

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND
ASSESSMENT



English as an additional language in Irish primary schools

Guidelines for teachers

DRAFT

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Introduction

In Irish primary and post-primary schools there is a growing number of children for whom neither English nor Irish is the language spoken in the home. The ideas and suggestions which are outlined in this document have been developed to support mainstream classroom teachers in meeting the learning needs of these children¹. The children concerned come from a diversity of linguistic, geographical and cultural backgrounds, including those who

- were born in Ireland but whose home language is neither English nor Irish
- have lived in Ireland for some time and who have oral competence in English but who do not have sufficient language and literacy proficiency to engage fully with the Primary School Curriculum
- have recently arrived in Ireland from countries where they gained literacy skills in other languages, including those who have literacy skills in languages which do not use the Roman script
- have recently arrived in Ireland from countries where they have not gained literacy skills in other languages
- come from homes where parents² may or may not be literate in the language spoken in the home and/or school.

This document addresses the language and literacy needs of the child for whom English is an additional language in Irish primary schools. The phrase ‘English as an additional language’ recognises that English is the language of instruction to be used in teaching the child. English is also a language which the child shares with his/her home language. The teaching of English will build on the language and literacy skills which the child has attained in his/her home language to the greatest extent possible. The use of the phrase ‘English as an additional language’ also recognises that, where possible, the child will also have an experience of learning Irish.

The remainder of the Introduction is presented in the following subsections

- Aims
- Structure.

¹ The mainstream teacher is the teacher with whom the child will spend most of the day in school. The child may also receive additional language and literacy support from the language support teacher whose role is discussed later in this document.

² Throughout this document, the word ‘parents’ refers to the child’s parents and his/her guardians, it is used to refer to all of those who are primarily responsible for taking care of the child.

Aims

The specific aims of this document are to

- provide information regarding children's language acquisition so that principals, teachers and school staffs come to a greater understanding of the processes involved in learning a new language and how this affects the language and literacy needs of the child
- identify how school and classroom planning, and collaboration within the school, contribute to meeting the language and learning needs of the child
- illustrate approaches and methodologies, including ICT, which enable greater access to the Primary School Curriculum for the child
- identify appropriate assessment strategies for schools and teachers in order to meet the learning needs of the child and provide assistance in sharing assessment information with the child's parents or guardians.

Structure

The document has four sections:

- Section one provides an overview of language learning. It describes how children acquire their first language and additional languages and it explores the implications for supporting a child's language and learning in primary schools.
- Section two describes school and classroom planning for the needs of the child for whom English is an additional language.
- Section three describes different teaching methodologies for developing children's language learning. The section also examines the role of information and communications technology (ICT).
- Section four identifies methods for monitoring the child's progress in mainstream settings and for assessing the child's learning over time.

In preparing this document, the NCCA acknowledges the advice and materials provided by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT). IILT has the responsibility for managing support programmes for children who speak English as an additional language on behalf of the DES. IILT provide professional development and resources for language support teachers and for mainstream classroom teachers.

Occasionally reference is made to specific websites in the guidelines where teachers and schools may access additional support for the methods included in these guidelines. However, inclusion of the specific website addresses does not constitute an endorsement of these websites on behalf of the NCCA. Teachers are advised to review the content of websites mentioned in these guidelines prior to sharing the contents of these sites with children.

1. Language acquisition

This section is organised under the following five headings

- Acquiring the first language
- Acquiring an additional language
- Teaching communicative language learning through the curriculum
- Developing language awareness
- Enabling cultural competence

Acquiring the first language

Children learn their first language and other languages spoken in the home in an incremental manner. From the time a child is born he/she interacts with others in the immediate surroundings, for example by reacting to voices and sounds. Within the first year, a child begins to coo and babble and will be able to detect differences in the tone of voice used by caregivers.

Soon thereafter, the majority of children begin to utter their first words and before these children are two years of age they form two word sentences and questions. Between the ages of two and three there will usually be a significant advance in children's use of sentence structure and in the range of vocabulary that they have in their linguistic repertoire. However, at this stage the child's grasp of phonological and grammatical conventions is still somewhat underdeveloped.

By the time children are three to five years of age, they continue to master more complex grammatical and conceptual aspects of the first language. Even at the age of seven children continue to develop the communication skills that are used to decode texts. At this stage of first language acquisition, the use of pronouns may still pose difficulties for some children. Children may also have difficulty in sequencing events and in determining how events are related to one another.

Each child's ability to use language is nurtured by parents, teachers and other caregivers. As the child grows, he/she learns to interact with other members of his/her family, peers and adults in the extended community. Over time, the child develops an understanding of the ways in which language is used in different contexts. The child's literacy is developed as he/she is learns about the interrelationships that exist between letters, sounds and words. The support of parents and community members is an important feature of initial and continuing literacy. Members of the child's community also assist him/her to understand the social conventions associated with the use of language.

The time frame involved in the acquisition of a first language illustrates the complexity of this task for the child. It also illustrates the need for patience and understanding as the child begins to acquire English as an additional language.

Acquiring an additional language

The processes of acquiring additional languages are also influenced by some of the same processes that affect the learning of a first language. In common with the acquisition of the home language, the child's acquisition of additional languages occurs in developmental stages.

The receptive skill of listening will develop before the child produces language and speaks an additional language, in this case English. Additionally, the receptive skill of reading will develop before the child has the capacity to write. The social language skills of listening and speaking have been shown to develop faster than literacy skills.

As with the acquisition of any additional language, the child's acquisition of English is a non-linear and incremental process. The child who is learning English for the first time utters one or two word phrases before he/she develops more fluency in the language. The child has to develop his/her internal rule pathways before he/she can overcome the challenges associated with the conventions of English. The errors that the young child makes at this stage of his/her language acquisition are a natural part of the acquisition process.

The silent phase

Teachers have noted that many children for whom English is an additional language do not participate in oral classroom interactions for some months when they are placed in the mainstream setting.

This is a natural phenomenon that occurs when a child is immersed in a new language and culture. The child takes time to become familiar with the lexicon and the structure of the new language and also learns how to participate in the new culture of the class and the school.

This is a period when the child uses other strategies for interacting with the teacher and with peers. Observational prompts and checklists have been developed which teachers may use to monitor the child's interaction with others during this phase of language development (see Appendix 5).

During this time, the teacher assists the child's involvement in classroom activities by using simple and routine phrases accompanied by actions in English.

The child's initial language and curriculum learning may also be developed when the teacher enables the child to access support from another child in the class who speaks his/her home language. Additionally, peer-tutoring arrangements should enable the child to participate, to some extent, in classroom learning activities during the silent period of language acquisition.

The teacher may use the child's oral and written work to determine what support should be offered to the child to develop his/her growing competence in English. As the child's proficiency in English increases, the classroom teacher will be mindful of the fact that, in

addition to learning a new language, the child is also learning subjects through and with that language. According to current research (for example, Frigo et al 2004) children who are learning subjects in the curriculum through the medium of an additional language generally take considerably longer to learn the subject areas than their peers.

Children who have attained some level of literacy in their home language should be encouraged to sustain the development of literacy in this language. An increasing number of libraries have access to books in a variety of languages and these should be utilised by parents to support the child's language literacy in the home language. Research illustrates that children who have literacy skills in their home language are able to transfer some of these skills to the learning of an additional language (see for example, Lindholm-Leary, 2005).

The continued enhancement of the child's language and literacy skills in his/her home language is also important for the child's affective development. Teachers should encourage the child's parents to ensure that the child has access to reading and literacy materials in the language of the home. Schools should reflect the language and cultural diversity of their children by incorporating different languages in the life of the school.

The child's capacity to engage in cognitively demanding tasks through the medium of English will depend on the amount of support he/she receives both in the school and in the home. For this reason, it is important that the mainstream classroom becomes a language and literacy oriented classroom. Such a classroom will enable all children to communicate with each other and collaborate as they engage in task-based and other activities.

Teaching English through the curriculum

Language is the means by which we interpret, organise and access our world. It is also the means by which we communicate ideas, feelings and thoughts. The Curriculum and Examinations Board (1987), the precursor to the NCCA, in its *Report on the Board of Studies for Languages* (cited in Little, 2004: 7) defined language as

- the chief means by which we think – all language activities, in whatever language, are exercises in thinking
- the vehicle through which knowledge is acquired and organised
- a central factor in the growth of the learner's personality
- one of the chief means by which societies and cultures organise themselves and by which culture is transmitted between and across cultures.

The home language is learned naturally as the child interacts with others in the home. In the school situation the teacher might use similar strategies for developing the child's literacy, for example by focusing on the importance of oral language. For example by encouraging children to communicate with each other and to share ideas regarding how school tasks should be completed.

In some instances, the child may have very limited exposure to English language interactions outside those which he/she encounters in the school setting, so the child's language learning should be structured in a way that enables him/her to interact with peers and with the teacher as extensively as possible. This can be achieved when the teacher facilitates collaborative learning within the class.

Children learn language more successfully when they have an understanding of the topics being taught (Vygotsky, 1934). The teacher can develop this understanding by linking the child's learning to meaningful experiences. The teacher should collaborate with the language support teacher³ where there is one so that he/she can build on the child's experiences in the mainstream class and vice versa. Examples of teaching methods that enable the teacher to create a communicative classroom that builds on the child's experiences are included in the next section.

The teacher can help to develop the child's language and engagement with the curriculum by

- using **gesture**s to illustrate actions and activities
- using **visual cues** to support the development of oral interactions
- **displaying phrases** that are commonly used in the classroom and in particular subjects
- providing the child with words and phrases which **assist him/her to look for clarification**
- **simplifying texts** that contain complex sentences and ideas
- providing opportunities for children to create their own monolingual or bilingual **dictionaries** and enabling the child in senior primary to use dictionary skills to support learning
- displaying flip charts and posters used to **record new words**, groups of words or structures experienced by the child and other children in the class
- setting aside time for independent and guided **reading**.

Teachers know from teaching Irish how children acquire greater fluency in the language when it is used for communication. They also recognise that the child's language skills are improved when children have an opportunity to reflect on how the language works. In the same way, teachers can raise awareness about how English is structured for the child who is learning English as an additional language.

Developing language awareness

By becoming more familiar with the oral and written work that the child creates, the teacher gains a better insight into how second language literacy is attained. For example, when the teacher examines samples of work contained in the child's portfolios or copies he/she may notice systematic errors. As the teacher notes the specific errors which occur over time he/she may be able to identify patterns of development in particular grammatical conventions which occur for all children learning English.

³ Schools which meet the needs of more than 14 children for whom English is an additional language have an entitlement to employ the services of a language support teachers. These teachers work with the child to improve his/her English language and literacy skills.

The teacher may also notice particular errors which children make as they are learning English that are associated with specific language groups. For example, children who speak a romance language may use 'she/he' to refer to 'it' in English. This is because their home language is gender based. These insights will inform the methods the teacher chooses as he/she sets about teaching specific conventions associated with English.

Whatever the child's home language is, he/she will be able to transfer some of the skills that he/she has learned in acquiring the home language to the additional language of English. If the child's home language is unrelated to English then it will be more challenging to ensure that the language skills are transferred from the home language to English. Grammatical conventions and the phonological system may differ greatly between the languages and as a result the child may experience an extended silent period before speaking or writing in the English language.

Should the script and directionality used in the child's home language be different from the script and directionality used for reading and writing in English, the child may have to learn spatial strategies for reading from left to right. In this case, the child will also have to learn the letter sound relationships in English and will need sustained support to grasp these letter sound relationships. By becoming familiar with the child's prior language and literacy learning, where this is possible, the teacher is better placed to build on the child's prior learning experiences. The child should be encouraged to use knowledge of his/her own home language

- to determine the meaning of words
- to explore the similarities and differences in sounds between English and the language spoken in the home
- to explore where possible grammatical conventions in the home language that may be the same or different from English
- to make comparisons between the script and letter sound relationships used for the home language and that of English.

By enabling the child to develop his/her awareness of how English is structured and how it is used, the teacher enables a transfer of the language skills from the language spoken in the home to English. The child's capacity to transfer language, literacy and cognitive skills from one learning context to another will depend on a range of factors. One consideration includes the similarities and differences between English and the home language. For example, there may be fairly simple transference from the child's home language if the child's first language is French, as this language shares many lexical items with English.

The child's awareness of English can be developed at a number of levels for example by

- examining the relationship between letters, sounds and words
- exploring the relationships between different words within sentences
- investigating how texts change according to their functions as reflected in different genres.

As the child's language proficiency develops he/she will benefit from opportunities to think about the nature of language used in oral, visual or written texts. By increasing the child's awareness regarding how English works the teacher enables him/her to reflect on his/her use of the language. For example, the teacher may wish to highlight how a particular text contains a list of past tense verbs which share similar endings or the teacher could raise awareness regarding irregular past tense verbs in a particular text. However, the teacher should be cautious about teaching decontextualised grammatical rules to the child in the expectation that this will assist the child's language and literacy development.

In senior classes, the teacher may draw attention to how the English language is structured and how certain words work together to create meaning. The very young learner does not have the cognitive capacity to reflect on how language is structured. However, as the child in the senior classes develops his/her oral and written skills in English, the teacher should use information from the child's work to reflect on his/her grasp of the conventions used in English. By providing the child with varied opportunities to explore and interact meaningfully with the language the teacher is also enabling the child to access the curriculum.

Enabling cultural competence

The cultural context of the school has an important bearing on how the child is enabled to access aspects of the curriculum. The child who has recently arrived in the school may not be familiar with classroom roles and responsibilities which have been formed over time. Children within the school, their parents, teachers and school patrons have all contributed to the formation of the school's culture. It is important for the child, once he/she arrives in a new school, that an emphasis is placed on introducing him/her to the cultural norms of the school and the classroom.

The social aspects of learning in a new environment

Initially, when children are in transition from one culture to another they may not wish to engage with others and may be distressed when parents or caregivers are not present. So teachers should be cautious about ascribing learning difficulties to children who have recently arrived in class. Dialogue with parents, to ascertain the child's prior experiences, assists teachers in determining the best course of action to ensure that the child is enabled to participate appropriately in class. For example, the teacher will want to ascertain whether the child's learning was interrupted or continuous. Additionally, the teacher may wish to ascertain, as sensitively as possible, the contexts in which the child and his/her family have arrived in Ireland. Involving the child's parents in school activities should also assist the child in learning to cope with change and readjustment.

Many cultural practices are conveyed through language and through the use of body language and gesture. This is also the case in school settings. These aspects of classroom practises should be made explicit for the child for instance by talking through the practises associated with the classroom and the community. For example, there are differing cultural practises associated with identifying who should speak next within a group, the teacher may wish to identify these practices both in gesture and in words for the child who recently arrives in the class. The teacher can also help to strengthen the child's sense of

belonging by integrating the cultural values of respect for self and others into the child's language learning with the curriculum.

Ultimately, the child should be enabled to access all subject areas of the curriculum including the Irish language which is both a linguistic and cultural feature of our national identity. However, if the child enters the school in more senior classes he/she may be exempt from learning Irish as the school deems it more appropriate for this child to concentrate on learning English as this is the medium of instruction.

Additional ideas and methods for ensuring cultural sensitivity within the intercultural classroom are accessible in the NCCA *Guidelines for Intercultural Education and the Primary School Curriculum* (2005).

2. School and classroom planning

There are three major areas addressed in this section

- School planning
- Classroom planning and
- Support for planning.

School planning

In accordance with the Education Act (1998), all schools must develop a school plan. Development of this school plan is the responsibility of each school's Board of Management. The Board of Management is required to ensure that adequate consultation takes place as the plan is drafted, implemented and reviewed. Parents are among the key personnel to be involved in contributing to planning within the school. Efforts should be made to include parents from cultural and linguistic minorities in the preparation of the school plan.

Information and guidance for schools engaged in school planning by is provided School Development Planning Support (SDPS) Primary (website: www.sdps.ie). SDPS suggest that as schools develop their plans they might include 6 sections. In the context of these guidelines schools may wish to consider how the sections will meet the needs of children for whom English is an additional language, some suggestions are provided below:

1. **General school details**: This section might make reference to the diversity of languages and cultures served by the school should this be the case.
2. **Vision and Mission statement**: Schools may consider the impact that equality legislation will have on enabling learning for all children.
3. **Curriculum plans and programmes**: In this section there is scope for schools to consider the specific language and literacy learning needs of the child for whom English is an additional language.
4. **Organisational policies**: These policies identify the guiding principles which orient teaching and learning in the classroom. They may make reference to legislation as well as to documents such as the guidelines provided here.
5. **Procedures and practises**: In this section reference might be made to the arrangements which are made for the mainstream classroom teacher and the language support teacher (where there is one in the school) to liaise and share information regarding the child's learning.

