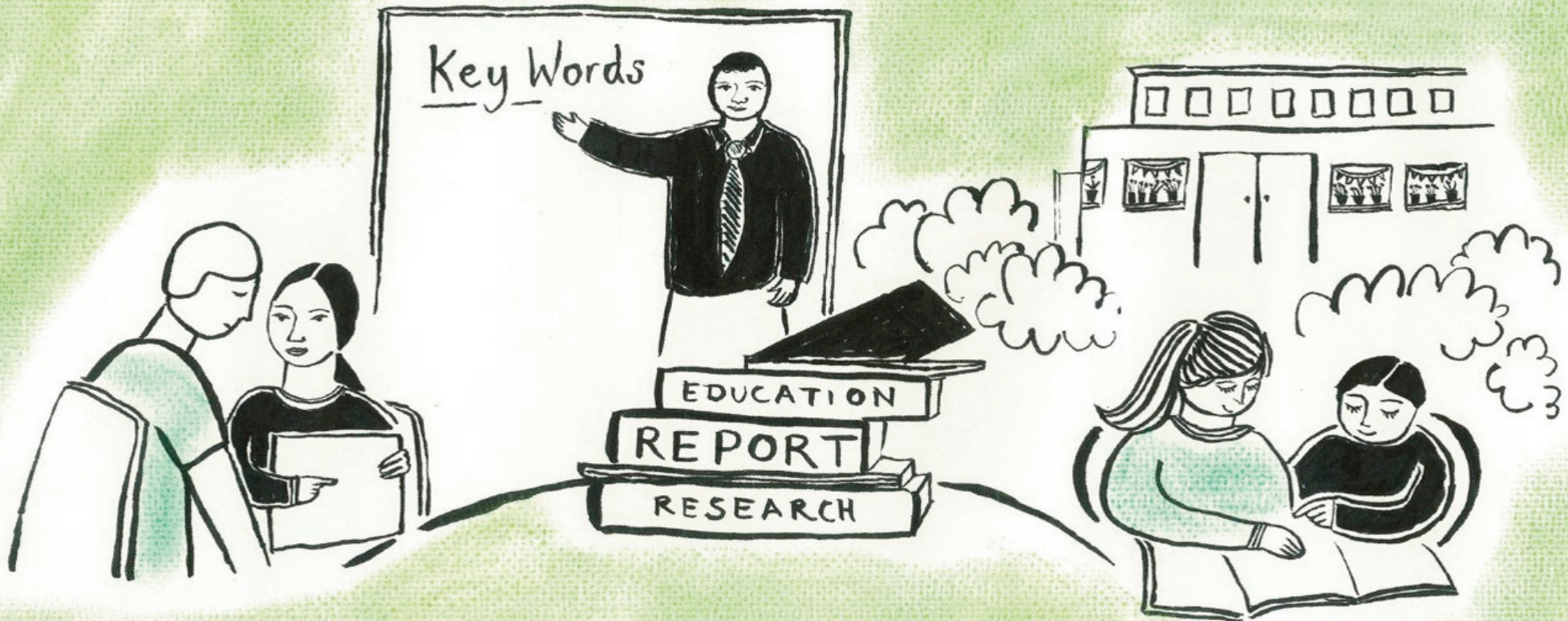# Designing New ITE Curricula:
EAL Content Recommendations

About The Bell Foundation

The Bell Foundation is a charity which aims to overcome exclusion through language education by working with partners on innovation, research, training and practical interventions. Through generating and applying evidence, we aim to change practice, policy and systems for children, adults and communities in the UK disadvantaged through language.

The Foundation works in two key areas:

- **The EAL Programme aims to improve the educational outcomes of children with English as an Additional Language in the UK to benefit the individual child and society as a whole. The Foundation works in partnership with a range of organisations across the education system to provide training and resources in order to build capacity, develop and evaluate models of good practice, and provide thought leadership.**

- **The Criminal Justice Programme seeks to break down the language barrier to accessing justice and rehabilitation for individuals in contact with the criminal justice system for whom English is an Additional Language. In 2017 the Foundation developed a long-term strategy for its work in the sector, with a focus on both victims and offenders of crime. The Foundation works through interventions in research, policy, practice and service support.**

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Introduction

Nearly half of all teachers in England will be teaching pupils from diverse backgrounds, and superdiversity in schools is becoming the norm. Therefore, ensuring that student teachers are prepared to meet the needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) as part of their initial teacher education (ITE) is essential, due to the scale of this challenge, and the need to ensure that their teaching practices are fully reflective of diversity, equity and inclusion.

