



# **Supporting Students with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Backgrounds:**

**Effectively Implementing the Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL) Policy, the Service Delivery Model (SDM) for newcomer students, students with CLD backgrounds, and students in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) Programs**

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

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## General considerations for welcoming and educating students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

### Unique student backgrounds

Schools in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) are enriched by many students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These students bring with them a wide range of experiences and cultural, linguistic, religious, academic and other backgrounds which form part of their unique identity and learning profile.

**Note:** In this document, the term students with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds is used to include students with all the potential related student backgrounds listed in Table 1 (e.g., English language learners (ELLs), students with refugee backgrounds). Where specific sub-profiles are relevant (e.g., students in the Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) program), they are indicated.

### Some potential effects of student backgrounds on learning

Like all students, students with CLD backgrounds have a wide range of unique strengths, assets, experiences and learning styles, which can impact a student's learning. Table 1 outlines potential impacts of these factors and this document outlines strategies and procedures to address any learning effects.

### Identifying students eligible for the EAL or LEARN programs

The need for EAL or LEARN initial evaluation/assessment should be determined when the student is registering for school and will depend on two features of the student's background: 1) the language spoken at home and 2) the student's educational history.

Students registering for school may require an initial assessment based on:

**Language Spoken at Home** – If a student does not speak English at home, an initial EAL language proficiency evaluation/assessment must be conducted. For students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs), the initial evaluation/assessment should include an evaluation/assessment of first language (L1) literacy.

**Educational History** – If a student has missed two or more years of schooling due to refugee or migratory experiences, a LEARN initial evaluation/assessment of mathematics, general academic skills and L1 literacy must be conducted.

The results of the assessment, conducted by a member of the Multicultural Education team, determine the need for EAL and/or LEARN programming. Families are to be informed of the initial assessment plan.

**Note:** Some students who speak a language other than English at home may not require EAL instruction because they have an English proficiency level above that taught in the EAL program. They may nevertheless benefit from the use of scaffolds and strategies appropriate for ELLs during curriculum-area instruction. See Table A1 in the Appendix for scaffolds and strategies./

**Table 1: Sample Student Backgrounds and Implications for Learning**

Student Background	Implications for Learning
<b>Students with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Backgrounds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different cultural, racial or ethnic group from the dominant population</li> <li>• May or may not speak English as a first language</li> <li>• May be born in Canada or abroad</li> </ul>	<b>Cultural differences between home and school</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families may view education and teacher roles differently</li> <li>• Need for respectful, culturally responsive communication and family involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Newcomer Students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrived in Canada within the last seven years</li> <li>• May or may not speak English as a first language</li> </ul>	<b>Culture shock and adjustment challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May need time to adapt to new routines and environment and traverse the stages of culture shock</li> <li>• Can be supported by interaction with peers and extracurricular activities</li> </ul> <b>Differences in education systems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have completed indicators above or below Canadian grade level</li> </ul>
<b>English Language Learners (ELLs)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not speak English at home</li> </ul>	<b>Level of English proficiency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May struggle with academic English in prescribed curriculum</li> <li>• Benefit from scaffolding and EAL support in general education classes</li> <li>• Progress should be monitored and compared to peers with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds</li> </ul>
<b>Students in the EAL Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessed/evaluated and determined to require EAL instruction to succeed in prescribed curriculum</li> </ul>	<b>EAL Instruction and classroom support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive EAL instruction and support</li> <li>• Require classroom strategies to support English language learning in general education classes</li> <li>• Require scaffolding and EAL strategies to support content learning in general education classes</li> </ul>
<b>Students with Refugee Backgrounds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrived in Canada under refugee and humanitarian pathways (e.g., GARs, CUAET, asylum seekers)</li> </ul>	<b>Trauma and displacement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have experienced trauma (e.g., war, loss, violence, starvation, poverty)</li> <li>• Will have experienced displacement</li> <li>• May experience impacts on learning due to trauma</li> <li>• May require referrals to support services</li> </ul>
<b>Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFEs)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had no access to schooling due to refugee or migration experiences</li> </ul>	<b>Gaps in education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lack academic readiness or familiarity with schooling routines</li> <li>• May need instruction in foundational skills</li> <li>• Bring valuable life experience and strengths</li> </ul>
<b>Students in LEARN Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newcomer SIFEs with more than two years of missed schooling</li> <li>• Assessed/evaluated and determined to require literacy and numeracy (LEARN) instruction to succeed in prescribed curriculum</li> </ul>	<b>Foundational skills instruction and support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive instruction in foundational academic and content skills (i.e., LEARN program)</li> <li>• Instruction bridges significant gaps in prior education</li> </ul>

