

The ESL handbook



Advice to schools on programs for supporting students learning English as a second language

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students learning English as a second language

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Foreword

The Blueprint for Government Schools launched in 2003 is based on the belief that learning outcomes for all students can only be achieved if we acknowledge the diversity of student needs in the development of local and system-wide responses.

Students learning English as a second language (ESL) are a significant student cohort in government schools, comprising approximately 15% of all students in metropolitan schools. On arrival in Australia, ESL learners are able to access the New Arrivals Program which provides intensive full time programs or targeted support to assist with the initial stages of learning English. Their learning of English is further supported by ESL programs in mainstream schools. Funding is provided to approximately 450 schools each year to enable them to continue to support ESL students in their English language learning and across the curriculum.

The needs of ESL students will vary according to factors such as their pre-migration experiences, including level of formal education in their home country, their age, the stage of English language development at which they enter the Victorian school system, and their access to ESL support.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide schools with information on:

- Policy and funding for ESL programs.
- Advice on planning and implementing effective programs for a school's ESL student cohort.
- Links to resources and services.

The ESL support program – teaching and learning for students learning English as a second language

Support for students learning English as a second language (ESL) is designed to reflect the needs of learners at key points along the ESL pathway. This pathway and the appropriate teaching and learning focus are outlined in the *ESL Companion to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards* (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2006). See <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/index.html>. Further information about ESL learning pathways can be found in the *ESL Companion to the English CSF* (Board of Studies, Victoria, 2000).

Funding for ESL programs and support

The New Arrivals Program

Newly arrived students who do not speak English at their time of arrival in Australia are entitled to access a range of supports to learn English. Parents or guardians of newly arrived students should be advised at the time of enrolling their children of their entitlement to intensive assistance or targeted support for their children. Students are deemed to be eligible if they have been in Australia for less than 6 months (18 months for Prep-aged students), are in need of an intensive English program, and are permanent residents of Australia. Some categories of temporary residents are also able to access this support.

Parents and guardians should be referred to a full time intensive new arrivals program, at an English language school or centre. Where attendance at an English language school or centre is not possible, support is available from Outreach Coordinators located in each of the four English language schools in the metropolitan regions, or from the Isolated ESL learner support program for students in non-metropolitan regions.

For more details on the New Arrivals Program go to: <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/enew.htm> Translated information for parents about the New Arrivals Program is also available on this site.

ESL Index funding in schools

ESL Index funding is provided to schools with significant numbers of ESL students through the Student Resource Package (SRP). The ESL Index funding line in the SRP also includes funding for Multicultural Education Aides.

ESL index funding is based on an integrated weighted index which is applied to a school's profile of students from language backgrounds other than English, as identified in the annual *Language Background Other Than English* census, using information collected by schools at the time of enrolment. Funding is allocated to schools to provide ESL programs for students from language backgrounds other than English who speak a language other than English at home as their main language, and who have been enrolled in an Australian school for less than five years.

A school's ESL allocation includes a weighting for Student Family Occupation (SFO) density. This weighting reflects the high correlation between student learning outcomes and family occupation, and is applied to target funding to those schools with the greatest needs.

Contingency funding may be available to schools which have substantial changes to their ESL student populations during the year. See *The Guide to the Student Resource Package* for more details.

ESL funding is given to schools to staff ESL programs. Using this funding to develop and operate an ESL program is an important aspect of a whole-school approach to meeting the literacy and learning needs of ESL students.

Schools are funded based on of the number of ESL students who meet the criteria for funding. However, it is up to schools to decide which ESL students need a targeted specialist ESL program, and which can be satisfactorily catered for in ESL-informed mainstream classrooms. Such decisions require a good understanding of each student, and their learning background, as well as the full cohort of ESL students in the school.

Schools will need to plan programs that are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the changes that occur to their ESL populations during the school year due to new enrolments or students transferring or leaving.

Funding for Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs)

From 2006, all schools receiving ESL index funding also receive funding for multicultural education aides. Allocations are calculated on the same formula for ESL funding. For more details see Guide to the 2007 SRP. All schools that reach the funding thresholds will also be allocated Multicultural Education Aide (MEA) funding component expressed as 24.56% of the ESL allocation. This does not appear as a separate line in the 2007 SRP, but is included in the ESL Index Funding figure.

Role of Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs)

MEAs support ESL programs in schools in several ways. They:

- Facilitate communication between the school and families from language backgrounds other than English
- Provide insights into students cultural backgrounds and experiences
- Assist individual, or small groups of students in the classroom
- Assist the teacher with the development of materials

Program accountability

All schools receiving ESL Index Funding are required to complete the ESL Survey and the MEA survey which are sent to schools as part of the August Census, as a paper supplement. Reporting on progress of ESL students in learning should be done against the ESL Standards, where appropriate. See <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/studentreports/index.htm> for information about reporting ESL student progress.

Regional support

All Metropolitan Regional Offices have program officers with responsibility for assisting schools in supporting their ESL students. Program officers can assist schools with a range of issues, including:

- Assisting with school data analysis of ESL learner outcomes
- ESL program development and implementation
- Assisting with program evaluation and ESL learner and evaluation
- Professional learning.

Country regions also have contacts within their regions, who can assist schools in locating appropriate support and resources. Contact your regional office for further information.

ESL provision and program development

ESL provision in a school should consider the following:

- A whole-school approach to ESL programming and provision, including ESL policy development and its implementation at the whole school level
- The development of a specialist ESL program
- The way in which ESL needs in mainstream classrooms are met
- Meeting the professional learning needs of staff.

The goals of the ESL learning program

Students learning English as a second language are faced with a very challenging set of tasks. In many ways they actually have to learn more, and more quickly, than their English speaking peers, as they need to learn through English while they are still learning it.