There are over 1.5 million pupils in England who are recorded as having a first language known or believed to be other than English. The proportion of pupils who use EAL has more than doubled over the last two decades, with 21.3% of primary and 16.9% of secondary school pupils using a home language other than English (DfE, 2019). This means that 27% of teachers in England work in classrooms with at least 10% of the pupils whose first language is different from the language of instruction (OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey, Country note, 2019). Between 2013 and 2018, the share of teachers working in schools with multilingual settings increased by 13 percentage points, from 28% in 2013 to 41% in 2018 (ibid.).

The increasing responsibility that student teachers face in meeting the needs of diverse learners within classrooms impacts on their confidence as professionals. In a recent study of EAL in ITE (Foley et al., 2018) student teachers reported feelings of being de-skilled and disempowered as they applied a known context-specific pedagogy to multilingual and multicultural classrooms, and felt they needed a broader knowledge base in terms of theory and practice that would allow them to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners more effectively.

This guidance document has been created to support ITE programme leads and tutors as they review and redesign their organisation's ITE curriculum in line with the DfE's ITT Core Content Framework (DfE, 2020) with a focus on preparing student teachers to work in diverse multilingual classrooms and to meet the learning needs of their current and future EAL pupils.

The ITT Core Content Framework explicitly states that it defines the minimum entitlement of all student teachers, that it does not set out the full ITT curriculum, and that it 'deliberately does not detail approaches specific to particular additional needs' (2020:6), thus devolving responsibility to individual providers for designing appropriate curricula for their student teachers in the contexts in which they will be teaching. With reference to assessment, the framework stipulates that student teachers 'will continue to be assessed against the Teachers' Standards only' (ibid.). Of particular relevance to EAL pupils is Standard 5 of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011), which specifies that teachers must 'adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils', that they must 'have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including [...] those with English as an additional language' [...]; and that they must 'be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.' (2011:11-12). It is therefore important to take this requirement into account when designing new ITE curricula, and by extension to include content regarding approaches that are particularly impactful for teaching and assessing the learning of multilingual pupils in diverse classrooms.

Structure of the guidance

The table below offers evidence-informed content recommendations related to EAL for inclusion in ITE curricula. The content included should be considered as minimum core content that enhances the generic statements included in the ITT Core Content Framework with reference to EAL and is by no means exhaustive. ITE programme leads and tutors are encouraged to engage with it critically and to add to it where necessary or desirable to ensure that their curricula address the specific features of the contexts in which their student teachers will be working.

The table is organised into three columns to make it easy for the reader to see the correspondence between: (1) the minimum content entitlement described in the ITT Core Content Framework sections, which is presented in the first column in the order in which it appears in the framework document, (2) the corresponding sections of the Teachers' Standards used to assess all student teachers, which are listed in the second column, and (3) evidence-informed minimum content recommendations in relation to EAL in ITE programmes, which appear in the third column. This section is subdivided into two columns: 'Learn (that)...' and 'Learn how to...', following the layout of the sections in the ITT Core Content Framework. The content in the table below does not follow a pedagogical sequence – it is up to the individual ITE providers to decide how this content can be best integrated sequentially in their programmes. References and further reading are provided following the table.