Curriculum planning

While addressing section 3 of the school plan, the school might acknowledge the need to build on all children's prior learning to the greatest extent possible. Suitable methods and approaches should be identified which will enable differentiation to take place so that all children will be provided with the potential to access the curriculum.

At an organisational level, if the school has a high proportion of children for whom English is an additional language its curriculum planning will reflect the need to consider the particular needs of these children. As the school plans for the child language development and facilitates the child's growing capacity to engage with the curriculum, the school community could

- endeavour to strengthen communicative competence in English
- explore how links might be made between all subject areas in the curriculum to boost the child's knowledge, skills and attitudes and to further his/her awareness of how language works in different contexts
- enable the child to mediate between the new language and culture of the school and the linguistic and cultural heritage which informs his/her experiences in the home.

Some approaches which should enable the school to plan for and develop a whole school approach to meeting the needs of the child include

- developing an awareness regarding of the **centrality of language and literacy** to learning across the curriculum and investigating ways in which this might be put into practice in the school
- ensuring that the child is in an **age appropriate class** so that his/her cognitive and language development is enhanced through interaction with peers
- **planning for progression** of the child's language and literacy learning over time and between classes bearing in mind the spiral development nature of the curriculum
- adopting a **cross curricular approach** to teaching and learning. These methods ensure that the child learns language in an authentic way and is exposed to similar types of language structures and vocabulary in a range of different learning contexts.
- **using experiences and examples taken from the local environment** and extending the child's learning from the immediate and known to the unfamiliar and unknown
- **sharing successful methods** that have been used by teachers to support the learning of other languages taught at the school
- ensuring that **resource issues are addressed** for the child so that he/she has access to oral, written and ICT resources that are appropriate for his/her learning needs
- identifying good practices for **informing parents** regarding the school's policy for the teaching the child for whom English is an additional language⁴.

Organisational planning

Organisational planning takes cognisance of how the school is best organised to meet the learning needs of all children. For teachers of children who are learning English as an additional language, organisational planning should consider

- **the professional development** requirements of teachers so that the cultural, cognitive and linguistic needs of all children are recognised
- **coordinating all the support services** within the school so that there is a cohesive and collaborative approach taken to meeting the needs of the child
- the particular **monitoring and assessment methods** to address the needs of the children concerned.
- the **timetabling issues** which will enable all teachers concerned with the child's learning to share information and engage in professional dialogue.

⁴ Information regarding how schools might inform parents regarding their child's learning is featured in the last section of this document.

Procedures and practices

The procedures and practises identify measures for ensuring that a successful working and learning environment is maintained within the school. Practices and procedures will be developed on the premise of meeting the differentiated learning needs of all children. For example, while recognising that experiential learning is particularly beneficial for children learning English as an additional language, the school might address the question of how best to inform parents, whose home language is not English, regarding school trips and other learning experiences. In this instance, the school may be able to engage the services of an interpreter who will assist in preparing forms for the parents concerned. Additional considerations for the Board of Management and the school staff involved in the organisational planning of the school might entail

- establishing **buddy support systems** that enable the child to rely on support from another member of the child's class
- enabling access to the **school or classroom library** so that the child is encouraged to read as much as possible
- **involving parents** from a variety of linguistic communities in the school as much as is practical and possible within the life of the school, for example to assist with interpreting while a new child is enrolled.

The nature of school planning will reflect the individual circumstances of each school. For example, schools which meet the needs of in excess of 14 children for whom English is an additional language have an entitlement to engage a language support teacher (DES, 2000). At present where language support is provided, children are entitled to two years of that support, whereas the need to provide particular guidance and support for the child's engagement with the curriculum will continue in the mainstream setting after language support has been withdrawn.

Classroom planning

This subsection addresses the following areas

- Planning for integrating language and curriculum learning
- Devising a cross curricular approach to language and curriculum learning
- Liaising with the language support teacher
- Promoting a reading culture in class

Planning for integrating language and curriculum learning

Programmes for teaching English as an additional language have identified that the child learns more effectively if he/she is enabled to use the knowledge of words and phrases that are acquired in one subject area to advance learning in other areas of the curriculum. This is why planning a thematic approach to teaching and learning is beneficial for the child. The child's interaction with similar forms of grammatical structures and lexicon over a prolonged period of time enables him/her to recycle language and to use it meaningfully in a variety of contexts. As the child hears and sees words and structures being repeated, he/she becomes more familiar with their meanings and their uses in a variety of contexts.

A model plan for meeting the learning needs of children for whom English is an additional language has been developed by the NCCA. The model plan takes cognisance of strategies

that have been developed in other countries which enable the teacher to focus on the language learning needs of the child as well as enabling the child to access the curriculum (for example, Echevarria et al, 2004). This model is featured on the following below. The model should assist the teacher in planning for an integration of language and curriculum learning in the mainstream classroom. When enacted, this model will enable the teacher to retain considerations of the child’s current language and literacy attainment to the fore. The model places the child’s current language and literacy proficiency as the critical starting point which will be used to determine the inputs for each of the subsequent steps in the cycle.

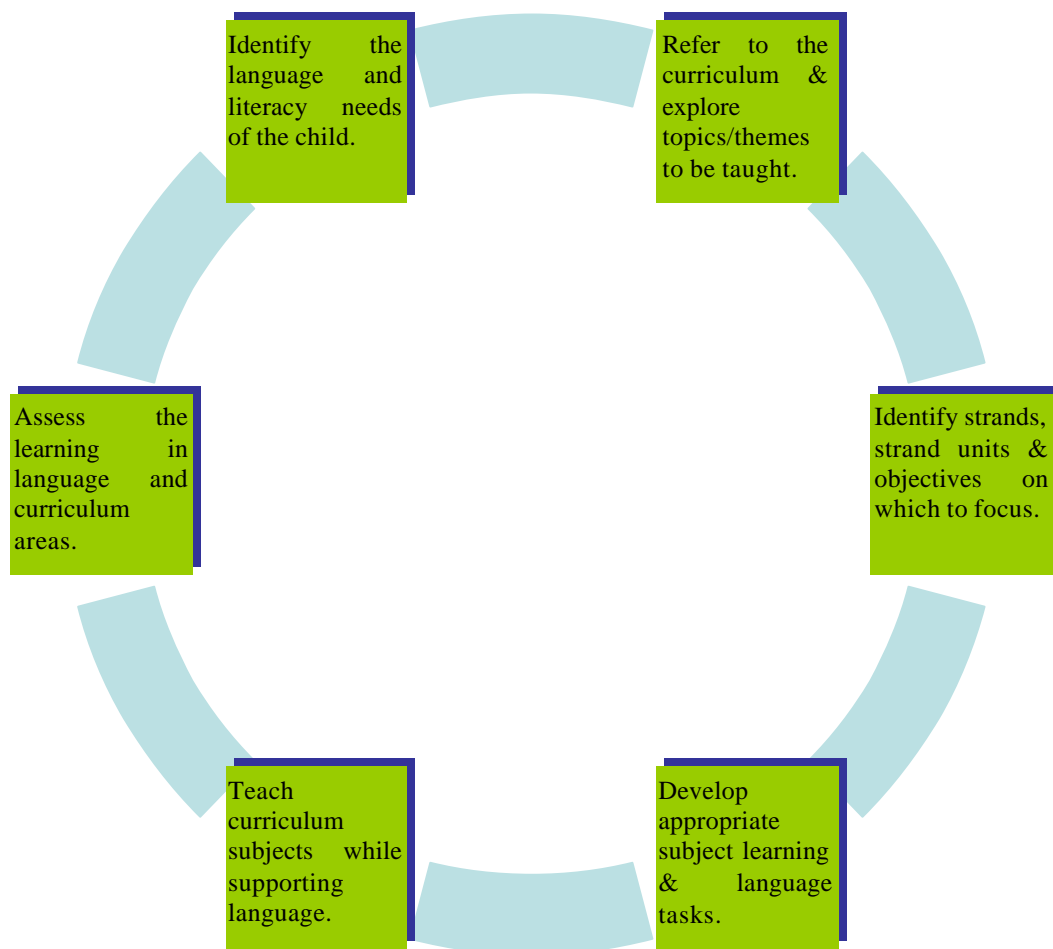


Figure 1: Planning for the child’s learning

The classroom teacher, and the language support teacher where there is one available within the school, may use the planning cycle above to develop a programme for classroom learning which takes cognisance of the child’s language and learning needs with regard to the curriculum. Teaching implications for using the model are identified below:

- Firstly, the teacher will identify the child’s language and learning needs. These needs will be identified through an analysis of the child’s previous work by assessing the child’s

current competence in English. The teacher may choose to use the Primary English Language Proficiency Benchmarks as one tool which will help to assess the child's language proficiency (see Appendix 6).

- Based on the learning needs of the child and the other children in the class the teacher will identify age and interest appropriate themes which will anchor the teaching and learning.
- Once the themes have been identified the teacher carefully identifies learning objectives from the Primary School Curriculum which will be appropriate for the child concerned. Particular strands and strand units and learning objectives identified may not be the same for all the children in the class at the same time.
- Based on the identified objectives, the teacher will develop suitable teaching and learning tasks which will enable the child to access and attain the learning objectives from the curriculum.
- As children are engaged with their tasks the teacher may support specific areas of language development while also guiding the child as he/she masters the knowledge, skills or attitudes identified in the learning objectives.
- When children are focused on their work the teacher supports and monitors the child's learning. This enables the teacher to continuously make informed decisions regarding possible next steps in supporting the child's learning.

Devising a cross curricular approach to learning

Research concerned with identifying the most effective ways for ensuring that children are enabled to access the curriculum indicates that cross-curricular teaching and learning is beneficial for language learners (Gibbons, 2003). Cross-curricular teaching using key themes or topics provides opportunities for the child to

- **comprehend vocabulary** and phrases that are associated with a particular topic in a number of different contexts
- **transfer reading skills** learned in one of the subject areas to other areas of the curriculum
- **gain sustained interaction with ideas and language** associated with particular topics, thereby giving the child a wide repertoire of vocabulary and collocations
- **make cognitive links** between different curriculum subjects and thereby develop higher order thinking skills
- **communicate with peers**, particularly when the teacher makes use of collaborative and project-based learning approaches (these are further explored in the next section).

The concept map overleaf illustrates how a classroom teacher in third or fourth classes might use a topic to devise an initial overview of the learning which will take place in the classroom. This map identifies suitable learning tasks which are based on specific learning objectives identified in the curriculum. This concept map also identifies the types of language learning activities which will be beneficial for the child learning English.

*A planning concept map for the topic
Travel and transport*

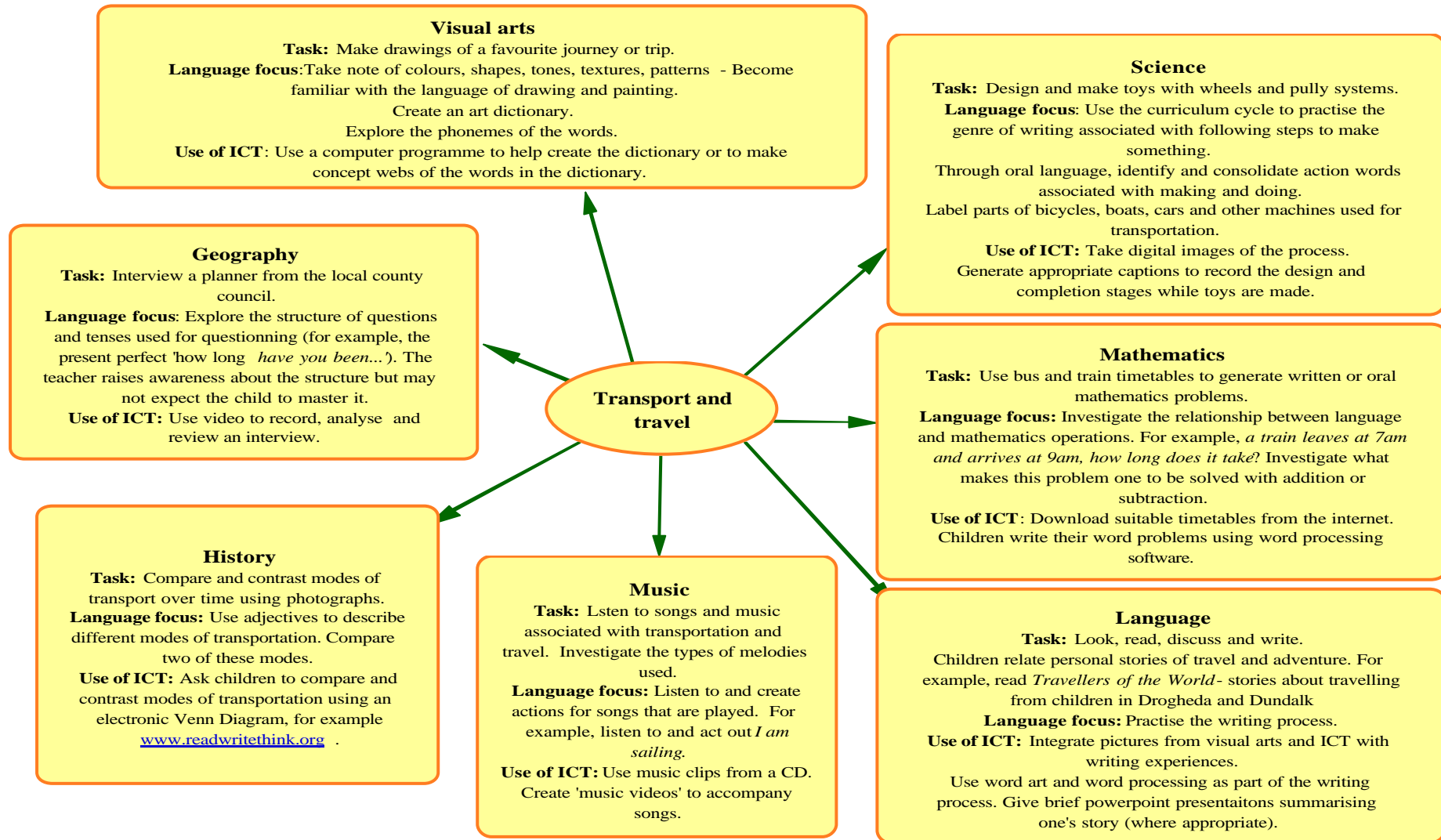


Figure 2: Curriculum planning concept map

Using the curriculum planning concept map

This concept map may be used by teachers to plan for teaching and learning of specific objectives from within the curriculum while also enabling the teacher to develop the child's language and literacy skills. For example, the learning tasks identified for science are based on the objective that children should be enabled to explore how objects are moved (Science Curriculum, p. 65). Before the task is assigned, the teacher will reflect on the types of language that the child will need to be able to use and understand in order to engage in the task. This might entail an investigation of the possible grammatical conventions that the child should focus on as well as the lexicon which will be necessary for the child to learn. This type of reflection before the lesson will help to structure the learning and to determine what assessment techniques will be appropriate for the task concerned.

While planning for the child's learning needs through the teaching of themes, the teacher should be mindful of the potential role of ICT in enabling the child to extend his/her learning of language and the curriculum.

The teacher will also ensure, where possible, that cross curricular learning which takes place in the mainstream setting reinforces the support which the child receives from the language support teacher. There is scope for the mainstream teacher and the language support teacher to plan jointly for classroom learning using shared resources. For example, they may wish to use materials devised by IILT. Following an examination of topics which were identified in the Primary School Curriculum, IILT devised materials to support a cross curricular approach to support the child's learning. These topics are identified in the table below.

1. Myself	2. Our school	3. Food and clothes
4. Colours, shapes & opposites	5. People who help us	6. Weather
7. Transport and travel	8. Seasons, holidays & festivals	9. The local and wider community
10. Time	11. People and places in other areas	12. Animals and plants
13. Caring for my locality		

These are the topics which the language support teacher tends to use while developing the child's language and literacy skills in English. Additional strategies for ensuring that there is a collaborative approach between the mainstream teacher and the language support teacher are identified below.