To make progress and to achieve the same level of educational success as other students they must develop literacy in English by:

- Learning to speak English
- Learning to read and write English
- Continuing their learning in all learning areas through English, at the same time as they are learning English
- Learning about the Australian school system.

Students will also need to learn new cultural understandings, in both the educational context and in the wider community.

ESL students need optimum teaching and learning conditions to build English language skills in order to reach these goals.

All programs in which ESL students are participating need to provide optimal conditions for learning English. ESL students in ESL index funded schools will principally be learning their English through specialist ESL support programs and/or through ESL- informed classroom support. As ESL students will spend most of their time in mainstream classrooms, a commitment to ensuring that classroom teachers understand the needs and can meet the educational needs of their ESL students is critical.

A whole school approach to ESL programming and provision

As with any student in the school, catering for the language and literacy development of ESL students is a long-term, shared school community commitment. The ESL program in a school includes everything that is put into place to support ESL students.

The ESL program is likely to include:

- Elements in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan, and the systemic practice of the school that support ESL provision
- Targeted ESL program components
- Classroom program and the planning, teaching and assessment practices that support ESL learners in all learning areas.

The ESL program as a whole should be integrated into the school's curriculum provision across all learning areas. The targeted ESL program is a part of the whole-school approach to curriculum development, implementation, evaluation and reporting for all students.

As with any program, the school community needs to have input to the school's ESL policy if it is to inform and support the ESL program. It is important that the whole school community has an understanding of the particular needs of ESL learners, and the way in which the school intends to meet these needs.

The range of ESL students

As with any group of students, ESL students are a diverse group, and their learning needs will also vary. They comprise students:

- Beginning school in Australia at any year level
- Born overseas or in Australia
- Beginning school with little, some or no exposure to English
- With schooling equivalent to that received by their chronological peers
- With little or no previous formal schooling in any country, or with severely interrupted education in their first language.

The School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan

The School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan emphasise the importance of setting goals for better student outcomes, and selecting key strategies to bring about improvement, for all students.

ESL students will be following a different pathway of English language learning to those students for whom English is a first language. This ESL pathway is described in the ESL Companion to VELS, and the ESL standards found in it should be used as the basis for developing realistic and accessible goals and teaching programs for ESL students. Strategies to bring about improvement in the learning of ESL students should be specifically outlined in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan.

The School Strategic Plan can include aspects such as:

- The way in which the school's ESL program will be organised
- Assessment and reporting policies for ESL students

- The way in which ESL program committees are constituted and how they will operate
- The way in which the ESL program will be monitored, reviewed and implemented.

Strategies for the Annual Implementation Plan will include a more specific description of the ESL program, so that reviews can be undertaken on a yearly basis. It can include aspects such as:

- Specific goals for the learning of particular groups and individual students
- The way in which student progress will be assessed and monitored
- Professional learning plans.

A suggested procedure for whole school ESL program development

Begin to develop an informed view of ESL learning and teaching within the school

School staff may need to develop their understanding of:

- How a second language is learnt
- The teaching and learning conditions that best promote the learning of a second language
- Identifying the language and literacy demands of classroom activities
- The ESL teaching strategies they can use in their classrooms
- The stages of ESL learning as described in the ESL Companion to the VELs
- The particular learning needs of the full range of ESL learners.

Identify ESL students and their individual needs

To provide appropriately for the ESL students in the school, it is essential to know their learning history and achievements in both their first language (and additional languages) and in English.

Much information about a student's cultural, linguistic and educational background is collected on enrolment. Using an interpreter, as appropriate will ensure that accurate information is collected.

Information on CASES21 includes:

- Whether or not students speak English as their main language at home
- The number of years of schooling students have had, in their home countries
- Whether their schooling has been disrupted
- Date of arrival in Australia.

This kind of information can form the basis for planning but will need to be supplemented with further information. Information collected from parent/teacher interviews, students themselves, reports from previous schools (including transition reports from intensive English language programs), and school assessments also adds to the picture schools have of their students and their learning needs and experiences. For example, teachers need to know:

- How long have students been learning English, both in Australia and overseas?
- What is their level of literacy in their first language?
- What are students' assessments against the ESL standards?
- Are the students making acceptable progress in learning English?
- How are the students progressing in other domains?
- What is students' access to English outside of school hours?
- Are students attending classes in their home language?

School outcome data can also be used to broaden knowledge about ESL student achievement. Examining data beyond student results English and mathematics can provide valuable insights into ESL student needs and strengths. Attitude, attendance and retention data are important data sources to look at. AIM data will provide data on students not achieving national benchmarks. In certain circumstances, students may be granted an exemption from the AIM assessment program. The principal may grant an exemption to students who have been learning English in Australia for less than one year.

Develop policy

The ESL policy, which can form part of the School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan, will be added to throughout the process of developing ESL provision for the school, but can begin with a description of the:

- ESL students in the school, their skills and needs
- Learning and literacy goals for ESL students.

Prioritise student learning needs

By looking at the range and spread of ESL students learning needs across the school, schools can begin to develop a view of what the priorities for the ESL program should be. Other elements of the school community will need to be involved in this, such as the literacy and the curriculum committees.

- Which students are in need of a specialised ESL program?
- Which students could be adequately supported in mainstream classrooms?
- What is the range of needs?
- Who will be targeted for a specialist ESL program?
- ESL index funding and MEA allocations
- Which teachers have ESL qualifications, extensive professional development in ESL, or experience in teaching ESL students?
- What additional funds could be allocated to support ESL students?
- What teaching spaces are available?
- What resources, such as books, may need to be purchased?

