected in a recent focus on the potential of translanguaging in education (Cox, 2015; Garcia, 2011, 2017).

Translanguaging accounts for the resourceful use of a full language repertoire, by those who speak more than one language in response to features of the context, for example, the purpose of the communication and the audience. In other words, students who use more than one language select from their entire verbal and non-verbal repertoire (words, gestures, technology tools), to make meaning which best facilitates understanding in each context (Pennycook, 2014).

Drawing on students' entire repertoire of language resources, including multiple languages, dominant home languages, individual ways of speaking (idiolect) and use of gestures, has the potential to maximise learning and achievement (Garcia, 2011; Bloomaert, 2010; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Haig, Konigsberg & Collard, 2005). A student's first language is both the foundation and a resource for learning additional languages and additional language learning benefits from first language maintenance (ACARA, 2014; Adoniou & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Hessel & Murphy, 2019). For example, students who are literate in their first language can apply this knowledge and skill to achieving literacy in English. Students' existing linguistic and cultural capital is valued and used in the classroom when teachers provide opportunities for students to use their first language (L1) to learn academic English.

For EAL/D students, developing the proficiency in English required for success at school takes time. In general, it takes about two years to attain functional use of an additional language, and five to seven years to attain academic proficiency in the language (Baker & Wright, 2017; Cummins, 2008; Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000). The younger a student is on arrival in Australia, the less time it takes to achieve parity with similar aged peers, while older school students tend to take longer to achieve language parity (Creagh et al., 2019), highlighting the need for additional language learning support for older, new arrival students. The English language proficiency of EAL/D students, and their educational achievement in Australia, varies greatly and depends on prior schooling, supportive home environments and the level of development in the home language. Some EAL/D students may require more support than others.

To succeed at school, EAL/D students need to develop two varieties of language. These are basic interpersonal communication skill (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2008; Baker & Wright, 2017). BICS, sometimes called 'playground language' (Herzberg, 2012), refers to the informal conversational

English students learn through interacting with their peers. CALP, in contrast, refers to the more challenging language use required for educational success. While BICS is typically used in context-embedded face-to-face exchanges with much nonverbal support, CALP tends to be more specialised and abstract, and more removed from supportive contexts (Baker & Wright, 2017). CALP takes longer for EAL/D students to acquire than BICS, and often requires specialist EAL/D support.

Classroom teachers share with specialist EAL/D teachers the responsibility of meeting the language learning needs of EAL/D students. At some time, every Australian teacher will have EAL/D students in their classroom. Up to 2020, the number of EAL/D students in schools has been increasing each year. Teachers share the responsibility of ensuring that they have a sound understanding of the language learning needs of these students, and related pedagogies, so they can best cater for the varied learning and wellbeing needs of this diverse and significant student group.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D: a brief historical overview

In Queensland, over 11,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have been identified as having a language background other than English, and therefore potentially requiring EAL/D support. This number has nearly doubled over the past four years, largely due to an awareness campaign and improved enrolment practices. It is suspected that many of the over 61,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remain unidentified; and therefore unsupported. These students have various language backgrounds including some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and many under-researched and often mislabelled varieties, including Aboriginal English, Cape York Languages, and simply English to describe a range of varieties of English, from standard varieties to non-standard and creole varieties.

Teaching English as an additional language for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners is the oldest field of English language teaching in the country. During the 1790s, Bennelong famously learned English and actively worked with Governor Phillip. Before this, in 1788, Arabanoo was captured and unwillingly learned English to support the work of the colonisers. Nearly two decades earlier, Joseph Banks worked to document the languages he encountered while mapping the east coast of Australia – the start of a long and still ongoing project to understand the complexity, variety and uniqueness of First Nations languages.

These moments of language exchange capture the essence of what was to come in Australia, including the dominance of English, a mixture of active, passive and unwilling engagement with learning and using it, and occasional, anthropologically recorded exchanges and interest which set the scene for 'two-way' learning approaches centuries later.