## Home/School Communication

Schools must convey information to newcomer families as effectively as for students in the general population. Steps should be taken to ensure that school information has been appropriately shared and accurately understood, particularly when communicating with families who are learning English or are new to the NL school system. Translation and interpretation services should be provided when necessary, particularly for health and safety matters.

### Communicating with parents/guardians

Any language and cultural differences should be considered, especially when discussing sensitive topics. Cultural norms, attitudes and practices related to privacy, personal information sharing, physical, mental and sexual health and relationships to family, friends, peers, teachers and authority may affect interactions. Professional interpreters may be required, in which case confidentiality of student information must be maintained.

### Acquiring informed consent

Obtaining informed consent from families with CLD backgrounds, especially those who are learning English, requires careful attention and adequate time to ensure parents/guardians understand all processes and the implications of giving consent. A professional interpreter can aid in this process; however, all procedures governing confidentiality of information must apply if an interpreter is used. Schools must take steps to:

- minimize possible misunderstandings due to language and/or cultural differences;
- offer flexible scheduling for meetings, including longer or multiple meetings;
- explain the Canadian educational system and student services, as needed, and
- ensure confidentiality of student information.

For detailed guidelines on comprehensive assessment for students with CLD backgrounds, see the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) document *Guidelines for the Comprehensive Assessment of Students with CLD Backgrounds*.

## Documentation

Lack of documentation must not delay student registration or access to schooling. Schools should provide timely assessments and services, even if transcripts and educational or medical records are unavailable.

Common challenges regarding documentation include:

- Students with refugee backgrounds may have left the home country quickly and may arrive without any documents.
- Newcomer students may arrive with education or medical documents in a language other than English. The process of document translation must not delay access to programming or services.
- Students who have recently arrived may have limited records and documents available in their school files and may not yet have a cumulative file.
- Cultural differences in access to or perception of educational supports and services may result in a lack of documentation available from the home country.

Where required, families must be supported to access certified translation services and/or to access new medical and educational assessments, as needed.

For K-6 students in the EAL program, and 7-9 students not enrolled in EAL courses, but who attended NL schools in prior years, the *ESL Learning Plan* ([Grade K-6/ Grade 7-9](#)) will be found in the student's cumulative file.

## Supporting students in the EAL and LEARN programs in prescribed curriculum

### EAL and LEARN: Overview of programs and student placement

The EAL program supports students who speak a language other than English at home and, as determined by initial evaluation/assessment by a member of the EAL programming team, require English language instruction in order to succeed in the prescribed curriculum.

The student's English proficiency does not influence the choice of grade placement - students are placed in an age-appropriate grade. EAL and other supports as needed are provided to support the student in the prescribed curriculum.

Some newcomer students will have had interrupted formal education, with no access to schooling for a period of over two years, due to refugee or migration experiences. SIFEs are evaluated/assessed by a member of the EAL or LEARN programming team to determine whether they require support in academic and content skill development in order to succeed in the prescribed curriculum.

SIFEs are placed in an age-appropriate grade. In occasional extreme cases, such as if a student in junior high or high school has had no prior schooling, with the parents'/guardians' consent, administration may consider placing the student a grade-level behind their age group. In this case, all factors such as physical size, maturity, and likelihood of social integration should be considered. When a student is placed in a grade level higher than the student's academic achievement level, a plan for literacy and numeracy catch-up, including EAL, LEARN and/or other supports, must be put in place.