Minimum Content Entitlement (ITT Core Content Framework sections)	Assessment Standards (Teachers' Standards sections)[1]	What student teachers need to learn in relation to EAL in ITE programmes[2]	
		LEARN (THAT)	LEARN HOW TO
High Expectations	1. **Set high expectations** which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils	• That understanding the values and knowledge of other cultures and languages that EAL pupils bring benefits all pupils, as it facilitates an understanding and respect of difference (1.2) • That the ability of pupils, for whom English is an additional language, to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English[3] (1.3) • That deficit views of EAL pupils as 'limited/defective users of English' may lead to low expectations, which in turn may limit pupils' opportunities and potential for achievement (1.3)	• Set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and levels of proficiency in English, while offering the right level of language support and scaffolding to access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge/skill
How Pupils Learn	2. **Promote good progress** and outcomes by pupils	• That EAL pupils actively use the language(s) they know to learn English and learn through English (2.2) • That moving between languages makes cognitive and emotional demands on EAL pupils (2.4) • Key factors that aid and hinder understanding as EAL pupils engage with spoken, written, visual or digital texts • That vocabulary is learnt in 'chunks' (i.e. words that frequently occur together), and that EAL pupils' ability to commit whole chunks to memory and to recall these is the basis of fluency	• Promote the use of home languages in class and for independent learning • Assist EAL pupils to understand features of English that may cause difficulty for EAL pupils and deploy them appropriately • Build in review and practice of language to express the key ideas and concepts over time

[1] The text in bold reflects how the standards sections are worded in the ITT CCF document, the full text (bold and regular) shows how the standards sections are worded in the Teachers' Standards.
[2] The numbers in brackets after the statements refer to the 'Learn that' statements on the corresponding section of the ITT CCF. For example, (1.1) refers to Section 1 'High Expectations', statement 1.
[3] The National Curriculum (DfE, 2014)

Subject and Curriculum	3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge	*While English as an Additional Language is not a curricular subject in English schools and there is no EAL curriculum in England, there are three broad knowledge areas relevant to EAL for student teachers to learn in this section, whatever their specialist subject:*	
		1) The contexts for EAL in England	
		LEARN (THAT)	**LEARN HOW TO**
		• That EAL pupils are a heterogenous group and that individuals vary greatly in their cognitive abilities, prior knowledge of curricular subjects, proficiency in English, literacy in their home language(s), and cultural experiences that they bring to classrooms • Key factors that impact on the educational outcomes of EAL pupils, e.g. level of English proficiency, age at which they arrived in the English school system, first language and prior educational and life experiences[4] • That proficiency in English is the strongest predictor of educational attainment of EAL pupils • Key national educational policy[5] and research[6] relating to EAL	• Critically apply their knowledge about superdiversity, policy and initiatives to their placement schools' settings to inform planning and teaching decisions
		2) Bilingualism and multilingualism	
		LEARN (THAT)	**LEARN HOW TO**
		• That bilingualism/multilingualism is an asset to the individual pupil, their class, the school and the wider community [7] • That there are differences across languages in structure that are likely to impact the pace and degree of challenge pupils experience when learning English and learning through English	• Draw on the knowledge that multilingual pupils and colleagues bring to support learning

[4] See recent research studies that show the specific categories of pupils in compulsory education at risk of low attainment: for information about the link between proficiency in English and educational achievement see Strand and Hessel (2018), for data on language groups that have attainment below the national expected standard, and on children arriving in England late in their schooling see Hutchinson (2018), for information about multilingual pupils from specific ethnic groups who are substantially more at risk than their peers from the same ethnic group but with English as their first language see Strand, Malmberg and Hall (2015).

[5] See the DfE's Brief summary of Government policy in relation to EAL Learners (2012)

[6] See references following this table.

[7] For a review of concepts of bilingualism, multilingualism, and plurilingualism, see Garcia and Wei (2014)