During the 19th century, language became an essential means for Aboriginal people to engage in the changing economy of the continent. Aboriginal people from many language groups began to learn English for their own purposes. Nevertheless, the lack of access to formal education for Aboriginal people, the reduced purposes and restricted domains for using English available to Aboriginal people, and the widespread use of shipboard pidgin[1] in the early colony resulted, unsurprisingly, in a pidgin soon developing in the colony. This early contact language was largely based on English vocabulary.

[1] A pidgin is a limited form of language that is developed as a result of the communicative needs of groups who speak different languages (Dutton, 1983; Bakker, 2014).

Later described as NSW Pastoral Pidgin, this pidgin language variety was used by Aboriginal people and others working in the pastoral industry as it spread through what is now NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory (Dutton, 1983). In conjunction with the spread of Pastoral Pidgin, in Western Queensland particularly, there is a well-documented history of violent massacres (Bottoms, 2013). Aboriginal people were murdered, moved to missions, reserves and town fringe camps, or joined the industry that was reshaping their ancestral lands, while also learning and adding to the pidgin that came with so much rapid change and disruption (Sutton, Hinkson & Beckett, 2008; Dutton, 1969). This pidgin, in effect, was the only variety of 'English' that many Aboriginal people could access and was used for communication with the coloniser and between Aboriginal language groups.

During the early 20th century, English language learning continued a parallel path for many Aboriginal people. Under the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897, many people came under greater control of missionaries and government officials. This often included the explicit restriction of the use of Aboriginal languages. Even though Aboriginal people were expected to use English, access to and explicit teaching of standard English was limited and sporadic. Mission and reserve schools generally focused on giving students enough basic education to enable them to work as low or unpaid servants in homesteads or stations. During this time, through regular use within Aboriginal families and communities, various pidgins, spoken as a first language, developed into creoles, that is, full languages with complete meaning systems which children learned as their first language (Bakker, 2014). These creoles have a shared Aboriginal and English linguistic inheritance but with some variation in linguistic features (Mushin, Angelo and Munro, 2016).

Torres Strait Islander people

Torres Strait Islander people also have a mixed history of learning English. The Torres Strait Island variety of English, called Yumplatok, or Pacific Pidgin English, is the result of many people actively attempting to learn the 'English' they were exposed to following colonisation (Shnukal, 2004). In generations that followed, Torres Strait Islanders discovered that this variety was not the language of government and power they sought to learn, so as to understand 'what the language of the "white" people and their institutions do that keeps [them] at a disadvantage, that keeps [them] as the lesser "knowers" in situations' (Nakata, 2007).

The use of pidgins and creoles alongside limited access and no opportunity to learn Standard Australian English continued throughout the second half of the 20th century. Flint (1968) was one of the first to use the term 'Aboriginal English', while describing the contact language varieties spoken by Aboriginal children at school in Woorabinda, Palm Island, Yarrabah and elsewhere. This term is now applied to many varieties with varying degrees of shared linguistic heritage, structure, phonology, and relationship to Standard Australian English. Following others like Sharifian (2001) and Eades (2013), Malcom (2018) defines Aboriginal English in terms of shared cultural conceptualisations and lists some of the most common structural and phonological features.

Some of the earliest work in response to the English language or dialect learning needs of Aboriginal children in an English language education system was undertaken by Flint (1968), whose report to the Queensland government proposed options for 'integrating' Aboriginal children into mainstream education. However, his approach was decidedly assimilationist. Having recognised the existence of new languages, he suggested eradicating them and replacing them with English, supposedly for the benefit of their speakers.

In the decades that followed various responses to the language backgrounds and language learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have been implemented, alongside a growing focus on their learning needs. These have ranged from the assimilatory, replacive monolingual model, through additive bi- or multilingual/dialectal models with a focus on code-switching, to the more recent preoccupation with plurilingualism, translanguaging, and the aspiration to move towards a genuinely celebratory multilingual society where standard English language skills are not a precondition for success or participation (Parkinson & Jones, 2019).