#### EAL Program

**K-6:** EAL instruction is part of universal instruction for students in the EAL program and is guided by the [Guidelines for the Delivery of ESL Services in K-6](#). EAL instruction is provided by an EAL teacher and is determined according to the student's English proficiency level and other relevant aspects of the student's learning profile. EAL instruction will usually involve direct language skills instruction and ongoing evaluation/assessment, and may include in-class support, student monitoring, and/or classroom/subject teacher consultation/collaboration. See Section B in the Appendix for more information.

**7-12:** EAL courses, listed below, are available at the junior high and high school levels. These courses are intended to support students' English language development while they undertake prescribed-curriculum courses.

**Table 2 EAL courses**

Junior High	High School
Four EAL courses are available at Grades 7-9: EAL Foundation EAL 1 for the Intermediate School In pilot: EAL 2 for the Intermediate School EAL 3 for the Intermediate School	Five EAL courses are available at Grades 10-12: EAL Foundation (non-credit) EAL 1205 (two optional language arts credits) EAL 2205 (two core language arts credits) EAL 3205 (two core language arts credits) EAL 3206 (two optional language arts credits)

For more information on the delivery of EAL programming, see Section B in the Appendix, which provides guidance on the role of the EAL teacher, student eligibility for EAL programming, exiting the EAL program, models of program delivery and effective scheduling and grouping of students. Curriculum Guides are available through the eNLighTenED Curriculum Port.

## LEARN program

The LEARN program supports students who have missed two or more years of schooling due to refugee or migration experiences and who require instruction in foundational academic skills and background knowledge in order to succeed in the prescribed curriculum. LEARN courses, listed below, are divided into two levels.

- **LEARN 1** courses are primary to lower elementary-level courses that may be offered at the elementary, junior high and high school levels.
- **LEARN 2** courses include four academic enabling courses in curriculum areas.

These courses help students develop academic skills while taking prescribed curriculum courses, with support. In Newfoundland and Labrador, LEARN students also receive EAL instruction.

**Table 3 LEARN courses**

LEARN Courses
LEARN 1 Language Arts
LEARN 1 Mathematics
LEARN 2 Language Arts
LEARN 2 Mathematics
LEARN 2 Social Studies
LEARN 2 Science

Curriculum guides are available through the eNLighTenED Curriculum Port.

## Supporting students in curriculum-area instruction

Depending on students' backgrounds, newcomer students may need time to succeed independently in the prescribed curriculum. They may require support to develop language skills, fill educational gaps, and adapt to new cultural expectations.

### Implementing appropriate instructional practices

Newcomer students should be welcomed and encouraged to participate in all learning activities from the time of their arrival. Teachers are expected to use strategies that promote participation and inclusion, language development, and content understanding while valuing students' backgrounds and experiences.

Scaffolds and strategies used by classroom/subject teachers will align with students' backgrounds. For example:

- **Students in the EAL program** will receive linguistic and cultural supports to engage with the curriculum and develop English language proficiency, especially in academic English.
- **SIFEs or students in the LEARN program** will receive additional scaffolds to support and develop academic skills, based on their first language literacy and background knowledge.
- See Table A1 in the Appendix for more suggestions.

The implementation of the Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL) Policy and the Service Delivery Model is the same for students with CLD backgrounds, including students in the EAL and LEARN programs, as it is for all other students in the K-12 school system. Information gathered through the implementation and documentation of scaffolds and strategies used in classroom instruction will guide decisions regarding consultations and recommended programming, including any decision by the Teaching and Learning Team (RTL)/collaborating teachers (SDM) to provide targeted or intensive intervention (RTL Policy) or intervention (SDM).

## **Prevention and Intervention K-12**

As for all students, when an analysis of teaching and learning data determines that universal instruction alone is not addressing a student's learning needs in foundational literacy, numeracy or SEL, the Teaching and Learning Team (RTL)/collaborating teachers (SDM), which include the EAL and LEARN teachers, will determine if targeted or intensive intervention (RTL Policy) or intervention (SDM) is required and develop a plan for delivering the intervention.