Liaising with the language support teacher

The mainstream teacher should work collaboratively with the language support teacher to

- liaise with the child's parents to build up a profile of the child's prior learning
- determine the child's language and literacy development needs after a settling period⁵
- identify topics which ensure that the child's learning in the mainstream classroom is reinforced and strengthened by the language support teacher and vice versa
- discuss the child's social and cognitive development
- become familiar with the methods and activities which the language support teacher uses to develop the child's language and literacy
- jointly assess the child's cognitive, social and language development over time
- determine how information should be shared with parents and others concerned with the child's learning
- encourage parents to strengthen the child's literacy through reading.

Promoting a reading culture

The Primary School Curriculum encourages schools to promote a reading culture, to create an 'atmosphere in which books and reading are seen as valuable and pleasurable' (p.18). Research on second language acquisition in school contexts (for example, AERA, 2004) emphasises the central role that reading has in enabling children to learn a new language. The table below looks at three complementary teaching methodologies reading in the classroom.

Type of reading	Possible approaches	Description
Shared reading	Using a Big Book	The teacher raises children's awareness regarding the different features of the book. The teacher models the reading process and prompts reflection through questioning. This approach is particularly beneficial for children in junior classes. The teacher may use this strategy in senior classes to highlight characteristics of different text genres.
Independent reading	Sustained silent reading (SSR)	Some schools set aside time for children to choose their own reading material and to read this in an uninterrupted fashion for an agreed period of time. This encourages older readers to gain more autonomy in their reading, to apply dictionary skills and to compare different genres in reading.
Guided reading	Collaborative reading groups	Guided reading is facilitated when the teacher, or other support person within the class, leads a particular group in reading through and learning from a text. The children are grouped for a short period according to their literacy and language needs. This enables the teacher to identify a specific aspect of the child's reading which can be strengthened in the supportive grouping arrangement. During guided reading, many aspects of reading may be addressed for example, highlighting letter sound relationships and increasing phonological awareness, investigating the use of pronouns so that children are enabled to decode texts and/or focusing on the features of specific texts.

⁵ The child may require a period when he/she grows accustomed to his/her new environment within the school.

In addition to the methods identified above, the classroom teacher may further develop the child's language and literacy skills by using some of the practices identified below. It is worth mentioning that the practices which are outlined are based on approaches identified in the Primary School Curriculum. These methods are suitable for all of the children but they are particularly advantageous in assisting the learning of English language and literacy for children whose home language is not English.

- Illustrating, in the early stages of literacy, how print corresponds to sound.
- Identifying sequences of sounds and words that are challenging for the child to articulate or comprehend so that these become the focus for future learning encounters.
- Displaying texts prominently throughout the classroom and the school. These environmental text displays may be further exploited when the teacher creates 'games' which encourage children to learn from and about the printed material displayed in the classroom and the school. For example, developing word or phrase hunts or quizzes based on the material displayed in the class.
- Encouraging children to read and discuss each other's writing so that the child for whom English is an additional language gains a growing awareness regarding the conventions for writing different genres and how these might be read.
- Promoting the use of ICT in reading and research, for example by asking children to read and contribute to shared online stories.
- Building the child's sight vocabulary through a sustained recording of new words and phrases which are revisited and recycled in different subjects in the curriculum. Where possible new words and phrases should be displayed prominently so that the child has ready access to them.
- Promoting a sense of critical literacy so that the child becomes increasingly aware of the need to question the factual nature of a variety of text genres, for example by investigating the veracity of statements made in advertisements.
- Planning to maximise the time available for children to engage with and learn about reading as reading skills are critical for children for whom English is an additional language.

Support for planning

Both the SDPS and PCSP work collaboratively with the NCCA to assist in the implementation of the Primary School Curriculum. An example of this collaborative approach is exemplified by the development of '*Suggested Prompts to Assist in Drafting a Whole School Plan for English*' which are available for schools and teachers from the SDPS website (www.sdps.ie). These prompts will guide the planning process within schools as they reflect on and identify the learning needs of children for whom English is an additional language. Additional support for schools is provided by IILT.

For some time, materials, professional development and advice have been provided to the language support teachers by IILT. The key materials developed by IILT include the publications identified in the following table.

Publication	Function
The primary English language proficiency benchmarks	<p>The benchmarks serve several purposes including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabling the language support teacher to identify the capacity of the child in the target language of English once he/she is admitted to the school • informing the language support teacher and the mainstream class teacher of the language proficiency level of the child so that appropriate teaching and learning tasks can be developed. • identifying for the teacher when the child might be considered to have the language capacity necessary to engage with the Primary School Curriculum to the same extent as children who speak English as a first language
European Language Portfolio	<p>There are three sections in the European Language Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the language passport allows the child to record his/her prior language and literacy experience of other languages and monitors the child's development in English • the biography identifies progress that the child makes in attaining the English language benchmarks • the dossier provides examples of the child's written work.

The materials made available from IILT (www.iilt.ie) in conjunction with these guidelines and the resources made available by other support personnel can assist schools in planning to meet the needs of the child for whom English is an additional language.

3. Approaches and methodologies

In this section, approaches and methodologies to support teachers in guiding the child's learning of English include

- collaborative learning
- do, talk, record
- total physical response
- focus on language awareness
- tips for supporting the child's learning.

Each of the approaches is supported by examples of activities which the teacher may use with children. These activities identify subject learning objectives for the children. In each case, the examples also identify possible English language learning objectives. The English language learning objectives are not necessarily identified from within the curriculum. They focus on areas of English language, including vocabulary and grammar, which will enable the children for whom English is an additional language to complete particular learning tasks. The teacher identifies these language learning objectives by reflecting on the vocabulary and structures that the child should learn to improve literacy in English and to access the curriculum.

Collaborative learning

The Primary School Curriculum (Introduction, p. 17) notes that collaborative approaches to teaching and learning enable the child to broaden and deepen his/her understanding of a problem through discussion and clarification. Collaborative approaches to teaching and learning ensure that the child's learning experience is grounded in communication with the teacher and other children. As children develop their language and literacy skills in the curriculum it is important that they gain an appreciation of working with others. Advantages and challenges for implementing collaborative work arrangements in the class are identified and briefly discussed in the T chart on below.

Benefits of collaborative learning	There are challenges associated with collaborative learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enables teachers to plan for and implement differentiated language and literacy learning tasks• Facilitates interaction among the children and promotes respect for ethnic and linguistic diversity within the class• Allows the teacher to monitor whether knowledge, skills and attitudes have been learned• Promotes learning autonomy• Engages the child in communicative interactions with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involves extensive planning and practise to ensure that learning takes place• Sometimes enables more vocal or self assured children to dominate group interactions• May make it challenging to determine what individual strengths and weaknesses might be• Can sometimes lead to an over reliance on the stronger members of the group• Leads to situations where much of the discussion and learning that takes place within groups may be beyond the teacher's control

It is important to ensure that the work assigned to each member within the group is valued and contributes to the realisation of a shared goal, even if individual learning outcomes are differentiated. This might be achieved by assigning roles to the children within the groups. Learning processes for assuming different group roles can be undertaken as an integral part of the theme ‘relating to others’, which is featured in the ‘Myself and others’ strand in the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum. While forming groups and assigning individual responsibilities, teachers should be cognisant of factors such as gender and ability ensuring that there is equity as roles are assigned. This will ensure that all children in the class have opportunities to assume positions of leadership within groups where this is appropriate. Some group roles might include those identified below:

Role	Responsibilities
Resources person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes sure that the group has all of the materials necessary to do the work and is responsible for distribution and collection of crayons etc.
Timekeeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that the task is being done within the time identified.
Reporter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shares what the group has done and how well the group worked as a team. The reporter may be asked to indicate how the work might be improved the next time.
Clarifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represents the group and talks with the teacher to make sure that the group understands the task at hand.
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes sure that each member of the group is involved and may monitor turn taking in the group with the teacher’s supervision and training.

When assigning the roles to the members of the group the teacher will provide the child with some communication methods that he/she may need to interact with others in the group and to seek clarification if needs be. For example, the teacher may provide a poster sheet with guiding questions which will help the child. Sample clarification questions might include

- How is this word spelt?
- What does this sentence mean? Can you explain it to me please?
- Is this what I have to do?
- Can you help me to write that please?
- When do we have to finish this? How much time do we have left?
- Can you please repeat what you said?

The teacher monitors the development of each child’s roles and responsibilities and pays attention to the strategies that children use to complete their tasks. The teacher also provides particular language and learning support for the child, ensuring that he/she is involved with the other children. The teacher may strengthen children’s capacity to assume particular roles within the group by modeling the duties and responsibilities associated with those roles. In this way the child begins to grasp the language that is associated with fulfilling the roles identified and is in a better position to collaborate with his/her peers.

While children are engaged in group work in the junior classes it will be important to focus on the cultural norms of turn taking to facilitate communication, for example the teacher can assist the children to say and practise turn taking phrases such as ‘it’s your turn to speak’ or ‘this is my chance to say something’. Additionally, the child who is experiencing the silent

phase of learning should be included in collaborative work. Even though the child may not be an active participant he/she will use observational and listening skills to develop his/her listening skills and gain more knowledge regarding how classroom work is structured by participating in collaborative work.

Two types of collaborative learning arrangements are explained below

1. Mixed ability groups
2. Same needs groups.

1. Mixed ability groups

When children are grouped together to work collaboratively in mixed ability groups this enables them to extend their learning. Children whose English language and literacy development is continuing over time will benefit from being able to interact and communicate with peers. When mixed ability groups are organised and supported appropriately, the child is provided with rich and authentic language input. The child will become an active participant in his/her own language and literacy development.

While forming mixed ability groups the teacher may wish to

- ensure that the child communicates with peers and learns from others who have the skills necessary to complete a task
- provide the child with opportunities to share his/her cultural and linguistic skills with a wider audience

For other children in the class involvement in mixed ability grouping may

- enable the children concerned to improve communication by explaining the tasks to be completed
- focus on specific social skills which are necessary for ensuring that all members of the groups are learning
- encourage children to respect diversity and to learn about the cultural and linguistic experiences of others in the class while raising their own awareness of language and literacy.

An exemplar for enabling a mixed ability approach to language teaching and learning in a geography class is provided on the following page.

Exemplar 1 – A map search

Activity

Children are asked to conduct a map search. This is conducted by children in mixed ability groups. This activity is designed for a geography lesson in Fifth and Sixth classes. Teachers may wish to adapt this exemplar for other subjects in the curriculum or to cater for the language and learning needs of children in junior classes.

Objectives

Curriculum subject	The child should be enabled to ⁶
Geography Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">become familiar with the names and locations of some major natural features in Ireland (p. 79)
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">discuss ideas and concepts encountered in other areas of the curriculum (p. 53)
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">encourage children to help each other (peer tutoring) - p. 31 <i>ICT in the Primary School Curriculum</i>.
Language – these objectives are specific for children acquiring English as an additional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">use spatial language, cardinal directions and the lexicon of natural physical features.

Method

Groups of mixed language and learning ability children work together to locate and record a list of natural features in Ireland.

Step 1 – Preparation for the task

- The teacher assigns children to mixed ability groups
- Provide responsibilities for each of the children in the group
- The teacher provides an illustration of the physical features that the children have to locate on their maps, such as the one featured in the following table.

⁶ Each of the curriculum subject objectives identified in the exemplars are specified in the Primary School Curriculum. The learning objectives for language are those which the teacher identifies to strengthen the English language skills of the child for whom English is an additional language.

Physical Features

- The teacher prepares a series of posters or PowerPoint slides with graphics showing different physical features. For example, the slide to the right uses a picture from 'clip art' on a PowerPoint slide. The use of pictures enables the child to make associations between the printed word and its graphic representation.



A mountain range

- Distribute a task sheet to each of the groups. For example the sheet might ask children to work together to locate and record different physical features, for example 4 mountain ranges, 4 rivers, 4 lakes, 4 bays, 4 headlands and 4 islands.

Step 2 – Working in small groups

- Children work together to identify the counties and regions where the physical features are located.
- Each child should have a written record the area where the physical features are found (for children who are pre-literate in English the teacher may request groups to support the recording for this child. Depending on the language experiences and needs of the child, the teacher may ask that child is supported by peers in labeling pictures of the physical features).

Step 3 – Presentation

- An oral presentation of the findings for each group is made using a full sized map of the country. This presentation may be assigned to the child for whom English is an additional language only if his/her competence in oral language is advanced enough to ensure that this will be a rewarding experience. This child may be asked to participate in the presentation in other ways, for example by identifying where the physical features have been located.

Differentiated extension activities

Shared extension

- Children design their own posters or PowerPoint slides illustrating geographical features which they label and share with others, these can be used to promote other map searches.

For the children learning English as an additional language

- Match words with pictures
- Make a simple sentence using the physical features concerned.

For independent work

- Research how one of these physical features is formed and how it may change over time.

2. Same needs groups

At times, the teacher may wish to support and develop the specific language or subject area skills of an individual or group. In forming same needs groups the teacher may wish to

- introduce and practise the steps involved with completing a task
- focus on the conventions of grammar in completing an oral or written piece of work
- familiarise children with a specific oral or written genre associated with a curriculum area
- teach the appropriate lexicon which is associated with a specific curriculum area
- develop reading skills that other children in the class may already have mastered through a guided reading process
- provide guidance in the drafting, editing and redrafting of written work
- test prior knowledge associated with particular subjects in the curriculum
- practise skills necessary to implement an aspect of the curriculum
- discuss progress attained in learning and set future learning targets
- develop the early English literacy skills of the child who has little or no prior literacy in his/her home language.

In some circumstances, children who have attained high levels of proficiency in speaking and listening will require additional assistance in negotiating the cognitively demanding tasks associated with the curriculum. By grouping the children according to their needs, on a short term basis, the teacher can provide the additional assistance required for these children.

The following exemplar will support children in completing a guided reading task in a same needs group setting.

Exemplar 2 – A guided reading exercise

Activity

Children are guided in their reading about past and present festivals in other cultures. This activity is appropriate for children in Third and Fourth classes. It is based on objectives identified in the history curriculum but can be adapted to other subjects, especially those that use written text to convey meanings.

Objectives

Curriculum subjects	The child should be enabled to
History Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become familiar with the origins and traditions associated with some common festivals in Ireland and other countries (p. 44) • explore, discuss and record some of the ceremonies, stories, legends, poetry, music, dances and games associated with these feasts and festivals (p. 44)
Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate the diversity of people within communities and the importance of mutual respect, empathy and understanding for living together in peace and harmony (p. 50)
Drama Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work (p. 31)
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use more than one strategy when reading unfamiliar text • refine his/her reading skills through hearing the teacher read aloud. (p. 36)
ICT in the Primary School Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use concept maps to strengthen understanding of texts (p. 81)
Language – these objectives are specific to children for whom English is an additional language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore one genre of non-fiction text • sequence events according to cues given in the text • identify the action words in the text • recognise the constituent roots in compound words • recognise the meaning of prefix ‘re’ followed by the verb.

Method

An appropriate text is identified to meet the language and literacy learning needs of the children concerned (it may be necessary to adapt the texts concerned). The children are grouped according to their needs and the teacher guides the children in reading the text. At times it will be advantageous to choose a text which refers to the child’s cultural heritage as the springboard for learning as the child’s experiences will enable him/her to understand the contents of the text. The teacher will be mindful of cultural and linguistic sensitivities of each child in engaging with this task.

Step 1 – Preparation for the task

- The teacher identifies a suitable text that can be adapted to meet the reading needs of the children. The text used for this activity is *The Iranian New Year* (See Appendix 1)
- The teacher may adapt reading texts by, among other things,
 - ⇒ ensuring that sentences are short
 - ⇒ editing compound sentences and developing simple sentences
 - ⇒ replacing some words which are not perceived to be core words
 - ⇒ using similar tenses throughout the text.
- Prepare for the reading by discussing the pictures which accompany the text.

- Introduce new vocabulary necessary for the exercise for example, words such as; celebrate, celebration, ancient, stand for, symbolise - the teacher, or child, may record these words on a flip chart or poster and then identify them during the reading phase.
- Provide background information about the festival concerned, for example by locating Iran on the class atlas or on the globe. Use the text in conjunction with a topic covering 'seasons, holidays and festivals' (one of the 13 topics identified in the IILT support materials).