Develop program

Which teaching contexts are most appropriate to meet the needs of student groups, within the specialist ESL program (e.g. team teaching, parallel classes, similar needs groups a combination of these?)

- How will students be grouped?
- How flexible will the groupings be?
- How will staff roles and responsibilities for ESL be allocated?
- Which members of staff have ESL qualifications?
- Who is most qualified for the ESL teacher/s role?
- What timetabling considerations need to be taken into account, e.g. which classes will ESL classes be blocked against in a secondary program?
- How can resources be best used to support improved learning outcomes for ESL students?
- How will the goals of the ESL program be evaluated?
- Who will be involved in the process?
- How will the process be conducted?
- How has the program been able to respond to changing needs?

Assessment

- Which assessment tools will be used throughout the school?
- Which assessment tasks are appropriate for ESL students?
- Who will assess the English language learning needs of ESL students?
- Parent/guardian involvement

Reporting

- How will the school report ESL learner progress to parents and other teachers?
- How will parents' language needs be catered for in parent/teacher interviews?
- How will ESL students' development in learning English be reported to the system?

Professional development

- What are the professional development needs of the staff?
- What are the professional development needs of the ESL teacher?
- How will access be provided for relevant professional development?
- What opportunities will there be for teachers to learn from each other?

How will parents be informed about school programs?

- How will communication be facilitated to enable all parents to participate in the life of the school?
- Which contexts will provide opportunities for parents to understand the way in which the ESL program works?
- What opportunities will parents have to express their needs and expectations?

Setting priorities within the ESL program

There are many factors which will influence the way ESL teachers work in a school, and the way in which the program is prioritised and timetabled. Priority should, of course, be given to the ESL students with the greatest need, but the needs of all groups should be considered when deciding priorities.

Considerations

When identifying ESL program priorities, consideration should be given to:

- The time available for the program
- Individual ESL student needs
- The numbers of ESL students in each year level
- The stage of English language development of the students, and whether this stage of development is considered to represent satisfactory progress
- The length of time students have been in Australia and have been learning English, and their stage of development
- Teacher expertise and qualifications
- The classroom program, and the way in which ESL needs are being met in the mainstream – for example, a classroom teacher trialling a new initiative to support ESL learners may benefit from team teaching with the ESL teacher for the time it takes to establish the program.
- Teaching location options – the availability of suitable locations for flexible groupings, such as parallel teaching needs, with either the classroom teacher or the ESL teacher using an alternative location. Locations may need to be found for activities that require space or quiet.
- Teacher relationships and teaching style – where beliefs about teaching and teaching styles differ, some programs will be more practicable than others. It may be beneficial to plan collaboratively but use a separate teaching location.
- The timetabling of specialist programs – it is important that, wherever possible, similar-needs ESL groups are not timetabled at the same time as specialist programs. Physical education or technology activities, for example, are excellent opportunities for English language learning, and students may feel they are missing out on something special if they are not included in such programs.
- Beginning readers and writers – lower primary students or preliterate students. These students also need to become literate in English, and will require special consideration for ESL programs.
- The way in which ESL needs, and therefore provision, may change from term to term or from semester to semester.

Staff roles in ESL provision

All the members of a school community have a role to play in the development and maintenance of the school's ESL program. Staff roles in schools will vary according to the size of the school, but in general the following roles will be appropriate.

The school administration

- Ensures that accurate data is collected through enrolment procedures, interviews and meetings with parents, so that statistical information about the school population can be collated, and so that important factors that may influence students' learning are known
- Provides teachers with access to information about their students that is relevant to the teaching and learning program
- Provides opportunities for staff professional development to ensure that there is an awareness in the school community of the implications of second language acquisition for learning and teaching, and so that teachers can access the latest information about ESL methodology and resources
- Promotes a culture that values diversity and ensures that multicultural perspectives are incorporated into all aspects of school life
- Encourages home–school partnerships.

The curriculum coordinator

- Ensures that policies and learning programs in all learning areas are formulated and implemented with the language learning needs of all students in mind
- Ensures that all teachers are informed about teaching strategies for making the mainstream curriculum accessible for all students, including ESL students
- Ensures that curriculum policies require that multicultural perspectives are incorporated in all learning areas.

The early years/middle years/literacy/coordinator

- Ensures that classroom literacy programs meet the learning needs of ESL learners
- Develops home–school links in conjunction with the classroom teacher and the Multicultural Education Aide (MEA)
- Ensures that information about student language learning background is collected and made available to all teachers
- Organises cultural background information sessions for staff, in conjunction with the ESL teacher
- Ensures that literacy assessment strategies used are appropriate for students learning English as a second language.

The ESL teacher

- Provides information which helps teachers to plan and implement school programs with multicultural perspectives, and develop cross-cultural understandings with their students
- Provides resource information for teachers in the areas of second language acquisition, ESL teaching methodology, classroom organisation, and selection of suitable texts and resources for ESL learners
- Keeps abreast of the latest information in the ESL field, e.g. through professional learning opportunities and shares this with staff as appropriate
- Provides specialist ESL teaching that increases students' capacity to participate successfully in mainstream classroom activities and to achieve the goals of the mainstream curriculum
- Assists teachers to plan and implement a program inclusive of ESL needs
- Assists the classroom teacher in assessing ESL students' competence in English, formulating practical goals and objectives for ESL learners and planning a program that caters for the needs of all ESL learners
- Organises cultural background information sessions for staff.