Learning from the past

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to learn from the past and attempt to apply this knowledge to the future. Such lessons include:

- Attempting to erase, replace or remove languages and dialects in favour of English is not just unethical, it is also a barrier to the future educational success of children whose cultural heritage is expressed in these languages. The first languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people must be recognised, respected and used in classroom learning.
- English needs to be explicitly taught, using best-practice language teaching methods, if students are to learn to use it fluently and effectively.
- Like all EAL/D learners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have the right to engage with opportunities to learn Standard Australian English and academic English, to access the power and opportunities associated with these varieties.

> **The first languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people must be recognised, respected and used in classroom learning … Like all EAL/D learners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also have the right to engage with opportunities to learn Standard Australian English and academic English, to access the power and opportunities associated with these varieties.**

The experiences and advice detailed elsewhere in this paper are applicable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners. If these basic principles are not followed in EAL/D teaching practice, particularly for speakers of English-lexified contact languages or non-standard varieties of English, there is a risk of repeating history, devaluing and destroying existing languages. This would maintain the power imbalance rather than advantaging multilingual citizens, empowering those with multiple languages to share their perspectives and experiences, and to learn to use Standard Australian English in the contexts in which it is required.

EAL/D students in schools: a parent's view

Though bilingualism, or multilingualism, is believed to be beneficial for children, families and the wider community, the importance of supporting children to grow up multilingually in a monolingual English-speaking country like Australia is not always valued or recognised (Hu, Torr & Whiteman, 2014). Many children from immigrant family backgrounds have already developed language proficiency in their home language before they enter Australian educational settings. Whether these children will eventually become bilingual or multilingual or lose their home language and become mainly English speakers, is influenced by many factors, including parents' attitudes (Hu et al., 2014) and language practices (Lan, Torr & Degotardi, 2012).

A recent study of Chinese immigrants, one of the largest ethnic groups in Australia, determined that parents value bilingualism highly and actively support their children in developing bilingual skills prior to school (Hu et al., 2014). On the one hand, Chinese parents have a strong desire for their children to become bilingual for practical reasons such as future careers and to enable communication between family members. On the other hand, they share concerns about their children's English language development during the early years of education and are worried about whether their children will be able to understand their teachers fully by the time they enter primary school. It appears that learning multiple languages concurrently can be a dilemma for families with EAL/D backgrounds as some parents are unsure whether knowledge of a first language can help or hinder

> **… the importance of supporting children to grow up multilingually in a monolingual English-speaking country like Australia is not always valued or recognised.**

the development of learning a second language. Some parents believe that home languages can negatively affect their children's English learning, including English pronunciation (Hu et.al, 2014). For these reasons, the parents desire that their children learn English during the years

prior to school. It is not too difficult to understand and empathise with these immigrant parents' concerns and expectations. For parents around the world, proficiency in English is a highly valued aspect of children's school readiness and predictor of future success because of the status of English as a global language (Lan et al., 2012).

In addition, many EAL/D families feel that they do not receive effective and practical support from educational settings for teaching and maintaining the home language (Law, 2015). Apart from programs such as the Australian Early Learning Language program, and schools like the NSW Community Language Schools, EAL/D children generally have limited opportunities to hear, speak and learn their home language in educational settings (National Centre for Multilingual Education, 2012). Most of these children will primarily hear and speak their first language at home but prefer to use English as the language of communication outside their home environments. This places high demands on the parents, who along with educators in early years settings and schools, need to work towards stimulating children's development in their home languages.

Understanding children's multilingual development, and support in educational settings can help preserve home languages (Law, 2015). EAL/D families are concerned about the loss of their heritage language, but 'most feel alone, helpless, and inadequate' (Law, 2015, p 3) in addressing the issue of maintaining the home language while supporting their children's English acquisition. This highlights the importance of developing parents' understanding of multilingual education and supporting them to gain knowledge and skills to aid their children's multilingual learning.