Step 2 – Guided reading of the text

- The teacher reads the text through while the children listen
- The teacher reads the text and stops to
 - ⇒ focus on different cueing systems
 - ⇒ develop concepts about print
 - ⇒ identify literary features associated with this non-fiction text, for example the use of sequencing cues 'a few days prior to', 'At the beginning of the New Year', etc.
 - ⇒ point out how morphemes help to provide meaning in reading words, for example focus on the prefix 're' in the words rebirth, rearrange, renewal.
 - ⇒ raise awareness about the root words in different compound words, for example explore the components of words such as 'outdoors', 'household' etc.
- Each child reads the text quietly and independently at his/her own pace, the teacher may request for individual children to read for him/her away from the group
- The teacher makes reading assessment observations regarding the child's reading and identifies the reading strategies and pronunciation skills that may need strengthening.

Step 3 – Synthesising the learning

- The teacher may design different pair work or group activities which will be determined by the children's language and literacy needs, for example
 - ⇒ ask children to reread the text and to underline all of the action words in the text
 - ⇒ invite the children to act out one or more of the paragraphs
 - ⇒ take the text and cut out the different paragraphs, put the different paragraphs into the wrong sequence and ask the group to reorder the paragraphs correctly (this will improve concepts of how texts are structured). Children who are new language learners might be asked to reassemble key sentences on software programmes such as those accessible from www.cricksoft.com (go to the teaching ideas section and then to EAL).
 - ⇒ encourage children to explain how some non-fiction texts are sequenced by making a time line of the significant activities associated with the Iranian New Year. Children may use a web based tool for making their timelines, for example http://teachers.teach-nology.com/web_tools/materials/timeline/

Extension activities

- Listen to and give reactions to music associated with celebrations in Iran.
- Dramatise one of the sequences of the celebration for others in the group or for other children in the class, the other children have to guess which actions are being portrayed.
- Compare the celebration of Nurooz with Halloween.

- Children write about, or draw pictures associated with celebrations from their own cultures (the teacher may assist with recording children's writing and drawing).
- Research celebrations from different countries using the Internet.

The Jigsaw technique

The jigsaw technique for collaborative learning was developed in the 1970's as a means for students to share what they had learned with their peers (Aronson et al, 1978). Jigsaw enables children to achieve learning objectives collaboratively. The technique may be used for same needs groups or for mixed ability groups. When children share information with others in the class they are part of a jigsaw where all of the pieces of information provide insights into the 'bigger picture'. The knowledge and information that children gather is shared with others so that all of the information fits together to form a jigsaw. For the child learning English a focus on clarification, oral language and sharing helps him/her to practise the target language in a meaningful context while also learning about particular subject areas in the curriculum.

There are different forms of jigsaw, these vary from simple tasks designed for children in junior classes to more complex jigsaw tasks aimed at meeting the learning needs of children in senior classes. For example, children in a junior class may be assigned a task in mixed ability groups. Each group is given a similar task, but the task or the learning objectives for the each group task may vary slightly. Once the children have completed their own task they exchange what they have discussed or learned with a member of another group. This occurs in a structured and organised way so that the learning is reinforced. This jigsaw technique is explained further below.

In response to some prompts, a group of five children in a senior infants' class might be asked to describe an apple. The children might be asked to describe the object referring to its colour, shape and size. A different group of children might use a similar approach to describe a teddy bear. Once the two groups have completed their descriptions, they share orally with each other what they have described within their groups. This form of jigsaw' enables the child to strengthen the oral skills required to support emergent literacy in English. The task builds on the child's communicative competence in English and models the use of English. This grouping method is illustrated by the following figure.

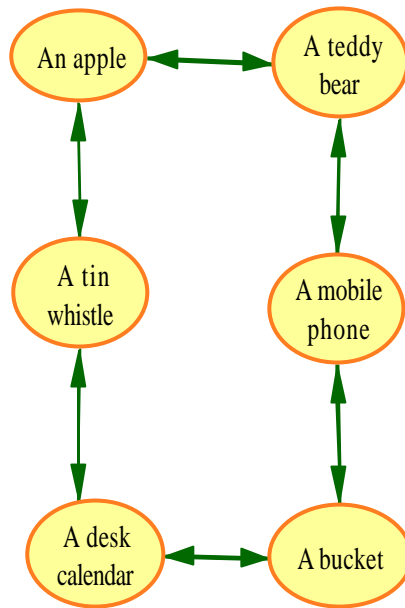


Figure 3: A sample jigsaw task for junior classes

This approach to jigsaw is explored further in the exemplar below.

Exemplar 3 – Describing an object

Activity

Children discuss the features of an object and then share their findings with other children in their class. This activity is developed for an infant class of approximately 30 children. It is based on Exemplar 2 in the English Teacher Guidelines (p. 43).

Method

The teacher models the process by describing an object then children work in groups of five to describe their objects. Having described their objects in the small group, the children share (jigsaw) their findings with others. Specific language and subject support is identified for the child for whom English is an additional language by focusing on adjectives and by enabling the children to practise the language structure ‘I am going to’ to describe an action in the near future.

Learning objectives

Curriculum subjects	The child should be enabled to
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> choose appropriate words to name and describe things and events (p. 18)
Visual Arts Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discover the relationship between how things feel and how they look (p. 19)
Science Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe and compare materials, noting the differences in the colour, shape and texture (p. 27).
Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practise care and consideration, courtesy and good manners when interacting with others (p. 21).
Language – these objectives are specific to children for whom English is an additional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extend the use of adjectives practise the construction, ‘I’m going to...’ to convey intention.

Step 1 - Modelling the process

- The teacher introduces the activity by inviting the children to help her/him in describing a small bucket. The teacher may use a framework such as the one below to help her/him to structure the exercise.

Questions to elicit responses	Teacher says with collaboration from children
Opening remarks	I have a bucket
Describe it – What does it look like?	It’s round and red. It has a red handle.
Texture – What does it feel like?	It is smooth
Material – What is it made of?	It is made of plastic
Function – What can you do with it?	I can play with it
Plans – What are you going to do with it?	I’m going to fill it with blocks!

Step 2 – Working in small groups

- Teacher distributes 6 objects (for example, an apple, a teddy bear, a tin whistle, a mobile phone, a desk calendar, a plastic bucket) to different groups of children.
- The children use a similar format as that identified above to describe their objects.
- The teacher monitors the children to ensure that all of the members of the group are engaged in appropriate forms of turn taking.
- Each child has an opportunity to describe the object.
- As each child describes his/her objects the teacher models possible phrases and words for the child for whom English is an additional language this supports his/her oral interactions with peers.

Step 3 – Jigsaw with others

- Once each child in the group has had an opportunity to describe the object the teacher invites children to describe their objects for members of other groups.
- Each child finds out about another one/two or three different objects. For example, a child who has described an apple may now be requested to find out about a teddy bear and a tin whistle.
- Rather than finding out about two other objects, the child for whom English is an additional language might be asked to find out about one. This allows for differentiated learning to take place.

Extension activities

- Children choose another object, they don't let others see what it is. They describe the colour, texture and function of the object. Others have to guess what object has been described.
- With the teachers help, make single worded captions to describe the object
- Identify initial letters of the words
- Make a list of all of the colours used to describe the objects
- Ask children to describe two items in their homes
- Invite children to discuss what they are going to do this afternoon.

Jigsaw for senior classes

A more complex use of jigsaw allows the teacher to design and implement differentiated learning tasks to meet the individual language and learning needs of children in the class. This approach is sequenced below

1. Using a cross curricular approach to teaching and learning, the teacher first identifies appropriate language and curriculum objectives for different groups of children. These objectives then form the basis for the development of appropriate learning tasks which are allocated to the different groups. For instance, the teacher may identify a topic such as 'transport and travel' (see the planning map p.14) from the curriculum. For the children who are learning English as an additional language the teacher might guide them in a language appropriate exercise such as labelling the different parts of a bicycle or a car using an illustration.
2. Another group of children might be asked to use a Venn diagram to compare a bicycle with a motorcycle and to complete a writing activity based on their findings. As this task is more linguistically demanding than the labelling task it will be completed by a group of children for whom it is appropriate. The teacher may form five or six different groups and ask each one to complete a differentiated learning task based on the theme of 'travel and transport'.
3. Once the differentiated learning groups have completed their tasks, a member of each one joins a 'home group'. Learning within the differentiated groups generally prepares the child for participation within the home group by equipping him/her with some of the language structures and vocabulary that he/she needs to interpret what others have done in their groups. In this way, language is recycled and the child has a greater understanding of the context within which the home group discussion takes place.

4. Within the home group each child is asked to explain the nature of the tasks which he/she was involved in completing. If it is appropriate, the group might further examine collaboratively how individual tasks were completed. As children share their previous work with members of the 'home group' they contribute to the formation of a new and cohesive project. The home group may be asked to collate the work of each of its members creating a group project. The shared nature of this form of this jigsaw is illustrated by the following figure.

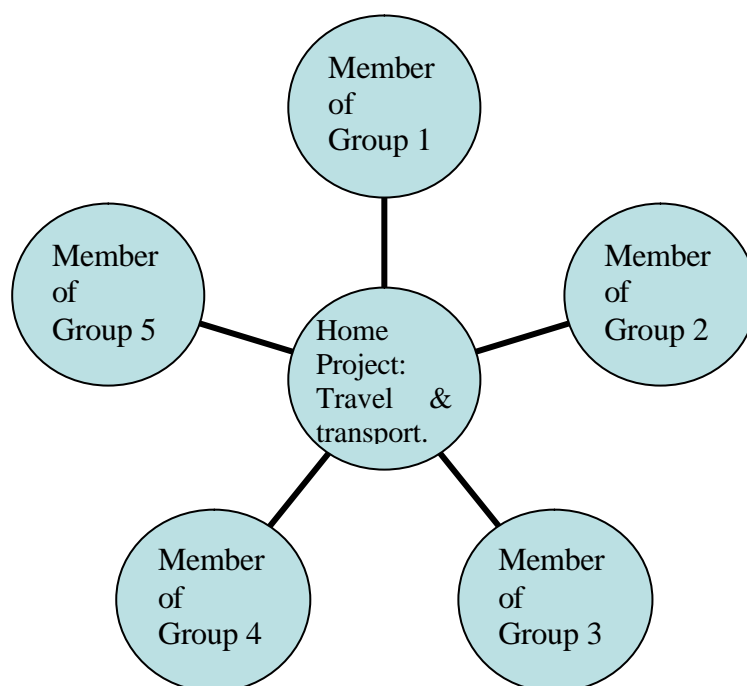


Figure 4: Forming a home group

An exemplar for how to design and implement this type of jigsaw is further explored in 'One project, many activities' below.

One project, many activities

The use of jigsaw allows for collaboration between the members of mixed ability and same needs groups at different times as children work on a project. Projects that use a cross curricular approach to teaching and learning add coherence to the work of the different groups. The teacher devises differentiated learning tasks for completion by same ability groups of children. These children will then share what they have learned with representatives from other groups of children in mixed ability 'home groups'. This grouping strategy ensures that each task adds to a greater understanding of the topic being taught and learned.

The approach used is called, 'One project, many activities'. This approach is compatible with the principles of learning in the Primary School Curriculum. It provides an ideal way for the mainstream class teacher and the language support teacher, if there is one, to collaborate in

meeting the learning needs of all children in the class. There are three stages in this topic and project based approach, these are further discussed below.

One project

‘One project’ refers to the fact that each of the groups has one overarching project to complete. This task is an integral component of a topic which acts as the anchor for completing a teaching and learning project. The teacher leads the project based language and curriculum learning by

- eliciting information from the children regarding the selected topic
- allocating children to differentiated task groups and home groups

The grid below illustrates how a class of 30 children might be grouped together according to their same needs and how they might be grouped into home groups illustrating the shared nature of the project. Children are grouped together by their learning needs, these groups can be seen by reading the table from left to right. Each child also belongs to a ‘home group’ which ensures, reading the table from top to bottom. This ensures that once the child’s specific language learning tasks are completed he/she may join with other children in the class.

Project name:					
→ Same needs	↓ Home group 1	Home group 2	Home group 3	Home group 4	Home group 5
Group 1	Sonja	Mohammed	Aiden	Hilda	Abiba
Group 2	Barbara	Sarah	Tony	Brian	Lisa
Group 3	Seán	Ella	Adam	Paula	Nial
Group 4	James	Ann	Geraldine	Feargal	Tanya
Group 5	Liam	Margaret	Eileen	Fabien	Julie

Many activities

Learning tasks which are developed for the 5 same needs group, as identified from left to right on the grid above, will include both language and curriculum subject objectives to be learned. According to the model provided above, 5 differentiated learning tasks are required for the same needs groups of children. The teacher may wish to spend more time with the children who require most support and to set challenging tasks for other children in the class who can work more independently.

Shared project

Every child should be provided with the time and the language skills necessary to share his/her work with classroom peers in the mixed ability home group. Teachers may wish to support the sharing process by providing children for whom English is an additional language with some oral expressions that will enable them to describe the work that they have completed. The types of phrases that the child learns and uses will be dependant upon his/her language and literacy levels. For instance, the task identified for the children for whom English is an additional language in the exemplar below involves making a flag. The teacher

can model and teach phrases which will enable the child to report back to the mixed ability group by providing phrases such as those below

Project questions	Possible phrases and responses
What did you make?	In our group we made a flag.
What did you use?	We used a scissors and rulers to make it.
Can you show what you have made?	Here is the flag that I made, the other children in the group also made the Irish flag

Once each child within the home group has shared information about his /her work, samples of this work are joined with other samples, for example by affixing them to poster paper for a display of finalised projects. To illustrate the importance of the task, the teacher may invite the groups to display their work around the classroom and to create a 'gallery walk'. This is where children have an opportunity to circulate around the classroom to view and discuss the work of their peers.

These displays may be shared with other groups and other classes with representatives from the groups explaining what they have done. The display may also be used as a teaching and learning tool for all of the children in the class, for example by enabling the teacher to create a quiz based on the information in each of the projects. This will reinforce children's motivation for project work as well as reinforcing their reading skills.

An exemplar for implementing 'one project, many activities' is provided below.

Exemplar 4 - Democracy in Ireland.

Activity

Children are asked to work in groups to complete a project entitled, 'Democracy in Ireland'. This activity is aimed at meeting the needs of all children in a fifth class or sixth class. The differentiated nature of the tasks allows the teacher to identify and meet the learning needs of all children in the class. This exemplar is based on the methodology for implementing project work in primary schools as identified in Exemplar 25 of Social Personal and Health Education (p. 92).

Learning Objectives

Curriculum subjects	The child should be enabled to
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begin to explore the concept of democracy (SPHE p. 65).
Violet Group – (Task for children for whom English is an additional language) Make an Irish flag	
Visual Arts Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make drawings based on themes reflecting broadening interests, experiences and feelings
Mathematics Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> estimate and measure length using appropriate metric unit (p. 102)
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read and interpret different types of functional text (p. 54)
Language of Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use language associated with shapes and size – equal sized, twice the size of, three times the size of, rectangle, vertical, horizontal, wide (width) tall (height). Directions - draw, divide, measure, colour and cut.
Green Group – What your local government does	
Geography Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn about and come to appreciate the peoples and communities who live and work in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland (p.72).
Social and Personal Health Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and explore the positive contributions made to the local community by various organisations, ethnic, social or community groups and individuals (p. 64)
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retrieve and interpret information presented in a variety of ways (p. 54)
Blue Group - Focus on rights and responsibilities	
Social and Personal Health Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore rules and regulations in home, in school and in society and the importance of adhering to them (p. 59)
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discuss ideas and concepts encountered in other areas of the curriculum (p. 53) sketch an ordered summary of ideas and draft a writing assignment based on it (p. 55)
Orange Group – Population study	
Geography Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> study some aspects of the environments and lives of people in one location in Europe and in another part of the world. (p. 75).
Mathematics Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collect organise and represent data using pictograms, single and multiple bar charts and simple pie charts (p. 109)
Red Group - Our presidents	
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take part in cooperative writing activities (p. 52) develop skills in information technology (p. 52) develop study skills such as skimming, scanning and summarising (p. 54)
History Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acquire some knowledge of the major personalities, events or developments in certain periods (p. 70)

Method

Use a cross curricular approach to meet differentiated learning needs of all children in a Fifth or Sixth class. Jigsaw grouping ensures that each member of the class contributes to the completion of a project. Specific language and curriculum support is identified for children who have English as an additional language as they complete a mathematics task. This mathematics task entitled ‘make a flag’ is explored further in the exemplar below.