The classroom teacher

- Considers the language learning needs of all students when planning activities across all areas of the curriculum
- Supports ESL students in learning through the use of English, while they are learning English
- Uses assessment strategies that allow all students to express the understandings they have gained across the curriculum
- Keeps assessment records that indicate the growth of understandings and skills in both English and ESL
- Informs parents of student progress in ESL as well as in the learning areas other than English
- Provides opportunities for all students to share the diversity of their experiences
- Develops classroom activities that relate to and build upon the experiences that students bring to the learning situation
- Ensures that multicultural perspectives are incorporated in all aspects of the classroom social and learning environments
- Attends relevant ESL professional learning opportunities.

The school librarian/resource coordinator

- Provides a range of accessible resources for ESL learners at different stages of ESL development (e.g. for classroom units of work, for their own reading)
- Provides access to a range of factual and fictional materials in students' home languages
- Ensures that materials reflect the diversity of Australian society
- Culls resources that contain racist and stereotypical references
- Provides teachers with up-to-date materials on second language acquisition and on ESL teaching methodology.

The specialist subject teacher

- Uses strategies that allow all students, including ESL students, to participate fully in their learning area
- Considers and builds on the background experiences of all students as a starting point for presenting new information or materials
- Uses assessment strategies that allow all students to express the understandings they have gained
- Exploits the potential of their particular learning area to teach English.

The multicultural education aide (MEA)

- Supports ESL students in their learning by explaining concepts or directions in the learners' first languages
- Facilitates the participation of ESL students in group work
- Liaises with family members and members of the ethnic community to foster communication and to encourage parents to participate fully in the life of the school
- Provides staff with insights into the culture and language of students and their families
- Assists teachers to communicate with parents and other family members.

Program options

Schools can use many different organisational strategies and student groupings to maximise their ability to cater for the diverse learning needs of their ESL students. These include team teaching, flexible groupings, and specialist programs. The options described below are not mutually exclusive, and some or all can operate, depending on need and resources.

Collaborative planning

Planning is a key element in the implementation of an ESL program. In collaborative planning, classroom teachers and ESL teachers plan together, each of them bringing important information to the planning session. Classroom teachers have knowledge of:

- Curriculum areas
- The ESL learners, whom they have been able to observe working in many different learning contexts.

ESL teachers bring knowledge of second language acquisition and teaching to:

- Help to identify the stage of language development of the ESL learner
- Set reasonable learning goals and identify effective strategies which will enhance English learning
- Plan assessment activities that identify the learner's competence and needs.

Where the ESL teacher's time allocation is small, or ESL learners are spread across the year levels, collaborative planning may represent the optimal use of an ESL teacher. It provides ESL-informed input into the ongoing classroom program, and may therefore have greater overall effect than a brief teaching session directly with the ESL students. Collaborative planning is also particularly effective when new programs or teaching approaches are being implemented.

Collaborative planning is most successful when the roles and expectations of classroom and specialist teachers are clear. If the ESL teacher is also involved in parallel or similar needs teaching, collaborative planning ensures that both teachers are working towards the same learning goals. It allows for flexibility in implementing the program and sharing knowledge about the learner's progress.

Collaborative planning can involve a single teacher and an ESL teacher working together, or a team of teachers and an ESL teacher working together. Planning can be done at the syllabus or unit planning level, and take place during the implementation of the program, to allow for changing student learning needs. A common format may be used for unit planning, and this can be copied for all members of the planning team.

Team teaching

Team teaching is an effective strategy for ESL provision. In this model, the classroom teacher and an ESL teacher share responsibility for assessing students and planning, teaching, and evaluating the ESL program. In this model it is crucial that collaborative planning as described above is undertaken. Part of the planning session should involve deciding on the tasks in which students may benefit most from having two teachers, and the tasks in which ESL learners may need most support. Team teaching may be most useful in:

- Activities where ESL learners are introduced to new tasks or are working in cooperative groups on a challenging task
- In introducing ESL learners to new information to prepare them for a future task.

Team teaching is most successful when both the ESL teacher and the classroom teacher have shared beliefs about language teaching and learning. The role of both teachers may change from week to week, depending on the needs of the students and the demands of the curriculum. Team teaching provides the flexibility to use a range of effective classroom organisational options which may be demanding for the classroom teacher to implement alone. These may include small group work, conferencing, or clinic teaching that focuses on particular language items, or on preparing ESL learners for a new topic or activity.

Parallel teaching

Parallel teaching involves both the classroom teacher and the ESL teacher presenting the same content to students, but with an ESL teacher teaching the ESL students and focusing in particular on the language demands of the task. While they are likely to use separate teaching locations and different activities, teachers need to plan collaboratively to ensure that they share goals, and that all students are covering the basic classroom curriculum.

Parallel teaching may be particularly effective at the start of a new unit, when ESL learners may need to learn new vocabulary and concepts, or when a task is particularly demanding linguistically, for example, writing a report where students need to revise the structures and features of the text type.

In secondary schools, ESL classes for a subject area may run parallel to, and in place of, mainstream English classes, or in subject areas such as science, mathematics or humanities.

Similar-needs classes

Similar-needs classes may be organised in response to particular ESL learner needs.

They may be used to prepare students for the language demands across the curriculum or to recycle language that still requires more practice. Similar-needs classes should be based on English language learning needs and can include clinic groups, and students from more than one class. This kind of provision is also suitable where small numbers of ESL students, at similar stages of development in classes at the same year level (or across year levels), are brought together to maximise the time they can spend in a targeted ESL program. Similar needs classes are particularly effective for newly arrived students.

In similar needs classes, content is chosen that is most appropriate to the students at their level of development.

Planning between the ESL teacher and classroom teachers is an essential element of such classes, and ensures that the ESL program remains relevant to the mainstream classroom program.

The mainstream classroom program

ESL learners spend the majority of their school time with their classroom teacher, even though they may have additional support from an ESL teacher. Therefore the main responsibility for ensuring that ESL learner needs are met will always be the day-to-day responsibility of the classroom teacher.