As soon as it becomes apparent that a student is not progressing at a rate comparable to peers with similar cultural, language, life experience or educational backgrounds, intervention procedures will be implemented. For K-6, the Teaching and Learning Team, in consultation with school administration, decides who will deliver the interventions. Considerations for students in EAL or LEARN programs when planning and delivering interventions may include:

### **Effectiveness of interventions**

As is the case for every student, any supports provided must be appropriate for the student's particular background (See Section A in the Appendix), and interventions must be documented using the appropriate forms, as required.

### **Student backgrounds**

Learning progress should be evaluated with student backgrounds in mind (see Table 1) and compared with that of "true peers" - students with similar linguistic, academic, life experience and cultural backgrounds (Brown & Doolittle, 2008, p. 68). For example:

- ELL students' progress and performance in literacy and content skills might be influenced by their learning of a second language.
- SIFEs' performance in literacy and numeracy might be influenced by their gaps in schooling.
- The social-emotional and other learning of students with refugee backgrounds might be influenced by their refugee or traumatic experiences.

### **Home/school communication**

Communication with the home about programming or interventions may be influenced by language, if parents/ guardians are learning English, or by cultural expectations of schooling. The guidelines around sharing information with the home and acquiring informed consent described in the General Considerations section must be followed when interacting with parents/guardians of students in the EAL or LEARN programs for all communication about programming and interventions.

## **Reporting on student progress**

As for all students, reporting for students with CLD backgrounds, including those in the EAL or LEARN programs, should occur at regular reporting times with steps taken to ensure that parents/guardians understand the evaluation/assessment and reporting process (e.g., report cards, progress reports, parent-teacher interviews, and grading practices), using professional translation or interpreters as needed.

All students with CLD backgrounds, even those at the beginning stages of learning English, are encouraged and supported to participate in all classroom learning and evaluation/assessment activities, using scaffolds and strategies appropriate to the student's learning background.

Like all students, students in the EAL or LEARN programs should receive feedback on their progress in curriculum-area instruction at reporting periods. For students in the EAL and LEARN programs, feedback



on English language and/or academic skill development should also be provided by the EAL and/or LEARN teacher at regular reporting intervals.

For more information on evaluation, assessment, and reporting, see the NLSchools document *Guidelines for Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting for Students in the EAL and LEARN Programs/SIFEs* and presentations on the Multicultural Education page on the K12PL site.

### **Reporting on EAL and LEARN programming**

All EAL and LEARN teachers must provide a report on student progress at regular reporting times. For teachers delivering EAL and/or LEARN courses/curriculum, a grade should be included on the student's report card.

Where grades are not included on the report card, the teacher will prepare an EAL report card insert indicating student progress in English language acquisition and/or academic skills.<sup>1</sup> The insert includes:

- the number of hours of instruction the EAL student has received in the reporting period or receives per cycle;
- a detailed description of the student's progress, including an overview of the tasks and concepts being covered during EAL instructional time, highlighting the student's strengths and needs;
- notes on progress in the student's language development from one term to the next;
- next steps in the student's EAL instruction and progress;
- a personal comment;
- a listing of the student's abilities in Speaking/Listening and Reading/Writing based on the Benchmarks for their level ([Primary/Elementary](#), [Junior High](#) or [Senior High](#))
- Contact information

### **Reporting on curriculum-area programming**

Students in the EAL or LEARN programs, regardless of their level of English proficiency, must be supported to participate in classroom instruction from the time of their arrival, using the scaffolds and strategies listed in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Students, therefore, will be included in curriculum-area evaluations and assessments. The goal is for students in the EAL or LEARN program to complete the same evaluations/assessments as their grade/course-level peers. If the teacher is unable to determine the student's level of curricular achievement using the same evaluation/assessment due to the student's English proficiency or academic skills, multi-modal means of evaluation/assessment should be used, and achievement of indicators that can be demonstrated using non-linguistic means receive a grade.

