

Introduction

Welcome to Module 7 of Working with English Language Learners: A handbook for learning assistants (WELLS).

In this module you will learn about ways to support learners who are at different stages of learning to read in English. “Reading is the process of getting meaning from print. It is not a passive, receptive activity, but requires the reader to be active and thinking” (Gibbons, 1991, p. 70). Learning to read in a new language may take a long time, and often learners have a wide range of reading abilities in their heritage language/s. As learning assistants, your role in supporting learners to read in English is important, as you draw on a variety of strategies and resources to help you to connect with your learners through effective reading practices. When thinking about and contributing to the planning of the reading programme with your classroom teacher, you could draw from these two Ministry of Education resources to support your discussion:

The English Language Intensive Programme (ELIP)

- ELIP provides guidelines for teachers on explicit language teaching for different text purposes and curriculum areas.
- ELIP explains what teachers can do for learners from Foundation Stage to Stage 3, and explains what to do for learners at different stages of ‘learning to read’ and ‘reading to learn’.

The English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP)

- Learning to read in an additional language is different from learning to read in a heritage or first language.

- Each booklet (Years 1-4, Years 5-8 and Years 9-13) explains potential challenges at each stage and makes suggestions about how to help learners when reading texts at different levels of complexity.

Below is an outline of strategies that you can use to enrich the reading programme of the classroom teacher, and to meet the needs of new readers of English at any age or year level.

Suggested Reading Programme

Suggestions for ELLP Foundation Stage Learners and ELLP Stage 1 Learners

Develop letter/sound recognition (phonological awareness) in regular daily sessions that are meaningful for learners. Make the learning more relevant by connecting the development of phonological awareness with words and lexical chunks (meaningful phrases) that come from learners’ worlds. These daily sessions can be done as part of the reading programme of the classroom teacher. This approach can be strengthened, when reading, writing, listening and speaking are integrated and connections are made across the curriculum. For example, words practised in the morning might be seen again during topic time in the afternoon.

The class reading programme can also be supported by:

- using texts that connect with the lives and experiences of learners
- encouraging families to share their own knowledge of letters and sounds in their heritage language/s
- creating bilingual word cards (with the word

in English on one side, and in the learner's heritage language on the other side)

- putting laminated word cards with words and sounds onto a key ring for learners to practise
- taking home English books/dual language books
- sharing links to online learning resources
- playing literacy-based card and board games
- using bilingual and English dictionaries, including picture dictionaries
- using dual language books in classroom learning.

Suggestions for ELLP Stage 2 Learners

Alongside the classroom teacher, you can help to develop vocabulary and reading/writing skills in meaningful ways through the reading programme:

The class reading programme can be supported by:

- integrating reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting
- using lots of visual materials that can engage your learners and promote plenty of discussion
- choosing reading materials that build on learners' prior knowledge and experiences
- choosing reading materials that match the age, interests, strengths and needs of your learners
- making sure that there are a variety of books on the same topic available for different reading levels
- exploring and encouraging the use of strategies for independent learning e.g., 'Look, Say, Spell, Cover, Write, Check' or bilingual word cards
- encouraging and supporting learners to take reading materials home
- reading both fiction and non-fiction texts from a range of curriculum areas
- supporting learners to take ownership of their learning journey by setting specific, achievable short-term goals.

Additional suggestions for learners at all ELLP Stages:

Keep a modelling book which includes pictures or photographs of cultural items and events familiar to your learners (e.g. festivals, food, plants, people, animals, cultural traditions, places, landmarks). You can use this modelling book to:

- promote oral language by talking about what learners can see in the pictures
- support learners to write about the pictures they see and talk about
- support learners to read the sentence/s that they write
- record key learning points from the lesson quickly
- keep evidence of learning in one central place.

It is still important that learners get plenty of reading materials in both English and their heritage language/s to take home to read with their families. Encouraging learners to read texts in their heritage language/s with their families will also help to support them in learning to read and understand English. If you do not have access to texts in learners' heritage language/s, encourage learners and their families to write stories and texts in their own languages. These texts can also become useful reading material.

Some Emergent Bilinguals may come from heritage language backgrounds where the orthography (written script) of the language is different to English, for example, the characters are different to the English alphabet script; a character might represent a whole word; the text reads right to left; there may not be spaces between words; words are written down the page etc.

This is a very brief guide to developing a reading programme with your classroom teacher. They might have other suggestions or resources to support you.

Module 7: Task 1: Building Knowledge about Supporting Reading

Purpose: To demonstrate how to make the most of a simple reading text when working with Emergent Bilinguals at Foundation Stage and Stage 1.

Task Instructions: Choose a book that you might use with your learners. With your coordinating teacher’s support, complete the table below. After completing the table, you might like to prepare some of the resources suggested in this module, for example, you might make some bilingual word cards or laminated word cards using key words from your selected text. See below for an example.

Title of selected book:	I think this book connects to the lives and experiences of my learners because:	Key words:
Online resources that connect:	Other books that might connect:	Learning activities that connect with the book:

For example:

Title of selected book:	I think this book connects to the lives and experiences of my learners because:	Key words:
<i>Spotted Butterflies, by Carmen Scanlan-Toti</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have noticed they are really interested in insects.</i> • <i>I have noticed that they love to create art.</i> • <i>I have noticed that they love to help their friends.</i> • <i>They are learning the names of colours in English.</i> • <i>It is Springtime and we have a good chance of seeing butterflies in the school playground.</i> • <i>We are following the life cycle of a butterfly in science.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>butterfly</i> • <i>painting</i> • <i>colours</i> • <i>yellow</i> • <i>red</i> • <i>orange</i> • <i>green</i> • <i>blue</i>
Online resources that connect:	Other books that might connect:	Learning activities that connect with the book:
<i>Youtube videos of songs about insects or colours.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle</i> • <i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr</i> • <i>Press Here by Herve Tullet</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create butterfly art</i> • <i>Mixing colours</i> • <i>Go for a walk in the school garden and talk about insects we see in our heritage language/s and English</i>

Things to remember:

Supporting Emergent Bilinguals with reading instruction involves effective practice.

Effective practice in reading instruction includes:

- choosing texts that engage and connect with Emergent Bilinguals’ interests
- supporting learners to engage with a variety of reading materials and to read for meaning by connecting with prior knowledge and lived experiences
- ensuring all emergent English readers are

well supported by effective teaching at the Foundation Stage so that they can decode (understand sound and letter relationships)

- supporting learners to decode words should be done in the context of a meaningful text so learners can also draw on their prior knowledge to solve the unknown word
- connecting reading with learning activities across the curriculum
- supporting learners who can read in their heritage language/s to maintain their heritage language/s by encouraging them to find materials in libraries and through online resources.

Recapping Key Vocabulary: Module 7

Term	Definition
Phonological awareness	Letter/sound relationships
Decode/decoding	Understanding sound and letter relationships to read words off the page
Reading for meaning	Going beyond 'decoding' to understand the meaning of the words being read
Orthography	Writing system of a language, which includes: punctuation, capitalisation, word breaks, emphasis, etc.

Resources

Gibbons, P. (1991). *Learning to learn in a second language*. Primary English Teaching Association.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *English language learning progressions*. Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2003). *English language intensive programme: Years 7 - 13*. Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *English language intensive programme: Primary resource*. Learning Media.

Coming up: Module 8

Module 8 is about supporting learners with their writing.

Preparation: Think about how you support your learners with their writing. Think about the different purposes of writing and the audiences we write for.