Step 1 – Identify the topic and assign learning tasks

- Identify a suitable topic from the curriculum and design appropriate tasks with reference to the strands, strand units and objectives in the Primary School Curriculum. For example as identified in the concept map below.
- Use the topic to develop suitable areas of work for different groups as identified.

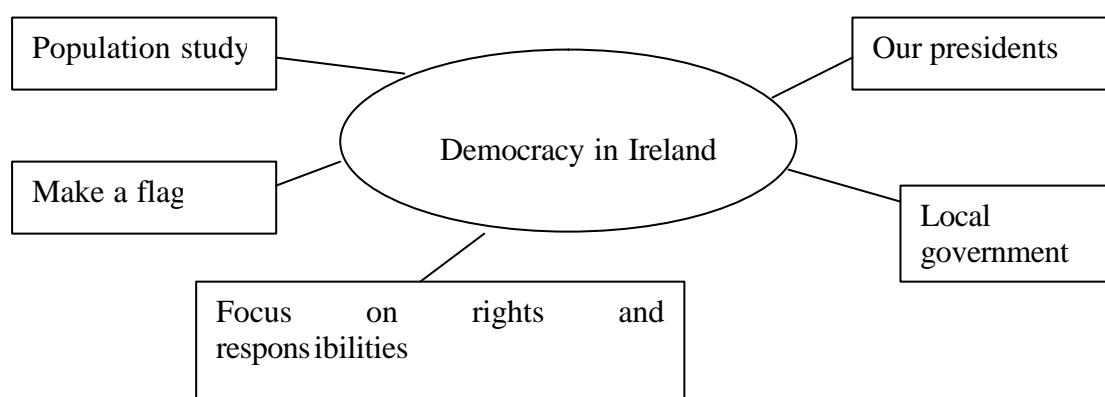


Figure 5: Developing learning tasks

- Discuss the concepts and vocabulary associated with democracy.
- Develop clear task sheets, such as the one provided below, for each of the groups in the class. Provide resources, reading materials, text books and web site addresses where selected groups may access relevant information to complete their tasks.
- A sample task sheet for the ‘violet group’ is identified below, the teacher works with the children to interpret the text and to talk through the task.

Step 2 – Task for the children learning English

- Read the first paragraph describing the Irish flag from www.eu2004.ie (See Appendix 2).
 - ⇒ Use a dictionary to find and explain words you don’t know
 - ⇒ Use the instructions below to guide you in making the flag
 - ⇒ Draw a line 12 cm in length
 - ⇒ Make a rectangle by drawing two lines 6 cm high at each end of the first line. Finish the rectangle by drawing a line at the top.
 - ⇒ Divide the large rectangle into three equal sized rectangles. Each rectangle should be 4cm in width and 6 cm in height.
 - ⇒ Colour your flag and cut it out.
 - ⇒ Further activities for this group might include

- ⇒ Design a flag for your class, give directions on how to make the flag
- ⇒ Use the information about the flag to write a mathematics problem, for example, ‘if this flag is 10cm wide, what is its height?’ (Note that within the text it indicates that the Irish flag is twice as long as it is high).

Step 3 – Creating a shared project

- Once same needs groups have completed their tasks the children join their home groups.
- Ask each member of the home group to share his/her finished work with the other members of the group. This enables all of the home group members to jigsaw their learning so that each task contributes to a growing picture of the overall project.
- Collate all individual work from within the home group to create a multifaceted project about, ‘Democracy in Ireland’.
- Display the work of each home group.

Step 4 – Extension activities

- Explore the concept of democracy in the classroom by developing classroom rules that appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Extend the concept of democracy further by promoting elections and identifying classroom representatives.

The teaching and learning cycle

The teaching and learning cycle was developed by practitioners in Australia who used this teaching method to raise children’s awareness of different genres in the curriculum (see for example, Derewianka, 1990). The cycle is an approach to teaching and learning that supports the child in developing an understanding of how texts are structured. It is particularly beneficial for helping the child to see how texts are used in different areas of the curriculum. Children for whom English is an additional language English is an additional language generally face particular challenges in comprehending the nuanced differences of genres used to convey information in the curriculum. By exploring how texts are structured and by examining how information is conveyed in the curriculum, teachers support and guide the growing curriculum literacy of the child.

The teaching and learning cycle allows the teacher to highlight the conventions of vocabulary, grammar, text type and expected forms of presentations associated with a particular genre. The teaching and learning cycle uses concepts identified for the writing process (see Approaches to writing in the Primary School Curriculum, English Teacher Guidelines p. 76). The approach also encourages children to participate in oral discussions with peers as they work in groups to create a piece of writing in an area of the curriculum.

There are three phases in the teaching and learning cycle, these are illustrated in the following figure.

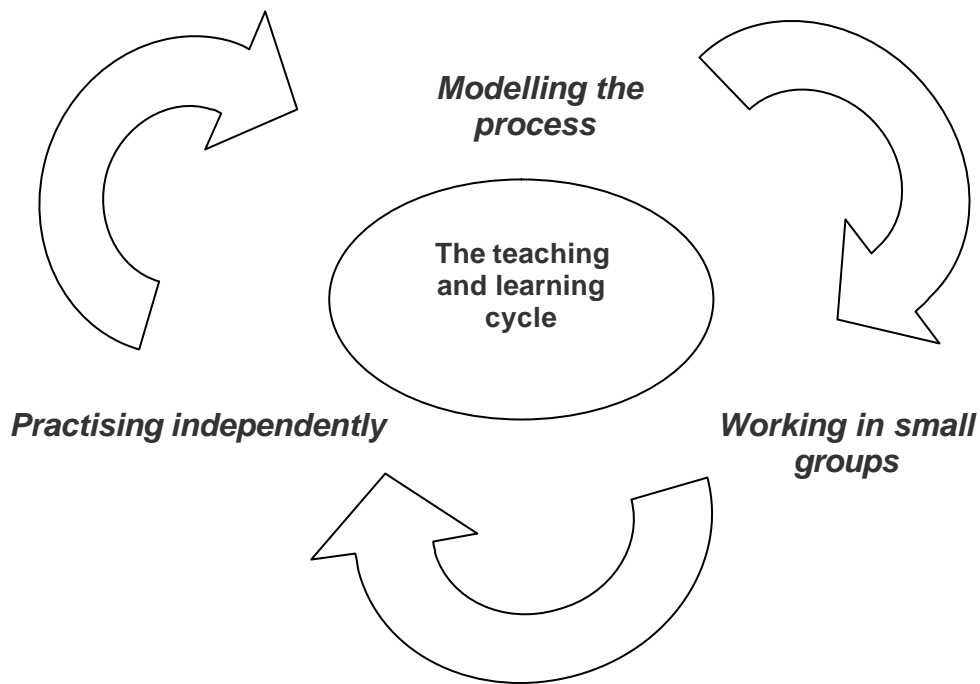


Figure 6: The teaching and learning cycle

Modelling the process

During the modelling phase the teacher and children work together to create a text. The children and teacher may initially discuss what the text might be used for and identify a possible audience for the writing. They collaboratively ask and answer questions about the words and phrases that might be needed to complete a piece of writing. This first phase of the learning process assists the children to focus on the rationale for producing a particular text. It alerts the children to the conventions of writing associated with this form of text and also assists them in choosing the particular vocabulary that might be used to create a piece of writing.

The teacher may also focus on increasing the child's language awareness regarding a particular grammatical structure that appears in the text, without going into detail regarding the naming of this structure. For example, the teacher may point out how capital letters are used, as the text progresses, or how the use of 'ed' endings are used to past events and the examples of irregular past tenses in the text. Likewise, the teacher may wish to highlight the use of particular prepositions in the text and the nouns that accompany their use. The type of grammatical or phonological conventions that the teacher chooses to highlight will depend on the language learning needs of the child. This 'focus on form' will be helps the child to reflect on the language conventions and the structures used in the language.

The teacher may use the following steps in the first phase of the teaching and learning cycle.

STEPS	WHO IS INVOLVED?	WHAT DO THEY DO?
1	Teacher & children	Discuss the intended audience for the text
2	Teacher & children	Recall if this genre has been used before
3	Teacher & children	Brainstorm possible vocabulary for the text
4	Teacher & children	Explore possible grammatical forms
5	Teacher	Thinks aloud as he/she creates the model text
6	Teacher & children	Review the text and discuss its features

During the following phase of the cycle when children work in small groups the children use their newly acquired knowledge regarding text construction more independently.

Working in small groups

Once the teacher and the children have developed a model text that illustrates a particular genre in the curriculum, the children are grouped together to create a similar text themselves. Children learn language and literacy in a social context. It is important that teachers recognise this communicative nature of language learning by providing opportunities for children to work collaboratively in completing a writing task.

As children engage in oral clarifications regarding the work that has to be completed, they gain a better understanding of the nature of a particular genre and its intended audience. For the child, this aspect of learning is critical to his/her growing understanding of the structured nature of texts. The child begins to gain confidence and competence in identifying and using different genres featured throughout the Primary School Curriculum.

Depending on the needs of the child, the teacher organises the children into mixed ability or same needs groups. Mixed ability groups might use peer tutoring where the child is provided with additional support by another child in the class. This type of arrangement will be more feasible in senior classes. If same needs grouping arrangements are used, the teacher will guide and support the literacy development of this group.

As groups of children jointly create their own texts, the teacher supports their learning by further clarifying the task in hand. The teacher supports the small group work by discussing linguistic conventions such as punctuation, spelling and grammar with individuals and groups.

Practising independently

As children's competence in English develops, they may be asked to create their own texts. During this phase of the teaching and learning cycle, the child may produce pictures, individual letters and attempts at writing single words or sentences. Generally, these will provide the teacher with information regarding the language and literacy development of the child and this may be used to inform further planning and prompt continued support for the child's literacy development. A portfolio which contains child generated notes and drawings will also inform collaboration between the language support teacher and the mainstream teacher as jointly plan for the child's developing language and literacy.

For children whose proficiency in the language is more advanced, this exercise will help to focus on metacognitive strategies which will enable the child to gain a deeper appreciation of how to write genres used in the curriculum. Samples of writing created by the child can be added to the child's language portfolio so that the teacher is in a position to assess and evaluate the child's language and literacy development over time.

Texts that are created during all phases of the teaching and learning cycle may prove to be informative language and literacy teaching tools. Once completed, the texts can be displayed and revisited so that the child gains a greater understanding about the types of words and structures used to convey meaning in a particular aspect of the curriculum.

The teaching and learning cycle may be adapted so that the teacher and other class members provide models for the child in oral communications as well as written ones. The cycle may also be used to assist children who may have learning difficulties associated with language and literacy. Teachers may find it expedient to use the teaching and learning cycle while other children in the class engage in more independent forms of writing and research.

Exemplar 5 – Writing a short drama script

Activity

Children are led by the teacher in creating a short script which children later expand themselves. This exemplar is adapted from Drama Activity, Session 3 in the Primary School Curriculum, Teacher Guidelines (p. 89). It may be used from third class upwards and may be adapted to meet the language learning needs of the child.

Learning objectives

Curriculum areas	The child should be enabled to
Drama Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use reflection on and evaluation of a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action (p. 29) • begin the process of using script as pre-text (p. 28).
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observe the teacher modelling different writing genres (p. 37) • express feelings and attitudes through improvisational drama (p. 44)
Social Personal Health Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore how feelings can influence one's life (p. 42).
Language of Drama – these objectives are specific to children for whom English is an additional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for assistance – to explore ways of providing or declining assistance • identify how feelings influence intonation • investigate tag questions - didn't I? • identify features of oral language but which would not be used in written texts • investigating punctuation in context, attention to commas, question marks, contractions, exclamation marks.

Method

The teacher writes a model script with the support of the children and questions how the oral text may be different from an oral one. Following this, children work together to create their own texts. Specific language and subject support is identified for the child by focusing on emotive use of language and by comparing spoken language with written texts.

Step 1 - Modelling the process

- The teacher creates a scripted dialogue with the support of the children. The teacher does this by first asking children to suggest how they might ask for help and how they might agree or disagree in providing assistance to others.
- The teacher explains that this sample dialogue takes place between three children one of whom is making a go-cart.

A: Can you come over here and give me a hand with this?

B: Sorry, but I'm busy right now.

C: Don't worry, I'll help you. What is it you want?

A: Great, why don't you give me a hand to put this together? When we're finished we can take a ride in it together!

B: Oh, look I'm free now – let me do it instead.

C: I don't think so! After all, I volunteered first, didn't I?

- The teacher explores with the children some other possible situations where the dialogue may arise, for example (Children / teacher interaction, child / parent or among children).
- The teacher explores with the children how the different situations affect the emotional perspectives that each of the speakers may bring to the dialogue.
- As the dialogue is scripted on poster paper or on the blackboard, the teacher 'thinks and talks aloud' for example by stating, "oh this is a question, what should I do at the end of this sentence?" This enables the teacher to highlight the conventions of punctuation and grammar that are used. As the teacher thinks aloud while writing she/he is developing the child's growing language awareness at the level of words, sentences and genre.

Step 2 – Working in small groups

- The teacher asks children to explore through role play how the dialogue would change if one of the characters adopted a kinder approach while speaking with the others.
- The teacher assists the children in creating their own scripted dialogue, paying attention to the punctuation that was highlighted previously.
- The teacher asks groups to experiment with the stress and intonation used and to identify the corresponding emotions of the characters (if children are in the silent period of language learning they might match emotions expressed to appropriate pictures).
- The teacher observes the intonation patterns that are used and suggest changes.
- This can be performed for the whole class if the teacher deems this to be appropriate.

Step 3 – Practising independently

- The child uses the scripts that have been developed to write your own short pre-text (pre-texts are generally short scripts that children can use to expand their ideas into more formulated drama scripts or texts).
- The child writes a short narrative, supported by pictures if necessary, to explain the feelings of each one of the characters. Provide a background for each of the actions that take place.
- The child practises the scripts with family members and shows how placing an emphasis on a particular word may help to convey the speaker's emotions.

Extension activities

- Ask children to generate their own short dialogues which might be used to create dramas.
- Practise and extend the pre-texts created by other children in the class.
- Practise matching pictures of different emotions with phrases.
- Use samples of children's reading texts as the basis to explore grammatical and punctuation conventions.
- Explore how further pre-texts can become the basis for generating written drama scripts, some additional pre-texts are provided in the Drama Curriculum, Teacher Guidelines (pp 86-91.)

Do, talk, record.

Do, talk, record, is an approach to teaching and learning which involves children in authentic and experiential language and curriculum learning encounters. Teachers assist the language and literacy acquisition of the child by providing rich contextual cues that support language and literacy learning. Language and literacy learning is a process that is intricately interwoven with learners' experiences of communication with peers, teachers and others in the school community. Children learn a new language by exploring the meanings of new words, phrases and structures as they are encountered in their environment. In the school context, language and literacy develops when children are involved with experiential activities. The teacher designs and leads these activities with the collaboration of other teachers, parents, members of the community and the children in the class.

Do

By providing the child with opportunities to do something, to talk about the experience of doing and then to record what has been done, teachers guide the social, language and literacy development of the child. As the child engages in real tasks it is more likely that he/she will be better able to recall new vocabulary, to use new structures and to remember new phrases which are associated with the task. Through doing, talking and recording the child uses different senses and relies on different intelligences to mediate and learn authentic language. For example, if a child shows a particular capacity to learn expression through music the teacher might explore ways in which language learning might be reinforced through musical composition and song. While undertaking a task, the child makes links between the activities associated with the task and with the language used to complete the task.

Talk

Following an activity children are given time to talk about their experiences and to recall what they experienced, what they learned and what how they felt. The sophistication of the talk generated among children and between the child and the teacher will reflect the level of oral language acquisition that the child has attained in English. If the child is in the early stages of acquiring the language he/she may be going through the 'silent period', this is a time when the child's ear is becoming attuned to the sound and structure of the language. As the child's learning of the language progresses he/she should develop the capacity to verbalise one or two words of the target language. At this stage, communicating what has been experienced may be done through actions or pictures which the teacher supports with words and written labels. The child with more communicative competence in English should be able to interact with greater verbal detail while recounting the learning experiences.