Insufficient Evidence to Evaluate (IE)/Unable to Evaluate (UTE) will be avoided. IE/UTE may only be used if the teacher has demonstrably exhausted all alternate multi-modal means of determining a student's achievement of an indicator. In cases where IE/UTE is unavoidable, a comment will be included describing the student's progress towards competence in an indicator/curriculum area.

IE/UTE will not be used for students who have been registered in Canadian schools for more than one year; rather, the student will receive a scalar or percentage grade.

Course selection for students at the high school level should be undertaken with care, as students may struggle or excel in unanticipated ways. With appropriate supports, students will achieve success in

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<sup>1</sup> Sample inserts can be found in Appendix 11 of the [Guidelines for the Delivery of ESL Services K-6](#) and Appendix 5 of [Guidelines for the Delivery of ESL Services in the Intermediate School](#).

prescribed-curriculum courses, including students who arrive with significant years of missed schooling and/or beginning proficiency in English. Some students arrive from school systems more advanced than the Canadian system and may require additional challenges. Course selection should be based on English proficiency and prior education, rather than solely on grade level. Students should be placed in and be supported in courses where they will achieve success and receive grades like their peers.

For important information on course selection for high school students, see the Appendix of the NLSchools document [Guidelines for Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting for Students in the EAL and LEARN Programs/SIFEs](#) and presentations on the Multicultural Education page on the K12PL site. For important information on assessment and reporting, see the [Guidelines Applicable at K-12](#) section of the same document.

### **Consultation with the Service Delivery Team**

If, despite good first instruction and interventions, a student is not progressing as peers of similar cultural, language, life experience or educational backgrounds, the Teaching and Learning Team (K-6) or collaborating teachers (7-12), including EAL and LEARN teachers, may request a consultation with the Service Delivery Team (SDT). Before doing so, they must ensure the student has had enough time to develop language skills, address educational gaps, and adapt culturally. Classroom scaffolds and interventions should be implemented and evaluated and appropriate programming provided before a request for consultation is sent to the SDT.

#### **Key considerations:**

##### **Language, academic or cultural differences**

Teachers must determine if learning difficulties stem from second-language acquisition, prior schooling gaps, or cultural differences (see Table 1).

##### **Comparing progress to that of peers with CLD backgrounds**

Progress should be assessed relative to true peers with similar cultural, language, life experience and educational backgrounds. Consultation with EAL/LEARN teachers, or a member of the multicultural team, is essential.

##### **Immediate Consultation for Newly Arrived Students**

Occasionally, an immediate SDT consultation may be necessary when it is clear that preventative teaching would not be beneficial or effective for a newly arrived student. Examples include:

- Students with medical or academic documentation indicating learning challenges.
- Students without documentation but showing urgent needs, such as:
  - Severe anger regulation issues or violent outbursts which result in safety concerns, or
  - A suspected need for adaptive skills development programming with moderate to profound severity.

Guidance Counsellors/Educational Psychologists will review available records, and translation services or new assessments should be provided if needed.

##### **Composition of the Service Delivery Team**

When a Service Delivery Team consults on a student in the EAL or LEARN programs, the EAL or LEARN teacher will be present.

For students with CLD backgrounds **not** in the EAL or LEARN program, the SDT will include a specialist or an educator knowledgeable about issues related to cross-cultural competence. If the student speaks a

language in addition to English, a specialist or an educator knowledgeable about the acquisition of English as an additional language should also be consulted.

The team may also consult other professionals familiar with the assessment and/or education of students with CLD backgrounds. If the specialist is from an outside agency, consent for information sharing is required.

For more information on the process of comprehensive assessment for students with CLD backgrounds, see the EECD document *Guidelines for the Comprehensive Assessment of Students with CLD Backgrounds*.