The main way in which this responsibility can be met is through planning and implementing a teaching program that caters to the ESL learner's particular needs.

ESL teachers can assist classroom teachers to develop appropriate programs for their ESL students. This can include assisting them to:

- Identify the English language skills and needs of ESL students across the learning areas and planning learning experiences that cater for them
- Choose resources that reflect the diverse nature of Australian society and are culturally sensitive
- Choose resources that are accessible for all students in terms of the language used, or planning activities that prepare ESL students for these resources
- Plan 'ESL-friendly' teaching strategies and approaches, that model language and processes, and scaffold demanding tasks.

Considerations in ESL program development in primary schools

In primary schools, the development of the ESL program is mainly influenced by the percentage of students at the different year levels and stages of ESL development, and the time allocation of the ESL specialist teacher/s.

The case studies below outline the approaches taken by two schools in developing and implementing their ESL programs, including the timetable developed by the ESL specialist teacher/s.

Case studies

Case study 1: High Street Primary School

The following case study shows the kinds of programming decisions which were made in one school, and how the role of the ESL teacher developed and changed over the year according to the changing needs of the school.

The school profile

High Street Primary School is a school in which:

- There is an enrolment of 205 students
- Specialist art, library and computer technology classes are offered
- About 75% of the students use languages other than English at home, including Italian, Greek, Lebanese, Dari, Arabic, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Chinese
- 58 per cent of the students (about 120) attract ESL funding
- Of these 120 students, 80 were prioritised for specialist ESL assistance, (including all the ESL students in Prep) in addition to that provided by mainstream classroom teachers, many of whom were very experienced in teaching ESL students
- 27 of the ESL students were enrolled in Prep, 15 had been learning English for less than 2 years, and 78 had been learning English for between 2 and 5 years.
- The school's SFO weighting is 1.4.

The ESL students

The ESL students have diverse needs:

- Fifteen students were recently arrived, and have been learning English for less than 12 months (many of the students had attended for 6 months at a New Arrivals outpost program, and have returned to the mainstream school at the beginning of the year)
- The other ESL students have been learning English for longer than this and use English confidently for social purposes, but they need support when producing texts required for academic purposes

- The twenty seven students enrolled in Prep, have a range of proficiency in English – although all speak a language other than English as their main language at home, their exposure to English varies enormously: five children did not attend kindergarten and speak very little English; others have learnt some English from parents and older siblings, or from kindergarten or child care attendance
- This year the classes with the highest numbers of ESL students are the Years P, 1, 2 and 5. The recent arrivals are in Years 2, 4 and 6
- The Year 6 teacher is particularly concerned about the 3 recent arrivals in Year 6, who will be attending secondary school next year, and who she feels will need additional help to make adequate progress.

The staff

The school's ESL allocation is for approximately 1.4 EFT teachers. One full time and one part time ESL specialist teachers are employed, making a total of 1.6 EFT, with additional funding being allocated from literacy funding. The ESL teachers have TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) qualifications.

Four of the classroom teachers have completed the ESL in the Mainstream Professional Development Course. The school also employs part-time MEAs (around 0.7 EFT in total), who speak Arabic, Lebanese, Vietnamese and Chinese.

The ESL teachers

In the first weeks of the school term the ESL teachers' priorities are to:

- Get to know the incoming Prep students and their parents/caregivers (this is facilitated by access to data collected on enrolment)
- Help the Prep teachers to assess the ESL students' strengths and needs
- Work with the Prep teachers in implementing the transition program (e.g. ensuring all students and parents are familiar with the school routines and practices)
- Assist the most recently arrived students at other year levels to settle into their new routines
- Assist all teachers to build up their learner profiles and class profiles
- Prioritise student needs and draw up a timetable for the ESL program
- Timetable collaborative planning sessions with all teachers.

The timetable for the rest of the term is weighted towards the Prep class because of the high numbers of students with a background in languages other than English, and the number of students who need support in English language learning.

As these students make the transition into school life, as their needs are identified and mainstream programs are developed to meet these needs, the emphasis on the Prep class will become less. However, this school has identified high ESL support through team teaching as a priority in the early years, as it believes that early literacy development is crucial to success at these early stages, and that by providing strong support in the early years, reduces the support that may be required in the following years.

Also of high priority will be assistance for the most recently arrived students to settle into new classes and routines. The timetable at this stage also includes team teaching in their classrooms. ESL input into all classes is provided through collaborative planning sessions.

Ongoing identification of priorities

At the end of the first term the situation is re-evaluated and new priorities set for Term 2. The ESL students in the Prep class have settled into school life and are progressing well. They no longer need the same amount of intensive teaching so extra time may be given to the students in other year levels. Needs are reassessed again at the end of the second term. In line with priorities listed in the school charter, extra support is now offered to programs where ESL students need assistance to achieve the mainstream goals. This influences the timetabling in third term.

The ESL teacher also helps classroom teachers to introduce or implement a new program or organisational approach that is particularly supportive of ESL students. Further assessment of the program is undertaken at the end of each term.