Record

Once children have had an opportunity to reflect on and discuss what they have done they set about recording the experiences. The recording phase of Do Talk Record (DTR) should also match the language and literacy proficiency skills of the child. In some instances, the child might be asked to tick a box to identify a picture or word that he/she has encountered during an activity. In another case, a child may be asked to develop a flow chart of a process which she/he has observed or participated in. Should the child have more advanced language and literacy skills, he/she may be asked to provide an oral or written recount of activities and experiences using the types of language and structures associated with the subject area being learned through the task. Possible activities for DTR are provided below.

Sample 'Do, Talk, Record' Activities

Do	Talk	Record
<p>A visit to the farm (Senior Infants, exemplar Geography Teacher Guidelines p.49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what children know about farms before they go on a visit – compile a vocabulary list. • Prepare question sheets for the children before a visit is undertaken. • Children use the question sheets as a means of focusing on language and curriculum learning. • Recall the experience through structured dialogue in groups or whole class Recall can be assist through such questions as; Who was involved? What did they / we do? When did they / we do it? What was the reason for doing this? What did they / we learn and experience? What are your opinions about this? • Highlight particular collocations, phrases and grammatical structures encountered during the visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a personal picture, word or bilingual dictionary. • Draw a series of pictures to sequence the events of the trip (use The teaching and learning cycle as the teacher models the genre of report writing – see p 41. Use of a timeline may also be helpful in assisting children to learn about sequencing of events – see History teacher Guidelines p. 6-8).
<p>Guided discovery approach to games (2nd class exemplar Physical Education, Teacher Guidelines, p. 44)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support discussion through structured dialogues. Focus on vocabulary and structures children need to discuss effective ways of hitting a ball • It is better to hit /throw the ball, it goes higher /faster. • Identify and practise the roles of each player in a game e.g., <i>the bowler throws the ball, the batter hits the ball</i> etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match pictures to actions : rolling, stopping, throwing, catching, moving and other actions. Write down and numerate rules of a game created (pair work). Mix up the rules and ask children to order them correctly.
<p>Mathematical trail (3rd - 4th class exemplar Mathematics Teacher Guidelines, p. 47)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify lexicon necessary for completing the task (For example, digits, shapes etc.) • Ask and answer questions relating to aspects of the trail. • Prepare question sheets for the children before a visit is undertaken. • Support the development of language through clarification strategies, e.g. - what is that called? What is that shape? Where are the digits? Is that parallel? Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a pictogram. • Draw and label shapes observed on the trail. • Record the numbers of particular items encountered on the trail. • Identify and record the vocabulary associated with mathematics.
<p>Materials and change (5th and 6th class exemplar Science Teacher Guidelines, p. 128)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorising objects into the types of materials that the are for example, <i>this spoon is made of metal</i>. • Predicting and hypothesising - If you place this over the heat it might.... • Discussing findings, <i>wood is a good insulator</i> etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide objects into a T chart of insulators and conductors of heat and energy (a T chart allows children to categorise information into two groups on each side of the T).

Exemplar 6 – A science field trip.

Activity

Children participate in, talk about and record a learning activity during a field trip. This exemplar is adapted from Science, Teacher Guidelines (p. 68). It is targeted at children in Third and Fourth classes though it can be adapted to suit all classes.

Learning objectives

	The child should be enabled to
Science Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• observe, identify and explore a variety of living things in local habitats and environments (p. 42).• group and sort living things into sets according to certain characteristics (p. 42).
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore different genres (p. 26)• experience an abundance of oral writing activity when preparing a writing task (p. 28)• write about something that has been learned (p. 30).
Geography Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• record and communicate experiences and observations using simple drawings, plans, displays, models and sketches (p. 41)
Mathematics Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• count the numbers of objects in a set (p. 40)• sort and classify objects by two and three criteria (p. 58).
These objectives are specific to children for whom English is an additional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• record vocabulary associated with science and plants• use demonstrative adjectives – this, that, these, those• increase language awareness through an exploration of the structures used to form and answer questions• use pictures and graphs to extend simple sentences in English.

Method

The teacher uses an experiential and communicative language learning activity to engage the child with a variety of new words, collocations and structures. These are encountered, taught and learned in the context of experiential tasks designed by the teacher. The teacher provides specific language and subject support for the child by enabling vocabulary extension, by highlighting the conventions used to form questions and by guiding the child to form sentences from pictorial graphs or from tables containing information.

Step 1 – Introducing and implementing the trip

- Use models to identify what children have to do (teacher).
- Provide children with directions for completing tasks (teacher).
- Mime activities for ensuring that all children can follow directions given by the teacher (children and teacher in preparation).
- Familiarise children with the names of plants before the visit takes place (teacher).
- Point to objects identified by the teacher (the children).

- Make a sketch of an area in which the study is conducted – label the sketch for significant geographical and environmental features (the children)
- Work with a partner on a quadrat (a squared area that is delineated for study, for example 1 square metre)
- Investigate and identify the different types of plants and/or minibeasts in the area
- Complete a recording mechanism to identify the numbers of plants/minibeasts in the area. For example like the one identified below

<i>Name of plant</i>	
Guess (estimate) the number of plants.	
What are the colours of the leaves / petals?	
What shapes are the leaves / petals?	
Guess the height of the plants	

Step 2 – Encouraging talk and reflection

- Assist children as they describe the area where the survey takes place supporting them with appropriate vocabulary when required
- Identify geographical features in the environment, mountains, streams, rocks etc
- Match actions and hand signals with words.
- Support child’s questioning, what is the name of this plant? What is this called?
- Spell words to support child’s note taking
- Question children as they engage in their activities, Can you see a? Do you have a ...? Have you found a? Where are the....? Who can identify a?
- Encourage children to formulate their own questions of other children, *did you find a ...?* etc.
- Discuss the experience that children have had once they are back in the classroom. Digital photographs taken by the children may be used to prompt memories and descriptions.

Step 3 – Recording what children have learned

- Label pictures of drawings and sketches with single words
- Brainstorm all of the words learned, categorise the new vocabulary accordingly. Save and revisit the new words and phrases learned (flip charts are a very useful means of maintaining a record of new vocabulary and structures that can be revisited throughout the following days, weeks and months)
- Use the graph completed in the DO phase to formulate simple sentences
- Draw a series of pictures to show what was done during the activity.

Extension activities

- This task may be extended into other subject areas such as Geography when children are encouraged to explore the natural environment and to collect and investigate a variety of natural materials (see Geography Curriculum p. 52 for additional ideas).

- Ask representatives of the local language communities to accompany you during the activity. With assistance from members of the language communities in the school, develop bilingual or even multilingual (For example: Irish /English/Russian) charts for plants, animals and minerals found in the local environment. Use these to extend knowledge of pronunciation in English, the L1 and additional languages.
- Use writing by other children in the class as models for the children learning English to develop skills in different reading and writing genres.
- Focus on the rime and onset to heighten children’s reading skills.
- Create a project resulting from the learning which has taken place for example by making a documentary video about the experience.

Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response is a teaching and learning strategy which enables children to participate in classroom activities without necessarily having to speak, it is particularly appropriate for children with limited oral proficiency in the target language. The strategy was first exemplified in the 1980’s (Asher, 1982). The first practitioners of the strategy recognised that children first learn the language spoken in the home and in their community by listening to the sounds and structures of that language. When the young child is learning an additional language he/she goes through a receptive phase when active listening takes place yet the child does not form words and phrases until he/she has already grasped much of the information regarding how the new language works.

An aim of the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to teaching and learning of English is to mirror this natural approach to language learning. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate the child’s early stages of English language acquisition by developing suitable listening activities. These activities encourage the child to react in a physical way rather than by providing an oral or written response to instructions given by the teacher or other children in the class.

Some ideas for TPR activities might include those identified below

Curriculum area	Types of activities	Level of proficiency in English ⁷
Physical education	Ask children to run on the spot for 20 seconds	A1
Music	Follow actions in an action song, for example - do the Hokey Pokey.	A1
Language	Listening to and following directions.	A2
Geography	Information gaps, for example children work in pairs, one reads directions for getting to a particular place while the other child listens and follows the directions on a map.	B1

⁷ As identified in the English language primary language proficiency benchmarks (IILT, see Appendix 6).

Exemplar 7 – Moving to music

Activity

Listen to and participate in an action song. This exemplar is adapted from Music, Teacher Guidelines (p. 64). This activity is targeted at children in infant classes.

Learning objectives

	The child should be enabled to
Music Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respond imaginatively to short pieces of music through movement• show the steady beat in live or recorded music (p. 20).
English Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• experience, recognise and observe simple commands (p.16)
Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• become aware of his/her immediate world through the senses (p. 16)
Physical Education Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respond imaginatively through movement to stimuli such as words, stories, poems, pictures, music (p. 18)
These objectives are specific to children for whom English is an additional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respond physically to commands given by the teacher.

Resources:

Tape recorder or CD player, photographs of children engaged in different actions,

Method

The teacher mimes the activities of the actions and then leads the song as a whole class choral activity. Specific language and subject support is identified for children by enabling the child to associate words with actions.

Step 1 – Preparing the children for the task

Preparation phase

- The teacher mimes or models the actions associated with a particular song, for example, 'If you're happy and you know it'.
- The teacher may provide visual cues for each part of the body to be incorporated into the song.

Step 2 - Carrying out the actions

- Children participate in the whole class action song by using the following accompanying actions, the actions below may be used in addition to the familiar lyrics and actions which may already be known by children in the class.
 - ⇒ Stamp your feet
 - ⇒ Touch your nose
 - ⇒ Wriggle your fingers
 - ⇒ Blink your eyes

Step 3 – Extending the learning

- Ask children to complete the actions which are represented in pictures or photos.

Extension activities

- Play games such as ‘Simon Says’, use the same activities as those included in the song so that children begin to reinforce their understanding of the actions taking place.
- Ask those children who have begun to engage in spoken interaction to invent their own chants for TPR activities, peers may enact the actions in these chants.
- The Physical Education, Drama and English curriculum may provide additional ideas for how to incorporate TPR activities. For example, in more senior classes, children might be asked to enact different emotional or physical reactions to significant events such as winning the lotto (Drama: Teacher Guidelines, p. 39).

Focusing on language awareness

The child’s confidence and competence in using English is strengthened as he/she is made increasingly aware of how the language works. Language awareness is a feature of the Primary School Curriculum, in particular as a component of the ‘receptiveness to language strand’ of the English curriculum. This may be achieved by raising the child’s awareness of the conventions and structures of English at different levels. How language awareness is developed will depend on the learning needs of the child. For example, the teacher may wish to use rhymes and limericks to build on the child’s phonological awareness or the teacher may wish to raise awareness regarding how a particular genre is used in oral or written texts.

The following table below illustrates some of the ways in which language awareness may be integrated with the curriculum. Many of the activities identified will benefit all of the children in the class, especially the activities that involve higher order skills for example, analysing different texts.

Different levels of language awareness	Suggested activities
Sound and word (grapho-phonics cues, building phonological awareness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising onset/rime. • Identifying phonemes in sound and in print. • Looking at and exploring letter clusters. • Exploring the relationship between sounds and letters in English – for example, through word hunts. • Comparing sounds and writing systems from the child’s home language with those in English (where appropriate). • Listening out for or looking for particular clusters of vowels or consonants while engaged with texts. • Identifying morphemes for example prefixes suffixes and root words in nouns, compound words and verbs. • Examining the role of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs while reading and writing. • Practising tone and stress in different contexts – for example through drama. • Expanding access to vocabulary through concept mapping of words (this is further explored below). • Playing word games such as crosswords and word hunts. • Creating dictionaries, making concept webs, classifying words alphabetically.
Words and sentences (syntactic cues, building an awareness of language structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring word order in sentences – using group work and process writing. • Comparing structures in the child’s home language and in English. • Exploring the effect on sentences of using single or plural nouns. • Investigating the role of pronouns in the formation of sentences. • Expanding and/or simplifying sentences. • Identifying collocations or clusters of words that are often found together in different texts.
Sentence and genre (contextual cues, building higher order language awareness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using contextual cues. • Using gesture and facial expressions. • Identifying key ideas in visual, listening and written texts. • Paraphrasing paragraphs and texts. • Exploring social conventions of different genres, for example contrasting how lists are made with the process of writing a procedure. • Comparing the effects of culture on language in the home language and in English (where appropriate in senior classes). • Interpreting mood, attitude and emotion in a variety of listening, visual and written texts for example as exemplified in a short drama.

Phonological awareness

Research indicates that teaching and learning of phonics and phonological awareness assists with the child's growing language and literacy development (see for example, American Educational Research Association, 2004). During the initial stages of acquiring the English language, some children may experience difficulty in being able to pronounce certain sounds or they may experience challenges in linking the sounds of English with their appropriate spelling. The phonemic sounds that the child has acquired in his/her home language may not be the same as those which are used to form words in English.

For the child in more senior classes who is new to the language there may be more of a challenge in acquiring these sounds naturally. For this child it is advisable to explore how the sounds of English are formed in particular contexts. The child should be provided with opportunities to practise these sounds as a component of a communicative approach to learning English. In the exemplar below, an exploration of phonological awareness is integrated with a geography task.

Exemplar 8 – Developing phonological awareness

Activity

The activity encourages the children to identify and record words associated with the built environment. This activity is based on objectives identified in the Geography curriculum for third and fourth classes but may be modified to suite children in more junior or senior classes. Specific learning objectives are identified for the child learning English as an additional language as he/she explores onset in some of the words identified during the activity.

Learning objectives

Curriculum areas	The child should be enabled to
Geography Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explore, investigate and come to appreciate the major features of the built environment in the locality and in a contrasting part of Ireland (p.54)
These objectives are specific to children for whom English is an additional language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognise that letters have different sounds depending on how they are used in context

Method

Children are organised into groups, they explore buildings in their local areas, from their experiences they create concept webs of lexicon associated with the built environment. The teacher identifies pronunciations that pose challenges for the child, these become the focus of the phoneme study.

Step 1 – Create a concept web

- The children work collaboratively throughout the activity using one of the grouping methods identified earlier.
- Children create a concept map of words associated with a building in their locality (for detailed information regarding the use of concept mapping, refer to the *Information and Communication Technology Guidelines for Teachers* pp. 80-86). In rural areas or where children are not able to physically visit other buildings, schools may wish to use the internet and conduct virtual tours through different buildings. For example, take a virtual tour of Aras an Uachtaran (see www.oasis.gov.ie)
- The example below uses a concept web that is developed once children have made a tour of their school, this enables preparation for an exercise conducted outside of the school.

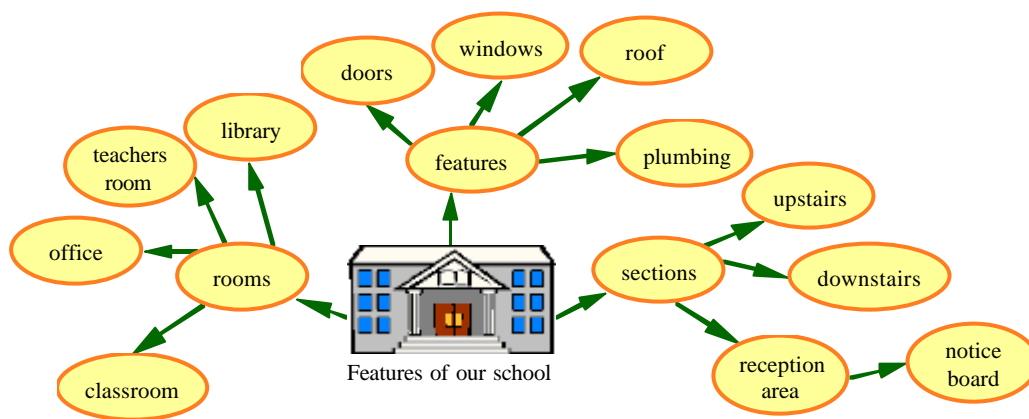


Figure 7: A concept map for organising vocabulary.

Step 2 – Developing phonological awareness

- While observing children engage in their group work, the teacher may notice that a child (or a group of children) has difficulty in pronouncing initial consonant blends (onset) and in decoding these in reading contexts.
- Teacher identifies the blends concerned: for example; sch - school, st – stairs, cl – classroom, pl- plumbing etc .
- The child (or children) concerned write out the words and underline the initial consonant clusters he/she practises sounding out these words and identifies other words with similar initial sounds.