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## **APPENDIX: Supports and programming for students in the EAL program**

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## A. Supporting ELLs in Prescribed Curriculum

### How Scaffolds for ELLs Differ from Those for All Students

Many scaffolds used with ELLs are also helpful for all students; however, ELLs may need different scaffolds or use them differently due to language barriers, cultural backgrounds, or interrupted schooling. Effective scaffolding should support academic English development and gradually lead to independent learning. It's also important to recognize that ELLs bring valuable knowledge from their first language and culture, which can support their learning. Scaffold choices should match each student's English proficiency and educational background.

Presentations related to scaffolds for English language learners are available on the Multicultural Education page on the K12PL site.

### Scaffolds Especially Effective for ELLs

ELLs will benefit from scaffolds that mitigate the effect of English language proficiency, while other students with CLD backgrounds will benefit from those that address the role of background or cultural knowledge in learning. Seven key strategies, each of which can be implemented using a range of scaffolds, are listed in Table A1.

For more on strategies and scaffolds beneficial to ELLs during demonstrations of learning, see the NLSchools document *Guidelines for Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting for Students in the EAL and LEARN Programs/SIFEs* and presentations on the Multicultural Education page on the K12PL site.

**Table A1: Strategies and Scaffolds that Support ELLs: An Overview**

Strategy	Sample Scaffolds
#1: Using the first language (L1) as a tool for learning	<i>Translation, bilingual word lists, resources in L1</i>
#2: Providing explicit linguistic supports	<i>Pre-teaching vocabulary, drawing attention to language structure, sentence/paragraph frames, corrective feedback</i>
#3: Using non-linguistic supports	<i>Visuals, videos, hands-on learning, gestures, talk and tap</i>
#4: Providing context/background required for subject matter comprehension	<i>Teaching background knowledge, using international/multicultural examples</i>
#5: Simplifying/clarifying instructions	<i>Modeling, demonstrations, repetition, point-form lists</i>
#6: Reducing processing demands	<i>Slower presentation speed, extra time</i>
#7: Reducing linguistic load	<i>Simple language, shorter texts, graphic organizers</i>

## Challenges ELLs Face and How Scaffolds Can Help

ELLs may face different challenges in accessing the curriculum, depending on their English proficiency, educational background, and cultural experiences. Choosing effective scaffolds means identifying the specific barrier the student is facing and addressing it with the right support.

### Challenge 1: Language Comprehension

Students, especially those with beginning and low-intermediate proficiency levels (i.e., Beginning and Developing on the EAL benchmarks) may not understand the content simply because they don't know the vocabulary or language structures used. Scaffolds should focus on using the first language (Strategy 1), building vocabulary and providing linguistic supports (Strategy 2), and using visuals or demonstrations (Strategy 3). Clarifying instructions (Strategy 5) can also help students at all stages, as needed.

### Challenge 2: Processing in a Second Language

Intermediate to low-advanced proficiency level students of English (e.g., Developing and Expanding on the EAL benchmarks) may understand the language but struggle with the volume of content and speed of instruction. They may need more time to process, read, write, or respond. Helpful scaffolds include reducing processing demands (Strategy 6), reducing linguistic load (Strategy 7), and continuing to provide explicit language support (Strategy 2). Clarifying instructions (Strategy 5) remains useful for all students.

### Challenge 3: Cultural or Background Knowledge Gaps

Some students may speak and understand English well but lack the background or cultural knowledge assumed in the lesson. In these cases, scaffolds should provide context and background knowledge in a culturally responsive way (Strategy 4), along with clarifying instructions as needed (Strategy 5).

**Table A2: Some typical learning challenges and related strategies**

CHALLENGE	STRATEGIES (to guide selection of scaffolds)
#1: Student doesn't understand the language (i.e., beginner-developing/low intermediate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #1 Using the L1 as a tool for learning</li><li>• #2 Providing explicit linguistic supports</li><li>• #3 Using non-linguistic supports</li></ul>
#2: Student generally understands the language, but it's too much or too fast (i.e., expanding/intermediate - consolidating/low advanced).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #2 Providing explicit linguistic supports</li><li>• #6 Reducing processing demands</li><li>• #7 Reducing linguistic load</li></ul>
#3: Student understands the language well but is unfamiliar with the references/examples (i.e., advanced or native speaker).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #4 Providing context/background knowledge required for subject matter comprehension</li></ul>

#5 Simplifying/clarifying instructions

## Special considerations for students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs)

SIFEs, usually from refugee backgrounds, have missed two or more years of schooling and can face significant gaps in literacy, academic skills, and familiarity with school routines. While the same scaffolds used for ELLs apply, they often need to be more intensive, sustained over time, and adapted to the student's academic readiness and L1 literacy. Trauma and cultural adjustment may also impact learning. See Table A3 for strategy-specific considerations for SIFEs.