The time allocated for the different aspects of the ESL program for the year looks like this:

<p>Term 1: (weekly timetabled responsibilities) Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level) Finding and adapting resources for classroom programs to assist classroom teachers – 4 hours Team teaching Prep – 10 hours Team teaching, parallel teaching in Year levels 1 to 5 – 2 hours each = 10 hours Similar needs group for Year 6 students – 5 hours Preparation for team teaching – 4 hours Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours</p>	<p>Additional responsibilities: Assist with the compilation of school and class profiles. Get to know the parents of new ESL students. Develop timetable for MEAs Buying new resources Investigating school ESL PD needs and PD opportunities.</p>
<p>Term 2: (weekly timetabled responsibilities) Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level) Team teaching Prep – 10 hours Team teaching/parallel teaching Years 2, 3, 4, 5 – 8 hours Team teaching/parallel teaching, Years 1 and 6 – 10 hours Resources development and support – 5 hours Preparation for team teaching – 3 hours Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours</p>	<p>Additional responsibilities: Organise interpreters for parent–teacher interviews. Organise ESL PD session at curriculum day Introduce new teachers to the ESL Companion to the VELs. Review the MEAs' timetable. Assist teachers to report on the progress of ESL learners to parents, using the ESL standards. Assist in writing reports for ESL students, as appropriate.</p>

<p>Term 3: (weekly timetabled responsibilities) Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level) Team teaching Prep – 5 hours Team teaching/parallel teaching, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 = 12 hours Similar-needs group, recent arrivals in Year 5 – 10 hours (see Note 1) Team teaching/parallel teaching, Year 6 – 5 hours Introducing rotating activities – 4 hours (see Note 2) Resources development and support – 5 hours Preparation for team teaching – 3 hours Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours</p>	<p>Additional responsibilities: Trial the use of the planning format from the A2, B2 and B3 ESL Teacher Support Materials at collaborative planning sessions. Review the MEAs' timetable.</p>
<p>Term 4: (weekly timetabled responsibilities) Collaborative planning – 7 hours (1 hour per year level) Team teaching Prep – 5 hours Team teaching, parallel teaching, Years 1, 2, 6 – 6 hours Years 3, 4 – rotating activities program – 4 hours (see Note 3) Similar-needs group, recent arrivals in Year 5 – 10 hours Resources development and support – 5 hours Preparation for team teaching – 5 hours Supervision of MEAs – 2 hours</p>	<p>Additional responsibilities: Evaluation of the ESL program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goals met • on-going needs • new needs identified • future directions/priorities <p>Review the MEAs' timetable. Assist teachers to report on the progress of ESL learners to parents, using the ESL Standards. Organising interpreters for the parent–teacher meetings.</p>

Note 1

Discussion about ongoing monitoring of students' English language needs may take place formally or informally at weekly planning sessions. This provides valuable information when the ESL timetable is reviewed for the following term. In this case, the Year 5 teacher expressed concern about the progress of several of her recently arrived students with reading factual materials. It was decided to give them some extra modelling of how a report is structured and practice in using a structural overview.

Note 2

Rotating activities are a set of activities related to the topic the students are investigating, such as a science based problem-solving activity, a SOSE activity around an issue, a reading activity based around literature, and an art activity. The students are divided into groups and each day they complete one of the activities. This approach provides contexts in which:

- Students can participate in small groups in hands-on activities
- Teachers can monitor the language development of a group of students or a particular student
- Students may share and compare their findings with the rest of the class.

Note 3

A Year 3 teacher expressed interest in her students also participating in this program. As the Year 3 and 4 teachers plan together this also has benefits for the teachers in regard to their workload. All three teachers (including the ESL teacher) take responsibility for preparing the activities for the rotating activities and these materials are shared by the two classes.

Case study 2: Fernhill Primary School

The following case study shows how an ESL program was organised in a school with a small number of ESL students.

The school profile

Fernhill Primary School is a school in which:

- There is an enrolment of 345 students
- Specialist computer, art and physical education programs are offered
- 15% of the students attract ESL funding (52 students)
- The school is funded for approximately 0.5 EFT ESL teacher and a 0.2 MEA
- The school's SFO weighting is 1.

The ESL students

The learning needs of the ESL students vary greatly:

- One student is newly arrived, and is in Year 5 – this student has had little schooling in his country of origin, but was unable to attend a new arrivals program
- Seven students have been learning English for less than two years
- Nine students are in Prep
- The students come from a range of language backgrounds, including Serbian, Croatian, Polish and Vietnamese, and the majority of them have been learning English for several years
- The ESL students are scattered in each year level and in each class – not all of the students were deemed to be in need of ESL support beyond that offered by the classroom teacher
- The most recently arrived students are being assessed on the ESL standards in the *ESL Companion to the VELs*
- Many of the other ESL students have been assessed on the English CSF, but many teachers feel that this does not give an accurate picture of their students' achievements and is not helpful for planning their ongoing program.

The staff

The staff at the school vary in their understanding of ESL needs, but several have taught previously in schools with high ESL populations. The Assistant Principal has ESL qualifications and feels that the ESL program needs to be reviewed.

The school uses its ESL funding to fund an ESL teacher who is qualified in TESOL. The teacher is at the school for two full days and one extra morning a week. Two MEAs work at the school for half a day each.

The school has an ESL committee which consists of the Assistant Principal, the ESL teacher, the early years coordinator, the curriculum coordinator and a teacher representative. Many of the ESL students who have been assessed on the English Standards are about one full level or more below where their year levels

would indicate they should be, particularly in reading and writing. The teachers were concerned about this and wanted to know how they could assist their ESL learners to develop their literacy skills. They wanted to become more familiar with the ESL standards and to continue the process of using them to assess their ESL learners, where appropriate.

The ESL program

At the start of the school year a review of the ESL program commenced. The previous ESL teacher had left, and the ESL program, which had operated wholly as a similar-needs/withdrawal program for the last two years is felt to be in need of examination, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the students and providing appropriate support for teachers. The School Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan indicate that improving the learning of the ESL learners is an important goal of the school program.