Step 3 – Extending the learning

- Create spelling list of words based on words with similar initial consonant blends.
- As the child encounters words with similar consonant blends in the following days he/she identifies them in the context they arise thus raising awareness of how the consonant clusters appear in other contexts.

Extension activities

- The teacher displays examples of differing initial consonant clusters around the class, the child then explores the rime involved in the word and explores aspects of contrasting long and short vowel sounds evidenced in the onset.

Awareness of language structure

As the child's competence in oral language communication develops, he/she unconsciously uses the language structure to interact with peers and teachers. Through enriching oral language engagements in the class, the child gains a deeper appreciation for how different aspects of the language are used according to differing social contexts. For example, the child begins to appreciate how oral language may be used to persuade, to enquire or to justify a point of view.

The child's oral language proficiency is enhanced further as he/she is encouraged to investigate how the language works for different purposes. In the same way, when children investigate how written texts are structured they are enabled to gain a greater sense regarding how the different parts of the language work together.

Opportunities to explore how written language is structured according to the conventions of grammar and the use of punctuation are afforded when the teacher and child work through the *teaching and learning cycle*. Other opportunities to jointly investigate the structured nature of language in written texts will arise as the teacher and child work through the writing process. Rather than 'correcting' the child's writing mistakes in grammar and punctuation, the teacher may question and support the child as he/she uses different words, grammatical structures and different attributes of punctuation. This assists in raising the child's awareness of how English is structured.

Through discussion and questioning the teacher also leads the child to a greater understanding regarding the differences between spoken and written forms of language. This is critical as the child begins to engage with the cognitively demanding tasks associated with the curriculum. If particular structures are identified which require reinforcement, the teacher may use 'mini-lessons' to raise the child's awareness regarding the particular structures used or the punctuation that appears in writing.

Cognitive development and language awareness

As children attend schools through the junior classes they gain a growing capacity to interpret information in a variety of ways. These children become aware that there are often subject specific ways in which information from the curriculum is presented. For the child who learns English as an additional language in more senior classes the shared classroom knowledge regarding how specific genres are used in the curriculum may not be available, so this poses an additional learning challenge for the child. The child must acquire literacy in the additional language of English but also needs to learn about the language conventions associated with each of the subjects in the curriculum.

The teacher supports this developmental process by highlighting the language conventions associated with each curriculum area. For example, science lessons often rely on diagrammatic or graphic illustrations to convey information. Depending on the child's prior learning, the child for whom English is an additional language may not have the visual

literacy skills that are required to interpret information presented in such formats. To improve the child's capacity to interpret graphic information, the teacher should enable the child to

- observe or participate in an experiment
- monitor the changes that occur
- record the changes
- talk about what has happened
- design appropriate images for the process
- order the graphics appropriately.

The child should become familiar with the process which informs the development of diagrams before being enabled to interpret information from such diagrams. Similarly, the teacher should pay close attention to the type of language that is used to convey information in the curriculum. For example, looking at a sample of history texts that discuss how people lived in the past the teacher may notice that many of the narrative texts contain phrases like, 'the people would...' or, 'the women used to...' By raising the child's awareness regarding the language conventions used in history texts, the teacher further enables the child to access the history curriculum. The teacher will enable to child to become familiar with other curriculum genres by using the teaching and learning cycle (see page 37).

Tips for supporting the child's learning

There is scope for teachers to build up a repertoire of techniques which they find successful in their own classrooms. Some additional methods are identified in the following table. These should be adapted to suit the learning contexts of each schools and to meet the specific differentiated needs of the children concerned.

Tips for supporting the child's learning

Methods	How does it work?
Preparing for content instruction:	Teachers consciously reflect on the language being used in oral and written communication in the classroom and simplify this if necessary.
Building background knowledge:	Introduce new concepts and lexicon associated with subjects in the curriculum before embarking on new units of learning or individual lessons.
Scaffolding understanding:	Practise 'thinking aloud' to identify successful strategies used to improve reading comprehension and to raise awareness about the different genres in the curriculum.
Reinforcing vocabulary:	Develop children's language retention and development skills by using flip charts or posters to record word lists and concept maps. Children's independence in language learning is encouraged by helping them to record information systematically using other forms of graphic organisers too. Additional graphic organisers may be accessed from the internet for example from www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer
Making links to foster learning:	Reinforce vocabulary, language and literacy development by making links and connections in cross curricular projects, as suggested in the Primary School Curriculum. This allows the child to recycle language.
Supporting learning by using a variety of approaches:	Utilise a variety of different teaching techniques that incorporate a range of learning intelligences. For example, employ visual cues, graphics, kinesthetic activities, auditory and oral modes of conveying learning.
Creating a print rich environment:	Use examples of work generated by all children in the classroom to support the language development of the child for whom English is an additional language.
Providing a classroom culture for reading	Provide lots of time for children to engage in reading and assess reading skills on an ongoing basis.
Enabling access to homework tasks:	Give children clear and concise information on homework assignments. Modify homework tasks if necessary.

4. Assessing the child's progress

This section includes information for schools and teachers under the following titles

- Building a profile of the child's prior learning
- Monitoring language and social development during the silent phase
- Teacher observation
- Portfolios
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Criterion referenced benchmarks
- Using standardised tests
- Sharing information regarding the child's progress with parents.

For the child for whom English is an additional language assessment processes will focus on two facets of the child's learning:

- the development of the child's language and literacy and/or
- the child's learning in curriculum subjects of the Primary School Curriculum.

Where appropriate, the assessment methods used by the teacher should be informed by the different dimensions of learning as identified in the Primary School Curriculum, these are identified below.

Dimensions of learning	Relevant focus of assessment for the child learning English
Cognitive dimension:	The cognitive dimension of assessment entails an identification of the child's progress in language and literacy as well as in the subject areas.
Creative dimension:	The creative dimension of assessment concerns the child's inquisitive and spontaneous interaction with people, concepts and environments which may be new and previously unfamiliar.
Affective dimension:	The affective dimension of assessment takes into consideration the child's preferred learning styles and how the child engages with learning tasks.
Physical dimension:	The physical dimension of assessment takes into consideration the child's developing fine and gross motor skills.
Social dimension:	The social dimension takes into consideration the child's growing capacity to interact with peers and others in a new socio-cultural context.

Building a profile of the child's prior learning

Information available to the school regarding the child's prior language and literacy learning will have an impact on the type of support which the school provides. Initial contact with the child's parents should be conducted in a most sensitive manner where those concerned are made aware that information gleaned during meetings will only to be used for the purpose of supporting the child's well being in school.

Where possible, it will be important to determine whether the child has previously attended school, in Ireland or in other countries. If the child has attended school in other countries it will be useful to know the language of instruction used and to establish whether the school

may access samples of the child's work. This will help to inform the classroom teacher and the language support teacher of the child's literacy capacity in the language of instruction used in the school which the child has attended.

Additionally, it will be helpful for the school and the teacher to ascertain whether the child's attendance in other schools was sustained or interrupted. Interrupted learning may have affected the child's cognitive and social development and this will impact on the methods that the teacher uses to involve the child in the classroom setting.

While considering the future learning needs of the child, the school should focus on

- the child's prior attendance at school and whether the child's learning has been continuous or interrupted
- knowledge regarding literacy skills in the home language or in the language of instruction used in previous learning encounters
- information about the language(s) which the child uses while at home and while engaged with other members of the community.

The NCCA has developed a short prior learning profile which will enable schools to gain background knowledge regarding the child's learning which might be sustained and strengthened (Appendix 3). This entry profile may be used by schools to support their current information gathering practices when children for whom English as an additional language are enrolled in the school.

Once the child has had an opportunity to become familiar with his/her new school environment and the procedures within the school, the mainstream teacher and the language support teacher (if there is one in the school) should conduct an assessment of the child's English language and literacy proficiency. For this purpose, IILT have developed a short entry assessment test (Appendix 4) that should assist the teacher in determining the child's initial English language and literacy requirements. Guidance for administering this test and for interpreting its results is available from IILT.

Assessment during the silent phase

As discussed earlier in this document, a child who is learning a new language in a new cultural context may appear to withdraw and experience a silent phase. During this silent phase it is important for the classroom teacher and the language support teacher to monitor the child's on-going social, cognitive and linguistic development.

Each child's experience of the silent phase is influenced by individual factors, so the length of time that the child remains silent will vary. However, over time it should be possible for the teacher to note increased interaction between the child and others in the classroom. This interaction may take the form of the child looking at and copying the actions of other children, engaging in nonverbal forms of communication such as using gestures or calls for attention or using his/her home language as a means of communication.

An observation chart has been developed by IILT (Appendix 5) so that teachers can monitor the child's development and compare the advances that the child makes with previous observations (this observation chart is included in the appendices). This observational chart may also be complemented by anecdotal records which enable the teacher to focus on a particular facet of the child's language or socio/cultural development.

The teacher should be cognisant of the fact that some children may also require additional special needs support and the nature of this support should be identified at the earliest possible opportunity. If the child does not show signs of an increased interaction with others in the classroom over time this may signify a need for additional professional assessment.

Teacher observation

Teacher observations of the child's work, his/her interactions with peers and the strategies that the child uses to engage with a task are an effective assessment mechanism for monitoring the child's learning. Observations are also a means of supporting judgments made using other assessment techniques.

While the teacher observes the child during a shared or individual reading activity he/she can make judgments about the child's current literacy capabilities in English. As the child reads the teacher monitors the skills that he/she uses to decode printed texts. By asking questions while the child is reading the teacher may also probe whether the child has an adequate understanding of the texts being read. Teacher observations of the child's reading skills should be carried out during the English class and during classes for the other curriculum subjects.

- Teacher observations of **peer and collaborative talk** conducted during tasks and projects provide important insights into the child's capacity to attain learning objectives in both language development and in curriculum subject areas. Observations of peer interactions are a particularly good way of enabling the teacher to make professional judgments regarding the child's language and curriculum learning. Structured observations that investigate specific skills such as turn taking or making communication 'repairs' will also enable the teacher to pinpoint specific areas of speaking and social skills which should be supported.
- Observations of the child while he/she is involved in **writing activities** will enable the teacher to assess whether the child uses successful strategies to plan for and engage in writing for different purposes. Interactions with the child during the writing process provide opportunities to support the child's learning through a guided raising of the child's awareness about the grammatical conventions of English. This forms part of the assessment for learning strategy. The writing process can be practiced in all of the subject areas so that the child's literacy skills are continuously monitored and developed.
- When children are **working collaboratively** on projects, the teacher may wish to observe and monitor the child's interactions with others to assess his/her personal and social development. As indicated earlier, some cultural differences between the child's home and the school may lead to situations where the teacher explicitly needs to teach certain cultural practices associated with the classroom and the school.

- Observations made while the **child reads** aloud for others or while he/she conferences with the teacher will also be instrumental in informing an assessment of his/her reading skills. Teachers should note that the child may be able to decode the sounds of words and letters but may have difficulty in comprehending the content of the texts involved.

Compiling anecdotal notes during, or directly after, observations ensures that teacher observations are substantiated by written accounts of behaviours and practices observed.

Portfolios

Portfolios usually consist of purposefully chosen pieces of work which the child and the teacher identify for inclusion in a representative body of work. The samples of work chosen for the portfolio should be illustrative of how the child's learning develops over time. From the outset, schools may decide to delimit the types of work to be included within a portfolio. For example, a classroom teacher may wish to ensure that the child who is at the initial stages of learning English as an additional language should have an English portfolio containing

- drawings or sketches associated with early or pre literacy
- samples of writing the child has generated in his/her home language as a result of project work or other classroom based activities (that is, if the child is literate in his/her home language)
- examples of first letters and words written in English
- word lists in English or early bilingual dictionaries which assist the child to use language within his/her immediate school and home environment
- attempts at writing using one or more sentences
- samples of writing using the writing process that assist the child to gain a greater understanding of the structural conventions and word order used in English.

A review of the portfolio will assist the teacher and the child to recognise how progress has been made in language and literacy learning. A motivational aspect of portfolio use includes the fact that the child is encouraged to recognise how work has changed over time. This enables him/her to monitor progress and plan for new learning goals with the teacher. An example of how a portfolio for English writing might be used by the teacher to inform assessment of and for the child's language and literacy learning is included below.

Subject	Language and literacy development
English	Maurice began class with no language skills in English. He is now able to use appropriate sentence structures to create simple sentences. He is able to describe his work and uses opportunities provided during the writing process to self correct his errors in writing. He has made sustained progress with his writing. So far, the samples of writing, which he has created with assistance from peers and with my guidance, have been limited to personal narrative experiences. The next phase of his work will include a simple book review and will also include work that is independently generated.

Depending on the school's assessment policy, a component of portfolio assessment may entail an ability to use the 'dossier' which is part of the European Language Portfolio developed by IILT. The dossier consists of a record of the child's learning experiences with the topics which the language support teacher uses to facilitate the child's learning. The dossier will complement other forms of portfolio assessment used by the mainstream classroom teacher and will add to the inventory of informal assessment resources available to the teacher.

Portfolios may also be used for on-going assessment in other areas of the curriculum. For example, the grid below illustrates how the teacher might use a portfolio to inform assessment of the child's learning in history and how this assessment tool may also be used to monitor the child's language and literacy skills.

Subject	Curriculum knowledge, skills and attitudes	Language and literacy development
History	A review of Abiba's portfolio shows that she has grasped concepts associated with working as an historian. She has developed several time lines illustrating her understanding of how events change over time. Her work shows that she may need to improve in the area of working collaboratively with others.	Abiba has developed a word list of terms associated with historical events. Her writing shows that she has gained an increasing ability to use and sequence tense correctly. The use of graphic organisers is an area that should be improved, this will be addressed partly with the use of ICT.

Where facilities and resources facilitate, the teacher may also support the child in developing an electronic portfolio of work, this might include samples of presentations or written work and samples of audio/visual work created by the child. Electronic portfolios provide the teacher with the another avenue for sharing information about the child's learning with parents/caregivers.

Teacher designed tasks and tests

Teacher designed tasks and tests play an important part in the inventory of informal assessment tools, they are beneficial in assessing the child's learning in particular areas of knowledge, skills or attitudes which children have learned. Tasks designed for and assigned to children for whom English is an additional language should emphasise clarity and simplicity of direction. The criteria, which are used to assist assessment marks or grades should be clearly identified and explained before the task is given to the children.

Teachers may use a variety of tasks to assess the child's language and curriculum learning some of these might include the following

- improvising group dramas or 'scenarios'
- asking children to reassemble jumbled words, sentences or texts
- asking children to respond to verbal or written directions given by the teacher or peers

- ‘innovating’ a narrative, that is creating a new ending to a familiar tale or imagining what might happen next
- asking children to complete cloze passages⁸
- identifying the appropriate operations to be carried out in mathematics word based problems
- drawing graphics that record science experiments
- using classroom texts to assess the child’s reading ability.

Teacher designed tasks and tests play an important part in adding to a holistic picture of the child’s language and literacy development. An additional means of assessment involves the use of criterion referenced benchmarks.

Criterion referenced benchmarks⁹

Criterion referenced benchmarks are a more formalised approach to assessing the child’s learning and their use ensures that the combination of assessment approaches add objectivity to assessment of the child’s learning. Criterion referenced assessment compares the child’s learning to a standard of performance rather than to a norm achieved by other children.

The criterion referenced *primary language proficiency benchmarks*, (see Appendix 6), developed by IILT, were designed to identify the progressive language proficiency levels of children who are learning English as an additional language in Irish primary schools. The benchmarks are linked to learning outcomes identified in the Primary School Curriculum and are adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). The benchmarks are presented in the form of proficiency statements which are referenced to the discrete language skills of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. The benchmarks use graded ability levels namely ‘A1, A2 and B1’ which match progressively challenging ‘can do’ statements.

These benchmarks enable the language support teacher, with the assistance of the mainstream classroom teacher, to match the child’s language and literacy performance to a graded list of proficiency benchmarks. They are used to

- assess language development over time
- identify future learning goals and objectives
- determine when the child has the capacity to access the curriculum independently.