> **… it can take the whole of the primary school years for young EAL/D children to achieve academically at the same level as their English-speaking peers.**

EAL/D children not only face the risk of losing their home language, but also encounter barriers to gaining competencies in learning Standard English in educational environments. As stated previously (Baker & Wright, 2017; Cummins, 2008; Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000), it can take the whole of the primary school years for young EAL/D children to achieve academically at the same level as their English-speaking peers. This suggests that EAL/D students must overcome significant challenges to succeed in English-speaking educational contexts (Creagh et al., 2019). Specifically, EAL/D children face challenges in developing academic English and engaging with increasingly abstract and complex curriculum knowledge. In an English dominant society, the degree to which educators, families, and communities can provide EAL/D children with equitable, adequate and sufficient support for both home and English languages is the key to them successfully becoming bilingual or multilingual (Creagh et al., 2019). To be able to support EAL/D students, it is crucial that adults, especially parents and educators, have a clear understanding of multilingual education and EAL/D students' needs, so as to inform their engagement with multilingual children and to be able to work collaboratively to address the issues that arise from multilingual practices.

Multilingual world of the children in our classrooms

In order to set EAL/D students up for success, educators need to consider the teaching/learning context from the perspective of the learner. Oftentimes, the student's own perspective is ignored or downplayed in the light of teachers' intentions or prescribed learning outcomes. Also, at times, schools and systems rely on an 'outmoded idea' of the language use of their students based on an 'immigration' model which was prevalent at the end of last century. This model suggests that EAL/D students are still seen as being newly arrived or new to the English language and thus present a problem that needs to be solved, or a gap that needs to be closed. A recent study (Cox, 2015) aimed to examine more closely the perspective of EAL/D learners in schools by engaging directly with a sample of students and asking them about their 'linguistic lives'.

This study explored the language use of a small sample of primary-aged children who speak English and another language or languages. The study design incorporated the 'children as co-researcher model' (Lundy,

McEvoy & Byrne, 2011), as the researcher wanted to explore the lived experiences of multilingual learners in Australian classrooms. The study took place with ethics approval from both the researcher's university and the school system.

The findings of the study revealed the rich and sophisticated linguistic lives of these EAL/D learners and suggest that these language skills and understandings were rarely used or valued in the teaching and learning contexts they were familiar with. When interviews with the 17 participating students were analysed, four broad themes emerged. A review of these themes suggests knowledge, strategies, and tools teachers of EAL/D students' can use to support successful teaching and learning in their classrooms.

These four themes suggest that EAL/D learners in schools already have:
- meta-awareness of language and identity links
- emerging understanding of the role of language in their education
- significant understanding of what it means to have a global childhood
- metalinguistic awareness of how to go about learning and consolidating a new language

By assuming that many of the EAL/D students also have these insights, it is possible to broaden the framing of the way they are taught. Furthermore, when considering these insights in relation to the work of Blommaert (2010), in which he identifies a shift in sociolinguistics from the sociolinguistics of variation to a sociolinguistics of mobility reflecting an increasingly globalised world, it is likely that these learners have thought a lot about the place of multiple languages in their lives.

Classroom practice which recognises learners' multilingual lives

The following offers a partial discussion of a study reported by Cox (2015), which explores bilingual and multilingual children's understanding of language usage and the linguistic choices that they make. The findings indicate how teachers can appreciate and work with the 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) embedded in these students' multilingual ability.

Theme (i): Meta-awareness of language and identity links
Student comments
- 'In the house I always speak Cantonese but sometimes when I like don't know the word in Cantonese I just say it in English. My Mum and my family always understand.'
- 'Vietnamese, French, Japanese, English, Croatian, Chinese, Korean … all the languages in the world … because I want them to learn different languages so if they travel they can understand.'