		3) English as the language of instruction, and how to support pupils' full access to the curriculum and their development of the language and literacy skills specific to individual disciplines and subjects	
		LEARN (THAT)	**LEARN HOW TO**
Subject and Curriculum	3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge	• How language works (e.g. the grammar of spoken and written English; different varieties of English; different registers for different purposes) • About features of English that often prove problematic to EAL pupils • That differences and gaps in cultural knowledge and experience embedded in the texts and talk used in classrooms impact on comprehension • That multilingual pupils need to use different registers for different purposes (e.g. basic interpersonal communication to speak to their friends and academic language to access and demonstrate learning of subject content in class and in their written work)[8]	• Teach unfamiliar vocabulary explicitly, including high-utility and high-frequency phrases beyond isolated, subject specialist 'key words' • Make language and texts comprehensible for EAL pupils, particularly those who are New to English or at the Early acquisition stage • Teach oracy and literacy skills specific to individual subjects • Promote high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English
Classroom Practice	4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons	• That EAL pupils at all levels of proficiency need models of successful English, scaffolds and worked examples to support their language and literacy development (4.3) and that these should be gradually removed as their proficiency in English increases (4.4) • That talk is important to develop language and literacies across the curriculum (4.7), but that high-quality talk is different for pupils at different levels of proficiency in English • That EAL pupils who are New to English and at the Early acquisition stage will need simple and clear examples and concrete language support • That both same-language and mixed language groupings are needed at different stages and for different purposes[9] (4.10)	• Integrate language-focused activities into subject lessons to meet the needs of EAL pupils • Plan for diversity, building in sensible differentiation where necessary to support EAL pupils[10]

[8] See Gibbons' Mode Continuum (2014)
[9] See Evans et al. (2016) for details
[10] See worked examples of Gibbons' Planning Framework (1991, 2002) here and here

Adaptive Teaching	5. **Adapt teaching** to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils	• That EAL pupils at different levels of proficiency in English and/or literacy levels are likely to require different types and levels of support (5.1) • Different support strategies that can be used to promote the learning of EAL pupils	• Adapt teaching to support pupils at different levels of proficiency in English (5.3 & 5.4) • Support academic language development (5.7)
Assessment	6. **Make accurate and productive use of assessment**	• That assessment of progress of EAL pupils should take account of the pupil's age, length of time in England, previous educational experience and ability in other languages • That there are different frameworks and instruments to assess the English language proficiency of EAL pupils • That good EAL assessment helps teachers avoid being over-influenced by potentially misleading factors, such as how silent pupils are immediately after arrival, or how fluent pupils are in social conversation (6.2) • That feedback for EAL pupils should include feedback on language use as well as subject (6.5)	• Carry out formative assessment to identify pupils' EAL development in curriculum subject areas, provide guidance for further language learning and set challenging curricular targets • Assess curriculum/subject learning in different ways, particularly when the ability of EAL pupils to take part in the national curriculum is more advanced than their communication skills in English (e.g.by using tasks that require demonstration of knowledge without having to produce extended texts in English) • Use assessment frameworks and tasks to determine progress in English language development • Provide clear feedback and guidance on how to improve
Managing Behaviour	7. **Manage behaviour effectively** to ensure a good and safe learning environment	• That EAL pupils New to English or at the Early acquisition stage will need short, simple and staged instructions (7.2 & 7.4)	• Grade instructions so that EAL pupils at all levels of English-language proficiency understand them • Check understanding of instructions • Convey meaning using non-verbal signals
Professional Behaviours	8. **Fulfil wider professional responsibilities**	• Strategies for involving parents of EAL pupils (8.4) • Where to find resources for professional learning on EAL	• Work with Teaching Assistants to support the learning of EAL pupils (8.5)

Suggested approach

It is important to highlight that except for the content included in section 3, 'Subject and Curriculum,' which could be included in 'core' sessions on EAL for student teachers, the content included in the remaining sections focuses on assisting student teachers to make all lessons more accessible to the diverse multilingual classes that they will encounter in schools. As recommended by Foley et al. (2018), such content could be 'infused' throughout individual subjects, e.g. mathematics, science, etc., and across all the core concerns of a Teacher Education programme, such as planning, feedback, assessment, group work, etc. As Foley et al. (2018: 90) point out,

Such a 'permeation' of EAL throughout a teacher education programme [...] ensures that EAL is given a central place where the focus is on making all lessons accessible, rather than treating EAL as a 'bolt-on' addition to existing programmes. It also requires a very subject-specific response to EAL issues, strategies and techniques, [...] include[ing] attention to the assessment of EAL learners in individual subjects.

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Resources (freely available)

EAL Nexus **http://bit.ly/EALnexus**

The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework for Schools and Tracker **http://bit.ly/EALassess**