⁸ Careful consideration should be given to the objectives for testing using cloze passages and multiple-choice tests. The tests should measure the skills and discrete languages areas taught by the teacher. For example, a cloze test might focus on the use of verbs or verb tenses used in a context which have been learned previously by the child.

⁹ Note that while criterion referenced benchmarks may be useful in identifying the child’s language and literacy needs they are not featured in the Primary School Curriculum.

Notes regarding the child's proficiency may be shared with parents and other teachers within the school as part of the reporting process. The benchmarks are a most useful tool in identifying when the child may have the capacity to engage in all classroom activities to the same extent as other children in the class. The *primary language proficiency benchmarks* serve the dual purpose of assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

Using standardised tests

A standardised test is an assessment instrument which contains 'standardised' procedures for its administration, use and for scoring the results obtained. Standardised tests contain objectively scored items. They are produced commercially or by a test agency. They provide information on how well children perform in relation to a normed group of children.

Teachers need to examine the test instrument to determine whether a child's limited proficiency in English might militate against the child completing the test in the time allocated. Teachers might also question whether the child will be able to follow the written or oral instructions for the test. If the child's proficiency in English has not developed to an extent which is adjudged necessary to be able to engage successfully with the test instrument, then the teacher may decide not to administer the test to this child.

Generally, schools may decide to involve the child for whom English is an additional language in standardised tests once he/she has obtained the linguistic competence necessary to engage fully with the Primary School Curriculum. There is anecdotal evidence that some children for whom English is an additional language may attain this level of English language proficiency within one year or two years of attending school. This is particularly the case in junior classes. However, for the majority of children, especially those in senior primary classes, the progression to a sufficient level of language proficiency in English may involve a learning journey of up to five years or more.

In the interim, as the child acquires sufficient language proficiency, teachers may use a range of informal monitoring and assessment techniques to provide information regarding the child's learning. When an appropriate range of informal assessment tools are used, this ensures that the child's learning is assessed objectively and that the teacher is in a position to make informed judgements regarding the child's learning.

Reporting the child's progress

According to the Education Act (1998), it is a function of the school principal and teachers to

Regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents (22: b).

Providing information to the child's parents regarding the child's learning should form an important part of the **Ink** between school, home and the community. Thus, assessment of learning progress across the curriculum and of the child's language and literacy attainment levels should be included as part of the continuous exchange of information between the home and the school.

Providing information regarding the child's progress can be challenging if the parents lack the English language skills necessary to communicate fully with the his/her teachers.

Therefore schools have to ensure that approaches are put in place which maximise the potential for mutual understanding and an exchange of views. While planning for a meeting with the child's parents, teachers should explore how they might:

- Work collaboratively with the language support teacher and the home school community liaison co-coordinator in preparation for the meeting.
- If possible, engage the services of a reliable translator from the community with whom the mainstream teacher or language support teacher has already established a professional relationship. This person may assist in relaying information to parents in their home language if they do not speak English.
- Illustrate for parents, using diagrams and work samples, the range of approaches that are used to monitor and assess the child's language and literacy development and the child's engagement with the curriculum.
- Share concrete examples of the child's work so that parents are enabled to explore this work and to identify how the child's learning has progressed over time. Records of project work, displays and presentations should also be made available to parents if possible.
- Encourage parents to take a continued interest in the child's learning by promoting the maintenance of literacy in the home language, and the strengthening of literacy in English.

Whatever mechanisms are developed within schools to inform parents regarding the child's progress should come about as a result of collaboration between the mainstream classroom teacher, the language support teacher and other colleagues in the school. IILT have developed reporting cards for parents which utilise 'smiley faces' to indicate the child's achievements in the curriculum subject areas (see Appendix 7 for an example, there are available in a more extensive format from the IILT website www.iilt.ie). In addition, it is important to provide parents with practical insights into how the child's learning has changed over time. This may be done by sharing concrete examples of how the child's work has progressed, as evidenced for example in the European Language Portfolio or other portfolio work that the child has completed. Please refer to the Appendices for further ideas regarding how the child's learning might be assessed in the classroom. These are included following the bibliography.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Iranian New Year

Based on an article accessed from the World Wide Web
<http://www.farsinet.com/norooz/hajifiruz1.html>



The Iranian New Year celebration, or *Norooz*, always begins on the first day of spring. *Nowruz* ceremonies symbolise two ancient ideas - rebirth and dying; or good and evil.

A few weeks before the New Year, Iranians clean and rearrange their homes. They make new clothes, bake pastries and germinate seeds as signs of renewal. Revellers called *Haji Firuz*, disguise themselves with makeup. They wear brightly coloured outfits of satin. These *Haji Firuz*, parade through the streets. They sing and dance. They celebrate with tambourines, kettle drums, and trumpets. They spread good cheer and the news of the coming New Year.

A few days before the New Year, a special cover is spread on the Persian carpet or on a table. This ceremonial table is called cloth of seven dishes (*Haft Sin*). Each dish begins with the Persian letter cinn, or the letter 'S'. Since ancient times, the number seven has been sacred in Iran. The seven dishes stand for the seven signs of: rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience, and beauty.

On the last Wednesday of the year (*chahar shanbeh suri*), people light big bonfires. With the help of fire and light, people hope that the New Year will bring health and happiness. Children leap over the flames and shout, 'Give me your beautiful red colour and take away any sickness'! On the same night, children run through the streets banging on pots and pans. They knock on doors and ask for treats.

At the beginning of the New Year, family members gather around the *Haft Sin* table to start the New Year together.

The thirteenth day of the New Year marks the end of the *Nowrooz* break. All of the families leave their houses. They go outdoors where they eat, play games, and celebrate a happy and healthy holiday season. This tradition is called *Seezdah Bedar* (*seezdah* means thirteen) which in English translates to "getting rid of thirteen". This exciting event marks the end the holiday season.

Appendix 2 - The Irish Flag



The national flag of Ireland consists of three equal-sized vertical rectangles of orange, white, and green. The flag is twice as wide as it is tall. The green side is by the flagpole. The flag is flown at all government buildings and is frequently seen outside many private buildings such as hotels and supermarkets.

These days, it is usually accompanied by the EU flag. Many people who haven't been to Ireland will recognise the flag from its enthusiastic waving by Ireland fans at international soccer and rugby matches.

The orange stripe represents the Northern Irish Protestant tradition, while the green signifies the older Gaelic and Anglo-Norman, mainly Catholic, element in the population. The white represents the hope of peace between them.

The tricolour was first unfurled at a public rally in 1848 by the nationalist Thomas Francis Meagher, who declared: "The white in the centre signifies a lasting truce between the 'Orange' and the 'Green', and I trust that beneath its folds the hands of the Irish Protestant and the Irish Catholic may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood."

It was adopted as the national flag of Ireland upon independence from Britain in 1921. Its position was formally confirmed by Article 7 of the Constitution of 1937.

<http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/standard.asp?sNavlocator=3,242,457> accessed 30.08/04

Appendix 3 – Profile of prior learning

Areas of interest		Notes
Has the child attended a school in Ireland?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the child attended a school in another country?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the child's learning been continuous?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Was the child's home language also the language of instruction?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Can samples of the child's prior work be provided?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix 4 – Initial interview assessment for new pupils (IILT)

Ö appropriate box as interview proceeds

* response may not be accurate but indicates a reasonable level of comprehension

		No response	Some comprehension but unsure response	Response indicating comprehension *
1	What is your name?			
2	How old are you?			
3	What is your age?			
4	What language do you speak at home?			
5	Where do you live?			
6	Have you brothers and sisters?			
7	What games do you like to play?			
Only proceed to 8 if the pupil has answered some or all of questions 1-7				
8	How did you come to school today?			
9	Did you go to school in another place? (if applicable)			
10	Tell me about your last school			
11	What was your best subject?			
12	What did you not like in school?			
13	What will you do today after school?			
14	What would you like to be when you finish school?			

Interpretation of initial interview assessment

Questions 1-7

Inability to answer a single question between 1-7 indicates that the pupil has little or no English language proficiency or may be passing through a non-verbal period. If you suspect that 2 may be the case, apply the ***Observation checklist for the non-verbal period*** over the following weeks.

Ability to answer some or all of questions 1-7 indicates some level of proficiency. Observation is necessary over the following weeks with the use of further checklists to identify the pupil's proficiency in relation to the ***Language Proficiency Benchmarks***.

If the pupil is unable to proceed to question 8 the likely level of proficiency is in the **A1 range** in the ***Language Proficiency Benchmarks***. However, it is inevitable that proficiency levels will vary across different skills areas. For example, the pupil may be at **A1 level** in some activities which are based on *spoken interaction*, but may not be capable of reading or producing written text. In this case, broad achievement at A1 level provides the first set of learning objectives.

Questions 8 - 14

These questions are progressively more difficult and involve the use of past and future tenses as well as the conditional. If a pupil identifies the different tenses but replies inaccurately then he/she may have some competence at proficiency level A2 but is generally at A1 level.

If the pupil both identifies the tense used in the question and responds accurately then he/she may have spoken interaction proficiency in the A2/B1 range. It is necessary to apply further observational checklists in the following weeks to ascertain, in particular, where deficiencies exist in other skills such as reading or writing.

It is important to remember that, for any pupil, language proficiency will not be consistent at the same level across all skills areas and units of work. Therefore learning objectives should be set in accordance with observed and noted individual strengths and weaknesses.

Appendix 5 – Monitoring development during the silent phase (IILT)

Checklist for observing progress in ESL learners during the non-verbal (silent) period





Name of pupil: _____ *Age:* _____

The pupil is – (Write the date of observation in the relevant column)




	Not at all	Occasionally	Regularly
Using his/her mother tongue with teacher/peers despite their inability to understand			
Making eye contact with the teacher			
Watching other pupils closely			
Imitating other pupils' actions			
Using facial expression to communicate feelings			
Bringing particular objects, books etc. to teacher			
Responding to cues acted out by teacher or other pupils			
Attention getting by interacting with other pupils or teacher (e.g. handing them objects)			
Requesting help by making signs, pointing etc.			
Indicating dislike of an object or activity			
Protesting by making sounds or appearing aggressive			
Imitating non-verbal behaviour of other pupils			
Repeating and rehearsing words or phrases			
Experimenting with sounds of English			
Following instructions given verbally			

Appendix 6 – Sample global benchmarks of language proficiency (IILT)

Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency – Listening and Reading (for details see Language Proficiency Benchmarks)

		<i>A1 BREAKTHROUGH</i>	<i>A2 WAYSTAGE</i>	<i>B1 THRESHOLD</i>						
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	I can understand words and phrases about myself, my family and school and simple questions and instructions.	I can understand most instructions given inside and outside school, can follow topics covered in the mainstream class, and can understand a simple story.	I can understand detailed instructions given in school, the main points of topics presented and stories read aloud in the mainstream classroom, and films about things I am familiar with. I can follow most conversations between other pupils without difficulty.						
	Reading  (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	I can recognize the letters of the alphabet and can understand signs and simple notices in the school and on the way to school. I can understand words on labels or posters in the classroom and some of the words and phrases in a new piece of text.	I can understand short texts on familiar subjects and can use the alphabet to find items in lists (e.g., a name in a telephone book).	I can understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes and can use comprehension questions to find specific answers in a piece of text. I can also use key words, diagrams and illustrations to help me understand texts I am reading. I can follow written instructions for carrying out classroom activities.						
		A1			A2			B1		
		With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help	With a lot of help	With a little help	With no help
Listening 										
Reading 										

Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency – Speaking and Writing (for details see Language Proficiency Benchmarks)

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	I can say <i>hello</i> and <i>goodbye, please</i> and <i>thank you</i> , can ask for directions in the school, and can ask and answer simple questions.	I can answer questions about my family, friends, school work, hobbies and holidays. I can keep up a conversation with my classmates when we are working together, and can express my feelings.	I can talk fluently about school, my family, my daily routine and my likes and dislikes. I can take part in classroom discussions and can hold conversations with other pupils about things I am interested in. I can repeat what has been said and pass the information on to another person.
	Spoken Production 	I can give a simple description of where I live and people I know, especially members of my family.	I can describe my family, my daily routines and activities, and my plans for the immediate or more distant future.	I can retell a story that has been read in class or the plot of a film I have seen or a book I have read. I can describe a special family event (religious festival, birthday, new baby, etc.) and can explain my opinions and plans.
W R I T I N G	Writing  (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	I can write my name and address and the name of the school. I can write labels on pictures and copy short sentences from the board.	I can write new words in my European Language Portfolio and can write short texts on familiar topics (e.g., what I like to do when I'm at home). I can write a short message (e.g., a postcard) to a friend.	I can write my daily news, a short letter, a summary of a book or film, an account of my feelings about an event or situation, and a short dialogue to be performed by puppets.

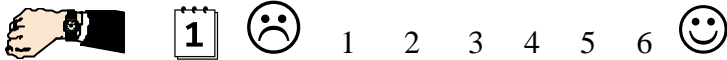
Appendix 7 – Reporting information to parents (sample, additional cards available from IILT)¹⁰

Parent – Teacher Meeting Report

Name of pupil: _____ Class: _____

Date: _____

Punctuality and attendance:



Time school starts: _____

Interaction with other pupils:



Interaction/answering in classroom activities:



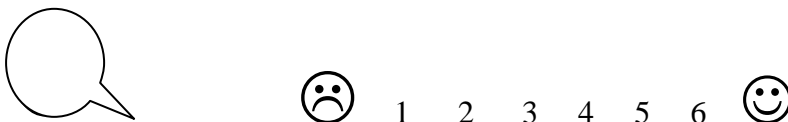
Reading:



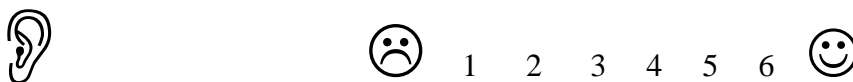
Writing:



Speaking:



Listening:



¹⁰ While using these report cards, teachers should ensure that parents are able to understand the icons used.

Glossary

Anecdotal records: Observing the child's language, cultural, social or behavioural practises over time, enables the teacher to maintain a record of the child's achievement and progress with language. Information from these anecdotal records, when combined with other assessment information, can provide more detailed information for parents and for other teachers.

Buddy system: Buddy systems help schools to provide a child for whom English is an additional language with a peer learning guide. In some circumstances, the buddy may also act as a language interpreter. Buddy systems enable both children to benefit from the experience by learning about one another's home language and cultural background.

Comprehensible language input: Research has indicated that it is easier for the child to learn an additional language when he/she is able to understand most of target language used during communication. Thus, the child builds on what is already known while he/she is introduced to new words, phrases and structures.

Differentiated learning needs: Within any class group there may be considerable variation between children's learning styles, their pace of learning and their language and literacy proficiency. To meet children's different learning needs, teachers differentiate both the content of language and literacy instruction and the teaching methods used.

English as an additional language (EAL): The use of the term EAL in the Irish context refers to children who are learning English as a language that is additional to their home language. In using this term, the NCCA takes cognisance of the child's prior home language and literacy learning and recognises that this language is neither Irish nor English.

Lexicon: For the purposes of teaching in the mainstream setting, a lexicon is the body of words or terms which is associated with a particular subject area or experience. It incorporates the vocabulary associated with the subject but pays particular attention to how the vocabulary is used in particular situations.

Phonological awareness: Through word games, songs, rhymes, riddles, poetry, drama and other activities, children can explore the relationship between the sounds and letters that make up the English language sound and writing system. Children may build on their phonological awareness by comparing sounds in their home language with those of English and by making connections between words/sounds that they already know and those that are new. Phonological and phonemic awareness is discussed in the English Curriculum (p. 14).

Silent phase: Many children who are introduced to a new culture and new language may experience what is known as the silent phase of language development. During this period of time, which may last from between a few days to some months, children are receptive to the new language. They are listening to the new language and becoming familiar with its conventions while they remain silent. The teacher may assist the child's linguistic development at this stage in language development by providing opportunities for the child to participate in simple classroom routines.

Total physical response (TPR): During the early phases of English language acquisition, the teacher can support the child's language skills by linking actions with verbal cues. For example, the teacher may lead the children in singing and performing action songs and action rhymes. At this phase of learning, the child increases his/her knowledge of the language by listening to and carrying out verbal instructions. Total physical response allows the child to react to spoken language through action without having to speak or produce responses, this helps the child to gain a greater understanding of the conventions of English before engaging in spoken interactions with others.