Possible ways of incorporating existing abilities
- explicit valuing of other languages through discussions, story reading and labelling (beyond the already common welcome signs)
- accepting other words for common items including words from other languages
- building library collections in languages of the school community
- using SBS programs in languages within the mainstream
- studying language groups and sociolinguistics formally, including Indigenous languages, language families and identification of languages with the largest numbers of speakers in the world.

Theme (ii): Emerging understanding of the role of language in their education
Student comments
- 'I learnt Slovak because my parents they weren't speaking English to me. They … Slovak a lot and then when I was in preschool, I learnt how to speak English.'
- 'I went to school when I was in China, so I learned to write it. Say when I was in Year 2, when I was in school here. But in China, when I was Year 2, we have English lessons when we go there. But in China we speak Chinese even in English lessons.'

Possible ways of incorporating existing abilities
- focusing on how we learn languages and how vocabulary builds from Tier 1, 2 and 3 words
- explicit teaching about ways that spoken language becomes written language, including the more formal aspects of grammar and spelling, while comparing with language that use an orthography

Theme (iii): Significant understanding of what it means to have a global childhood
Student comments
- 'I would speak to them in Greek and teach them English, so like one day if there something goes wrong and there is no work – then they can come here.'

Possible ways of incorporating existing abilities
- a school wide valuing of multilingualism, through library collections and film days, national days that foreground language as well as national dress or costume
- recognising that there are large nations and economies which operate without the use of the English language.

Theme (iv): Metalinguistic awareness of how to go about learning and consolidating a new language
Student comments
- 'When it comes to my head like if it's – if I have to say something to my father or my mother; if it comes in Greek quicker to my head I can say it but if it comes quicker in English I can say it.'

Possible ways of incorporating existing abilities
- active classroom discussions and games which focus on metacognition and on how languages are learnt
- classroom bingo and memory games where both English and mother tongue languages are accepted (supported by bilingual teachers, and multilingual teacher aides).

Setting EAL/D learners up for success requires consideration of the 'intercultural turn' (Thorn, 2010), which is the effect of living global lives, alongside the emergence of government policy which attempts to reconcile immigration, language difference and education and the transnational literacies which exist in multilingual classrooms. Importantly for EAL/D learner success, Portes and Zhou (1993) have noted that it is among the second (and third) generation that issues such as maintenance of language, cultural traditions and ethnic identity are decided.

Key principles for supporting the language needs of EAL/D students including refugee students

The migration journey is often a traumatic experience for students, especially those from a refugee background. In supporting the learning needs of students, wellbeing must be at the forefront of any support strategy. It is vital that teachers ensure that students feel welcomed into their new learning environment which is often in vast contrast to educational settings they are accustomed to. Teachers need to take positive steps to ensure that their students feel safe (both emotionally and socially), and to foster trusting relationships so the students

> **In supporting the learning needs of students, wellbeing must be at the forefront of any support strategy.**

develop attachments to their teachers, peers and the school community. In doing so, teachers establish optimal conditions and environments where learning can flourish.

Few classrooms exist in Australia where there are no EAL/D students. These students have very diverse backgrounds, experiences, English language proficiencies and cultural capital. Whilst intensive support for students with limited English is an important feature of EAL/D education, all teachers must have the mindset of collective responsibility for language acquisition. For primary schools this includes mainstream teachers, as they teach EAL/D students for the majority of the school day, and for secondary teachers, it means that ALL subject area teachers understand the role they play in language instruction. For teachers to truly be able to design well-targeted learning experiences for culturally and linguistically diverse students, they must possess a certain level of professional knowledge, develop explicit professional practices and foster certain mindsets to ensure effective language learning.