**Table A3: Special considerations when using strategies with SIFEs**

Strategy	Special Considerations for SIFEs
#1: Using the first language (L1) as a tool for learning	<b>Low or no L1 literacy:</b> <i>SIFEs may not be able to read or write in L1, so reference to the L1 will use aural resources (e.g., videos, audio).</i>
#2: Providing explicit linguistic supports	<b>Unfamiliar with reading instruction:</b> <i>SIFEs may not have been taught to read in L1, so teachers may need to teach foundational reading skills from the beginning.</i>
#3: Using non-linguistic supports	<b>Need more non-language supports:</b> <i>Non-linguistic supports are especially beneficial for SIFEs, and will make up the bulk of scaffolds at the beginning stages.</i>
#4: Providing context/background required for subject matter comprehension	<b>Missing basic background knowledge and skills:</b> <i>SIFEs may not know basic background, academic and conceptual information (e.g., basic concepts in science, geography), so extra background instruction may be needed (e.g., more time spent on background knowledge instruction, more repetition, explicit instruction of foundational concepts).</i>
#5: Simplifying/clarifying instructions	<b>Need clear, simple instructions:</b> <i>Simplifying instructions will be especially critical for SIFEs and should include aural or visual techniques of clarification (e.g., modeling, demonstrating, visuals).</i>
#6: Reducing processing demands	<b>Need more time and simpler tasks:</b> <i>Because they may not be used to academic tasks, SIFEs may need significantly more time to complete tasks, slower pacing of and smaller chunks of information in presentations and instruction.</i>
#7: Reducing linguistic load	<b>Need ongoing/long-term language support:</b> <i>Simplified language tasks and language supports may be required over a longer period of time for some SIFEs; for example, even at the Developing proficiency level, SIFEs may still need or benefit from supports like simplified language, shorter texts, or the use of graphic organizers.</i>



## B. EAL Program: An Overview

### Role of the EAL Teacher

The EAL teacher:

- Provides direct English language instruction
  - Develops students' English language skills and language learning strategies
  - Uses varied instructional approaches based on proficiency level and learner profile
- Assesses and reports on student progress
  - Conducts initial and ongoing assessments of English language skills
  - Reports on progress using EAL benchmarks or course grades
- Collaborates with school team
  - Participates in programming and support planning for students in the EAL program
  - Attends team meetings for students receiving direct EAL instruction
- May conduct initial English placement evaluation. This evaluation:
  - Includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing (listening/speaking for Kindergarten)
  - Helps determine if EAL programming is needed
  - Informs instructional planning
  - Is shared with classroom teachers and families

### Eligibility for EAL Programming

Students eligible for EAL programming do not speak English at home and are assessed by the NLSchools EAL team as needing English language instruction to succeed in the curriculum. This typically includes newcomer students, and may include some Canadian-born students, such as Indigenous, francophone, or first-generation Canadians.

### Delivery of EAL Programming

EAL teachers support students' language development through direct English instruction. They also collaborate with classroom/subject teachers and monitor student progress. The optimal delivery format for direct instruction is determined based on students' English proficiency, age, grade-level, academic background, and learning profile.

#### Direct Instruction:

- **Course/Curriculum Instruction:**

In cases where EAL teachers deliver courses and curriculum, EAL is part of the timetable of the teachers and the student, like all other courses. The EAL program includes the delivery of EAL courses. At the high school level, EAL courses provide language arts credits towards students' graduation requirements. For more on EAL courses, see the Multicultural Education page on the K-12 PL site and/or the eNLighTenED curriculum portal.