The new ESL teacher started her job with several priorities. For the first six weeks the school funded her for an additional day each week so she could review and set priorities for the program. During this time the ESL teacher was not expected to work to a timetable, except for spending 45 minutes a day with the newly arrived student, who was unable to attend an intensive English language program, due to its location. The teacher set her priorities as follows:

- Get to know the school and in particular the ESL students
- Assist teachers to complete sociolinguistic profiling of the school population, focusing on those students who are from a language background other than English, and helping teachers to add this information to their learner profiles
- Talk to staff about concerns they may have about the progress of their ESL learners
- Assist teachers to place ESL learners on the ESL standards
- Work with the ESL committee to discuss possible scenarios for an ESL program, and from this discussion, develop an ESL program that meets the needs of the school.

The ESL committee felt that it was important to establish some priorities and principles for the program. It felt that the newly arrived ESL learner in Year 5, particularly because of his lack of prior schooling, should be given individual teaching for two hours each week for the first two terms, in two, one-hour blocks. When prioritising the rest of the ESL program the committee was faced with several constraints that needed to be taken into consideration:

- The time available to the ESL teacher is limited
- The needs of the students are varied
- ESL learners are to be found in every class in the school.

It was felt that the ESL teacher's role needed to change from one where most of her time was spent with students in similar-needs classes, which had been the previous model. It was considered that this kind of approach did not link strongly enough with the classroom program, and did not support teachers to cater more appropriately for their ESL learners in their own classes. This was felt to be due mainly to the fact that the ESL teacher's planning time with the classroom teachers had been very limited.

Each team of teachers meets once a week to plan their units of work together. It was decided that the ESL teacher would join these meetings and use this time to assist teachers to plan their units with a strong focus on teaching the literacy demands of the topics and tasks they were planning. The planning format from the ESL Teacher Support Materials would be trialled during this time.

The ESL teacher and the early years coordinator both attend the Prep and Year 1 meeting. Apart from planning, the focus in this group is also on sharing guided reading strategies that are particularly successful with the ESL learners, and using the *ESL Companion to VELs* to guide planning of the literacy needs of the ESL learners.

At the end of the first four weeks of the first term the ESL teacher, in consultation with the ESL committee, developed a timetable for the rest of Term 1 and for Term 2. The last two weeks of the second term were set aside to assist classroom teachers in assessing and reporting the progress of their ESL learners.

The program was evaluated by the ESL committee at the end of Term 2. It was felt that the program had assisted teachers to cater for their ESL learners and should continue in much the same way until the end of the year, and then be reviewed for the following year. The ESL teacher wrote a short report for the ESL committee at the end of the year, with recommendations for the following year.

During the year the ESL teacher was funded through SFO funding to attend ESL professional development. She was also funded with extra time to report back to staff meetings about these sessions.

The following timetable operated throughout the year:

<p>Term 1</p> <p>First 4 weeks – 3.5 days a week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sociolinguistic profiling Getting to know the ESL learners in the school, and making sure that classroom teachers are aware of their language skills and needs Helping teachers to assess their ESL learners Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student, 45 minutes per day Prioritising and organising the program for the rest of Term 1 and Term 2 <p>Final 7 weeks – 2.5 days a week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative planning – 8 hours (1 hour per year level, 2 hours with Preps) Prep team teaching – 2 hours Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 2 hours Program planning and finding ESL-appropriate topic resources for classroom teachers – 3 hours 	<p>Term 2</p> <p>First 8 weeks – 2.5 days a week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative planning – 7 hours Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 2 hours Program planning and finding ESL-appropriate resources for classroom teachers for specific topics – 2 hours Prep team teaching – 2 hours <p>Final 2 weeks – 2.5 days a week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student – 2 hours Prep team teaching – 2 hours Assisting classroom teachers to assess the ESL learners' progress in English, and helping them to write reports. Organising interpreters for the parent-teacher interviews – 8 hours Program planning and finding ESL-appropriate topic resources for classroom teachers – 2 hours
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Term 3

Weekly timetable – 2.5 days a week:

Collaborative planning – **7 hours**

Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student –
3 hours

Program planning and finding ESL-appropriate
topic resources for classroom teachers – **2 hour**

Prep team teaching – **2 hours**

Term 4

First 7 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student –
1 hour

Collaborative planning – **7 hours**

Program planning and finding ESL-appropriate
topic resources for classroom teachers – **2 hour**

Prep team teaching – **2 hours**

Final 3 weeks – 2.5 days a week:

Working with the newly arrived Year 5 student –
1 hour

Prep team teaching – **1 hour**

Assisting classroom teachers to assess their
ESL learners progress in English, Organising
interpreters for the parent–teacher interviews – **7
hours**

Reviewing ESL program and writing report for
the ESL committee, planning for the next year –
6 hours

Considerations in ESL program development in secondary schools

In secondary schools, the development of the ESL program is influenced by the percentage of students at the different stages of ESL development, and the time allocation of the ESL teacher/s as well as year level of students, subject choices and timetable constraints.

The case studies below outline the approaches taken by a school in developing and implementing an ESL program.

Case study

Highmont High School

The following case study shows the kinds of programming decisions made in one school.

The school profile

Highmont High School is a school in which:

- There is an enrolment of 1250 students
- About 25% of the students use languages other than English at home, including Cambodian, Arabic, Tagalog, Sudanese, Vietnamese and Chinese
- 7 per cent of the students (about 125 students) attract ESL funding
- 85 students are deemed to be in need of a specialist ESL support program, and the rest are catered for through targeted ESL strategies in their all classes
- The ESL students are in the following year levels:

Year level	Number of students
Year 7	11
Year 8	13
Year 9	14
Year 10	14
Year 11	16
Year 12	17

- 40 students have been learning English for less than 2 years, and 45 have been learning English for between 2 and 5 years.
- The school's SFO weighting is 1.