Not all teachers have had the necessary training to address the needs of EAL/D students. Consequently, it is essential that teachers identify areas for further development. In doing so, they may seek the professional learning required to build their capacity (such as engaging in personal research, enlisting in professional development course or further study). When teachers develop their specialised knowledge of EAL/D education and pedagogy, they reinforce their capacity to support the efficacy of their colleagues by transmitting this knowledge to others who may need additional professional support in teaching EAL/D students. Often, the best form of professional learning occurs through collegial and collaborative professional discussions and incidental workplace learning.

Mainstream teachers may request pedagogical support to cater for the needs of EAL/D learners. Identification of who EAL/D learners are, and assessment of their language proficiency, is the first port of call for any teacher supporting EAL/D students. There is a range of useful support materials for teachers of EAL/D students to use as a guide for their practice. In particular, the EAL/D Learning Progression (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2014), which is used in some states, has proven useful in guiding teachers and schools by providing a description of the stages through which students usually pass as they move toward English language proficiency.

The nomenclature of the EAL/D Learning Progression (ACARA, 2014) is regarded as a 'common language' shared by EAL/D specialists and mainstream educators to describe student language proficiency. Teachers must recognise that learning a new language takes time. The time

> **It is important for teachers to be patient with their EAL/D students' progress with English whilst maintaining high expectations.**

taken to move from one level to the next is dependent on several factors, including each student's previous educational experience and students' literacy skills in their first language. For refugee students who have experienced trauma or disrupted schooling, this time frame extends substantially, possibly to around ten years. Similarly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students requiring EAL/D assistance, whose language learning needs often go unrecognised and unsupported, may attend a mainstream English-only school for several years without progressing beyond the developing or even emerging stages. It is important for teachers to be patient with their EAL/D students' progress with English whilst maintaining high expectations (DeCourcy et al., 2018; Herzberg, 2012; Hammond, 2012).

Teachers of EAL/D students must also recognise and acknowledge the cultural capital which these students bring to the classroom. The term 'cultural capital' refers to those cultural elements that help students succeed at school, including family background, status, taste and cultural resources (Bourdieu, 1986; Di

> **EAL/D students … bring knowledge, experience and orientations to learning into the classroom that, if recognised and valued by teachers and peers, will enrich the curriculum, and expand and extend the learning repertoires of EAL/D students …**

Maggio, 1982). A student's cultural capital is usually developed across different educational contexts. There are times when their cultural capital can help promote their learning and the learning of others. For example, students may be well travelled, or have lived in societies vastly different to their Australian contexts. When students share these experiences, others can develop a deep knowledge, understanding and appreciation of different cultures. Conversely, EAL/D students may have limited knowledge of aspects of Australian culture, which can impact their learning. For example, EAL/D students may not be familiar with common nursery rhymes, which children from the dominant culture in Australia learn from a very young age. EAL/D students may also bring with them learning skills such as memorising, which served them well in schools in their home country but may not be valued to the same extent in Australia where many classrooms are underpinned by pedagogies based on constructivism, a view that students learn more by doing than by rote learning. These students bring knowledge, experience and orientations to learning into the classroom that, if recognised and valued by teachers and peers, will enrich the curriculum, and expand and extend the learning repertoires of EAL/D students in ways that will lead to success in their new educational context.

EAL/D students are learning English, through English, and about English simultaneously. When compared with students who are developing their English skills in their first language, EAL/D students face additional challenges, first needing to learn how to use the language to communicate successfully and to interact formally and informally within their immediate environment. They learn through English as they access the mainstream curriculum in carefully designed programs which make key knowledges, skills and language visible. Finally, students learn about English, how it works, how to use it, and how it acts as a resource in classrooms where language itself becomes the focus for explicit instruction (Halliday, 1980; 2004).

