Guidelines for using the EAL Profile of Competence

QI 3.5 Assessment as part of teaching
'The school has robust procedures in place for monitoring the English language development of bilingual learners, for example a language profile tracking progress in key aspects of English (reading, writing, talking and listening), assessment of the pupil's stage of English language acquisition.'

Inclusion and Equality Part 4: Evaluating educational provision for bilingual learners, HMIE 2006 (p.17)

See also **QI 5.3 Meeting Learning Needs** and **QI 5.4 Assessment for Learning**
How Good is our School? The Journey to Excellence: Part 3, HMIE 2007

What is the EAL Profile of Competence?
The EAL Profile of Competence is a set of descriptors of significant steps in the acquisition of English in the 3 skill areas, namely Listening & Talking, Reading, Writing. (Whilst these skill areas mirror the 3 lines of development for Literacy across Learning, the focus here is on the development of English *language* rather than a set of *literacy* skills.) The Profile enables class, subject and support teachers to assess the receptive and expressive English language skills of bilingual pupils and provides a framework for:

- monitoring and tracking the English language development of bilingual learners
- identifying areas for development and planning support
- assigning a stage of English language acquisition (scotXed Level of English 1-5) (see below)

Timescale for progression and factors affecting language development
Research shows that progression from Stage 1 (New to English) to Stage 5 (Fluent – in social and academic English) can take from 5 to 10 years. The rate of progression is dependent on a range of factors including pupil motivation, age, level of competence in first (and other) languages, previous educational experience, general cognitive ability, personality and home educational values and support. In addition, progress is dependent on the school ethos, the knowledge and expertise of the staff in relation to the use of effective strategies of support and the maintenance of high expectations of pupil progress. Progress is also influenced by the pupil's entry point to the Scottish school system.

As an approximate guide, a bilingual pupil who has no other additional support needs (emotional, social or learning) may take approximately 6 - 18 months to pass through Stage 1, 6 – 18 months to pass through Stage 2, 2 – 3+ years to pass through Stage 3, and similarly 2 - 3+ years for Stage 4. It is common for a newly arrived pupil to pass through a 'silent period', which may last for 6+ months.

If a pupil is making unusually slow progress, this may be an indication that the pupil has another additional support need and further holistic assessment may be necessary in order to identify the nature of the need and appropriate support. Please seek advice from an EAL teacher.

Transition The Profile of Competence should form part of the pupil's record and move with them as they progress through their education. It is a key document for transition.

Setting up an EAL Profile of Competence

Profiles should be set up and updated in collaboration with an EAL teacher. This can be scheduled into the school's ASL planning processes. Achievement of a descriptor should be based on evidence from formative and summative assessment.

- Photocopy or create an electronic copy of the Profile document for each learner.
- Enter the pupil information at the top of each sheet.
- Enter the date in the right-hand column when a descriptor has been achieved. If not achieved, leave blank.
- Update the tracking grid twice a year (recommended).

Using the Profile to identify targets and plan support

Having detailed knowledge of a bilingual pupil's current language skills allows the class/subject teacher to identify language development targets for the pupil and to select support strategies so that the pupil can access the curriculum at the appropriate cognitive level.

Useful questions to ask when planning:
- What are the pupil's language development targets?
- Which of these can be developed in this lesson?
- What vocabulary and language structures need to be taught in order for the pupil to engage with the learning experiences and outcomes of this lesson?
- Which support strategies would be appropriate? (refer to the EAL strategies booklets)

EAL teachers can assist class/subject teachers in identifying and implementing the relevant language support required for a lesson.

Assigning a Level/Stage of English as an Additional Language

A single level/stage is required for the EAL Service database, SEEMIS and scotXed. It is important that this information is accurate. (See CEC guidance 'Recording Information about Learners' and scotXed 'Pupil and School Census Guidance Notes'). As individual learners are likely to show characteristics of more than one stage at one time across the three skill areas (L&T, R, W), a judgment is usually needed as to which level/stage best describes a learner's language development. *Schools should consult with their EAL teacher when assigning a single level/stage of English.*

Related documents
- Profile of Competence (Primary and Secondary versions)
- Glossary
- Strategies booklets
- Aspects of English as an Additional Language development
- General Descriptions for levels/stages of English language acquisition

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Professional Development training in the use of the EAL Profile of Competence

Professional development opportunities for individuals and groups of staff on the use of the EAL Profiles of Competence and the stages of English are available via the EAL Service. For further information please speak to an EAL teacher or contact the EAL Service on 0131 469 2890.