- **Pull-Out/Small-Group Instruction:**

Where EAL courses and curricula are not part of the school timetable, EAL is taught to small groups of students organized by proficiency level. Small-group/pull-out instruction is especially beneficial for students at the Pre-beginner, Beginner, and Developing levels of English proficiency. EAL small-group/pull-out classes may also consist of multi-level and multi-age groups, to avoid one-on-one instruction, which is not optimal. EAL instruction should be scheduled around core classes, such as math, whenever possible.

For small-group/pull-out instruction, scheduling should group students based on their English proficiency, academic skills and age/grade and prioritize instruction as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Students with academic gaps or limited L1 literacy due to interrupted education and Beginner or Pre-beginner English proficiency on the EAL benchmarks
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Students with L1 literacy but Beginner English skills
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Students with L1 literacy and intermediate or Developing-to-Expanding English proficiency on the EAL benchmarks
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Students close to grade level with advanced or Expanding-to-Consolidating English proficiency on the EAL benchmarks

Older students are generally given priority over younger students at the same proficiency level since the level of academic English they encounter in classroom instruction is higher.

- **In-Class/Push-In Instruction:**

When students reach higher proficiency levels (e.g., Expanding or above), EAL teachers may provide English language instruction within the general education classroom, focusing on skills like reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary—aligned with the curriculum. In-class/push-in instruction is time-limited and goal-oriented, and skills development, resources and topics used in EAL instruction for higher proficiency students should be drawn from the prescribed curriculum.

### **Consultation and Collaboration:**

EAL teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to adjust instruction, plan appropriate supports, and monitor students' progress. They also promote inclusive practices and model strategies for language development within the general education setting, including:

- Sharing information on language skills, second language acquisition, classroom strategies, and EAL benchmarks
- Promoting inclusive practices and appropriate expectations for student progress
- Advocating for additional supports when needed (e.g., literacy instruction for SIFEs)

### **Student progress monitoring:**

Students who have developed sufficient English proficiency to continue learning through the prescribed curriculum may be monitored for up to two years, to determine if EAL instruction should resume. Monitoring can include:

- Consultation with classroom/curriculum-area teachers (e.g., during reporting periods or as needed)
- Evaluation, assessment, and observation of students in curriculum-area classrooms

Students eligible for monitoring include:

- Students with High-Expanding to Consolidating proficiency level on the EAL benchmarks
- Students transitioning between key stages (e.g., primary to elementary/elementary to junior high/junior high to senior high)
- Students not receiving EAL support due to high proficiency levels in English, who do not speak English at home (monitored up to one year after arrival)

### **Exiting EAL Programming**

- **Course/Curriculum EAL Instruction:**

In cases where EAL teachers deliver courses and curriculum, students take EAL courses instead of English language arts courses, progressing through the levels of proficiency.

- Students exit the EAL program after completing the advanced EAL courses (i.e., EAL 3206 at the high school level, EAL 3 for the Intermediate School at the junior high level (in pilot)) and transition to prescribed-curriculum English language arts courses, with support as needed.
- Monitoring of progress continues for up to two years after exiting direct EAL instruction.

For more information on programming and scheduling for students in the high school EAL program, see the presentations on the Multicultural Education page of the K12PL site and the Appendix of the NLSchools document *Guidelines for Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting for Students in the EAL and LEARN Programs/SIFEs*

- Pull-out/Small-group EAL Instruction and Push-in/In-class Instruction (for higher proficiency students):  
Students receive EAL support until they develop the necessary English language skills to succeed in the prescribed curriculum.
  - Exit from the EAL program occurs when they reach the Consolidating stage on the EAL benchmarks in all language skills.
  - The process usually takes up to five years, with monitoring for up to two years afterward.
  - Exit decisions are made by a team which includes classroom/curriculum-area and EAL teachers.
  - EAL support, through direct instruction or monitoring, is recommended for five years for K-6 students.