Strategies for English competence in the classroom

A key strategy in valuing the cultural capital that EAL/D students bring to school is developing an inclusive curriculum where diversity is valued and celebrated. This may be achieved through text selection, including the use of bilingual books and texts which represent diversity through stories and illustrations. Parkin and Harper (2019) stress the importance of selecting quality literature in the classroom that 'represents the lives of our minority students' (p 8), so all students can identify, understand and engage with characters and plots in texts. Teachers may also consider using the child's first language (L1) in the classroom, especially during discussions when EAL/D students are confirming or clarifying ideas, or seeking support (ACARA, 2014; Adoniou & Maken-Horarik, 2007; Hessell & Murphy, 2019). Teachers must understand the benefits bilingualism brings to the classroom and harness them.

Best practice in supporting EAL/D learners is established based on several key conditions. These include oral language development, learning through contextualised experiences, scaffolding and modelling language, message abundancy, zone of proximal development and explicit vocabulary instruction (ACARA, 2014; Beck, 2014; Herzberg, 2012). These teaching strategies can be augmented with strategies that support the language learning needs of EAL/D students, including the use of visuals, integration of interactive technologies, and providing timely and constructive feedback, all useful inclusions in teaching repertoires that contribute to effective EAL/D education.

Concluding discussion

It is clear from each of the varying facets of the EAL/D teaching 'diamond view', as outlined in this paper, that given the increasing number and diversity of EAL/D students in mainstream Australian classrooms, all teachers share responsibility for addressing these students' learning and wellbeing needs. Teachers can be reassured that EAL/D students typically arrive at school with an existing rich linguistic repertoire of one or more languages, a diverse range of global experience, intercultural competence and social capital, all of which they can apply to the learning of the English they need to succeed at school. A student's first language is a valuable resource for educators to draw on as students acquire both second and subsequent languages. The linguistic resources and cultural capital students bring to school provide a foundation on which they develop forms of English language knowledge and skill that guarantee their success in Australian education settings (Albright & Luke, 2006).

Whilst developing academic English, EAL/D students may experience challenges, for example, when engaging with increasingly abstract and complex curriculum concepts as they progress through school. To help their children meet these challenges, some parents of EAL/D students are unsure whether they should strive to keep their children's first language alive. In an English-dominant society, such as Australia today, the degree to which educators and schools provide EAL/D children and their families with adequate support for both their home language and English is the key to their success at school (Creagh et al., 2019). The aim of language learning is effective communication, therefore moving towards a genuine multilingual society where all languages are valued is an important pursuit.

> **Teachers can be reassured that EAL/D students typically arrive at school with an existing rich linguistic repertoire of one or more languages, a diverse range of global experience, intercultural competence and social capital, all of which they can apply to the learning of the English they need to succeed at school.**

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Lorri's current role is curriculum advisor, supporting schools in curriculum implementation. Her PhD research centres on *Collaborative teacher professional learning: investigating impact and sustainability* (2015). Recent papers for teachers encompass publications and co-publications for English, including those focusing on the alphabetic principle, writing, spelling, collaborative teacher professional learning and teachers as researchers and practitioners. Lorri particularly enjoys collaborating with teachers on writing English units using the vehicle of quality texts.

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Henry Fraser manages the Languages and Cultures team in the Queensland Department of Education. This team supports teachers to improve their cultural responsiveness, engage with the Cross Curriculum Priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, and respond to the language learning needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. He has published research in EAL/D for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the early years, and worked with Aboriginal language centres in Queensland and Western Australia to support Language Owners in the maintenance, revival and reclamation of their First Nations languages.
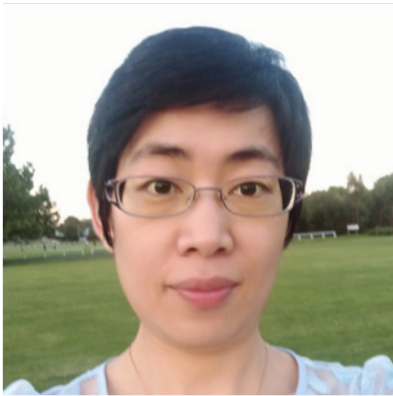
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