The ESL students

These ESL students have diverse needs:

- Ten students are recently arrived into the school from a language centre and have been learning English for less than 12 months. These students are in Years 9 & 10. The school usually has an intake of recently arrived students

who have spent between 1 and 3 terms at the local language centre. The students usually arrive at the beginning of each term.

- The other ESL students have been learning English for longer than this and generally use English confidently for social purposes, but they need support when accessing and producing texts required for academic purposes
- Of particular concern is the Year 10 group of ESL students, as these students will be making pathway choices about VCE and VCAL or other pathway options at the end of the year.

The staff

The school's ESL allocation is for approximately 3.7 EFT teachers. Four ESL qualified teachers are employed, in a mixture of full and part time capacities. One of these teachers coordinates the ESL program.

Five other teachers from different subject study areas across the school have completed the ESL in the Mainstream Professional Development Course.

The school also employs three part-time MEAs, who speak Arabic, Vietnamese and Sudanese.

Timetabling of ESL support

The school offers parallel ESL classes at the same time as the English classes.

The ESL/English class is taught by an ESL teacher at each Year level.

English/ESL is timetabled for 5 periods a week.

A team teaching program is in place, with an ESL teacher in classrooms to support the students. In Maths and Science at each Year level, the ESL students are grouped in one class so the support available to them is maximised. The ESL teachers also plan with the classroom teachers in these subject areas, ensuring that supportive teaching strategies and activities are used. They assist teachers to select appropriate texts for their students, and help them plan and teach the kinds of classroom activities that will assist the ESL students to access them. They discuss with teachers the kinds of assessment activities that are most appropriate for their ESL students. They also assist teachers when making judgements of students' performance against the VELs.

In the first weeks of the school term the ESL teachers' priorities are to:

- Get to know the students and meet their parents/caregivers at enrolment, parent teacher meetings and information evenings.
- Support the recently arrived ESL students with an orientation/transition into the school (ensuring all students and parents are familiar with the school routines and practices)
- Work with other pastoral care leaders/teachers and student buddy mentors to support the students enrolling from the intensive English language program
- Assist the most recently arrived students at other year levels to settle into their new routines
- Set up homework support programs
- Support other teachers to assess the ESL students' strengths and needs
- Assist all teachers to build up their ESL learner profiles and class profiles
- Prioritise student needs and draw up a timetable for the ESL program

- Timetable collaborative planning sessions with all teachers of the ESL students
- Decide on the make up of the specialist ESL classes and develop the syllabus

Additional responsibilities:

- Assist with the compilation of school and class sociolinguistic profiles
- Develop the timetable for the MEAs
- Buy appropriate new resources and assist classroom teachers with purchasing new resources and material appropriate to their ESL learners needs
- Investigate school ESL PD needs and organising PD opportunities
- Organise interpreters for parent-teacher interviews
- Assist teachers to report on the progress of ESL learners to parents, using the ESL standards

Ongoing identification of priorities

The needs of individual students will need to be reassessed during the year. If recent arrivals come into the school from the language centre, these students will need priority support in their learning in the classrooms, as they settle into their new school.

Links and resources

ESL webpage

See the ESL webpage at <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/index.htm> for links to a range of ESL resources and materials, including information about Interpreting and Translating services, and information about ESL programs.

Reporting the progress of ESL students to parents

See <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/studentreports/index.htm> for information about reporting the progress of ESL students to parents, including sample reports, and commonly asked questions.

Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)

LMERC is a specialist support centre for Victorian schools in the areas of languages other than English, ESL and multicultural education. Victorian teachers may borrow a wide range of resources from LMERC. The LMERC catalogue is available on-line at the LMERC website.

The LMERC lending library has a collection of over 20,000 resources which includes:

- Teacher reference materials for LOTE, ESL and multicultural education
- Culturally inclusive picture books, fiction and big books, and posters
- Selected journals related to language teaching and multicultural education
- Pamphlets, clippings and articles
- Videos, CD-ROMs, DVDs and audio cassettes (English and multilingual)
- Resource materials on human rights education, civics and citizenship, prejudice, racism and social justice
- Studies of Asia resources
- Units of work and teacher notes
- LOTE, ESL and multicultural education policy documents.

See <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lmerc/index.htm> for further information.

Curriculum and support materials

A range of curriculum and support materials is available for teachers of students who are learning English. For further information about the resources and where they can be purchased see <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/esl/ecurri.htm>.

The ESL Companion to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VCAA, 2006)
<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/index.html>

The ESL Companion to the English CSF (VCAA, 2000)

No English – Don't Panic

No English 2 – Questions and answers

Beginning ESL – Support material for primary new arrivals

Beginning ESL secondary – Support material for newly arrived secondary students learning English a second language

ESL in the Early Years (CD-ROM)

First Language Assessment Tasks

Preparing for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE): Information for newly arrived students learning English as a second language and their parents

Language games for ESL students – Classroom activities for students learning English as second language

ESL learners in the middle years– Strategies for the mainstream classroom (video)

Moving in new directions – Literacy strategies for ESL learners with disrupted schooling

Where's English?

Talking in Tune – A guide to working with interpreters in schools (Video, DVD)

Teacher Support Material available on curriculum@work (DE&T) – CD-ROM or website at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/curriculumatwork/index.htm>:

- ESL Stage A1 – Teacher support materials for lower primary new arrivals, Years P–2
- ESL Stages B1 and BL – Teacher Support Material for Primary new arrivals, Years 3–6
- ESL Stages A2, B2 & B3, Teacher Support Material for Primary post-new arrivals, Years P–6
- ESL Stages S1 and S2, Teacher Support Material for Secondary new arrivals, Years 7–10
- ESL Stages S3 and S4, Teacher Support Material for Secondary post-new arrivals, Years 7–10